

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

February 2010

Vol.25, No.2 ISSN 0790-7672

and Northern Star incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.24 No.2 ISSN 954-5891

The Crisis In The North (again)

Britain divided Ireland and kept part of it under its own control but refused to govern it. Government was farmed out to a local majority which was locked in combat with the local minority when the deed was done. The farming out of government of the region, outside the political life of the state, preserved the condition of conflict that was there at the outset. The minority community, whose energy was denied an outlet in the meaningful politics of the state, eventually made so much trouble that the state abolished the majority rule principle in the farmed-out government, and made it a rule that representatives of both communities should hold governing ministries as of right, and that these ministries should not be subordinate to a Cabinet, or to the 'Parliamentary Assembly' on which you could believe the whole thing was based if you were careful not to think about it.

The only political connection between the two communities under this system lies in the appointment of the two First Ministers by the Assembly. Although one of these is called the First Minister and the other is called the Deputy First Minister, they are of equal status. But they have to be appointed as a packet by representatives of the two communities whose votes are counted separately. There must be a majority in each community for the packet. The local parties then appoint Ministers according to a scheme that is laid down.

The DUP rejected the whole arrangement at the start, but took the Ministers to which its vote entitled it, and ran them independently of the other Ministers and of the First Minister. It allowed no semblance of Cabinet Government to creep in.

The first First Minister was David Trimble, leader of the UUP, then the biggest party. Trimble signed the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 when Tony Blair, then in his primeval vigour, threatened that he would make him sorry if he didn't. Having signed, Trimble immediately set about preventing the Agreement system from functioning, but nevertheless got a half share of the Nobel Peace Prize. After about a year and a half Whitehall decided to make him play, and found the means of doing so. But he did so only with a post-dated letter of resignation. In the Trimble period the system only functioned

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Support For Mayhem

Hilary Benn, a member of the Blair Government that launched the war to destroy the Iraqi State, said a couple of years ago that the invasion gave the Iraqi people their freedom and it was up to them how they used it. Martin Mansergh, a Minister in Bertie Ahern's Government which gave such support for the war as was required of it by the USA, defended it on much the same grounds. What the Iraqi people were doing with the freedom conferred on them by the invasion was fighting a war of Shia, Sunni and Kurd against each other which it would be flattery to call a Civil War. A Civil War is a conflict to determine how the power of the State is to be conducted. In Iraq under the military occupation it often seemed that the internal combatants had lost sight of the State, which continued to exist only as an Occupation construct.

The United Nations, which did not authorise the invasion, later took responsibility for the Occupation, legitimising it, and branding Iraqis who did not comply with the will of the Occupying Powers as rebels, "*insurgents*". As far as we know it has never bothered to estimate the number

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The European Parliament – *a fifth wheel on the EU wagon*

"The rights of the European Parliament are limited, although much expanded in recent years. But it likes to flex its muscles. MEPs may only vote down the whole team, not each individual, and this "nuclear" option has yet to be exercised. But the threat is sufficient. Ms Jeleva, the weakest in the pack, has been taken out partly to prove a point in an ongoing inter-institutional tussle in which the parliament is struggling to extend its right to call the commission to account"

(Irish Times, January 21, 2010).

This is an absurd situation. And it's going to get more absurd. The EU has three heads, three Presidents: the Council, the Commission and the Parliament. (There is a fourth, if what's left of the

rotating Presidency is included.) The source of ultimate authority is constantly blurred but nobody seems to see this as a problem.

There used to be a straightforward arrangement between the Council proposing Commissioners and they in turn initiating and proposing legislation for the Council to make into law and implement. The Commissioners were the central force in creating a new European polity by this initiating role, which gave them a position that had a certain independence of the Council. It was a new and unique type of arrangement that struck a functioning balance between the existing Governments and the creation of a new reality 'on the ground' that was less and less definable in existing state terms and therefore more and more amenable to a genuine European

polity. This was inevitably a gradual process. It was a European solution to a European problem. The rotating Council Presidency was another practical support to this process. The arrangements were ademocratic but not anti-democratic. It was essentially consensual and focussed on the development of Europe itself.

Now we have a Parliament that has been introduced for ideological reasons but it is a fifth wheel in the whole arrangement. But a fifth wheel that wants to be the steering wheel. It cannot make laws, it cannot form a government, and it can reject the Commission but cannot replace it. And it can claim to be as representative as all the elected Governments because it is also elected—but it is not elected to run anything. It is elected just to be a Parli-

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

The Irish Budget And The Boston Burglar

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Last month we reproduced Philip O'Connor's obituary letter on Nina Fishman to the *Guardian* with a note saying that it had not been published (page 10). It subsequently appeared, along with other letters.

ament! It is a farce.

The European political class has got it itself so consumed with the pure ideology of democracy and parliaments that they think these are good things in themselves, no matter what the context. And the same class is prepared to engage in wars to impose such schemes on whoever takes their fancy—or rather whosoever the US-UK decides to impose upon in a deadly power-game.

At present, the European Parliament is a recipe for being a nuisance at best: but it will not stay as it is. And the more it tries to become what it wants to be, the more irresponsible and anarchic the whole EU set-up will become. This will wreck the EU consensual, community structure and prevent a European polity being created, an event which should happen before any parliament is set up to represent it.

The Member States will quite naturally resort more and more to intergovernmental arrangements and the EU institutions will simply be reduced to a forum for that process and will have nothing to do with European unity. There will be tons of rhetoric about such unity but that will for the naïve and the gullible.

Jack Lane

Northern Crisis continued

by fits and starts. It was suspended to facilitate him at one point on the grounds that the theft of confidential files from the high security Castlereagh Barrack by men who walked in in broad daylight without masks—with the cameras switched off, knew where the files were—and took them without a disturbance, was the work of Sinn Fein/IRA.

Trimble lost ground by this carry-on to those who rejected the Agreement in principle, without gaining support by implementing it with a will. And the SDLP lost support, under the leadership of Seamus Mallon and then of Mark Durkan, by its uncritical tolerance of Trimble's antics. And so the DUP and Sinn Fein became the major parties. After some hesitation Paisley decided to operate the Agreement with Sinn Fein, and it became functional for the first time.

The UUP then set about eroding Unionist support for the DUP by use of the 'extremist' criticism the DUP had earlier directed against it. And a new 'rejectionist' movement was launched, the Traditional Unionist Voice. And a trivial 'corruption' campaign was got up against the DUP—

Paisley's son was said to be paying too high a rent for a premises owned by a close connection. The 'investigative journalists', briefed by 'extremists', made hay with this weed for a while. Paisley stood down to avert a split in the Party. The hard men took over, led by Peter The Punt.

Paisley's approach of working the Agreement in a way that might influence Sinn Fein was abandoned. There was a standstill in the agreement the DUP had made with Sinn Fein regarding the devolution of Policing and Justice powers. This was intended to create a dilemma for Sinn Fein, making it issue an ultimatum that might possibly damage it. And then the Robinson scandal happened.

It is impossible for anybody involved in the Northern Ireland business over the last forty years to think of Robinson as anything but Peter the Punt. He ventured across the border about thirty years ago and committed some little act of rebellion to cause himself to be arrested and cause some embarrassment to the Dublin Government. He got himself arrested alright, but instead of seeing the thing through, he paid a fine and came home. In those days Irish currency was in transition between the pound sterling (with a picture of an Irish colleen on it) and the Euro, and it was called the punt.

Robinson was 'extreme' but careful. He did not cast his bread upon the waters and depend on Providence. He made a profit out of standing four-square for Ulster. And now this careful calculator, who nudged Paisley aside and took over the leadership to show how it should be done, has brought the Party to the brink of disintegration, with the Traditional Unionist Voice willing and able to take over.

It seems that the Paisley family has exerted itself to ward off disintegration for the time being, making Robinson stand aside from his position of First Minister (though not as leader of the DUP), and insisting that negotiation with Sinn Fein on policing should begin. And Trimble's instant demand that Robinson should resign was helpful in bringing about this device. What Trimble advised was the thing that should not be done.

Paisley's solution of the Robinson problem is very like the solution proposed by William O'Brien for the Parnell problem in 1891. Gladstone, speaking for the fundamentalist Protestantism of his Party, said he could no longer deal with Parnell, as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, on the Home Rule issue. O'Brien proposed that Parnell should give up the Parliamentary leadership for the time being while remaining leader of the Party. Parnell refused, and set about wrecking the Party instead.

The Good Friday Agreement allows for the First Minister to stand down for a

maximum of six weeks, after which he is deemed to have resigned the position and the Assembly has to elect a new pair of First Ministers. Whether Robinson returns as Parliamentary (so to speak) leader remains to be seen. He probably will, though Arlene Foster (who left the UUP for the DUP many years ago in disgust at Trimble's carry-on) has an altogether better public presence because, if he doesn't, there could be a serious problem under the curious rules of the Agreement about the election of a new packet of First Ministers.

In the case of Iris Robinson it appears there is serious corruption for a change. How far this is chargeable against Peter depends on how one regards the family. In English law it used to be the case that the family, as the unit of society, was outside the law. A wife, as we recall, could not give evidence against her husband, but in recent cases wives have been prosecuted for not informing on their husbands. In England the family is officially defunct and there is Labour and Liberal outrage at a tentative Tory suggestion that a family income tax might be restored. So was it Peter's business to know his wife's business, and if he did know, what he legally obliged to inform on her?

In the Republic there has been some strange comment on the sexual aspect of the affair, the strangest of which was Colm Toibin's contribution to a discussion of it on Marian Finucane's radio show. Homosexual culture is one of the active principles of general culture following its comparatively recent liberation, and judging by Toibin's smirking remarks it is still in an adolescent phase. And, of course Iris Robinson's up-front heterosexuality made her an irresistible target for it.

Alasdair McDonnell, who won South Belfast, a natural Unionist seat, for the SDLP, when the Unionist vote was split, by presenting himself as almost a Unionist, now proposes an anti-Sinn Fein/DUP alliance with the UUP. He says: *"the Stalinist style of political intolerance being forced upon Northern Ireland by the DUP/Sinn Fein axis is failing miserably as far as working for the benefit of our people is concerned"*. McDonnell is in the running for the leadership of the SDLP if it survives. The present leader, Mark Durkan, made a similar proposal a couple of years ago, but backed away from it very quickly under pressure from his electorate. (These proposals from what claims to be the Labour Party in Northern Ireland sits oddly, in view of the UUP's alliance with the Tory Party.)

The SDLP/UUP alliance is the middle-class will-o-the-wisp, tempting but ungraspable. Sinn Fein and the DUP are, if not strictly working class, at least plebeian

Remembering 1969

The November issue of *The Irish Political Review* carried a report of a session of the Desmond Greaves School—"Remembering 1969".

I was one of the speakers from the floor and was misquoted by your reporter several times in the article.

The context of my contribution at the school was a discussion about the Official Republican Movement which touched on the reasons behind the split of 1969/70. I am a former member of "Provisional" Sinn Fein and wanted to give a different perspective.

I did not make the following comments attributed to me:

"We disliked political action because the Officials' politics were dubious and confusing."

This simplifies of my argument to the point of falsification. I actually said this: that there were elements within the old pre-split IRA which were hostile to "politics" in general and that this was one reason for the split. But, on the other hand, the politics which were being advanced by the leadership then were dubious and confused, and that many people were reacting to the nature of the political line, not to politics per se.

"There are no normal classes in Ireland"

This would have been a absurd comment to make.

My argument was that there is no normal class struggle in Ireland because of the distorting effect of partition and sectarianism.

Your report also says I quoted Tomas McGoilla saying:

"Socialist partition is more dangerous than real partition."

I do not know where that came from. Again it is an absurdity. What on earth is "socialist partition"?

What McGoilla actually said was:

"The partition of Ireland between East and West based on economic laws is more real and dangerous than the partition between north and south based on religious laws."

I read this quote out at the meeting to illustrate the tendency within the pre-split leadership of using social and economic issues to fudge the central issue of partition.

Also I do not believe I said this:

"Goulding pushed socialism in a fantasy way to us Northerners".

Owen Bennett.

and vulgar in the eyes of the SDLP which, if not quite middle class, is at least pretentious. It was not class that brought Sinn Fein and the DUP together. Each was simply the most durable political element in the class melange of its community. When a third of a century of conflict exhausted the 'Stalinist' energies of the SDLP and the UUP, the 'extremists' were all that remained for making a deal. They made a deal that was more workable than the attempted deals between the SDLP and the UUP. That deal made at St. Andrew's might even survive the present crisis, despite the destructive efforts of the SDLP and the UUP along with various media efforts.

Sinn Fein and the DUP are an *"axis of failure"*, and they *"use obstacles as bolt holes"* says McDonnell (IN 6 Jan). The SDLP had at least three opportunities to form an axis of success with the UUP, and

it blew all of them. The most serious was when it brought down the semi-voluntary power-sharing of the Sunningdale Agreement, destroying the only Unionist leader who was ever a willing partner, Brian Faulkner. It did this by giving priority to the Council of Ireland aspect of the Agreement, even though the Dublin chicanery in the matter of the Council had been revealed. There was then a gap of a quarter of a century before the present system was set up. The SDLP claimed to be its architect, but then allowed Trimble to break its terms and make rubbish of it.

SDLP/UUP deals did not hold. The critical difference between the SDLP and Sinn Fein is that the SDLP, despite its formal anti-Partition position, from which it dare not budge, is locked within Northern Ireland horizons. Its Anti-Partitionism acts as a disabling taboo on it. It is a forlorn ideal which it dare not give up.

The Anti-Partitionism of Sinn Fein is

different in kind. For a start it is an all-Ireland party with a foothold in the South. And, like it or not, its willingness to support physical force in the undemocratic set-up of "*the Northern Irish state*" (as Professor Keogh calls it) gives it historic roots, and the ability to play a long game. (Fr. Faul regarded the Provos as not being Irish at all because their war was, like the the game of cricket, endless, while proper Irish wars were like hurling: fast, furious and short. It was strange how such an astute man failed to notice the Fenian phenomenon.)

We assume that McDonnell's middle-class alliance is not practical politics and is not going to happen. It is probable that there would have been a development of that kind within the political life of the State—such as we campaigned for for almost a quarter of a century. But the UUP was no less vehemently opposed to British politics than the SDLP. The British political system is effectively transnational and all sorts of people find their places in it opportunistically. The Unionist and Nationalist middle classes both rejected that development. And at home each is locked into its national community.

Political unity in the North has, with transient exceptions in 1903 and 1932, not been class unity since 1885. Class analysis was extensively deployed to study of the situation, but it was a study of what did not exist.

A book entitled *Politics, Society And The Middle Class In Modern Ireland* has just been published by Palgrave Macmillan. It is a collection of articles by various authors edited by Fintan Lane. It is a symptom of the collapse of socialism that Lane, Editor of the Labour History magazine, *Saothor*, for many years, has turned his mind to the middle class. Labour History failed to make an impact because it refused to come to terms theoretically with the realities of working class existence within the national division, adopted a Nationalist stance, and could not see working class activity on the Unionist side.

Much time is spent mulling over the term "*middle class*", but it is not asked what its sense can be in the absence of an upper or ruling class (in the case of Nationalist Ireland) or of a state (in the case of Ulster Unionism). The historic meaning of the term is a class lying between a ruling upper class of landlords and the working class. This existed in Britain but not in Ireland. In Ireland there was for two centuries after the Williamite conquest a landlord class, which for more than a century monopolised political office, and which dominated local government until the late 19th century, but it was not a ruling class in the British sense. It was a merely exploitative economic class of landlords. It did not shape developments

taking place under it, as in England. In 1903 it was sloughed off economically, and in most of the country that was that.

In Protestant Ulster it had functioned as the upper class of a connected community, but in 1903 the Orange tenant-farmers combined with William O'Brien's movement in the rest of the country to get the land for themselves. An attempt by the landlords to use the Orange Lodges against the land reform was thwarted, but it led to a serious rift within Ulster Unionism for a few years. The landlords were bought out, but thereafter they continued in the role of a ruling class to some extent, giving the Unionist movement during the Home Rule conflict something of an upper class style, which was important in evoking English sympathy, even though the personnel of the movement were predominantly working and middle class.

Ulster Unionism was identifiable in Britain as British because it was part of the British Unionist Party and its style did not jar on British political culture as developed over the centuries by the ruling class. Then in 1921 it was cut adrift by the British Unionist Party, which was itself changing into the Tory Party, having absorbed the Liberal Unionists. Only Lord Londonderry made any attempt to keep Northern Ireland part of the British political system, and he soon gave it up as hopeless.

The upper class continued to play a part in the political life of the British State. The BBC (which John Waters idolises) was constructed by it. There are things which it is almost impossible for middle class egoism to do, and which can only be done from above or below. Thatcher did her best to scotch what remained of the ruling class in the corridors of power, and maybe she succeeded. Cameron & Co. are beginning to find it hard to strike the right note.

There was an upper-class residue in the North. The North was a "*de facto one-party state*", we are told by N.C. Fleming, of Cardiff University, in Lane's book (p224). If the North was in fact a state, it is probable that the upper class residue would have played an influential part in it. Middle class conduct too would have been strongly influenced by it. And issues needing resolution would have arisen within it that would probably have given rise to a party-system appropriate to the conduct of a state in a modern industrial capitalist society. But it was not a state. The main functions of state were to be British after 1921 no less than before. The "*Northern Ireland state*" was a vision seen 30 years ago by Lord Professor Bew, and taken to be a fact by the weak-minded Professor Keogh. When the semblance of a state was abolished in 1972 the actual State continued without interruption. It is precisely because the Constitutional entity

called Northern Ireland is not a state, but a strategic local government device of the British State for an unacknowledged, and unquestioned, purpose, that it can carry on as it does.

Alasdair McDonnell's proposal for a middle-class political initiative was scotched while this article was being written. It seems instead that there is to be a Pan-Unionist Pact connected with the Tory Party. The UUP remnant was made part of the Tory Party last year. It became an attachment to the Tory Party. But its only Westminster MP, Lady Hermon, rejected that measure on the bizarre grounds that she was in serious disagreement with Tory policies.

Be in no doubt: that is bizarre reasoning for a Unionist politician in Northern Ireland. Lady Hermon is living in wonderland. That is to say, she thinks she's living in British political life where one takes a stand on policies for the conduct of the State.

Remember 1979! There was a hung Parliament, and, for once in a wonder, the MPs from outside the system counted. The SDLP voted with the Labour Party on policy grounds for a while, just as if it was part of it. But then it brought down the Government, precipitating the Election that Thatcher won. And the issue? The Labour Government decided to end the under-representation of the North at Westminster by increasing its MPs from 12 to 18!

In the good old days the UUP sometimes got all 12 Northern seats. Constitutional Nationalist politics was futile and morale was low. Only Republicanism aroused any enthusiasm. There was an occasion when Republican prisoners, standing as Independents, won two Westminster seats. They were disqualified and the seats given to the losing Unionists.

The UUP is once again attached to the Tory Party, as in the good old days. But what Cameron got last year was little more than a corpse. And the UUP did not think it prudent to stand as Tory in the European Elections. (It called itself *Ulster Conservative And Unionist New Force*.)

But Cameron saw the Robinson Crisis as a chance to attach other Unionists to the Tories for the Westminster Election.

As the situation had been developing during the past year, there was the prospect of a three-way Unionist split at the next Assembly Election: Democratic Unionist Party, Traditional Unionist Voice, and Ulster Unionist Party. And that raised the distinct possibility of Sinn Fein becoming the largest party and Martin McGuinness becoming First Minister. And the depth of Unionist commitment to democracy in the Assembly is indicated by the general assumption that, if that happened, the Good Friday Agreement—though copper-

bottomed with referendums and international law—would sink.

The UUP proposed in Stormont that voting be made compulsory in Northern Ireland, presumably to force increasingly apathetic Unionists to vote, and no doubt calculating that the UUP—lowest common denominator party of the majority—would benefit.

It has long been taken for granted that, if the Catholic electorate becomes a majority and votes for a united Ireland, a 1912 situation would be restored. But now it seems that the fact of Sinn Fein outstripping the divided Unionist parties is enough to re-activate 1912 reflexes. That assessment is confirmed by the *Sunday Independent* which, out of the blue, produced a worthwhile report on the Northern crisis. Alan Murray and Daniel McConnell wrote:

"The British Conservative Party... fears inheriting a meltdown in Northern Ireland if Martin McGuinness is to become First Minister after an election.

"Senior figures in the less hardline UUP say that even their members would refuse to serve under a Sinn Fein First Minister.

"It would cause major upheaval in the unionist community and lead to a loss of confidence and repercussions politically would be enormous. There would be no trust in that situation and it could cause mayhem in society and on the streets during the marching season, one senior party source said..." (24.1.10).

Cameron stepped in to ward off a premature recurrence of 1912 by bringing the Unionists back under the Tory wing. And it seems that the DUP is so traumatised by the implications of the Robinson affair that it is giving the proposal serious consideration.

And, to help them reach a positive conclusion, Cameron whipped them out of the contentious Northern Ireland atmosphere to a conference in the dynastic home of the last real grandee of the English upper class, Lord Salisbury. It was in the long Salisbury era of English Toryism that the British Unionist Party was formed through a merger of the Tories and the social reform and anti-Home Rule Liberals. And that Unionist Party took the Ulster Unionists in tow and put British manners on them for the long generation of the Home Rule conflict. And then made the Northern Ireland outhouse for them and dumped them in it.

Cameron is finding it had to strike the right Tory note in England. But it might be that his false note will still be good enough to re-activate deference in the North. If so, and if he gets the 12 Unionist seats he hopes for, and if there is a hung Parliament, then for the first time in generations there will be somebody elected from Northern Ireland in the Government of the State.

But that does not mean that the party-politics of the State will become active in the North, with the prospect of 'sectarian' politics being superseded. Cameron's initiative is a travesty of what this magazine tried to bring about (through the CLR and CEC) during the 1970s and 1980s, and which the Tory Party then opposed no less than the Labour Party.

Cameron's success would mean the restoring of 'sectarian' political unity among Protestants by overcoming the divisive effects of a form of devolved government in which a status of equality between the Protestant and Catholic communities is structurally enforced.

Its counterpart, according to the logic of the system, should be a reinforcing of Catholic cohesion, an implementation of the Northern presence in the Dail promised by Bertie Ahern but vetoed by the Labour Party and Fine Gael (no doubt at the urging of the SDLP), and a more active development of Fianna Fail party organisation in the North.

As we go to print, Sinn Fein is threatening to withdraw from Stormont over the failure to complete implementation of the 2006 St. Andrew's Agreement, negotiated with Dr. Paisley on the terms on which the Good Friday Agreement would be operated. The DUP had refused to deliver on various aspects of that Agreement, notably the devolution of the administration of Justice and Policing. It has been encouraged in its intransigence by the Tory Party which recently indicated that it wished to revoke the GFA. If that attitude is maintained, it means the end of Paisleyism.

Paisleyism, as a distinctive political position, was the decision to make the GFA functional through an agreement with Sinn Fein. What was called Paisleyism in the demonising culture of 'Constitutional nationalism' was merely the general attitude of Ulster Unionists, to which Paisley gave eloquent expression. The distinctive contribution by Paisley to politics in the North was the St. Andrew's Agreement. And that was what made 'extremists' of the official 'moderates'.

Lord Fitt, before he retired to the House of Lords, used to say that there was no sense in making distinctions between Unionists because they were all Unionists and that was all that counted. We can think of only two exceptions: Faulkner in the early 1970s and Paisley in recent years. And the fate of both of them confirms Fitt's view that Unionism is Unionism. And our view is that, under the perverse arrangement that Britain made for the governing of its Six Counties, there was nothing else for it to be. Functional democracy is a highly artificial, complex, sophisticated form of state which maintains stability through a form of all-out party-political conflict, which appears

absolutely in earnest, and always seems to threaten a Civil War, but always ends with almost everybody going home quietly after each election, win or lose, living submissively for a couple of years, until the fury is unleashed again for the next election. Britain has it in a high degree, but ninety years ago it decided that the Six Counties should not have it when they were retained within the State.

Cameron says he will 'renegotiate' the Agreement and replace it with 'voluntary power-sharing', which is a form of majority rule. Who will he renegotiate with?

Martin Mansergh, now a Fianna Fail Minister, published a denunciation of Rory O Brady in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1998, in which he asserted that the Agreement superseded the 1918 Election because it was enacted by an All-Ireland vote, and was part of international law. (In fact, the All-Ireland vote was two separate votes, for different objects, held on the same day.)

In the working out of whatever it was that was voted for in 1998, the British Government has acted as Unionist (except for Gordon Brown in the last two years) and Cameron has now attached Ulster Unionism to the Tory Party. And, apparently without consulting the South, he says that the GFA should be set aside.

The Dublin Government did not act towards the Nationalist community as the British did towards the Unionist. In the *realpolitik* implicit in the GFA, it was the guarantor of the Nationalist interest under it, but it refused to play that part. Possibly it thought that, by keeping aloof from the Nationalists, and taking part in Boyne and Somme celebrations, it would disarm the Unionists. But its primary concern was to damage Sinn Fein, even if that also damaged the Agreement—with the natural result that it provoked the Northern Nationalists to turn decisively towards Sinn Fein. (No political leader—aside from Haughey, and Reynolds to a lesser extent—has ever troubled to understand what Northern Ireland is. They don't know. What is worse, they know that they don't want to know.)

If Cameron gets Unionism securely under his wing with his Anti-Agreement policy, the growth of Traditional Unionist Voice is likely to be halted, if it does not join the Tory Alliance. And, with Cameron on track to get 12 Unionists back in the Tory stable, the SDLP—its overture to the UUP rebuffed—will have to decide what it is, and whether it is anything.

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Meanwhile Cardinal Daly died and was buried. And First Minister Robinson neglected to attend the funeral. That would be fair enough if Robinson was content to represent the Protestant side in the egalitarian apartheid system. But he

wasn't. He was preventing the final instalment of that system being put in place, and was angling for majority rule of the area in which Armagh is a prominent place.

*

We neglected to notice a sad book that was published some years ago by the Blackstaff Press, *Rethinking Union: an alternative vision for Northern Ireland*. The author, Norman Porter, who "*holds a D. Phil in Politics from the University of Oxford*", is the son of the Norman Porter who ran the Evangelical Protestant Society in the 1950s and 1960s and "*was an Orangeman, a Blackman, an Apprentice Boy, but never a Freemason*" (p4).

The family moved to Australia in 1970 after the father failed to win the Duncairn seat at Stormont on an anti-O'Neill policy. The son was then eighteen. His world view broadened out in Australia, he took an Oxford degree, and he returned to Belfast in 1994 and joined the UUP:

"I regained a sense of identity with Northern Ireland that was more subtle and nuanced than the one I left behind in 1970, but which, as I now find, fits uneasily with standard unionist expressions of belonging... I was sufficiently innocent ...to believe that in the new circumstances of a peaceful Northern Ireland, unionist politics would witness an exploration of creative possibilities... That innocence has vanished and has been replaced by a deep-seated frustration at how stilted political thinking within unionism actually is..." (p5).

Porter was out in the wide world, and in Oxford University, and he came back to Belfast and set about re-thinking Unionism. But it is evident that he took Unionism with him to Australia and to Oxford and brought it back intact, and then embellished it with bits of nuance and bits of metaphysics:

"The philosophical predispositions at work in this book are most aptly described as interpretative or "hermeneutic" in nature. As I appropriate it here, this philosophical term of description connotes two central theses, a general one concerning the conditions of understanding, and a more specific one concerning an image of humans as self-interpreting beings... This formulation may be amplified by two related claims. One underscores the inescapably historical condition of understanding... within some historical horizon of meaning which may be qualified, challenged or even replaced by another, but not transcended through ascension to a 'view from nowhere'... The other claim deals with the types of critical probing often associated with attempts to understand what is going on in various tracts of human experience..." (p11-12).

Two hundred pages follow in which nothing more than this is said.

The "*historical horizon*" within which

Unionism is to be nuanced hermeneutically is Northern Ireland. Beyond Northern Ireland is "*nowhere*". The world within which the metaphysical display must be confined was created in 1921.

But, when Unionism sprang into being in 1885-6, did it imagine itself living in this Wee Ulster, in a constricted Constitutional entity, "*connected with Britain*" through an arrangement that also distances it, and obliged to live with a community more than half its size with which it shares nothing but space, and whose advances it must continuously repel, lest it succumb to them and lose itself?

That is the outcome, but it was most certainly not the purpose. Porter accepts the outcome unquestioningly as the historical horizon of understanding, and his profoundly nuanced meditations on his navel only seals him more securely into it.

Editorial Digest

SCANDALS On January 18th, the *Irish News* covered its front page with a lurid account implying that Sinn Fein Councillor Brieghe Meehan (second wife of IRA leader Martin Meehan) had abused his young daughter at their home. No evidence, yet the reader is given the clear impression that the matter is beyond doubt. One statement from a local is given that screams of a child were heard from the house—now isn't that unusual! Mrs. Meehan has not even been charged, so the *Irish News* does the charging. The item is illustrated by a very large and not very flattering colour picture of Mrs. Meehan.

We have no idea of the truth or otherwise of this matter and doubt if the *Irish News* has either, but it was 'good copy' in the present climate. There have since been implications about the role of Martin—his picture usually accompanies these stories. He was in Jail at the time!

Then we have the sagas of the Adams family. Gerry seems to accept that his brother Liam did in fact abuse his daughter and has urged him to give himself up. But at the time she was encouraged to contact other agencies and not the RUC. In this Gerry is being accused of a cover-up akin to the actions of some Catholic Bishops of protecting some of their priests.

But in those days, and until quite recently, the RUC would have no interest in the child's welfare. They would have merely seen an opportunity for blackmail and for the recruitment of informers—even the abuser would have probably have got off if he could have been turned. Adams and the IRA would have known this very well indeed. The RUC was run, lock, stock and barrel, by the Special Branch. Again, all these stories carry photos of Gerry Adams.

And finally, so far we have had the

saga of the Robinson family and Iris's lover (strangely, a Fenian.) It seemed that she raised money to set him up in business. The fall out of these scandals has yet to come and we will judge the results as they come.

All these stories are old hat—the most recent being over a year ago. Also in the issue of the *Irish News*, January 18th, Tom Kelly, in his regular column, spent most of his time defending the media. (This was while the *Irish News* has spent most of its time, page after page, giving the most lurid details, in a way that would make the Editor of the *News Of The World* blush.)

But his final paragraph, emphasised by the sub editor in bold print at the centre of of the column, was most interesting. He said: "*Against such an emotively charged background, perhaps some journalist will question the source and timing of these saucy revelations which have brought us close to political Armageddon. As our history continues to unfold, who will hold a mirror to it?*"

Precisely. Why now after all this time? Why all together? The general consensus seems to be that some people want to bring down the power-sharing agreement. More likely, they want to prevent the devolution of policing and justice. Who would want to do this? The link between the PSNI and the Special Branch is not entirely broken, but it has been severely ruptured. It is likely that the bulk of the PSNI is not greatly bothered, so long as this very well paid body can continue to not have to do to much actual policing and can continue to attend to their own little private enterprizes, which they are confident they will be allowed to do.

So that leaves the Special Branch. Among other things, they will be privy to all these stories. And there are no end of "journalists" who are flattered to have the acquaintance of these spooky people. The Branch have an object of their own which includes a mission to return to the "good old days" and by their recent provocation of Republicans are determined to cause as much trouble as possible.

Daily they "catch" someone for the killing of the two soldiers in Antrim only to let them go again. They are still intimidating people in their quest for informers. And of course they have a nice, if dubious, collection of intelligence which they do not wish to fall into the "wrong hands". We imagine that there will be a lot of paper burning in the near future.

THE MILITARY And what of the British army? It could be seen to have had a role during the war. Not least because its largest component was the Ulster Defence Regiment—about 10 battalions. (Lest anyone forgets, the UDR was the B-Specials put into army uniform and

given modern weapons. It was the the UDR, after all, which carried out the massacre of the Miami Showband.) But the UDR is gone—except for one battalion, the Royal Irish Rangers, integrated into the British Army, and under the pompous Tim Collins it spearheaded the invasion of Iraq.

The British Army has no role in the North other than as a garrison or a series of garrisons, training and preparing for the invasion of other peoples and killing them. The local TV and the *Belfast Telegraph* celebrates their heroic return; but they never encounter an Ulster accent—these are Englishmen occupying our country as a matter of convenience. There has never been a better time to demand the complete removal of the British garrison from the North of Ireland. They bring nothing but shame to the place. In the words of the popular song of a few years ago—*"Go home British soldiers go on home / Have you got no effin homes of your own!"*

PSNI What should now be the Republican attitude to the PSNI? There can be no doubt that formerly the RUC was simply another force for forcing the Croppies to lie down. It was creature of its own vicious Special Branch. But the Croppies have ceased to lie down for a generation and the Catholic community has been the most vigorous part of the society for a generation. Furthermore that is a position which there is no prospect whatever of reversing. Hence the emergence of the PSNI and its increasing divorce from the Special Branch and any forces of Protestant or British oppression.

RIRA and other attacks on it make less and less sense. A policy of reinforcing its position as a normal police force with a view to its ultimate disarming seems the most obviously sensible course. And yet RIRA seems determined to reinforce its old position as an oppressor of Catholics. The latest was the bombing on January 8th of Peadar Heffron (he lost a leg), a PSNI man. Peadar is a Catholic, a Gaelic speaker and a member of a PSNI Gaelic Football Club. What on earth sense does that make?

SDLP A contest for the dubious honour of leading the SDLP is due between Margaret Ritchie MLA and Alasdair Mc Donnell MP. Party leader Mark Durkin is standing down, though not from his Westminster seat. What is the sense in this? The only relevance local politicians have is in Stormont. But then, I suppose, the perks are a hundred times greater in Westminster! McDonnell, who seems to have seen off his local rival Carmel Hanna, whom he couldn't stand, has come up with a novel idea.

A grand alliance with two other irrelevant local parties—the Ulster Unionist Party and the Alliance Party, with the possible addition of the only Green MLA—to form

a bloc against the DUP and Sinn Fein. So far there is no mention of adding Jim Allister's Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV), but we won't hold our breath!

SINN FEIN In a strange turn of events Billy Leonard is to become a Sinn Fein MLA for East Derry. Billy is a former Orangeman, RUC reservist and a member of the SDLP!

UDA On January 6th, the UDA announced that it had decommissioned its weapons. The international body responsible for such matters stated:

"The IICD confirms that, having started the decommissioning process with the UDA last June, we have now conducted a major act of decommissioning in which arms, explosive and explosive devices belonging to the UDA have been destroyed within the terms of our mandate".

We hear that the Official IRA has also announced that they wish to meet General de Chastelain with a view to decommissioning, presumably to get in on the act. But so far no one seems to be taking a blind bit of notice!

THE UNIONIST PACT? According to the *Belfast News Letter* on January 21st, and since then the *Irish Times*, Ulster Television, and just about everyone else, the previous weekend was taken up with discussions between the UUP and the DUP to form at the least an electoral pact. The meetings were sponsored by the British Conservative Party and chaired by Tory Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Owen Paterson. The DUP is reported to have been represented by the 'missing' Peter Robinson, Nigel Dodds and Sammy Wilson. The UUP by Danny Kennedy, Tom Elliot and David Campbell. A Conservative spokesman is quoted as follows:

"As soon as approaches were made through intermediaries, they got a very good response on all sides... There was an open agenda, it is a matter for the parties where they take this—it could lead to an electoral pact, a full-blown alliance or indeed the formation of a single party. But there was a feeling that unionists need to play a part in the national scene, through the Conservative Party."

It would seem that the Tories are not at all confident of a great victory at the next election and feel that they could do with 12 extra seats from the Unionists to help them!!!

The SDLP and the Alliance are none too pleased with these talks and their, very unlikely, outcome. Though, should the thing come about, it would be amusing to see the reaction of Alasdair McDonnell. Not only would his grand coalition proposal come to nothing, but he would lose his South Belfast seat. Joy of joys! He would have shafted Carmel Hanna for nothing.

Mayhem

continued

of people who died as a consequence of the invasion, the destruction of the State, the mayhem accompanying and immediately following the destruction of the State (which was incited by the Occupying Powers), the war between the various components of the Iraqi society, and the "insurgency" against the Occupation forces which was directed towards restoring an Iraqi State. However, the *International Clearing House Newsletter* records 1,366,350 as the numbers killed since the invasion.

These deaths are the direct responsibility of the US and UK (and their auxiliaries) in the first instance, and then of the United Nations. We were told to begin with that Saddam Hussein was the major killer of Muslims ever—a million of them, we were told. Most of that million must have been casualties of the Iraqi war on the revolutionary Islamic state of Iran. Iran was treated as part of the "Axis of Evil" long before those words were used by George Bush, and we are now considering making war on it ourselves. At the time we backed the Iraqi war against it, Iraq was a liberal, secular, women's-liberationist state, and therefore part of our world—though with the degree of democratic deficit required to make it liberal against the tendency of its traditionalist cultures. But, when we found it expedient to make war on Iraq, we delegitimised its war on Iran, and made Iran a victim of Iraqi aggression—without however legitimising Iran—in order to come up with the figure of a million Muslims killed by Saddam. So, whatever happened as a result of our invasion, Saddam's million Muslims would make it not seem so bad.

Curiously, in recent times the propaganda no longer tells us about Saddam's million every day. Could it be that the Clearing House figures are right and we have outstripped him?

During the long propaganda preparation for the War two journalists made outstanding contributions to the warmongering. David Aaranovich, in the *Guardian*, in print and on television, said that anybody who opposed the invasion would be responsible for all the killings under the Saddam regime. John Lloyd of the *Financial Times* and various Dublin publications, agreed. But the converse must also apply. The supporters of the invasion must be responsible for the killings under the Occupation regime.

Peter Hain was head of the Northern Ireland Government for a while. Professor Keogh of Cork University tells us that Northern Ireland is an Irish state. Hain, therefore, must have been head of an Irish Government. He appeared on BBC's *Question Time* in mid-January, still

defending the war on Iraq, despite all that is being said in Gordon Brown's Chilcot Inquiry into it, the revelations of the Dutch Inquiry, and explicit statements by Blair himself that, if he had been certain that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction—as this magazine was certain was the case—he would still have invaded. Hain said he disagreed with this statement of Blair's, but did not make clear what it was that he disagreed with about it. The Chairman suggested slyly that he had been Blair's dupe. Hain denied indignantly that he was a liar. Dimbleby said he had never heard anybody called him a liar. But Hain stuck to his misunderstanding. It seemed that he would rather be taken for a liar than a dupe.

The major revelation of the Dutch Inquiry—into Dutch support for the war on Iraq without military participation in it—was that, at a critical moment, Blair sent a letter to the Dutch Prime Minister, delivered by hand by the British Ambassador, to be read in the presence of the Ambassador and returned to him, and the content not to be made known to the Dutch Cabinet from his memory of the letter (of which he had not been allowed to make a copy). The letter stiffened the will of the Dutch Prime Minister to carry his Cabinet into support of the war. The Dutch Inquiry asked Britain for a copy of the letter in order to assess it. The request was refused.

(Echoes of the use made by the British Government in 1916 of copies of an alleged Casement Diary for the purpose of subverting the campaign against the execution of Casement! Not a single one of those pieces of paper, shown around to ensure that a man would be hanged, has survived. At least not one of them was available to be looked at when, forty years later, a document said to be the Diary was put in the Public Record Office. It is clear that they were all carefully recalled to source, and either destroyed or put in an ultra-secret archive in case there should be some future use for them. And it seems to us that a genuine investigation of the Diary affair should begin by demanding accountability for those 1916 bits of paper before speculating on other bits of paper pulled out of a hat two generations later.)

We did not notice any comment by the *Irish Times* on this Dutch affair; a report of the Dutch Inquiry failed to mention the secret letter. What it published instead was a big article by Blair (January 12) justifying himself in general terms by reference to the "constant flux" which prevails in the world. When he was Prime Minister he exulted in the "flux" while contributing to it. He then described the world as a "kaleidoscope". He and Bush had given the world a shake. The bits of it were floating about formlessly. He and Bush would order them according to their heart's desire. Then, when the kaleidoscope settled down, it would show a brave

new world.

The language has changed a bit. There is a desperate, stoical, stubbornness in place of exuberance.

He does not mention Iraq at all. He does not need to. It has been settled—or taken out of the news, which seems to be much the same thing for us these days. Britain has cut its losses there, and an independent but obliging media plays along with the pretence that there has been a settlement and that Iraq is now a democracy.

Beneath Blair's article there is a brief review by Michael Jansen of a book called *Cultural Cleansing In Iraq* by R.W. Baker and others. The review is titled *How US Set Out To Destroy Iraq's National Identity And Build A Dependent State*. It summarises the book as follows (and agrees with it):

"Iraq's state structures were systematically destroyed along with the independent secular nationalist socialist regime. This began with the looting of the country's museums and libraries, schools and universities. Although Iraqis carried out most of the pillage and destruction, the US was responsible for what took place. Scholars had warned the White House and Pentagon that this would happen if vulnerable sites were not protected. Nothing was done because, according to Barbara Bodine, Washington's first post-war ambassador, orders had been issued to the effect that looting should be allowed to proceed unchecked. In some cases US troops broke open the doors of institutions to aid looters. The US also used major archaeological sites, including ancient Babylon and Ur, as military bases, inflicting irreparable damage. By attacking the country's history and 'collective memory'... the US sought to undermine the unique national identity of Iraqis.

"The second half of the book focusses on the killing of Iraqi intellectuals and professionals... Israel's Mossad intelligence agency and the Iranian-founded Badr Corps militia were initially blamed for the killings. However, the book's contributors provide solid evidence that the US and Britain fostered the decimation of the intellectuals because they would resist foreign domination through Shia and Kurd proxies who rode into Baghdad on the backs of US tanks. The vehicle for the purge was the de-Baathification campaign. The US is accused of using the 'Salvador option', a strategy evolved in Central America, to create US-complicit regimes... This experiment in "state ending" has left a black hole at the heart of the eastern Arab world..."

None of this could appear controversial to anybody with some understanding of what Iraq was who just followed the course of the invasion from the news reports. Little attempt was made to disguise what was being done. Anybody who had illusions should have had them dispelled by the sight of the British War Minister, Geoff Hoon, lounging loutishly at the dispatch-box and praising the looting as the first-fruit of freedom.

Public institutions, including hospitals, were looted, the administrative stratum of the state was broken up along with the political; utilities kept in working order

despite the long period of punitive UN sanctions collapsed; the Shia, Sunni and Kurd were openly incited against each other.

What went wrong, to the extent that something did go wrong, was the degree to which Saddam had mended his fences with Islamism and prepared for resistance following what he took to be inevitable defeat, and the unexpected emergence of a purposeful Iraqi will within the Shia militias.

In March 2003 the selling off of the country to multi-nationals connected with the Occupation Armies began, but it had to be delayed. However, it has not been abandoned. And Iraq, intended to be a preliminary to Iran, became an obstacle to getting at Iran. Away back then Iran might have been attacked with Iraqi support. Today the probable consequences in Iraq of attacking Iran are such as did not exist then, and they are incalculable.

And Afghanistan, defeated in the year before the invasion of Iraq, has still not been brought to order. Its disorder has spread into Pakistan, where the national Government of General Musharaff, friendly to the USA, was overthrown at the behest of the USA, and President Obama is now conducting a war of assassination there.

The USA is still showing itself to be a very effective 'melting-pot' state. It needed to be that because it was founded in a vast territory ethnically cleansed by a multiple genocide with great open spaces needing people faster than the small white genocidal colony could breed them. It could hardly have survived without the "huddled masses" which it made such a virtue of letting in. And it melted them all down and re-moulded them. Within the past generation Latins, Blacks and Feminists have all become active agents of the state at the highest level. And of course the Irish. Not to mention the workers. (We recall how, about 1990, it was demanded that Japan should pull in its economic horns, and how spokesmen of the Unions reminded it of Iwo Jima and promised a replay if it did not back down on its economic success.)

Protracted war by assassination was pioneered by Jewish nationalists (within Israel and outside it), but while they made little secret of it, neither did they proclaim it to the world as the way to go, as Obama has now done. Another achievement marked up by Obama is the reduction of prisoners held by the US in Guantanamo to the status of legal non-persons, who therefore cannot avail of rights under US law, as is shown by the following report:

"While we were all out doing our Christmas shopping, the highest court in the land quietly put the kibosh on a few more of the remaining shards of human liberty.

"It happened earlier this week, in a discreet ruling that attracted almost no notice and

took little time... After hearing passionate arguments from the Obama Administration, the Supreme Court acquiesced to the president's fervent request and, in a one-line ruling, let stand a lower court decision that declared torture an ordinary, expected consequence of military detention, while introducing a shocking new precedent for all future courts to follow: anyone who is arbitrarily declared a "suspected enemy combatant" by the president or his designated minions is no longer a "person". They will simply cease to exist as a legal entity. They will have no inherent rights, no human rights, no legal standing whatsoever—save whatever modicum of process the government arbitrarily deigns to grant them from time to time, with its ever-shifting tribunals and show trials.

"This extraordinary ruling occasioned none of those deep-delving "process stories" that glut the pages of the New York Times, where the minutiae of policy-making or political gaming is examined in highly-spun, microscopic detail doled out by self-interested insiders. Obviously, giving government the power to render whole classes of people "unpersons" was not an interesting subject for our media arbiters. It was news that wasn't fit to print. Likewise, the ruling provoked no thundering editorials in the Washington Post, no savvy analysis from the high commentariat—and needless to say, no outrage whatsoever from all our fierce defenders of individual liberty on the Right.

"But William Fisher noticed, and gave this report at Antiwar.com:

"In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal Monday to review a lower court's dismissal of a case brought by four British former Guantanamo prisoners against former defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the detainees' lawyers charged Tuesday that the country's highest court evidently believes that 'torture and religious humiliation are permissible tools for a government to use'.

"...[Like] their predecessors in the George W. Bush administration, Obama Justice Department lawyers argued in this case that there is no constitutional right not to be tortured or otherwise abused in a U.S. prison abroad.

"The Obama administration had asked the court not to hear the case. By agreeing, the court let stand an earlier opinion by the D.C. Circuit Court, which found that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act—a statute that applies by its terms to all 'persons'—did not apply to detainees at Guantanamo, effectively ruling that the detainees are not persons at all for purposes of U.S. law.

"The lower court also dismissed the detainees' claims under the Alien Tort Statute and the Geneva Conventions, finding defendants immune on the basis that 'torture is a foreseeable consequence of the military's detention of suspected enemy combatants'.

"The Constitution is clear: no person can be held without due process; no person can be subjected to cruel and unusual

punishment. And the U.S. law on torture of any kind is crystal clear: it is forbidden, categorically, even in time of "national emergency". And the instigation of torture is, under U.S. law, a capital crime. No person can be tortured, at any time, for any reason, and there are no immunities whatsoever for torture offered anywhere in the law.

"And yet this is what Barack Obama—who, we are told incessantly, is a super-brilliant Constitutional lawyer—has been arguing in case after case since becoming president: Torturers are immune from prosecution; those who ordered torture are immune from prosecution. They can't even be sued for, in the specific case under review, subjecting uncharged, indefinitely detained captives to "beatings, sleep deprivation, forced nakedness, extreme hot and cold temperatures, death threats, interrogations at gunpoint, and threatened with unmuzzled dogs".

"Again, let's be absolutely clear: Barack Obama has taken the freely chosen, public, formal stand—in court—that there is nothing wrong with any of these activities. Nothing to answer for, nothing meriting punishment or even civil penalties. What's more, in championing the lower court ruling, Barack Obama is now on record as believing—insisting—that torture is an ordinary, "foreseeable consequence" of military detention of all those who are arbitrarily declared "suspected enemy combatants".

"And still further: Barack Obama has now declared, openly, of his own free will, that he does not consider these captives to be "persons". They are, literally, sub-humans. And what makes them sub-humans? The fact that someone in the U.S. government has declared them to be "suspected enemy combatants". (And note: even the mere suspicion of being an "enemy combatant" can strip you of your personhood.)

"This is what President Barack Obama believes—believes so strongly that he has put the full weight of the government behind a relentless series of court actions to preserve, protect and defend these arbitrary powers...

"One co-counsel on the case, Shayana Kadidal of the Center for Constitutional Rights, zeroed in on the noxious quintessence of the position taken by the Court, and by our first African-American president: its chilling resemblance to the notorious Dred Scott ruling of 1857, which upheld the principle of slavery. As Fisher notes:

"Another set of claims are dismissed because Guantanamo detainees are not 'persons' within the scope of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act—an argument that was too close to Dred Scott v. Sandford for one of the judges on the court of appeals to swallow", he added.

"The Dred Scott case was a decision by the United States Supreme Court in 1857. It ruled that people of African descent imported into the United States and held as slaves, or their descendants—whether or not they were slaves—were not protected by the Constitution and could never be citizens of the United States.

"And now, once again, 144 years after the Civil War, we have established as the law of the land and the policy of the United States government that whole classes of

people can be declared "non-persons" and have their liberty stripped away—and their torturers and tormentors protected and codified by authority—at a moment's notice, with no charges, no defense, no redress, on nothing more than the suspicion that they might be an "enemy combatant", according to the arbitrary definition of the state.

"Barack Obama has had the audacity to declare himself the heir and embodiment of the lifework of Martin Luther King. Can this declaration of a whole new principle of universal slavery really be what King was dreaming of? Is this the vision he saw on the other side of the mountain? Or is not the nightmarish inversion of the ideal of a better, more just, more humane world that so many have died for, in so many places, down through the centuries?"

Chris Floyd. Empire Burlesque (18.12.2009) [http://www.chris-floyd.com/component/content/article/1-latest-news/1887-dred-scott-redux-obama-and-the-supremes-stand-up-for-slavery.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3Aempireburlesque%2B\(Empire%2BBurlesque%2B%2BChris%2BFloyd\)](http://www.chris-floyd.com/component/content/article/1-latest-news/1887-dred-scott-redux-obama-and-the-supremes-stand-up-for-slavery.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3Aempireburlesque%2B(Empire%2BBurlesque%2B%2BChris%2BFloyd))

Meanwhile Israel has pioneered another innovation in diplomatic practice. Its only real ally in the Middle East is Turkey. It gave Turkey no warning of its long bombing campaign of Gaza (over which the Israeli War Minister of the time, Tzipi Livni is now an indicted war criminal in Britain, a warrant for her arrest having been issued despite Foreign Minister David Milliband's assurance to her that he would see that it wasn't). Turkish opinion was upset by the scale of the bombing, and the casualty ratio of 100 to 1 in favour of Israel. Turkish television broadcast some general criticism of Israeli practice. The Turkish Ambassador was summoned to the Israeli Foreign Office to be reprimanded. He was seated on a low sofa facing the Deputy Foreign Minister, Aydon, and two of his officials sitting on high chairs. Photographers were invited to record this arrangement, and the press was urged by the Israelis to emphasise it in their reports.

This is a practice of humiliation we have seen attributed to Fascist Governments in the 1930s.

The Israeli Government found it advisable to issue a public apology to Turkey some time later. But the damage was done. The tendency on the part of Turkey to distance itself from Israel was reinforced. And the Turkish Prime Minister issued a statement demanding that if anything is done against Iran on the issue of nuclear power, it must also be done against Israel (which has nuclear weapons).

The Israeli Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman, who ordered the humiliation of the Turkish Ambassador, makes no pretence of supporting a settlement with Arabs on the basis of the present borders of Israel (the territory awarded by the UN General Assembly, plus the area conquered in 1948). He will only settle for the entire territory that God is said to have awarded to the Jews. And he sees no point in pussy-footing.

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

PERSONALISED BANKING

The conventional wisdom is that Banks have lost the personal touch. They don't understand the problems of the small businessman, never mind the struggling employee. Well it appears that that is not a concern that is shared by the Banks themselves. *Au contraire!*

A property developer complained to the Long Fellow that he had lost his relationship manager of 30 years! Apparently this mishap was not caused by carelessness on anybody's part, but is a deliberate policy of the banks. They have come to the conclusion that a too personal and understanding approach towards a certain class of people has been one of the reasons they are in the mess they are in.

And so, at an expensive restaurant the relationship manager announced to his "pal", over the third bottle of wine, that the rather serious looking lady in her early twenties, who has a business degree, and had been sipping mineral water beside them was going to be his new relationship manager.

"But how can she understand my business", wailed the indebted property developer.

"She is not meant to", smiled the banker wistfully as he thought of his early retirement. "It's all changed now".

Good!

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

The Long Fellow wonders if the members of *The Irish Times Trust* choked on their Christmas dinner after reading Business Editor John McManus's excellent exposé on the abuse of charitable trusts (*The Irish Times*, 21.12.09).

McManus fearlessly exposed the hypocrisy of the *Medb Trust*; a registered charity set up by employees of the legal firm Matheson Ormsby Prentice. Its Memorandum and Articles of Association claim to have as its aims the relief of poverty; the advancement of religion; the support of schools and colleges and hospitals and other objects of a charitable nature. But McManus is not fooled for one minute. It is just a means of avoiding corporation tax. The *Medb Trust* is in fact a financial business specialising in the buying and selling of the debts of Icelandic banks.

McManus concludes that we should end this tax loophole because we:

"...debase the notion of charity by using vehicles like *Medb*, we are perpetuating a business and ethical culture that has done us no favours".

But by a strange coincidence *The Irish Times Trust* which controls *The Irish Times Group* has almost identical clauses in its own memorandum and articles of association. However, *The Irish Times*—no more than the *Medb Trust*—does not in fact give money towards the relief of poverty, the advancement of education and health etc. And yet after more than 35 years we have had no official explanation for why these clauses are in *The Irish Times Trust* Memorandum and Articles of Association.

However, last year we received an unofficial explanation. Former Deputy Editor James Downey in his autobiography says that the *Irish Times Trust* was set up as a "tax dodge". But Fintan O'Toole, who is at least as fearless as John McManus, somehow failed to notice this in his extensive review of Downey's book.

Perhaps charity begins at home!

HAMLET AND A STICKY END

Irish Times journalists are not the only ones who when they pontificate reveal more about themselves than those whom they accuse.

Readers of this magazine will know all too well that Senator Eoghan Harris distorts history to advance his political agenda. Not content with this he has decided to apply his black art to great literature.

It would be too much to expect Harris not to make political capital out of Gerry Adams's recent personal travails as the following mean spirited extract shows:

"Given Adams's frugal attitude to the truth in the past, why should we accept his spin on the abuse story? Was he not aware his revelations would distract attention away from the alleged victim to himself? Could he be piggybacking a bit on southern sympathy for abuse victims" (*Sunday Independent*, 27.12.09).

For the remainder of the article Harris attempts to disguise the crudity of his political message by misrepresenting Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He claims that the play is about the hero following the evil advice of his ghostly father leading to death and destruction. And concludes his homily with the following fatuous paragraph:

"For his sake and ours, Gerry Adams needs to go to journey's end. He should call Tommie Gorman back and tell his true story. The story of a Hamlet who listened for 30 years to the gruesome ghosts of Irish nationalism, but finally found the guts to tell them to go away."

This is another example of Harris indulging in fantasy so as to make a political point! The downfall of Hamlet is not caused by him following the advice of his ghostly father, but by his failure to act in a decisive way. His weakness is similar to the weakness of the *Sticky* political tendency which Harris belonged to. Hamlet knows and thinks too much. This drives

him to the edge of madness and disables him from acting. Hamlet himself makes this very clear in his famous "To be or not to be" speech, in which he contemplates suicide and which concludes:

"Thus conscience makes cowards of us all,

And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprise of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action."

SOMETHING ROTTEN ...

The Long Fellow has sympathy for the people of Iceland. They are currently being bullied by the Brits and the Dutch into repaying about 4 billion euro in debts incurred by an Icelandic bank. This amounts to about 12,000 for every inhabitant of that unfortunate country: comparable to the war reparations imposed on Germany.

But Iceland was not defeated in a war. Her only crime was to play the globalist capitalist game a little more enthusiastically than most. Britain, in particular, cannot claim to be innocent of that charge. But when the game was going against her, Britain decided to change the rules. She forgot about being in favour of capital flows across borders and decided to use anti-terrorist legislation to freeze the assets of the Icelandic bank thereby ensuring its collapse.

And now Britain has decided to set aside the most fundamental law of the capitalist system: limited liability. Once the bank went into liquidation the Icelandic people had no moral or legal obligation to pay British or Dutch creditors.

It appears that a substantial portion of British deposits came from Local Government authorities, encouraged by the State for ideological reasons to seek the highest returns on investment of surplus funds. But a high return carries with it a higher risk. That is another rule of the capitalist system, which Britain wants to exempt herself from.

IRELAND

David McWilliams has suggested that we should follow the example of Iceland even though it is not clear how that country will respond to the British and Dutch threats. But the Irish situation is different. In the first place the Irish banks are still trading. Secondly, the Irish State gave an explicit guarantee to deposit holders and some categories of bondholders in order to secure the continued operation of the financial institutions in this country.

The Long Fellow has supported the Government in this policy on the grounds that it would be more costly to liquidate the banks than keep them as going concerns. ■

Pollution Is In The Eye Of The Beholder?

The Soviet Union's heavy industry, initiated by Lenin and developed under Stalin, saved the Soviet Union from death by Nazism. Heavy industry initiated by Mao has also saved China from Western predators. As for the UK, it could have been a victim of other European powers but for its Industrial Revolution. Industrialisation caused great social problems for post-Tsar Russia and Britain, as it is doing now in China and India. So where else in the world is the sky being blackened by smokestacks in order to save themselves from the West?

Billions (promises, promises) will be handed out to Third World countries in the hope they will use the funds to control their carbon-dioxide emissions. The money might be better spent on building some form of cheap housing for the mass of people with a matching cheap energy supply. One country I am familiar with is the Philippines. Wherever you go in that country you come across huge squatter camps. If there is no way of tapping illegally into the electric power supplies, then anything and everything is used to build fires for cooking. Even in the capital you will find cardboard, newspapers, old vegetables remains, old shoes, rags, and packing case timber being used to cook a meal, if you can't afford calor gas. There is no other system of gas. On top of that the whole city smells of burning rubbish as huge municipal dumps smoulder day and night in the tropical heat.

I have to return to my childhood days of depressing memories in 1930s Belfast to find a similar situation in this *developed world*. A lot of people then couldn't afford coal. The next best thing was coal brick (coal dust compressed into bricks) Still too expensive? Then it had to be coke. It was hauled from the gasworks in a hessian sack. (not supplied). Prams and makeshift carts were used. People walked miles across Belfast. The entire area of The Markets and Cromac, where the gasworks was, smelt of coal-gas.

Those who were not part of the WW2 new war economy in the Six Counties continued with coke. In the countryside many people spent most of the day collecting dead branches and twigs from trees and hedgerows. If they could afford a bag of coke they would get the bus into Belfast and return with a sack. Mercifully the bus conductors were humane and allowed it to be put in the bus alcove. Coke (what is left of coal after the gas has been extracted) is not suitable for the domestic fireplace and has to be constantly revived by fanning or

by using a newspaper bellows (newspaper covers fireplace until chimney roars). The fumes from coke is appalling. Can't afford coke? then there is always the above used in today's Philippines. I was taught the art of plaiting old newspapers at five years old. A well-plaited length could burn for a couple of hours.

Belfast is in the Lagan Valley and surrounded by mountains and hills. Back then it trapped the smoke of thousands of fires burning everything burnable on earth. The streets were usually smoke-filled from the down-draughts of the chimneys, especially on windy days. Children played shoeless in the streets even in winter. Young girls might be wearing nothing but a thin cotton dress and the boys would wear what was called metaphorically a spit-through jersey. Thanks to the then Japanese textile slave industry, even the very poor could occasionally afford such meagre clothing from the 3d and 6d stores (Woolworth).

The next great polluter was the once-heavy industry of Belfast. In the shipyard you were assailed by the coke fires of the riveters, huge fires under the hot-water boilers (for the men's tea) where old paint-covered timber, thrown from the refurbished ships, sent out fumes. White asbestos floated through the alleyways of the ships like snow as it was being plastered on to every pipe in sight. Heavy fumes from red lead, used to prevent rust on steel and iron, was painted internally and externally on every ship, burning acrid smoke from the electric welders—accompanied by the deafening noise of caulkers cutting steel with pneumatic tools. Dry-dock pumping stations pumped out black smoke, as did the coal-fired ships at the shipyard wharves, along with the pioneer oil-fuelled ships. The shipyard power station belched heavy smoke day and night. You could watch clouds of it floating over the city or going down the Lough as the wind changed. Then it was home via tobacco-smoke-filled-trams.

If you lived in Carrickfergus in County Antrim during the 1950s, as I did then, you came home from the shipyard to the chemical fumes coming from the new Courtalds man-made fibre factory. The equally new estate where my family lived was ironically called the Sunnylands Estate. These chemical fumes pervaded the entire house, including the bedrooms, twenty-four hours a day. The majority of people on the estate worked at Courtalds. But then people didn't protest back then, especially workers who relied on these industries in order to make some kind of a

decent life.

London was also a pretty polluted place in the early 1950s, with domestic coal fires resulting in the smoke mixing with the winter fog causing smog. There were quite a few factory chimneys in inner London with a couple of heavy-industry iron foundries in the borough of Tottenham. Steam trains were still mainly the mode of travel to various cities. There was a constant protest by the women living around Chalk Farm in North London, where the Roundhouse turned around steam locomotives and re-fuelled them with industrial coal. This stoking-up caused smut to fall on the nearby washing lines. Some of their husbands who drove the steam trains wisely kept their traps shut.

So please excuse me if I wonder what all the alarm is about, with the Six Counties and the UK denuded of most of its heavy industry. There is a certain amount of pollution from cars (shoo!) which I can live with, being a driver, having survived every pollutant thrown at me. So who are these climate-change people living in a mostly service-industry country? They appear to me to be dictating terms to those trying to develop their nations. By all means keep the pollution down now for I don't have to go to that abandoned shipyard in Belfast or to that abandoned iron foundry in Tottenham anymore. Even Courtalds in Carrickfergus has closed this many a year past. It's a lovely place now in which to draw Jobseekers' Allowance and look across the Lough to the *Gold Coast* of the well-heeled, climate-change supporters?

The climate-change people don't, as far as I know, acknowledge nature's own polluters like the volcanoes of the Philippines and Indonesia, part of what is called the Pacific Ring of Fire. Was any of this mentioned at the recent Copenhagen Conference? All 22 of the Philippine's more active volcanoes leak sulphuric-dioxide twenty-four hours a day. One, Mount Pinatubo, blew its top in 1991. I was in Manila a year later in 1992 and sandy-grit was still falling from the sky. It was easy to see when buying a newspaper—the seller had to shake off it off while coughing his/her lungs up. It was acknowledged (when scientists were allowed to speak) that this volcano changed the world weather system for two years.

By all means study climate-change, but let's have all possible causes brought in with equal voices for everyone without being marginalised and called a climate-change denier (as in holocaust?). How many *deniers* have had their say in the media recently?

Wilson John Haire
31st December, 2009

Problems Of Green-Left Convergence

The following article has been contributed by Roy Johnston

May I venture to offer some philosophical comments on some of the material in the December 2009 and the January 2010 issues. I am stimulated to do this by Brendan Clifford's reference to my review of the recent Hanley-Millar book on the 'Stickies', and also by Manus O'Riordan's comments centred round the late Joe Sherlock, which also references this book.

I was earlier motivated by Michael Stack's ill-informed comments in December on the climate problem to contribute something, but found difficulty in finding a good peg to hang it on. The editorial lead-in on China and Greece in the January issue in its first paragraph then re-iterates a climate-sceptic position, echoing the US hard-right oil-fuelled ignorance. This reminded me of the earlier Stack contribution, and set the agenda: the Left needs to take effectively on board the seriousness of the global climate threat posed by the way fossil fuel consumption by industrial society over the past two centuries has influenced the carbon cycle.

All aspects of the scientific analysis of the carbon cycle converge on the need within the coming decade to reduce seriously our dependence on fossil fuel consumption and develop renewable energy sources. This conversion runs totally against capitalist economic growth culture and its short-term, short-sighted decision-making.

Let me address the problem at two levels: first may I offer some practical suggestions regarding editorial policy for *Irish Political Review*, and then may I comment on some of the January content, primarily on Brendan Clifford and Manus O'Riordan, and also some others, in the spirit of seeking common philosophical ground for a process which I have identified as the nascent 'green-left convergence'. This has been identified positively in the Marxist tradition by John Bellamy Foster, who edits the 'Monthly Review' in New York. His 'Ecological Revolution' (MRP 2009) explores the downstream implications of the Marx-Liebig interactions of the 1850s. I am currently reading this and hope to get to review it, perhaps in IPR?

EDITORIAL POLICY

I have problems with *Irish Political Review* in its print version, arising from the way the pagination skips about all over the place. The problem is substantially worse in the website version, which preserves the print-edited layout, in a situation where the columnar design imposes endless vertical scrolling.

The alternative process which suggests

itself is for the primary editing of the monthly to be in screen-friendly mode, with a single html page for each main feature, hotlinked from an overview page which might also contain some minor features. That way one could easily download and quote from the mainstream articles, and reference them. Comments on the mainstream articles could go to their authors, whose e-mails need to be made discreetly accessible for the purpose. The mainstream articles could then where appropriate be updated and tidied up in the light of the comments; they could be seen as sort of galley-proofs, subject to editing for print eventually, perhaps in a substantial quarterly, in a format such as to be stored vertically on the bookshelf; think in terms perhaps of the 'Bell' of Peadar O'Donnell-time.

This would then fill the niche in the market which exists for a serious critical quarterly, enabling the philosophy of the left-green convergence, and indeed all aspects of class, national, cultural, educational, scientific, technological, religious etc political issues to be subjected to critical analysis accessibly, in a national situation where there never has been more need for it.

There is another group, associated with the *Citizen*, earlier with the *Republic*, Finbar Cullen *et al*, which has attempted something along these lines, but also inadequately. There is perhaps scope here also for some interaction, with a view to resourcing the innovative 'website feeding quarterly' project.

IPR JANUARY 2010 ISSUE

I have mentioned the introductory editorial comment on page 1 above; later in the editorial, on page 2 column 3, after a comment on capitalism in China we have:

"...and if that means the destruction of the planet, so be it. Capitalism is incapable of self-restraint..."

It goes on to take the Copenhagen debacle as a nemesis; civilisation will collapse, and it will be capitalism's fault.

Can we perhaps avoid the nemesis by taking on board the environmentalist agenda, and campaigning politically for some social control over the investment process, bearing in mind the best scientific assessments of the global climate problem? I hope to develop this in a future review of the JBF book.

On page 3 we have Ivor Kenna on the European Jewish nation, which was beginning to emerge via the East European Yiddish culture. The transfer of this process in imperial mode to Palestine,

displacing the Palestinians, has complicated the nature of the Jewish national question. The land-grab imperial culture will not be resolved by setting up a reduced Palestine State as an Israel 'bantustan' source of cheap labour. It can only be resolved by a unified secular Palestine State with the right of return for displaced Palestinians, with a compensation system, and the right of existing Israelis to remain, in some sort of power-sharing constitution, with equal citizen rights for Jews, Muslims, Christians and other religions and philosophies.

This will of course be politically difficult, but there are perhaps lessons to be learned from the current Northern Ireland process, which although flawed and needing improvement, constitutes a start in the direction of setting up a system within which progressive politics might emerge in a multi-ethnic tribal environment having negative historic experience.

Continuing in Jewish mode, we have on page 10 Brendan Clifford on the Nina Fishman obituary, which gives interesting insight into the evolution of the old BICO into its current IPR/Athol niche. Fishman fell out with BICO in 1987 on the issue of projected support for the Lib-Lab coalition concept. The advantage of this project for the Left is of course that the outcome of such a coalition would have been electoral reform, giving some system of proportional representation. This incidentally is again on the agenda.

Clifford appears, surprisingly, to accept FPTP [First Past The Post] as being somehow intrinsically embedded in the English political culture. The lack of PR has been the insuperable obstacle against innovative ideas entering British politics. It has however become evident that Left and Green voices are beginning to be heard, thanks to PR being in the Scottish and Welsh Assemblies, and in the EU elections. Electoral reform in Britain is a key topic to be developed in the context of a left-green convergence.

In Column 2 we have the episode of Fishman and the Clifford book on the 1974 NI constitutional strike, which brought down Sunningdale. I for one would welcome a window into the evolution of Brendan's thinking which might have been accessible via such a book. In fact, a critical analysis of the Sunningdale process, seen comparatively with the GFA process, is long overdue. Is the latter the former for slow learners. as has been suggested?

I come now to Manus O'Riordan, who as usual tends to be somewhat long-winded, though insightful. The Harris/Kemmy/Sherlock interaction is analysed in some depth, with extensive quotations; this material could usefully perhaps have been edited into a new edition of the

Hanley-Millar book, or could evolve into a sequel to it. I agree Joe Sherlock was a principled supporter of the politicisation process which we attempted in the 1960s, and which continued into the 1970s, being wrecked by the FF ('HB&B' [Haughey, Blaney and Boland]) and associated Provisional processes, and renascent Fenian-type violence within the 'officials', on the one hand, and by the Smullen-Harris centralist ultra-leftism on the other.

I was somewhat intrigued by the J.P. McCarthy feature in the *Independent*, which appeared shortly after the Hanley-Millar book, and its associated promotional feature. The Mick Ryan mentioned exists, despite being put in quotes by McCarthy. He contributed an outline paper to the 1998 commemorative issue of the *United Irishman*, and is currently active in inter-community bridge-building. O'Riordain quotes him at length on pages 16-17. There clearly is unfinished business in the domain opened up by the Hanley-Millar book, primarily in the Garland-Smulen conflict area, and the details of how the notorious 'Group B' evolved. I can see raw material for an interesting critical seminar, in the real presence, generating publishable material. Could this perhaps be organised as a pilot co-operation between the IPR group and Finbar Cullen's Ireland Institute?

On page 17 also we have the Morrison contributions on Palestine-Israel, drawing attention to the acute nature of the situation, the Gaza disaster, constitutional anomalies etc. Could this perhaps not have been juxtaposed with the Kenna note on the Jewish nation on page 3, and integrated with the aid of some editorial comment?

This domain suggests a need for a serious in-depth comparative study between it and the South African Apartheid system, and also the somewhat similar apartheid system generated in Ireland by the Partition process? It is difficult to avoid being reminded of Balfour and his "loyal Jewish 'Ulster'" concept with which he fuelled the Zionist movement a century ago.

I see on page 18 Michael Stack has again come up in climate change denial mode, echoing the US hard right who, it seems, instigated the hacking of some climate change researchers' e-mails in an English university. The obscurantist gutter press has built this up, homing in the the use of the word 'trick' in an internal e-mail. In my research epoch in basic physics, we used statistical analysis extensively, and were always in search of good procedures for extracting a signal from the background 'noise', and in this context a valid clever procedure was often referred to as a 'trick'. No big deal.

The global scientific community is to all intents and purposes unanimous in

acceptance of the evidence, from a variety of domains, that increased atmospheric CO₂, mostly due to combustion of fossil fuels, is at the root of the problem, and we need to go for other energy sources. We also need to go for other sources because fossil fuels are running out, though this is longer term. The current urgency is due to the danger of a runaway process taking off within a decade or so, based on the vanishing of the polar ice-cap and the melting of the tundra permafrost, if we don't mend our ways. To get an overview of the current situation, see the recent review Ray Bates, who is in the Government Chief Scientist's advisory group; this is accessible at <http://www.chiefscientificadviser.ie/papers/title.5030.en.php>

I come now finally to the Clifford notes on the Hanley-Millar book, in which he picks up explicitly on my role in the processes described, giving my name (perhaps undue) prominence in the header. I see however the point he wanted to make, which is that in my review of the book, published in *Books Ireland*, I credited the book with being reasonably accurate, as far as it went, though leaving many questions unanswered. Clifford takes exception to their treatment of the BICO. Well, I agree we need more historical analysis of how the philosophy and ideology of the Left in Ireland evolved, under the influence of the many subjective and external factors which tended to tear it apart.

(Incidentally, I have done another review, in more depth, for the *Irish Democrat*, though this has suffered technical production trouble with its current web-site format, and it is not accessible there at the time of writing. I have made it available at my own web-site; see it at

<http://www.iol.ie/~rjtechn/library/centrev.htm>

and I would be interested in Brendan's comments, and in any additional ideas for further analysis of the various topics suggested by the Hanley-Millar book.)

I am not going into the details of European left politics relating to the genesis of the USSR, where Brendan ranges far and wide (this indeed is an important agenda!) but may I comment on where he refers to me explicitly. On page 19 column 2 he quotes what I wrote about the time I resigned; this was 1972, not 1977, a misprint. If I had stuck it to 1977 I might have influenced the Harris process in a more positive direction; the reason I left in 1972 was because the official IRA had gone into active competition with the Provisionals, with assassinations etc. I had clearly failed in my efforts to rescue the political process from the Fenian violent tradition, which was more deeply

embedded than I had bargained for. But I did not accept this as 'two-nations reality'. I held then, and still hold, that we have the makings of one secular nation, with a substantial element of Protestant culture embedded in it, but this process is not yet complete, and the Partition process was an imperial device to prevent it happening. By 'classic Fenian tradition' I meant 'violence regarded as a principle'.

OK the Home Rule movement as it evolved did project an image of 'Rome Rule' but this was far from being universally accepted. There was a substantial liberal Protestant element which saw it as an opportunity not a threat, and our family, based near Castlecaulfield, was representative of this tradition; my father wrote a book promoting it, which was on sale at the 1913 Ballymoney rally (and was reprinted with my introduction, and some appended notes illustrating the Tory imperial thinking, by UCD Press in 1998). This trend however was overwhelmed by the Tory-Orange conspiracy that ran all those guns into Larne, from Germany, in April 1914, carrying them in their motor-cars to the houses of the leading Orange landlords. This in effect was a counter-revolutionary *coup* against the Liberal Government, supported by the officer elite in the Curragh. (My father always held that the Germans went for France via Belgium because they judged the British were primarily concerned with the threat of civil war in Ulster!)

On page 20 column 1 Brendan credits me with a personal discussion about Connolly, in or about 1969, this being seen as exceptional, with me being seen as part of the Greaves network, which tended to treat him as 'not to be talked to'. At the time I was supportive of the Greaves analysis of Connolly, and the Lenin role in the USSR, though I was critical of the Stalin process (for which reason I had identified with the left-republican trend). I was critical of the BICO, and indeed the Fennell, two-nation models, but I was prepared to controveise civilly, where this was possible. (Incidentally I regard the Fennell two-nation model as being dominated by a Catholic-nationalist philosophy, and remain puzzled by why he seems to be at home in the Athol/IPR environment). Then, as now, I believed in one nation, as an aspiration which we did not yet have, but the components were there. I note Brendan's references to the complexities of Connolly's attitude to the war, and indeed the earlier Pilsudski connection, all of which indicate the need for further scholarly critical analysis, perhaps in comparative mode, with the Balkans etc.

Brendan's query re the Wolfe Tone Society references on page 20 column 2 can be answered to the effect that the Wolfe Tone promotion of Civil Rights, as

part of the left-republican politicisation process, was an attempt to get the latter to accept Connolly's critique of the Fenian tradition, in the pre-1914 Home Rule context. Regarding Brendan's queries on Column 3, I agree more work needs to be done on the analysis of how FF related to its Haughey, Blaney and Boland (HB&B) faction, and what exactly were the roles of Lynch and Gibbons. There is scope for much critical reviewing of the various books which have attempted to cover this area, with particular reference to the threat of actual all-out civil war and armed intervention by the Dublin Government. This for us, and indeed for all who supported the Greaves Civil Rights model for political developments within the North, was the ultimate nightmare.

CONCLUSION

The issues raised by Hanley-Millar, by me in my two reviews, by Brendan in *Irish Political Review*, and by various others such as the Ireland Institute, the Setanta Initiative etc, need to be pursued in more depth and more accessibly, if future historians are to be able to unscramble successfully the complexities of the unfinished Irish nation-building process, and relate it to the emerging post-national situation increasingly dominated by the EU. The various ethnic-nationalist issues which exist all over the EU (the Balkans, Bosnia, Alsace, Cyprus, Brittany etc) need to be resolved within the EU in some civic-national structures, Scotland and Wales perhaps offering interesting comparative models.

From all these processes the Irish Left can learn, and it could be that the key problems on which we need to concentrate are those presented in the politics of how to introduce the changes necessary in the economic system such as to enable us to wean ourselves off our addiction to fossil fuels, and pull back from the precipice represented by run-away global warming. We have to do this in the coming decade. Can the Left absorb enough of the basic science involved, to appreciate the threat to civilisation, and emerge as a credible green-left alternative?

FOOTNOTE

In the foregoing there are many 'notes and references', additional to the 2 URLs given in the text, that I could develop in order to enable readers to dig deeper into specific issues, but I am not going to give these now. If however this evolves into a substantive paper, for development along the lines suggested under 'Editorial Policy' above, I will add them. For the present, if anyone wants to contact me over any of the specific points raised, in search of references, let them feel free to contact me at rjtechne@iol.ie.

Roy H.W. Johnston
14.01.2010

Comment by Brendan Clifford

I will comment on the two points in Roy Johnston's criticism that seem to apply particularly to me.

First Past The Post Elections. It was explained to me over 50 years ago by Pat Murphy that PR was imposed on the Treaty state in Ireland to weaken it, and that Dev left the reform of it aside for future action in 1937, lest it tip the balance against the Constitution in the plebiscite, and I have come across nothing which suggests that Pat was wrong. It was a remarkable feat on the part of Fianna Fail to overcome the debilitating influence of PR for a generation.

In an isolated state with a conservative traditional culture and nothing much to do but tick over, I suppose PR would be the best system to prevent anything from upsetting the situation. But to the best of my knowledge there is only one country like that—Switzerland. And Switzerland is not widely admired for being that. But I am only critical of it because it finally capitulated to the UN by joining it.

Ireland is very far removed from that position. And it could not have become even as independent as it is without a generation of strong government, established despite PR.

Although it was not through PR that Sinn Fein won its watershed victory in 1918, Republicans at some point became addicted to PR and campaigned against Fianna Fail for its retention. And, in Tom Garvin's book on Lemass, there is a reproduction of a disgraceful Republican poster in the last PR Referendum showing the letters FF changing into swastikas.

The Referendum proposal was defeated, yet Fianna Fail has been in office for most of the time since. If the proposal had been carried I think it is probable that an Opposition party capable of winning an election would have evolved.

In Britain FPTP has for generations been acknowledged to be unfair, but it has been retained because it is practical in the sense of nearly always producing a Government with freedom of action to govern as it pleases for about three years. There is a horror of Coalitions, and I don't think that is unreasonable.

"Embedded" is not the figure of speech I would use for the position of the two-party system in British political culture. It has always seemed to me to be more like a Platonic Form hovering over it and guarding it.

The parties preceded the formation of the State (the regime formed after 1688) and shaped it from the start. The substance of the parties has often undergone comprehensive remaking. One might say that they disappeared and came back as something else. But they always came back in twos with a third in the offing.

I thought it was very foolish of Nina Fishman to suppose that this dynamic was exhausted. But these things are often clearer from some distance away, and they were from Belfast—apart from the State, though within it.

England took on its definite Constitutional form after 1688, and the world has had to put up with it ever since. It was open to radically different lines of development during the preceding 60 years. In 1628 Parliament showed it could not govern and, when it would not recognise this, its leader, Wentworth (Strafford), went into the service of the King. The tragedy for Ireland was that Strafford's Government was overthrown by a Parliamentary resurgence. The Parliament of the 1640s too showed that it could not govern. In the 1650s the Parliament of Saints was intent on settling in England under the Mosaic Law, which would have been a very good thing for the world. But Cromwell stopped it in order to preserve the gentry and the Common Law. Eventually, after 1688, the gentry and the Common Law took over, and here we are, with a highly functional system which is immune to ideals of perfection.

On the Two Nations. What I said in 1969 was that there was nothing latent in the Ulster Protestant community which would cause it to respond favourably to either force or fraud in the Nationalist approach—and I understood Desmond Greaves's scheme as a kind of fraud. I proposed therefore that Nationalist Ireland should recognise it as a distinct national community, as a precondition of establishing neighbourly relations with it. I thought, if that was done, that there were objective circumstances in the situation that would tend to bring about a *rapprochement*. And I was certain that telling them that they were really of the same nationality as us would do nothing but deepen the division.

My preference for dealing with the facts of the world led to me being called a Stalinist by the Trotskyists who were my first Marxist acquaintances, in the mid 1960s. I knew little about Stalin then. When I found out I had no objection to the name. But in those times of 1969 when definitions were called for, I gave Renan along with Stalin.

I suppose, if you went into it closely, you could see Desmond Fennell's meaning is not quite the same as mine. Fennell tends to over-define. Social entities do not bear the kind of analysis applied to physical entities. They are very crude, rough-and-ready things by comparison. And I don't think that what I saw the Ulster Protestants as being in the late 1960s has been shown to be a delusion by the way

they have behaved.

I have been meaning to explain that the argument between Desmond Fennell and John Martin about European culture, arising from remarks I made at Fennell's book launch, started from a report by John that was not quite accurate. When I said that Fennell prettified European culture in the matter of the law of nations, it was not on the ground that Europe had an Old Testament background in a general way. It was that the Old Testament was injected into the law of nations in concentrated form by Hugo Grotius, who is generally taken to be the founder of the modern theory of international law.

Grotius was a Dutch Calvinist. He was imprisoned for his part in the Dutch inter-Calvinist theological war of the early 17th century. He escaped, went into the service of Cardinal Richelieu—who was manipulating the European religious war in the French national interests by supporting the Protestants—and then went into service of the Swedish Protestant leader. Taking the Old Testament and some classical writers as his authorities, he allows almost everything. And, as far as I recall, he quotes the genocidal Psalm, "*By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept, remembering Zion*", as his authority for something.

Despite being held in general esteem, Grotius is not well known.

Report

Climate Manipulations

We are indebted to Tim O'Sullivan for drawing our attention to the following report of malpractice on Wikipedia. Posing as an encyclopaedia, this website is a ready vehicle for misinformation

"CLIMATEGATE: THE CORRUPTION OF WIKIPEDIA BY JAMES DELINGPOLE : DECEMBER 22ND, 2009

"If you want to know the truth about Climategate, definitely don't use Wikipedia. "Climate Research Unit e-mail controversy", is its preferred, mealy-mouthed euphemism to describe the greatest scientific scandal of the modern age. Not that you'd ever guess it was a scandal from the accompanying article. It reads more like a damage-limitation press release put out by concerned friends and sympathisers of the lying, cheating, data-rigging scientists.

Which funnily enough, is pretty much what it is. Even Wikipedia's own moderators acknowledge that the entry has been hijacked...

Unfortunately, this naked bias and corruption has infected the supposedly neutral Wikipedia's entire coverage of Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) theory. And much of this, as Lawrence Solomon reports in the National Post, is the work of one man, a Cambridge-based scientist and Green Party activist named William Connolley.

Connolley took control of all things climate in the most used information source the world has ever known – Wikipedia. Starting in February 2003... Connolley set to work on the Wikipedia site. He rewrote Wikipedia's articles on global warming, on the greenhouse effect, on the instrumental temperature record, on the urban heat island, on climate models, on global cooling. On Feb. 14, he began to erase the Little Ice Age; on Aug. 11, the Medieval Warm Period. In October, he turned his attention to the hockey stick graph. He rewrote articles on the politics of global warming and on the scientists who were skeptical of the band. Richard Lindzen and Fred Singer, two of the

world's most distinguished climate scientists, were among his early targets, followed by others that the band especially hated, such as Willie Soon and Sallie Baliunas of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, authorities on the Medieval Warm Period.

All told, Connolley created or rewrote 5,428 unique Wikipedia articles. His control over Wikipedia was greater still, however, through the role he obtained at Wikipedia as a website administrator, which allowed him to act with virtual impunity. When Connolley didn't like the subject of a certain article, he removed it—more than 500 articles of various descriptions disappeared at his hand. When he disapproved of the arguments that others were making, he often had them barred—over 2,000 Wikipedia contributors who ran afoul of him found themselves blocked from making further contributions. Acolytes whose writing conformed to Connolley's global warming views, in contrast, were rewarded with Wikipedia's blessings. In these ways, Connolley turned Wikipedia into the missionary wing of the global warming movement.

Connolley has supposedly been defrocked as a Wikipedia administrator. Or so Wikipedia claimed... In September 2009, the Wikipedia Arbitration Committee revoked Mr. Connolley's administrator status after finding that he misused his administrative privileges while involved in a dispute unrelated to climate warming.

If this is true, it doesn't seem to have made much difference to his creative input on the Wikipedia's entries. Here he is – unless it's just someone with an identical name – busily sticking his oar in to entries on the Medieval Warm Period (again) and the deeply compromised, soon-to-be-leaving (let's hope) IPCC head Dr Rajendra Pachauri. And here he is again just three days ago, removing a mention of Climategate from Michael Mann's entry. And here is an example of one of his Wikipedia chums – name of Stephan Schulz – helping to cover up for him by ensuring that no mention of that embarrassing Lawrence Solomon article appears on Connolley's Wikipedia entry. And here he is deleting criticism of himself...

More on the Connolley story:

"CHUCK JUSTICE WRITING IN HABLEDASH, 23RD

DECEMBER 2009:

"...What started as climategate, the hacked emails from the Climate Research Unit (CRU) at England's East Anglia University, has now exposed how far and extreme liberals are willing to go to hide the decline.

Looking back a few centuries ago, the earth was in the Medieval Warming Period - a time that lasted for about 400 years and improved agriculture, increased lifespan and bettered the overall human condition. The problem with the Medieval Warming Period is that it's an obstacle for current climate change alarmists. You see, if temperatures were warmer 1000 years ago than they are today, the message that we're living in the warmest of all possible times right now would be exposed as its true self; a lie.

The climategate emails just scratch the surface of how phony and politically motivated the climate change movement and their band of brothers are. Pre-climategate emails recognized the problem posed by the Medieval Warming Period - "*We have to get rid of the Medieval Warming Period*", one email read... After manipulating the data and hiding the decline, as exposed in the climategate emails, and with the help of the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the highest climate change authority, the pinnacle and crux of their case was released - the hockey stick graph. Noticeably absent from the graph was the Medieval Warming Period because it was counter to their cause. How convenient.

But the Medieval Warming Period can't be erased from history that easily. There are countless textbooks and other sources that reference it. Enter U.K. scientist and Green Party activist William Connolley... He had one target to focus on - the most referenced information source in the world - Wikipedia....

See also Lawrence Solomon in *NationalPost* December 19, 2009: <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/>

archive/2009/12/18/370719.aspx#ixzz0cTjqlGxn

Eamon Dyas brought the BBC website of 19th January 2010 to our attention:

"Climate body admits glacier error by Richard Black. Environment correspondent, BBC News website

The vice-chairman of the UN's climate science panel has admitted it made a mistake in asserting that Himalayan glaciers could disappear by 2035.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) included the date in its 2007 assessment of climate impacts.

A number of scientists have recently disputed the 2035 figure, and Jean-Pascal van Ypersele told BBC News that it was an error and would be reviewed.

But he said it did not change the broad picture of man-made climate change. ...

"It is so wrong that it is not even worth discussing" Georg Kaser, University of Innsbruck ...

The claim that Himalayan glaciers could disappear by 2035 appears to have originated in a 1999 interview with Indian glaciologist Syed Hasnain, published in *New Scientist* magazine.

The figure then surfaced in a 2005 report by environmental group WWF - a report that is cited in the IPCC's 2007 assessment, known as AR4.

An alternative genesis lies in the misreading of a 1996 study that gave the date as 2350.

AR 4 asserted: "Glaciers in the Himalayas are receding faster than in any other part of the world... the likelihood of them disappearing by the year 2035 and perhaps sooner is very high."

...

In December, it emerged that four leading glaciologists had prepared a letter for publication in the journal *Science* arguing that a complete melt by 2035 was physically impossible.

"You just can't accomplish it", Jeffrey Kargel from the University of Arizona told BBC News at the time. If you think about the thicknesses of the ice - 200-300m thicknesses, in some cases up to 400m thick - and if you're losing ice at the rate of a metre a year, or let's say double it to two metres a year, you're not going to get rid of 200m of ice in a quarter of a century."

...Georg Kaser from the University of Innsbruck in Austria - who led a different portion of the AR4 process - said he had warned that the 2035 figure was wrong in 2006, before AR4's publication...

The 'glacier' scare story was given authority by publication in the *New Scientist*—which presents a warning to those who put their faith in science. The *Daily Express* of 18th January explained that the story was based on a telephone interview with Dr. Raiendra Pachauri, "the world's top climate scientist" who is the Chairman of the 'authoritative' *International Panel On Climate Change (IPCC)*, which was set up by the UN to provide scientific advice on climate change to world leaders. Dr. Pachauri is a former railway engineer with a PhD in Economics and no formal climate science qualifications. The *Daily Express* writes:

"Dr. Pachauri... has a network of business interests that attract millions of pounds in funding thanks to IPCC policies. One of them, The Energy Research Institute, has a London office and is set to receive up to £10 million from British taxpayers over the next five years..."

The IPCC... issued the glacier warning in a benchmark report in 2007 that was allegedly based on the latest research into global warming.

The scientists behind the report now admit they relied on a news story published in the *New Scientist* journal in 1999. The article was based on a short telephone interview with scientist Syed Hasnain, then based in Delhi, who has since said his views were "speculation".

The *New Scientist* report was picked up by the WWF and included in a 2005 paper.

It then became a key source for the IPCC which went further in suggesting the melting of the glaciers was "very likely"..."

The Sunday Telegraph (24.1.10) carried Christopher Booker's, *The Real Story Behind The Glaciergate Row*, which provided further information, including that Dr Pachauri has shared the UN Peace Prize with Al Gore. Dr. Hasnain, having originated the glacier story, went to work for Dr Pachauri. Incidentally 'WWF' is the World Wildlife Fund, sponsored by Prince Phillip:

"...Dr Syed Hasnain... has for the past two years been working as a senior employee of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), the Delhi-based company of which Dr Pachauri is director-general. Furthermore, the claim—now disowned by Dr Pachauri as chairman of the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]—has helped TERI to win a substantial share of a \$500,000 grant from one of America's leading charities, along with a share in a three million euro research study funded by the EU.

At the same time, Dr Pachauri has personally been drawn into a major row with the Indian government, previously among his leading supporters, after he described as "voodoo science" an official report by the country's leading glaciologist, Dr Vijay Raina, which dismissed Dr Hasnain's claims as baseless...

To understand why the future of Himalayan glaciers should arouse such peculiar passion, one must recall why they have long been a central icon in global warming campaigners' propaganda... as Mr. Gore emphasised in his Oscar-winning film *An Inconvenient Truth*, the vast Himalayan ice sheet feeds seven of the world's major river systems, thus helping to provide water to 40 per cent of the world's population.

The IPCC's shock prediction in its 2007 report that the likelihood of the glaciers "disappearing by the year 2035 and perhaps sooner is very high" thus had huge impact in India and other Asian countries, and it is precisely this statement that the IPCC has now been forced to disown.

...Until now it has been generally reported that the IPCC based its offending paragraph on an interview Dr Hasnain gave to the *New Scientist* in June 1999. This was a time when global warming researchers were busy making ever more extravagant claims in the run-up to the IPCC's 2001 report. It was in that year that Dr Michael Mann in America launched on the world his famous "hockey stick" graph, purporting to show that temperatures had risen faster in the late 20th century than ever before in the Earth's history. The graph was made the centrepiece of the IPCC's 2001 report, though it has since been comprehensively discredited.

In fact Dr Hasnain had first made his controversial claim two months earlier, in a much longer interview with an Indian environmental magazine, *Down to Earth*, in April 1999. It was the wording of this interview which the IPCC was to quote almost exactly in its 2007 report.

Clearly the IPCC was aware that to cite a little Indian magazine as the reference for such a startling prediction would hardly seem sound scientific practice. But it discovered that Dr Hasnain's slightly later interview with *New Scientist* had been quoted in a 2005 report by the environmental campaigning group WWF. So it was this, rather oddly, which the IPCC cited as its authority—even though the words it quoted were taken directly from the earlier interview...

The year after the IPCC report was published, however, Dr Hasnain was recruited by Dr Pachauri to head a new glaciology unit at TERI. In a matter of months, TERI was given a share in a \$500,000 study of melting Himalayan glaciers funded by a US charity, the Carnegie Corporation. It is clear from Carnegie's database that a key part in winning this contract was played by Dr Hasnain's claim that most glaciers in the region "will vanish within 40 years as a result of global warming".

In May 2009 TERI was also given a share in a three million euro project funded by the EU. Citing the WWF's 2005 report, the EU set up its "High Noon" project to study the impact of melting Himalayan glaciers. It was particularly keen to foster alarm over the Himalayas as a means to win Indian support for action on climate change at last year's Copenhagen conference.

Last November, however, Dr Raina, the country's most senior glaciologist, published a report for the Indian government showing that the rate of retreat of Himalayan glaciers had not increased in the past 50 years and that the IPCC's predictions

were recklessly alarmist. This provoked the furious reaction from Dr Pachauri that tarred Dr Raina's report as "arrogant" and "voodoo science". Only weeks later came the devastating revelation that the IPCC's own prediction had no scientific foundation.

Dr Pachauri's first response to these revelations was to claim that he had "absolutely no responsibility" for the blunder, that it was "the work of independent authors—they're responsible". But the IPCC's error was so blatant that last week Pachauri and other senior officials had to put out their remarkable statement, admitting that it had been due to a serious system failure..."

Incidentally, the British Meteorology Office issued a report in connection with the Copenhagen Climate Summit, giving evidence of apparent global warming. However, Russian scientists have challenged part of the data, which appears to have been based on a selective use of reports from Russian climate stations. It seems that the adherents of the 'man-made climate change' theory are not content to blame human intervention for changes in global weather: they also exaggerate the change in the weather alleged to have taken place.

Obituary

Helen Lewis, 1916-2009

It's been said that the answer to the great speculative questions (did aliens build the pyramids? etc.) is usually No. Had it not been for the Holocaust, would we now be living in a world characterized by Jewish cultural and economic hegemony? I think the answer to that has to be Yes. And, in those spheres, would Germany have been supreme? Again Yes. German-speaking Jewry would have taken up the German cultural ball and run with it. Shorn of the Jewish catalytic genius, and consumed with a sense of national shame, post-war Germany lost its significance for the world at large, except as a fantastically competent maker and exporter of *things*.

This "*Jewish genius*" thesis is both a cliché and a truism. It's a truism because it's so self-evidently true. Why that should be is up for debate, but that it is true can't be gainsaid. Helen Lewis, who died on New Year's Eve, was a typically untypical example of Jewish *Mittleuropa* playing in far-flung corners, as well as being a woman of substance in her own right.

She was born Helen Katz in the Sudetenland, and grew into an identity where she could be culturally German, religiously Jewish, and Czech in nationality all at once, without any real tensions. Post-1945, and, specifically, post-1948, all three of these elements were lost to the Sudetenland. Her age of innocence ended when she was twenty-three, with the entry of the German troops into Prague, where she was a new graduate of Milca Mayernova's dancing school. Her mother and other relations died in the Concentration Camps, as did her first husband Paul Hermann, in Auschwitz, where they were both sent. One moment of quick-wittedness there saved her life. She side-stepped out of a line of people

queuing to be operated on by Josef Mengele and into another line going in the other direction. When Auschwitz was liberated in late January 1945, she managed to obtain a safe passage note from a Russian major, enabling her to get back to Prague. She had spent three months in Auschwitz, and was a survivor of two other Camps, Theresienstadt (Terezin) and Stutthof.

Her experiences included a forced march from Stutthof that nearly killed her, but things took a new turn when Harry Lewis, a refugee from pre-War Czechoslovakia, who had settled in Belfast, saw her name on a Red Cross list of survivors. They married in Prague in 1947 and settled in Belfast. They had two sons. In Belfast Helen Lewis was single-handedly responsible for introducing modern choreography, founding what became the Belfast Modern Dance Group.

During the Troubles she was one of a number of innovators who battled through the adverse conditions to produce a flourishing cultural scene in the city. As well as her involvement in pure dance, Lewis became an influential figure in the growth of opera and in the development of the Lyric Theatre.

One would have thought that her experiences from 1939 to 1945 would have given Lewis a lifetime exemption from dysfunctional ethnicity running rampant, but obviously her fifties and sixties too were lived under the shadow of that very thing. She could have been forgiven for retiring into private life but that wasn't an option she wanted to take.

In her mid-seventies she felt ready to set out her reflections in her memoir, *A Time to Speak*, which, to my shame I've not (yet) read. It has been translated into many languages. A one-woman play based on the book was recently performed at Belfast Festival.

If she hadn't been a dancer she probably wouldn't have survived. It was one of the peculiarities of the camp regimes that those who were gifted in any way often were called upon to display their talents for the diversion of their SS guards. They had to perform while undergoing the extremities of pain and hunger, as well as the all-pervading fear. I recently came across an obituary of a Greek Jewish boxer who was made to fight two bouts a week against other inmates. The loser was never seen again. The Greek managed to win consistently for about two years, but in the knowledge that by saving his own skin he was signing the death warrant of the other man every time.

It seems the human capacity for demonic cruelty is matched only by the human capacity to endure it, and, sometimes, to feel no bitterness. I'd like to encourage people, and encourage myself, to read Helen Lewis's book, which has been described as "*understated*".

Stephen Richards

The 'Racist' Gaelic Revival: *a case with no evidence*

Review of Brian Ó Conchubhair, *Fin de Siècle na Gaeilge: Darwin, an t-Athbheochan agus Smaointeoireacht na h-Eorpa*, Indreabhán, Conamara 2009

The Gaelic Revival, which got underway slowly in the 1880s and '90s and became a mass movement in the 1900s and "a school of revolution" for the officers of the Easter Rising and War of Independence, is a puzzle to academia. Very little has been written about its intellectual influences. But its leaders, at least in their English-speaking selves (because practically all of them, an t-Athair Peadar Ó Laoghaire not excepted, used English as the language of intellectual argument and polemic, even in Gaelic League publications), had access to the main currents of English and European thinking. It would be surprising if they were deaf and blind to everything. And it's easy to come upon evidence that they weren't.

For example, take the Preface in English which Piaras Béaslaí wrote to an edition of Brian Merriman's *Midnight Court*, published in 1912. Béaslaí maintains that the 18th century literature of the Irish language was generally hostile to life and living energies, and the one outstanding exception was Merriman, whose poem affirmed the vital human forces and above all sex. The language Béaslaí uses to make his case, and the case itself, and the confidence with which he makes it, show the clear influence of Nietzsche. Maybe it was second-hand influence but more likely it was first-hand, because even though Nietzsche was demonised a couple of years later as part of the Great War propaganda, his works were available in English and round about 1912 they were being very widely read. Yet I've never seen a book or article, 'Nietzsche and the Gaelic League' or even 'Nietzsche in Dublin'. But maybe there would be something to say.

Brian Ó Conchubhair doesn't mention Béaslaí or his preface, because wisely or unwisely he has restricted himself to the couple of decades ending in 1900. But his starting point is the feeling that there were more ideas in the Revival than it's given credit for. Usually, he says, the only influence that's mentioned is the 'cultural nationalist' philosophy of Herder, Fichte and Schleiermacher, and even that is seen as second-hand, taken up through Thomas Davis. He acknowledges that this influence existed and was important. Again and again the Revivalists expressed their conviction that the Irish language was bound up with the Irish people or nation, part of an organic whole that could not be removed without serious disabling effects, if not actual death. But in Ó Conchubhair's

view the proper context for judging the Revival is the *fin de siècle*, or the intellectual flux of late 19th century Europe.

This could have been a pioneering book. Unfortunately, Ó Conchubhair seems to have reached his conclusions first and then tried to force the evidence to match them. And the evidence refuses even to pretend to fit. Ó Conchubhair raises important themes in European thinking and gives an introduction to the controversies of the Revival, but by and large he fails to show what the one has to do with the other.

In his second chapter he introduces the key concept of degeneration (*meathlú*), which in Europe of the time was bound up with notions of race. Powers which were competing for colonies in Africa and/or ascendancy in Europe were afraid that the social developments of the times were weakening their populations. Sooner or later, with a weak population you were going to start losing your wars. This fear was connected with the movement from country to town, which was most advanced in Britain. It was suspected that the new townsmen (once capitalism had properly got to work on them) were a good deal weaker than they had been as peasants. One of the great scares was a survey done at the time of the Boer War, which showed that 60% of Englishmen were unfit for military service.

The classic theoretical work on degeneration was Max Nordau's *Die Entartung* (1893). Degeneration, it seems, is the same as decay, and race is the same as language, music and industry, or anyhow one is entitled to lump them all together—because Ó Conchubhair finds Revivalists who are complaining about the decay of the Irish language, Irish music and Irish industries, and straightway he locates them on Nordau's mental wavelength. He quotes a passage from Douglas Hyde's *The Study of Early Gaelic Literature*, which supposedly shows the influence of Nordau's language (p64). There are things I find next to impossible to imagine, and Hyde reading Nordau is one of them. The passage quoted does not suggest that he ever did. Hyde has none of the highly-strung morbidity and misanthropy of Nordau, and there isn't even much accidental resemblance in ideas.

In his third chapter (on the destruction of races, mixing of the blood, and cross-fertilisation) Ó Conchubhair's argument

falls down completely. He rightly says that race theory was of high importance in 19th century Europe. And he sets the scene with quotations from (among others) the founder of eugenics Francis Galton, Robert Knox, and the *London Times*. From Galton's *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences*:

"Probably in no former period of the world has the destruction of the races of any animal whatever been effected over such wide areas and with such startling rapidity as in the case of savage man. In the North American continent, in the West Indian Islands, in the Cape of Good Hope, in Australia, New Zealand and Van Diemen's Land, the human denizens of vast regions have been entirely swept away in the short space of three centuries, less by the pressure of a stronger race than through the influence of a civilisation they were incapable of supporting..."

From Knox's *The Races of Man*:

"The key to European history is also race war and genocide. The eventual outcome of the conflict between the Saxon and the Celtic races will be just the same as that between the Maori and both these fair races in New Zealand..."

And from the *London Times* in 1847 there's a gloating chunk of editorial looking forward to the extinction of the Irish in Connemara.

What is there to correspond with this on the Irish side? Ó Conchubhair cites the defensive response of some Revivalists to this kind of thinking, seeking to show that the Irish were not degenerate. But then, just because they've reacted, they're identified with what they've reacted against! He will allow that there are some secondary differences: the English, he says, concentrated on their Empire and their international standing, while the Revivalists concentrated on the question of language and the question of blood (*Dhúirigh na Sasanaigh isteach ar an Impireacht agus a sheasamh idirnáisiúnta; dhúirigh na h-Athbheochantóirí isteach ar cheist na teanga agus ceist na fola*, p83).

Unfortunately, it turns out that to find examples of Revivalists talking about blood is not much easier than to get blood from a turnip. So a sleight-of-hand is tried a couple of pages later: the main use that the Revivalists made of the theories of blood was that they applied them to the discourse of language (*Is é an leas is mó a bhain Athbheochantóirí na Gaeilge as teoiricí na fola ná gur chuir siad i bhfeidhm ar dhioscúrsa na teanga iad*, p85).

Armed with this clarification, we are ready to make a Nietzschean of an t-Athair Peadar Ó Laoghaire. Nietzsche said somewhere that "*the man of an era of dissolution who mixes the races together and who therefore contains within him the inheritance of diversified descent... will, on average, be a rather weak man*". Ó

Conchubhair tells us that there's not much difference between Nietzsche's view on the mixing of races and an t-Athair Peadar's view of the kind of corrupt Irish (*Béarlachas*) that results from mixing its language, grammar and vocabulary with English: in each case the product will be poor, weak and exhausted (pp86-7).

But what did an t-Athair Peadar actually say?

"To write Irish, using English literary usages, is to provide written matter in which there is neither life nor strength nor sweetness. It is Irish in form. The syntax is correct. But when a person has read one or two sentences he turns away to something else. The stuff is mawkish, tasteless, unreadable. The living Irish speech which, thank God, we still possess, is a real, good, sound, true acorn. It has within itself, in full perfection, the elements and the forces which are capable of producing a mighty oak. An attempt to impose any foreign elements into it will only have the effect of destroying it."

Not a word that I can see about races or blood.

Is beag idir téas Nietzsche... agus an t-Athair Peadar, Ó Conchubhair says. But in my opinion there's a very long way between them. For a start there's the full breadth of the European continent, between Ireland and the extravagantly diversified Empire of Austria-Hungary, which Nietzsche must have had in mind (though he would have seen the same process underway in Germany). But secondly, whether consciously or unconsciously, Ó Conchubhair is ignoring the obvious. What language was an t-Athair Peadar using? The passage quoted above is not a translation. The author's own words are there, as he himself originally composed them in English. It was the suitable language for these particular thoughts.

An t-Athair Peadar believed that Irish could prosper and develop if encouraged and supported and not fundamentally interfered with. But if the intellectual stock of English and other European languages was suddenly imported into Irish, the grafting wouldn't take and the language itself would sicken. For just that reason he was wary of translations. This was a different point of view from, say, Eoin MacNeill's. In some journal which I can't lay my hand on now MacNeill says that Irish had missed out on a lot of European intellectual development and it couldn't start making up the ground too soon. The most useful book that could be written in Irish, in his opinion, was a basic treatise on philosophy. The next most useful would be a short work on mechanics. But an t-Athair Peadar was in no hurry with the philosophy, not to mind the mechanics. Against those who were pointing to Geoffrey Keating as the great model,

whose lead unfortunately hadn't been followed, he maintained that Keating's books had never taken hold among the people. And Philip O'Leary (somewhere in *The Prose Literature Of The Irish Revival*) quotes a letter of his where he says straight out that he doesn't like Keating. "*I hate his big words!*"

And yet an t-Athair Peadar had lots of big words of his own, which we can find scattered through books like Ó Conchubhair's and O'Leary's. But they were English big words. And since he nowhere suggests that intellectual argument and polemic, contact with foreign literatures, industrial enterprise and science and so on should come to a full stop in Ireland, it must follow that his notion of the Irish, or a great many of them, was that they would be radically mixed people, with different languages for different spheres of their lives. Maybe this would change in time, but it wouldn't change in a hurry. And, while this way of looking at things was not spelled out, it seems that Pearse's generation took it on board and whatever the official doctrine may have been, that this was the attitude normally adopted. One could say a lot on this subject. Negative things might be said. But to say that an t-Athair Peadar's attitude to Irish bears any resemblance, even analogously, to the 19th century theories of the dangers of racial mixing is completely unreasonable.

For the most part Irish racialism was West British racialism. Or it could function parallel to Anglo-Saxon politics, as in America, or as in the dual monarchy which Arthur Griffith aspired to. Griffith was anxious to lay down the principle that "*the Irish nationalist declines to hold the negro his peer in right*" (Introduction to Mitchel's *Jail Journal*) and he hoped there would still be a piece of Africa left for Ireland before the Powers had carved it all up. But a thoroughgoing anti-British racialism was a non-starter. Even D.P. Moran, who might have been the most inclined in that direction, went no further than saying: "*The Gael must be the element that absorbs*". In Irish conditions, anyone who rejected absorption would have had to be an out-and-out lunatic. Ó Conchubhair suggests that such thinking was around, but he quotes nothing because he has nothing to quote.

In fairness to him, he does mention Eoin MacNeill's view that "*race... is all pure figment, serving no purpose except the rekindling of insane animosities*" and that the nation was "*a brotherhood of adoption as well as blood*". He then acknowledges that this view was in fact dominant among the Revival's leaders and intellectuals. But . . . the rank-and-file were more in touch with advanced late 19th century racial theory! To avoid the blatant absurdity of saying this plainly, he says it obscurely: another conception could

be found within the discourse of the Revival. (*Ach má ba í tuairim Mhic Néill a bhí i réim i measc cheannairí agus intleachtóirí Chonradh na Gaeilge, bhí tuiscint eile le fáil laistigh de dhioscúrsa na h-Aithbheochana...* p. 92) which, we are supposed to understand, was a discourse of racial exclusiveness. This is supposedly shown in a report on a singing competition, which in fact shows nothing of the kind.

An obsession with blood and the mixing of blood is foisted upon Fr. Peter Yorke and Douglas Hyde, without quoting anything whatever of that nature from what they say. And, although both Yorke and Hyde express themselves reasonably and without the cultivation of hatred, Ó Conchubhair leaps in to say that, as soon as one starts defining identity on the basis of blood, we're not far from racism and from Nazi anti-Semitism (*Chomh luath agus a thosnaítear ag trácht ar shainmhíniú ar an bhféiniúlacht ar bhonn fola, ní fada uainn an ciníochas agus go deimhin tagairt don leas a bhain Naitithe na Gearmáine as teagasc Gobineau chun idé-eolaíocht frith-Ghiúdach a bhunú níos faide ar aghaidh sa stair.* p91). It might be so (though as a matter of fact the cult of pure blood was not invented in the late 19th century—it was very much alive in 16th century Spain), but to tar the likes of Hyde with this brush is outrageous.

The one Revivalist Ó Conchubhair can find who has anything significant to say about blood is Tomás Ó Flangaile (p85). And Ó Flangaile is merely drawing on available language in order to oppose the racist anti-Celtic theories of the time. The same is true of Matthew Arnold, whom Ó Conchubhair predictably has down as a race theorist (pp82-3). Maybe he ought to read *The Study Of Celtic Literature* for himself, rather than picking up quoted snippets and interpretations from others.

(I can't understand why so many people have it in for Matthew Arnold. In the excellent survey of racist and proto-fascist thinking in Britain by Manuel Sarkisyanz, *Hitler's English Inspirers* (Athol Books 2003), Arnold is correctly identified as one of the few leading British intellectuals who tried to go against the mainstream (p130 and elsewhere). In *Irish Essays* and *The Study Of Celtic Literature* he shows respect for the Irish people, Irish Catholicism and the Irish language, and not in any token way but with reasonable, well-informed argument. For Irish literature he made good use of that best of all guides, Eugene O'Curry. Against those who thought this literature was all foolishness and nonsense, Arnold said that one should presume from the outset that this was not so. Maybe he was too mild a person and maybe he didn't oppose the racist mainstream very effectively, and

maybe some of his practical proposals, such as making the Catholic Church an established church alongside the Church of Ireland, were wrong-headed. But I can't see how to make him a racist bigot and anti-Celt. The notion that he was a cunning enemy or treacherous friend of Ireland seems to be very recent, and in earlier times, when Arnold was read in Ireland with much appreciation and interest, I think it would have been ridiculed.)

In his later chapters Ó Conchubhair seems to want to forget his hopeless main line of argument and try to present the Revival disputes reasonably, and the book is improved by that. He reviews the arguments for and against literature in the dialects, the *cló Rómhánach* and the different kinds of spelling (I never understood until now why Eamonn Ó Cuív spells his name with that 'v'). His fifth chapter ought to be about Gaelic Eugenics as the antidote to corrupt Irish, to judge by the ludicrous title (*Frithnimh an Bhéarlachais: Eugenics na Gaeilge*), but there's nothing more on eugenics after that. Instead there's an account of a unique controversy, which very untypically is argued out in Irish, as to whether Irish-language writers should be, or could be, in the vanguard of modern thinking and urban culture.

Chapter 8, on the question of dialects, is the most interesting. An t-Athair Peadar was the great champion of the cause of letting dialect writers have their head, but there were other soberer people on the same side who argued well. Ó Conchobhair refers to Max Müller's theory of language, where what matters is not the artificial literary standard but the living, evolving, regenerative (or 'anti-degenerative') dialects. He maintains that Müller's ideas produced a split in the Gaelic movement, between scholars who did not want what they thought of as a degenerate *patois* and a generation of young men who had swallowed Müller's gospel whole (p206). And at last he is able to produce one witness, Daithí Ó hIarlaithe writing in 1898, who refers approvingly and relevantly to Müller (p229). So here he might have a case, though it would take more to establish it. Ó Conchubhair could do worse than begin at the end of his book and start again.

John Minahane

Manuel Sarkisyanz, PhD:

Hitler's English Inspirers. 348pp. €25, £20.



The Dunmanway Killings... as wise as ever

"There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know." (Donald Rumsfeld)

Donald Rumsfeld's aphorism keeps coming to mind whenever the Dunmanway killings of April 1922 are discussed. The RTE programme of the 5th of October 2009 was billed as a CSI, i.e., a Crime Scene Investigation of the killings. Such an investigation is long overdue. But there was no actual investigation by the programme. If Donald Rumsfeld was watching, he might say we were only presented with the 'known knowns'—that is, that a number of Protestants were killed—but there was no attempt to deal with the 'known unknowns'. In other words, who did it?

But many who commentated on the programme did so on the basis that they did know and that there were no unknown unknowns for them. But the fact is that we are as wise now as we were before the programme as to who did it. This is a most curious situation. The era of the War of Independence in West Cork has been discussed and written about *ad nauseam*—by participants on both sides, by historians and commentators of all sorts, friendly and hostile. One historian, Peter Hart, has even interviewed participants in the afterlife, so there is very, very little that should be an 'known unknown' or an 'unknown unknown' in this area. Every participant and activist is well known. Yet nobody can pinpoint who carried out these killings. Much lesser events have not been left in such a state of limbo for so long.

But the media commentators have also drawn a blank as to the perpetrators.

A GARDA VIEW

One of the first off the mark in responding to the programme was Brendan Cafferty, the prolific letter-writing ex-garda from Mayo. One might have expected a forensic approach from him—but no. Instead we had the scattergun approach of many motives and guilt by many associations with no evidence whatever being provided. At the same time he dismisses out of hand the one motive which has bent put forward with at least some evidence, i.e., that most of the victims were informers.

I would ask you, dear reader, to put yourself in the position of a judge and ask yourself how useful you would find this kind of evidence from a garda in helping you come to a decision in a multiple murder case. Does it bear any relation whatever to a Crime Scene Investigation? On the basis of it, could you reach a verdict with a clear conscience?:

"At times, the great injustice done to those people was compounded by various spurious claims of justification – that they were informers and the like. But hardly mentioned until now was the question of land, religion and settling of old scores in that Protestantism was at times equated to Britain and the invader. And while the programme showed that perhaps it was a maverick and isolated attack condemned by all sides at the time, I am not so sure about that, as other examples exist in east Galway, Mayo, Leitrim, Midlands and Border regions and elsewhere" (Irish Examiner, 8 October 2009).

The *Irish Examiner* published a letter from me asking Mr. Cafferty to provide more specific information to back up his assertions but he seems to have got writer's block when asked for some actual facts. Next witness!

PIERCE MARTIN

Pierce Martin entered the debate in the *Irish News* with a claim that the Aubane Historical Society had published a narrative of the killings:

"When Cork abandoned the noble ideals of Wolfe Tone.

The screening on RTE1 of CSI's *Cork's Bloody Secret* (October 5th) directly challenges the nationalist Aubane Society's propaganda spin on the massacre of up to 14 Protestants in Bandon, Clonakilty, Dunmanway and adjacent areas from April 26 to April 28 1922. Aubane's narrative of the west Cork atrocities is thereby revealed as a grotesque part of the greater malignant tree of the Republic's national liberation myth.

"Cork's Bloody Secret—like *The Killings at Coolacrease*—has made an important contribution to debunking the sordid lie of the War of Independence... However, as has been pointed out, these vial (sic) crimes did not mirror the fate of 60,000 Irish Protestants driven out of their own country. The chilling testimony in the documentary of Dialann William Kingston on the train to Dublin filled with fleeing Irish Protestants should never be forgotten. His description of the train being bombed from the street at Limerick junction—and shots being fired—leaves a vivid impression on the mind that is not easily erased" (Irish News. October 17, 2009).

I replied as follows:

"The Aubane Historical Society has not produced a narrative of those events as there is as yet no evidence as to who did them or what the motives were and it has so far proved impossible to establish the facts regarding either. The first three killings are clear-cut and acknowledged by all as the executions in retaliation for the killing of a local IRA commander. The others are a mystery well known for nearly 90 years but still a mystery.

"I had hoped the RTE programme would have investigated and established who did them and why. But it did not

even present unfounded allegations of who the killers might have been. It threw out a couple of vague innuendos but left the mystery just as it had found it. It could not even find a local rumour attributing responsibility. The silence remains because nobody in the locality, Protestant or Catholic, has any information about the identity—general or particular—of the culprits.

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

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

"Apart from the actual killings, Mr Martin refers to one fact concerning them—Willie Kingston's leaving of Dunmanway as a result. But, typically, we get half the story. Willie returned shortly afterwards, set up a legal practice in the town, set up the local historical society, was a prominent citizen and lived a full and active life in the community until he died in his bed in 1965.

"Unlike Mr. Martin, Aubane likes to put all the facts on the table. Anything else is not doing justice to history or to the descendants of the victims of those killings. That is our interest in the issue—facts, not rhetoric and bombast" (IN, 2.11.2009).

He replied:

"Mr Lane's denial that Aubane has not produced a narrative of the west Cork atrocities is simply untrue. Contained in Owen Sheridan's book entitled Propaganda: as Anti-History, published by Aubane (however much they may squirm to get out of it) with an introduction by Jack Lane, is a bizarre claim by Sheridan (with no evidence) that Sir Henry Wilson organised the killings over three days in April of 1922 in order to force British troops to remain in southern Ireland" (IN, 10.11.2009).

THEORY AND NARRATIVE

I had to explain that Pierce Martin:

"...must try to distinguish between publishing a theory about an event and a narrative account of an event. All sorts of theories have been rumoured, suggested, published and broadcast about the Dunmanway killings but no narrative exists, precisely because of the prevalence of so many theories and the absence of documents—and even of specific local rumour or gossip. We published one long-held theory, that it was a provocative action to rile the Protestants of West Cork into a sectarian war. If successful it would have proved the point that no part of Ireland

should be allowed independence as only chaos would result. Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, organiser of the B Specials believed this. He was powerful, and was a long-standing and accomplished conspirator, having taken part in the high-level conspiracy that prepared for the Great War on Germany. And of course he played a leading role in that other very successful conspiracy, the Curragh Mutiny. Wilson himself was killed weeks after the killings by people working for a Dunmanway Protestant, Sam Maguire, who was a neighbour of some of those killed in April. Was that a coincidence or was it revenge? We do not know. But the motives for Wilson's killing at that particular time are also a mystery with many theories. Has Mr. Martin a theory about who did the Dunmanway killings? If he has, with some evidence, we will publish it.

"The fact that British troops were in the process of being withdrawn at that juncture is beside the point. The British secret service in Cork had been reorganised shortly before the Dunmanway killings and, if they were a British operation, they were the work of the secret services, not the Army. On April 26, 1922, the day before the killings began, three British intelligence officers of this new service (Lieutenants Hendy, Drove and Henderson) were captured down the road in nearby Macroom and executed. Was this another coincidence? Were they the only ones active in the area. I note he says that Aubane's narrative of the Coolcrease events is 'a grotesque distortion' but does not produce an iota of evidence to disprove our documentary account. Again, I would request facts not bombast from Mr. Martin" (Irish News, November 14, 2009).

Martin came back to insist we had published a narrative and gave his own explanation for the killings:

"One can very easily deduce that the rationale behind the west Cork killings by republicans was meant to ignite a chain of copy-cat atrocities and thus bring about the civil-war that never happened—the one between the Protestant north and the nationalist south" (IN, 9.12.2009).

This was progress of some sort in that he provided a motive and I examined that in a reply:

"He begs the question by referring to 'killings by republicans'. The uniqueness of those killings is that nobody claimed them and nobody was blamed for them, and local rumour pointed no finger. Martin's reasons must be that they served a republican purpose so clearly that Republicans must have done them. But even Senator Harris on RTE could not see that they served any republican purpose at all. Pierce Martin might tell us which republicans he means. West Cork republicans were split three ways in April 1922, Treaty, Anti-Treaty and Neutral, but the split had not become a rupture and all three had considerable information about each other. If one of them had done it the others would have known and it would have come out when the differences were manipulated into 'Civil War' by Churchill three months later and the leading Treatyites ceased to be Republican.

"That all three might have been in collusion to kill a dozen Protestants in West

Cork in order to start a war between North and South and then all condemned it and did no more killings—and then all kept strictly silent about it—is implausible in the extreme as a deduction from circumstances. It needs some actual evidence even to make it thinkable as speculation.

"Pierce Martin dismisses 'conspiracy theories' in principle but how is the complete lack of information about the Dunmanway killings to be accounted for if they were not the work of a tight conspiracy? And most probably an external conspiracy with the means of access because internal conspiracies are leaky.

"Field Marshal Wilson, recently retired Chief of the Imperial Staff—who denounced the Treaty as consigning Southern Ireland to disorder, who was organising the B Specials, and who was engaged in setting up a new authoritarian British Party—had both motive and the means (i.e. the British Secret Service, which was re-organised and active in Mid-Cork). And he was assassinated a couple of months later in London by a group controlled by Michael Collins's colleague, the Dunmanway Protestant, Sam Maguire.

"Of course, the case is circumstantial. But at least it has the merit of not flying in the face of circumstances" (18.12. 2009).

And there the matter rests with Mr. Martin.

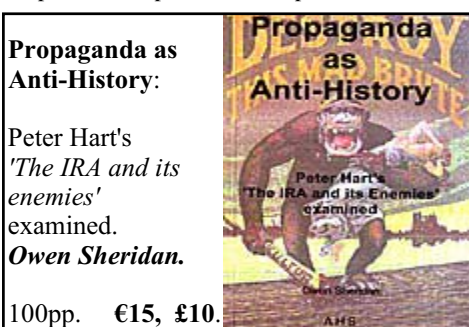
SPEAKING OF SIR HENRY WILSON

Sir Henry Wilson is an interesting figure and it's not usually appreciated what he was doing at the time of his death. He was the most effective opponent of Lloyd George and his Government on the basis that they were destroying the British Empire by a reckless foreign policy of taking on wars and tasks across the world that they could not cope with and at the same time allowing the Empire's disintegration at home (i.e., Ireland). He was the Government's enemy number one. A 1922 report of an interview with the *Daily Mail* gives a flavour of his views:

*"What are we doing in Palestine?
Sir Henry Wilson on the Prime Minister.
'The Empire or he must go'
Near East muddle and waste of millions.
The Wrong Horse*

"It comes to this: in Palestine as in Turkey, Mr. Lloyd George has put his money on the wrong horse. We shall never get peace in Palestine or Mesopotamia, in Egypt or India until we make love to the Turks. It may be very immoral, or it may not, it is a fact. Can anyone tell me why Mr. Lloyd George backed the Greeks? I don't know. And I am going to ask him as soon as I get a chance. I know it was not by the advice of the War Office, we were always dead against it. I know it was not by the advice of George Nathaniel (Lord) Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, or the British Ambassador at Constantinople, or Lord Reading (Viceroy of India, J.L.), that at least has come out.

"I was at the Quai d'Orsay {the French Foreign Office}, when three of them, including Mr. Lloyd George, gave Smyrna to the Greeks, and I had to arrange for troops to go there. I had no say in the matter. It was an affair of high policy.



"Veniselos {the then Greek Prime Minister} went at once with me to my hotel, the Astoria. He was always a good friend and I told him plainly that he had ruined his country. He pooh-poohed the idea. I said 'If you go to Smyrna you must go to Erzerum (Armenia) or get out.' That was not clever. That was simple common-sense. You can't hold a seaboard town with the Turks sitting all round you on the hills like wolves licking their chops. So they got Smyrna and had to take the railway, and at the minute they are losing the railway, and in time they will have to get out. But why did Lloyd George back them ?..."

"Let's get back to Palestine, though it is all part of the same question... And now Winston {Mr. Churchill, the Colonial Secretary} thinks he is going to do with a few hundreds of ex-Black and Tans and some aeroplanes what 5,000 regulars are doing in Palestine, and with three or four *battalions* what it took us four and half *divisions* to do in Mesopotamia. Phew!....."

Reverting once more to Palestine, Sir Henry Wilson expressed himself strongly in favour of getting out and leaving the country to determine for itself what sort of government it shall have. But he believes the whole thing is a dire mistake and that persistence in support of it by British politicians may lead to the loss of the Empire." (3 May 1922)

Wilson had pinpointed the crucial issues of the day. The encouragement of the new war against Turkey would lead a few months later, after the Greeks were routed, to a humiliating backdown by Britain known as the Canak Incident. This brought down the Lloyd George Government and disorientated the British Empire to such an extent that it never recovered.

Sir Henry Wilson had it spot on. He is the ghost of the Empire that could say—"I told you so!"

CURIOUS REPORT ON HIS DEATH

In the British National Archives there are collections of documents on relations between Whitehall and those setting up the Free State and in one of these there is a well informed report on the overall political situation in 1922 and it comments as follows on the assassination of Wilson:

"While this Constitutional interlude {in Ireland} was in progress, the storm of violence in Ireland continued to rage unabated, and Ministers of the Crown blandly asserted that all this "was but a transition stage." Suddenly a bombshell fell, which all but destroyed the shaky edifice of the Free State. Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson was murdered on his own doorstep in London. A storm of indignation at once swept over England, and prompt action was demanded. The Government in their panic, first alleged that their Irish allies had nothing to do with the murder. Mr. Shortt was put up in the House of Commons to declare that the murder was purely a private affair whose origin he could not interpret. Unfortunately for this theory, at the police court proceedings, a letter was read

The following letter was submitted to the *Irish Times* on 15th February. It has not appeared

Ian Paisley Jnr is exercised on the subject of reporting child abuse.

He has reported Gerry Adams to the Stormont standards committee (Irish Times, Jan 15) for alleged failings in this regard. Paisley Jnr suggested recently (December 7th) that Protestant churches 'have a vast open field' to convert disillusioned papists due to sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church. These suggestions, associating family, political and denominational responsibility, brings to mind the words pot, kettle and black.

In 1973 the leader of the Free Presbyterian Church and of the Democratic Unionist Party was informed by church employee Valerie Shaw that a homosexual Orangeman, William McGrath, was in charge of the Kincora Boys' Home. Homosexuality was illegal then and Paisley Snr, the leader in question, was publicly reactionary on gay rights. Ms Shaw produced incriminating letters from McGrath. The recipient of the letters, Roy Garland, repeatedly attempted to talk to Paisley after McGrath became involved in Kincora in 1971. Paisley Snr ignored him.

Those running Kincora were part of a 20 year old vice ring. British intelligence and RUC Special Branch blackmailed unionist 'clients' who abused the boys. McGrath was also leader of Tara, an extremely sectarian loyalist paramilitary grouping.

After McGrath was convicted in 1982, Paisley gave misleading accounts of what he had been told. Paisley claimed that Shaw had informed him in a limited manner of McGrath's activities in 1975 and that he then banned McGrath from preaching in one of his churches. In fact, Shaw resigned in despair due to what she claimed was Paisley's inaction in June 1975, whereas McGrath preached in a Free Presbyterian church in November of that year. Paisley was informed in 1973 that McGrath was preaching on Free Presbyterian premises, said Shaw. The political and religious leader admitted he never informed the authorities. Martin Smyth, the Unionist MP and Orange Order Leader, claimed later that Paisley rebuffed a suggestion in 1975 that they both approach the RUC. He also reported Paisley's suggestion that the claims against McGrath were part of a British 'dirty tricks' operation.

Roy Garland reported that when he warned the RUC, British military intelligence became interested in politically exploiting the abuse. Garland additionally informed leading Orangemen, one of whom suggested he "shake hands" with McGrath. Eventually, though not immediately, Martin Smyth also went to the RUC. Nothing was done by the authorities.

After an Irish independent expose in 1980 the paedophile ring was finally broken up. One additional victim was military intelligence officer Colin Wallace, framed for a crime he did not commit, partly because he questioned British exploitation of Kincora. Wallace was subsequently exonerated. Protected to this day are the blackmailers in the security services.

In his Newsletter column, under the headline 'Child abuse clerics need to resign' (January 15), Ian Paisley Snr comments on Bishops in the Roman Catholic Church. He also implicates the Gardai in a 'cover-up.' In a recent column on the same subject Ian Paisley Senior concluded, 'How much did the Pope know?' The answer to that question is probably less than the columnist knew about things people said they told him, but that he denies having heard. Paisley wrote, 'will anyone ask the Pope?' Will anyone ask Paisley who has at least one thing in common with the Pontiff. He banned women from holding positions of authority in his church after Valerie Shaw resigned.

There is no record of Ian Paisley Snr ever recognising any inadequacy in his conduct over William McGrath.

Abuse of young people does not know religious or political boundaries, but that does not stop Ian Junior from apparently tripping over sectarian ones.

Niall Meehan

showing that the perpetrators were Republicans, and that they had been in communication with Republicans in Cork. At their trial, too, they justified their action on the ground that murder for political motives was legitimate, and that they were proud to die for Ireland." (CO 739/15).

This is interesting as it indicates that the Government had little sympathy with Wilson and were willing to mislead the public about his killing with a subliminal message that he might have had an odd personal life. He was a well known Franco-

phile and maybe he indulged in 'French practices', nudge, nudge, wink, wink.

The reference to Cork is curious, given that the Republicans involved had no connection whatever with Cork and the focus of Irish affairs at the time was on the occupation of the Four Courts in Dublin. The most relevant and undisputable Cork Republican connection was Sam Maguire!

Jack Lane

Forgotten Aspects Of Ireland's Great War On Turkey. 1914-24 by Dr. Pat Walsh. 540pp. Index. ISBN 978-085034-121-8. Athol Books, 2009. €25, £20.

Downey's Memoirs

This reviewer has read numerous books by former employees of *The Irish Times*: ranging from Lionel Fleming to Conor Brady; from Tony Gray to Dermot James; and not forgetting Brian Inglis or even Nell McCafferty. On the subject of *The Irish Times*, Downey's book is by far the most interesting.

Downey worked for the newspaper for 30 years and will be forever associated with it. Unfortunately for him he will also be remembered for his failure to become Editor. This episode in his life is the most compelling part of the book, but Downey had a life before *The Irish Times* and— notwithstanding his bitter disappointment—he discovered that there was life after it.

He was born in 1933. His father was gifted academically, but spurned the glittering career which beckoned, and settled for being a national schoolteacher in Leitrim. Downey's family lived a modest but comfortable life by the standards of the time. The first part of the book is taken up with a description of Leitrim, which was one of the poorest parts of Ireland at a time when the country itself was struggling. Nevertheless, he seems to have been fond of his native County and its history. The O'Rourke clan were the local chieftains. He says that when Captain de Cuellar of the Spanish Armada landed in Ireland in 1588, the Spanish soldier remarked favourably on O'Rourke's hospitality, but was unimpressed by the Irish chieftain's modest castle.

It is sometimes said that hindsight is 20:20 vision. But it is often the case that present knowledge can distort the recollection of the past. In general Downey does not fall into this trap. His account of Ireland in the 1940s and 50s has the ring of authenticity. However, he strikes one false note when he speculates—admittedly very half-heartedly—that his father might have sent him to Newbridge Secondary School rather than Summerhill, which was nearer to his home, because of rumours of child abuse.

I'm also not sure about his observations of Ireland's neutrality. He claims that Ireland was "*neutral in favour of Britain*". My impression from Mark O'Brien's book on *The Irish Times* is that it required an effort of will on the part of the Irish State to sustain its position of neutrality. The late Colonel Doyle in the excellent *Bright Brilliant Days* book places Irish neutrality in its historical perspective by noting that for generations working class Dublin men had fought in the British Army, but their descendants were in the Irish Army during the Second World War. Taking an independent foreign policy decision was a departure from the default position of Irishmen being used as cannon fodder in

Britain's wars.

Apart from these quibbles I found Downey's observations to be interesting. Although Ireland did not participate in the Second World War, he notes that people in rural Leitrim took a keen interest in the great battles in Eastern Europe, which belies the common view that the Irish were insular.

On the subject of religion he recalls a conversation with Monsignor de Brún, an uncle of Máire Mhac an tSaoí (the poet, daughter of Sean McEntee and wife of Conor Cruise O'Brien). The priest said that his parishioners in Kerry believed three things simultaneously: one, the orthodox Catholic teaching; two, that death was the end; three, that the ghosts of the dead continued to hover about us, perhaps with malevolent intent.

Downey's acerbic pen portraits of Noel Browne, Brendan Behan and others are never less than entertaining. But he is most interesting about himself. He conveys a sense of disillusionment with the political establishment among young intellectuals in the 1950s. At the time he thought that the policies of the Soviet Union might provide an answer. He assures us that such a view was quite common among people with no connection to the Communist Party. In retrospect he admits that the political establishment was perhaps more competent than he had given it credit for. The economic policies of Lemass and Whitaker had allowed the country a respite from emigration.

Downey considers himself a left winger, but also a "*middle class individualist*". He stood unsuccessfully for the Labour Party in 1969. About ten years later this reviewer remembers anti-coalition Labour Party members referring to this election as a success, but Downey describes it accurately as a disaster. The higher than average First Preference votes merely reflected the large number of candidates the Party ran.

Downey helped write Brendan Corish's "*seventies will be socialist*" speech, which he rather self-deprecatingly says was turned around by Dublin wags into "*the socialists will be seventy*". Intriguingly, he balks at David Thornley's description of him as a "*Fabian Socialist*". In this reviewer's opinion that is a perfect description of Downey's political orientation. My impression is that he hoped that wise and just parliamentarians could implement socialist policies which would encounter no resistance from extra-parliamentary social forces.

There is one anecdote, which reveals so much about the author. Before joining *The Irish Times* Group, and after he had

worked for the *Carlow Nationalist*, he found himself in the employ of the *Evening Press* under—of all people—Douglas Gageby. In one of his reports he mixed up the date of departure of the American Ambassador, which caused other journalists and well-wishers to miss this event. This *faux pas* drove his Editor into a fury and Downey was docked a week's pay. This didn't bother Downey so much because he was a man about town with no financial commitments and modest tastes. But what really annoyed him was that Gageby also denied him the perk of writing theatre reviews for the newspaper.

This anecdote does not reflect well on Gageby, but I wonder did it ever occur to Downey that it was precisely because the docking of a week's pay didn't bother him that Gageby decided to impose the additional unjust sanction?

Another interesting aspect of this incident is that the left winger Downey refused to seek a remedy for the injustice by going to his Trade Union. Instead an unofficial delegation of senior journalists unsuccessfully appealed his case. I would call this a very Fabian attitude on the part of Downey.

The reader is left with the impression that this event had long-term repercussions.

Of course, while office politics can be interesting, a journalist such as Downey has a ringside seat at the unfolding of history. Therefore it is no surprise that his autobiography should reflect on significant political events. He rightly gives prominence to the Arms Conspiracy Trial of 1970, which in my view was a determinant event in the subsequent evolution of Irish politics. There is no doubt that Downey is a first-class journalist with a keen eye for detail when commenting on political events. However, on this occasion as with others, he pulls back from drawing—what appears to this reviewer—the obvious conclusions.

Downey dissents from the conventional wisdom on the Arms Trial, which is that Jack Lynch succeeded in thwarting a *coup d'état* and thereby saved the democratic institutions of the State. This widely held view is, of course, complete rubbish as Downey ably demonstrates. The Minister for Defence, Jim Gibbons, with the full knowledge of the Taoiseach Jack Lynch, authorised the attempted importation. In the light of this, Downey is correct to suggest that Colonel Hefferon and Captain Kelly were shamefully treated. The only disagreement I would have with Downey's description of what happened is the implication that Kelly, although never disobeying orders, was something of a loose cannon. This was the impression that Gibbons wished to convey at the trial by suggesting that he had decided to move Kelly sideways and out of the Army into the Customs Department.

But a reading of Angela Clifford's exhaustive and definitive work on the subject shows that this was done with the cooperation and prior consultation of Kelly because of the covert nature of his assignment.

A more serious disagreement I have is with Downey's conclusion. He says that an attempted illegal importation took place. But, since it was authorised by the Minister for Defence with the knowledge of the Taoiseach, it is difficult to see how the action was illegal, unless one accepts a higher authority than the Irish State in this matter.

Downey also has fascinating descriptions of British politicians from his time as the London Editor of *The Irish Times*. In particular, I found the following passage very interesting in the light of what we know now:

"I also had several meetings with Whitelaw and his chief press secretary, Keith McDowall, together or separately. My relationship with them was smoothed by their appreciation of my knowledge of British political history, but there was a much more obvious factor. It was greatly in Whitelaw's interest that the most influential newspaper in Ireland should support his work. He knew my own sympathies, which of course lay with him. McDowall was less sure about Gageby. In the hope of improving relations, Whitelaw invited Gageby and myself, along with McDowall, to lunch in Buck's Club, an establishment inner sanctum in St James's" (p146).

This meeting took place in 1972. It is interesting that one of the most powerful British politicians of the time should consider it important to meet the Editor of *The Irish Times*. We know now that the British considered Gageby to be the fly in the ointment. To his great credit—and Downey's disappointment—the "white nigger" was singularly unimpressed with the meeting and took the opportunity of his London trip to buy a new angling rod.

In my opinion Downey has a tendency to give the British the benefit of the doubt. This can be seen in his discussion of the sacking of the Garda Commissioner Edmund Garvey in 1978. The Government Press Secretary, Frank Dunlop, approached Gageby and Downey asking *The Irish Times* to support the sacking on the grounds that Garvey was a British spy. Gageby

refused to go along with this and wrote an editorial suggesting that the Government should do its own dirty work. Perhaps Gageby was not wrong in his attitude, but it does not follow that Garvey was not a spy. Downey, in my opinion, too easily dismisses the possibility but does not give a convincing alternative explanation for the sacking. There is concrete evidence that the Gardai had been penetrated by British Intelligence in the 1970s. In the history of the State Eoin O'Duffy is the only other Garda Commissioner that has been sacked. I can only assume that, at the very least, there must have been a very substantial reason for Garvey's sacking.

But the most interesting part of the book is the insight Downey gives on *The Irish Times*. Some of the information is well-known but the author gives extra details. And, as with so much in life, it is the little extras that make all the difference! So, for instance, in another book Tony Gray tells us in passing that a General Manager of *The Irish Times* in the 1950s, Pussy O'Mahony, might have had some connection with the Black and Tans during the War of Independence. But this detail is lost among other details such as O'Mahony being the father of the well-known comedian Dave Allen; and the "Pussy" nickname arising from him once encouraging a stray cat to lick milk from a saucer by doing the act himself.

Downey, gives these details, but is much more straightforward on this character's political background. He says that O'Mahony was a Catholic Unionist who fought with the Auxiliaries during the War of Independence. He also served with the British Army in Burma and Palestine. It seems that from *The Irish Times's* point of view O'Mahony was a "good Catholic".

Conor Brady in his book says that Douglas Gageby was in the Murphy Club, which seems to have been a discussion group in which influential figures in Irish life were invited to talk about the issues of the day to its exclusive membership. Downey adds the significant detail that Murphy was none other than Russell Murphy—the Chartered accountant who stole money from his celebrity clients such as Gay Byrne, Hugh Leonard and possibly Douglas Gageby. This might explain why Gageby was anxious to come out of retirement in 1977 and then remain as Editor long after he was expected to; notwithstanding the windfall he had received three years earlier on the creation of *The Irish Times Trust*.

It is well-known that one prominent journalist from *The Irish Times* had Official Sinn Fein political sympathies. But Downey tells us that Dick Walsh was a political intimate of Cathal Goulding, the Chief of Staff of the IRA, and was able to show Downey the transcript of the

court martial (*in absentia*) of Seamus Costello. One wonders if Costello himself saw the transcript before the sentence of death was carried out by the Official IRA!

On other radicals working in the newspaper and elsewhere Downey has this to say:

"When the IRA and Sinn Féin split into two wings in 1970, almost all the 'republicans' among the *Irish Times* journalists went with the misnamed 'Official' faction. At least half a dozen were members of Official Sinn Féin; others were sympathisers. To my knowledge, only one or two inclined towards the Provisionals, contrary to the widespread canard that the media were full of Provo sympathisers. On the wilder shores, there were of course a couple of Trotskyists, possibly influenced more by their hatred of Stalinism than by communist ideology, but no Maoists. The Maoists of the time, by the way, embraced the 'two nations' theory and demanded 'national rights' for the Northern Protestants. The Soviet leaders, by contrast, wanted a united Irish 'workers' and small farmers' republic'. They patronised the Officials, soon to become known as the Stickies, in preference to the minuscule Irish communist party, and supplied them with funds. By then, the Stickies had moved from revolutionism to Stalinism and from there to constitutional politics and to what their former comrades considered an acceptance of the 'two nations' theory" (p102).

Downey is not afraid to rattle a few more skeletons in *The Irish Times* cupboard. He tells us that *The Irish Times Trust* was a "tax dodge". Unfortunately, he does not go into any details. *The Irish Times* has denied that the Group benefited from the Trust's charitable status. But, even if this is true, it does not exclude the possibility that the individual Directors, who sold their shares in 1974, received a tax benefit or that the Bank of Ireland received such a benefit for lending to a company controlled by the Trust. He also says that, when Gageby returned as Editor in 1977, the Bank of Ireland wrote off a loan of £1 million pounds, an enormous sum at the time.

Downey refers to my book on *The Irish Times* a number of times and agrees with much of my analysis of the "white nigger" letter. But in my view he pulls his punches. For example, he says about *The Irish Times's* dominant figure Major McDowell:

"I have no doubt that his intentions were good, but it is grotesque to imagine that *The Irish Times* should be influenced, contrary to the editor's opinions and his independence in editorial policy, by 'guidance' from the British Foreign Office."

The good "intentions" at the beginning of the sentence have the effect of mitigating the "grotesque" nature of what McDowell was attempting. But in my opinion McDowell's good intentions are completely irrelevant when weighed against the overwhelming fact of his attempt to place

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the newspaper under the influence of a Foreign State.

When I was writing my book I became aware that it was widely known in official circles that McDowell was working for the British. Downey confirms this in the following passage:

"McDowell held conversations with Irish civil servants as well as British officials, and some of the Irish civil servants assumed that he passed on information which he received from them. They assumed, in addition, that he was in touch with British Military Intelligence, something that would hardly be surprising in a former British legal officer who was a member of the Army and Navy Club in London. They exploited what they saw as his naivety and told him what they thought the British wanted to hear" (p162).

I suppose one could make a case that, if it was "assumed" within Irish official circles that McDowell was working for the British, he cannot have been a spy, since a spy works under false pretences. However, it is indisputable that McDowell acted as an agent of the British State. No amount of disparaging comments about his "naivety" can obscure that essential fact. And, in fairness, Downey is aware of the significance of the 1969 correspondence:

"If the contents of the Gilchrist letter {i.e. the white nigger letter—JM} had become public at the time, readers would have lost all confidence in the paper and the position of the chairman or the editor, or both, could have become untenable" (p163).

The position of the Editor (Gageby), of course, would only have become untenable if McDowell had refused to go.

Nor does Downey deny McDowell's influence on Fergus Pyle, who was Editor after Douglas Gageby's first stint ended in 1974:

"Nevertheless, it is an indisputable fact that under Pyle's reign between 1974 and 1977 the tone of the paper's Northern coverage, and of its editorials on the subject, changed palpably" (p162).

And:

"The most senior members of the staff were dismayed by his {i.e. Pyle's—JM} habit of rushing down the stairs to the 'bunker' for consultations with McDowell. We assumed that he was getting instructions, and his standing was undermined. Long afterwards McDowell told me that the usual subject of their conversations was Pyle's contract, but the terms of a contract do not often require weekly discussion over a period of three years" (p163).

Downey, however, doubts that McDowell had much influence on Gageby. This has also been this reviewer's impression. However, there are more ways to influence editorial policy than exercising influence on the Editor. McDowell's influence, even during Gageby's time, was pervasive. The book gives the impression that he had a key influence over the

appointment of staff and the allocation of their duties. For example Downey doesn't consider it in the least bit strange that McDowell would instruct him (the Deputy Editor) on tasks which he wanted performed. Apparently, there was no requirement to route such instructions through the Editor.

My impression is that in the second period of his editorship (1977 to 1986) Gageby became isolated from his staff. This might have been a reflection of the diminishing influence of his right-hand man Donal Foley, who died in 1981.

An important figure in this story was Ken Gray, a long-time employee of the newspaper who was the Personnel Director. Downey refers to him as "*McDowell's representative on earth*". Another way of putting it would be that he was McDowell's office spy. Kevin Myers in his essay in the book *Bright Brilliant Days* says that Gageby used to send Gray to him to complain about his articles. When Myers refused to alter them Gray used to say: "*Good man*".

Downey has this extraordinary and revealing account of how *The Irish Times* was run. The passage relates to when Downey was standing in as Editor for Gageby, who was on holidays:

"...Gageby telephoned me from France at least once a day, questioning me closely about what I was doing and getting in the way of my work. Ken Gray, to his visible discomfort, had taken a temporary desk in the editor's office to watch me on McDowell's behalf. Evidently he told the chairman about the calls, for McDowell vetoed them the second time round. But it was disgraceful and humiliating for me to be treated in this fashion" (p205).

There are three things that strike me about this passage. Firstly, it shows the dominance of McDowell. Secondly, it shows the weakness of Gageby. Thirdly, it reveals the very strange relationship, which Downey had with the two men.

Downey finds it "*disgraceful and humiliating*" that Gageby should ring him from France. Presumably he interpreted this as Gageby not having confidence in his ability to do the Editor's job. But another interpretation might be that the reason why Gageby could not relax during his holiday was that he felt that his own position was under threat. Elsewhere in the book Downey suggests that Gageby didn't resign voluntarily in 1986 but was pushed by McDowell.

It may or may not be "*disgraceful and humiliating*" for a Deputy Editor to have his Editor issue instructions to him while on holidays. But in my view it is certainly "*disgraceful and humiliating*" for the Editor of a newspaper to have a Chief Executive order him not to make phone calls to his Deputy Editor!

And what are we to make of Ken Gray's role in all of this? Downey seems to accept

that it is part of the natural order of things for a Chief Executive to spy in the crudest way imaginable on his subordinates. He doesn't appear to find this at all "disgraceful and humiliating".

Another illustration of McDowell's dominance is the description of proceedings at the Trust when Downey stood in for Gageby as Editor:

"...I appeared before the trust as acting editor during Gageby's holidays. The proceedings were so tightly controlled that I was not given an opportunity to answer, for example, questions about the paper's Northern policy. At one meeting I could hear people asking one another 'what did he say?' As I opened my mouth to explain matters more loudly and at greater length, McDowell called a halt" (p205).

Downey confirms what we know from Conor Brady's book *Up With The Times* that the Editor appeared alone in front of the Governors of the Trust, which was composed of McDowell and his cronies.

But the most dramatic part of the book is Downey's battle to succeed Gageby. The fact that many readers will know that he never became Editor does not make the description of the twists and turns leading up to his great disappointment any less compelling. He says that I overstated his case in my book by describing him as the *de facto* Editor in Gageby's last year in the job. Perhaps, but his failure to become Editor reads more like a sacking than an unsuccessful attempt to obtain promotion.

Downey writes brilliantly about his disappointment, but again I would have to say that I completely disagree with his analysis. In my view his personal dislike of Gageby distorts his understanding of what actually happened. In particular—and contrary to Downey's firm conviction—in my view Gageby had little or no influence on who succeeded him as editor. That is the indisputable legal position. The Board of *The Irish Times* appoints the Editor. However, the Trust controlled the Board. Also, Major McDowell was legally entitled to veto any editorial appointments that were made. However, this was never likely to be required since McDowell was the dominant influence on the Trust. Why veto your own appointment?

Gageby, on the other hand, was never a member of the Trust (not even for a brief period as Downey suggests). The outgoing Editor's only influence was as a member of the Board of *The Irish Times*. However, this was negligible since the Governors of the Trust had an inbuilt majority on the board of *The Irish Times*.

That is how things worked in theory and it is also how they worked in practice. I have read an interview with Geraldine Kennedy in which she says that Conor Brady advised her that the key influence in the appointment of the Editor was the Trust. And even Downey, in spite of

himself, shows that Major McDowell (the dominant person on the Trust) was pulling the strings at every step of the way. McDowell arranged for Downey, Brady and others not to be present at the Board meeting at which the Editor would be appointed. Downey rightly points out that McDowell had no legal right to exclude Directors from attending Board meetings, but it seems that he was used to having his way and nobody was prepared to challenge him. Of course, if anyone had challenged him it would not have made the slightest difference to the appointment of the Editor. But it seems that McDowell was anxious to draw a discreet veil over where power really lay when important decisions had to be made.

Part of the reason for Downey's animosity towards Gageby was the latter's failure to keep his promises. At different times he had promised Donal Foley and Downey himself the editorship, but neither of them ever wore the crown. In my view it is possible that Gageby was not guilty of bad faith or dishonesty. He was wrong to promise the editorship to anyone simply because it was not in his gift.

Downey's failure to become editor was a personal tragedy because he had served the newspaper so loyally and had been the presumed heir to Gageby for so long. In such circumstances it is only natural for him to wonder if he could have done anything to avoid the devastating disappointment.

In 1979—seven years before Gageby retired—Gene Kerrigan wrote a long article for *Magill* magazine on *The Irish Times*. On the subject of Gageby's successor he wrote what now appears to have been a remarkably prescient comment:

"The front runner is Assistant Editor Jim Downey, who is well respected by the staff. However, a lengthy stay by Gageby may reduce the chances for Downey, who won't learn any more by waiting for several years. The reverse is true of Conor Brady, whose job in charge of promotion and of the "Focus" page puts him in a strong position. He is the dark horse in the race and his chances improve with every year Gageby stays" (*Magill*, December 1979).

Downey himself sensed that the prize was slipping from his grasp but felt unable to do anything about it. At one point Gageby was incapacitated as a result of breaking his leg while walking by a riverbank. Downey's friend Bruce Williamson suggested that this was an opportunity.

"He (i.e. Bruce Williamson) told me that this gave me my chance and I must seize it. But how? How, in practical terms? And how, consistently with remaining loyal to Gageby? He had no idea, and neither did I" (p205).

It seems that Downey did not consider any plan *inconsistent* with remaining loyal to Gageby. He was therefore unlike Alec Newman who was the number two to the famous *Irish Times* Editor R.M. Smyllie in the 1940s and early 1950s, before becoming Editor himself in 1954. Tony Gray in his biography of Smyllie says that Newman was disloyal to the Editor and also undermined Jack White, who was *The Irish Times* Board's preferred successor to Smyllie.

Of course there is no guarantee that if Downey had behaved differently he would have obtained the editorship. For one thing Major McDowell had far greater control over the editorial side of the business than *The Irish Times* Board had in the 1950s. For another, Conor Brady was a far tougher corporate operator than Jack White.

We all have some influence over our destiny, but for the most part we are the playthings of the Gods. And in the world of *The Irish Times* in 1986 there was only one God! The question of whether Downey could have exercised greater influence to obtain the editorship can be reformulated by asking if he could have done more to ingratiate himself to Major McDowell.

The manner in which the news was announced to Downey had a *Kafkaesque* quality to it:

"On Monday, McDowell met me in the offices of a firm of accountants in Harcourt Street. The large building appeared to be deserted. We went upstairs, past empty rooms, into a corridor in which he had some difficulty finding the right office. He fumbled with keys. At last we got ourselves inside and seated. He muttered something about the necessary procedures having been observed, then he came, uncharacteristically, quickly to the point: 'We're giving the job to the younger man'.

"He filled the silence by asking me if I would like a shoulder to cry on. He said that he had Bruce Williamson standing by, knowing how close I was to him. Or perhaps I would just like to be left alone in the room for little while? For a mad moment I thought of asking him whether he meant to leave me with a revolver and a bottle of whiskey. Then I pulled myself together and told him that I would say only two things. One, I would do and say nothing undignified. Two, he must tell Gageby that when he made the announcement to the editorial staff, as he shortly would, on no account must he mention my name. He replied that this would be difficult. I said that, difficult or not, I insisted on it" (p219).

This is a carefully controlled and managed exit even to the extent of directing him to who he could turn to in *The Irish Times* for consolation. Was Bruce Williamson told the news before Downey?

Later on, Downey says that McDowell instructed him not to give radio or television interviews.

It is difficult to understand Downey's response to this traumatic event. For example, why did he feel it necessary to say that he would do and say nothing undignified? Why not keep McDowell guessing? More extraordinary is Downey's reaction to his sacking as Deputy Editor and his dismissal from the Board. He says that all of this was done in a "light hearted" way (p222). Perhaps the trauma of the event had disabled him from thinking clearly. He seems to have been more concerned about inessentials, such as how Gageby was to announce the appointment of Conor Brady as editor, rather than his own basic employment rights.

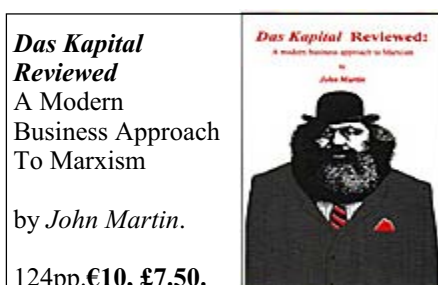
McDowell claimed that he was entitled to dismiss Downey from the Board of *The Irish Times*. This might well have been true given the powers that were accorded to him in 1974. But no legal clause within *The Irish Times* structure could override employment law. Given that there was no evidence of wrong-doing or incompetence, McDowell was not entitled to dismiss Downey from his position as Deputy Editor. Nevertheless, Downey meekly accepted the choices that were given to him: Washington, London or early retirement at 53. Exile or dismissal! Also, it was not enough that Downey himself be dignified, McDowell threatened that his "generosity" depended on Downey "kicking" staff sympathetic to him in line.

However, after a number of years of penance in London he applied successfully for early retirement on terms that were more favourable than McDowell had originally offered.

Life after *The Irish Times* had its ups and downs. He set up the *Nation* magazine which although unsuccessful he thinks was influential. From there he became a leader writer with the *Irish Independent*. He comments that this newspaper was in many ways more professional and less self indulgent than *The Irish Times*.

Although this reviewer disagrees with much of Downey's analysis, this book provides a valuable insight into *The Irish Times* as well as Irish society. It will be read after some of the current crop of political bestsellers have been long forgotten.

John Martin



Does
It
Up

Stack
?

WINTER 2009

So the 'Big Freeze' is over. It finished on or about 14th January 2010 but the consequences will be with us for a long time to come. Like many other capital expenditure projects, road building and road maintenance was done so as to put maximum profits into contractors' pockets. Formerly road surfaces were tarmacadam. Carefully graduated stones were rolled and tarred and cambered so that rainwater ran off quickly. However during the Celtic Tiger years the local Council engineers and Council Managers put the road work out to contract and they specified 'Blacktop' surfaces, which look great on a fine day but which do not shed rainwater—a very necessary quality in our climate—and what is worse is the 'Blacktop' cannot deal with frost either. It just disintegrates when the frost thaws out. But the 'Blacktop' was highly value-added. It was manufactured elsewhere and delivered to the spreading machines on the road. With this layout eliminated there was therefore great profit for the manufacturers, cutting out labour and expert road-builders, not to mention great profits also for the local Council Managers, engineers and their political bosses.

And the road grit had to be imported from Spain to help with this weather crisis. Six thousand tonnes of it came into Foynes. The only way out of this recession is to export more and import less—and our Council Managers import road-grit into Ireland of all places with its manifest quantities of the stuff. Every Irish agricultural contractor and most farmers possess grit spreaders and de-icing machines—also known as fertiliser spreaders and crop sprayers and all these machines are idle in December and January every year and therefore could have been hired very cheaply. But no—the whole economy came to a standstill instead. The Government went on holidays, Transport Minister Dempsey included who then went on to farcically 'get stranded' in Malta.

WATER SHORTAGES

To be short of water—in the middle of this Winter in particular—is surely indicative of really bad governance. Blame was put on householders running water to keep pipes from freezing. But how about the Councils who know and have known that they have leakages of up to 68% in some cases and are offsetting the problem onto the poor domestic dwellers as per usual. This is leakage of treated water, fit for drinking. Dublin's treatment plants are

working almost 100% of capacity all the time. Paris treatment plants work at 50% capacity normally. Water is being rationed in Dublin now. This is morally and physically damaging the economy. Again the lethargy and inaction of the Government is staggeringly awful. Who is in charge of all of this? It just does not stack up.

FRAUDULENT POLITICIANS

We do know what some politicians do with their time—they fraudulently fill out expense claims, not only for expenses genuinely incurred but not properly incurred on taxpayer's behalf, but also for fictitious expenses. What is the reluctance at official level to putting politicians behind bars for defrauding the citizens? There are several well documented cases. FAS executives were found to have done it. A Minister (who it seems is not a pianist—whether or not that is relevant) claimed €5,000 for having a piano in her suite on a US trip. Also, Aer Lingus Board of Directors who voted themselves first class flights around the world whether they are on legitimate Aer Lingus business or not! That is fraud. Fraud is staring us in the face, why do we tolerate it? Is it that fiddling, as it is euphemistically called, is so widespread in Ireland that perhaps most of the citizens are into some fraud or another? Why else is it so blatantly tolerated?

CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT

Of course, we are all keeping very bad company. We casually read in the newspapers that on the one hand the Supreme Court awarded FII plc €41 million in damages against DCC plc for insider dealing by DCC and its associates. Mr. Jim Flavin was a Director of both FII and DCC and it was he who conveyed the inside information from FII to DCC. Mr. Bill Shipsey SC, who investigated on behalf of the Director of Corporate Enforcement, has concluded in his Report that the actions of DCC and Mr. Jim Flavin were "*inadvertent breaches of the law*". Was Mr. Shipsey saying Mr. Flavin was a fool or a criminal? Ah no—he was not. What he said was that Mr. Flavin and the Directors of DCC had sought out legal advice and had acted in it, so the law was broken "*inadvertently*". That does not stack up at all.

The Directors of DCC plc were very experienced company directors. They included Mr. Michael Buckley, former Director and Chief Executive of AIB plc. They knew the law on insider dealing. Yet they sought legal advice on a circumvention of the law and the advising lawyer told them to go ahead and told them also that they would not be breaking the law. The Supreme Court thought otherwise after a very expensive court case. The

lawyers have made a lot of money out of this.

What Mr. Bill Shipsey SC has decided is in effect that a person pays for legal advice and follows that legal advice in doing a wrong thing then no guilt attaches to the person whatsoever. This decision could have awful consequences in itself if followed by the Courts but of course it is not the law. In the meantime, and whatever about the guilt or otherwise of the DCC Directors, what about the guilt of the nameless advising lawyer who advises on the wrongdoing? Somebody was guilty of major wrongdoing, if not DCC then it must be the lawyer who gave the wrong advice. Lawyers have immunity from liability if they lose a law-case but they do not and should not have immunity for giving wrong advice. Will the lawyer who gave DCC the wrong advice be sued or put behind bars? Will he . . . ? Mr. Bill Shipsey SC was indeed "*a safe pair of hands*". When the ball was passed to him, he knew what was required.

Ireland's efforts to export products and services have been dealt a massive blow by this recent decision. The message it sends out is that we defend wrongdoing by members of a protected class of person. It shows foreign business people that it can be dangerous and unpredictable to do business with the Irish. Irish laws may be unenforceable, and fraud and deceit has become a common way of life in Ireland. Not a good country for Foreign Direct Investment. The demonstrated lack of ethics among bankers and regulators is only the rotten tip of a very rotten civic and public carcass.

USA & AFGHANISTAN

For weeks and weeks the news media had the story that President Obama would send 30,000 extra troops into Afghanistan. This news was not popular in the US so Obama delayed and delayed the announcement. What was he waiting for? Well we found out—he was waiting for a good day to release bad news and it inevitably arrived when Mrs. Tiger Woods beat up the great golf player and her husband Tiger with a golf club for his alleged infidelity. All the media became full of the news and President Obama made his announcement which, under the umbrella of the more interesting Tiger Woods story, sort of faded into the inside pages of the newspapers. That's the way war is waged now. I suppose some would call it the Alistair Campbell way and you know what—it works.

NAVIGATION

It is important to all of us to arrive safely at our destinations. President Obama is pursuing line-by-line cuts and one of these is he signed off on a US Department

of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill that effectively kills off the US Loran-C system from January 2010. This decision sent some terror to maritime navigational organisations because, as Loran-C was being phased out, the new system eLoran crucially needs the Loran-C infrastructure which would be converted to eLoran. eLoran is important because it has radically different modes of failure to other global navigational systems (GNSS) such as Galileo, GPS etc. eLoran would be a vital back up service to GNSS and pressure from US Coast-Guard may yet result in the Loran-C infrastructure being preserved.

The EU is pursuing Galileo as the European system of GNSS, but the British are dragging their heels in its implementation. Meantime the Russian Federal Space Agency is pushing ahead with their GNSS system which is GLONASS. Three satellites are set to be launched in February 2010, plus three in December giving GLONASS the twenty four which it needs for global coverage, putting them in second place in the world of GNSS. Galileo is aiming to be operational in 2013 but experts say it may be 2014 before their installation of satellites are up and running.

Meanwhile President Obama has also cut the budget in the Department of Defence Bill by \$97 million in the allocation for the next generation ground system to support GPS (called the OCX). Because GPS is US-controlled, it is important for navigators to have other worldwide systems available on the Bridge of a Ship. GPS was intentionally seriously debased, i.e. wrong, at a time in the Iraq wars when the US wanted to confuse ship movements.

None of this GNSS system was of much use in tracking the MV Arctic Sea last July. It departed Pietessaari, Finland loaded with timber for Bejaia, Algeria. The Arctic Sea was boarded off Sweden by ten men claiming to be Swedish Police as it passed along its sea-coast and the crew were assaulted. Off Dover/Calais the on-board transmitter was switched off or disabled and the ship "*vanished*" so to speak. Piracy was mentioned in the news media. On 12th August 2009 President Dmitri Medvedev ordered three Russian warships to find 'Arctic Sea' which they did, near the Cape Verde Islands off West Africa. The rumours have it that it was carrying S-300 long range Russian missiles for Iran. For this purpose, it would have been on-course around Cape of Good Hope for the Persian Gulf and Iran. The latest heard of 'Arctic Sea' was it headed into the Mediterranean Sea under Russian guard. And President Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel—on September 7th 2009 made a secret visit to Moscow. Interesting stuff goes on out at sea *and sometimes it does stack up.*

Michael Stack. ©

UDA Disarm: so what?

The Ulster Defence Association apparently laid down their arms on 6th January. They must have been disappointed that their declaration was over-shadowed by the Robinson affair. But that is appropriate: the UDA has no longer any political clout.

There was some trivial reporting of the UDA story in the *Irish Times* (I didn't see the 6 Counties newspaper coverage). In the London *Guardian* it was sidelined to one column alongside the four columns of the Robinson story. Amusingly, the next page of the *Guardian* carried the story that both John Profumo and Lord Lambton had been admitted to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

My opinion is that the Robinson affair holds greater political significance than the UDA story. But Lambton's antics and particularly Profumo's (as Minister for War—before that department used the euphemism of 'Defence') were of far greater significance to the British state: it was at the height of the Cold War. The Robinsons do not endanger the state. It would be flattering to say that with the Robinsons the political culture of N Ireland has caught up with the sexuality of British politics—50 years late.

UDA: WHO WERE THEY?

What would have been interesting is if any of the press had reviewed the history of the UDA and the other Loyalist paramilitaries. And also their connections with some of those who are now 'respectable'

Unionists. It is often said that Loyalist violence was a response to Republican violence, but the fact is that Unionist politicians stimulated the revival of paramilitarism at a time when republicanism was quiescent. The object was to stymie some mild reforms contemplated by premier Terence O'Neill and to discourage the O'Neill/Lemass Talks.

Republican politicians and organizations have been constantly subject to scrutiny for their associations with the 'Troubles': many books and newspapers articles have delved into that. And indeed Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams may not have been totally forthcoming about their past histories, but the origins of some Unionist politicians should surely be subject to the same degree of investigation.

One of the few books which I have kept of the scores written about the conflict is David Boulton's *The UVF 1966-73: an anatomy of Loyalist rebellion*. Sadly, it seems to be out of print, although available on Amazon. Large parts of it are claimed to be based on statements made to the RUC and witness testimony in court. These relate to the Silent Valley bombing and sectarian murders in Belfast in 1966: years before the IRA recreated itself in response to the events of 1969. Apparently individuals mentioned there were also formative to the UDA.

I do not know whether the Rev Ian Paisley has ever refuted statements about him made in that book.

Tom Doherty

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THE DEARLY DEPARTED

Media kerfuffle and a body:
a British drug mule smuggled to China
heroin, though to the UK minor.
Cathay too strong to send in the squaddie.
Human rights as superiority.
(what about a few for Afghanistan
where Hamid Karzai is their courtesan).
Is Beijing's law a mere mendacity.
British East India Company
exported opium for a century,
Royal Navy protected felony,
years past when they were rich with colony.
Qing Dynasty found it unsavoury.
China smells corpse of old hegemony.

Wilson John Haire
30th December, 2009

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BUDGET continued

The retired public servant is now sitting pretty—as the value of their pension has shot up.

The cuts to the pay of those still in the public service mean some retired public servants are now commanding a pension of 60% to 70% of their final salary.

In addition, because of what is known as pay parity, they get a pension rise of the same percentage as any salary increases paid to their successors.

In contrast, those still in employment in the public service have suffered two hits—the pensions levy and the December Budget pay cuts.

And deflation has left retired public servants with huge amounts of disposable income.

Unlike young families, they will not be burdened with a large mortgage and childcare costs of €700 to €800 per child a month.

Retired public servants are the real winners in the downturn, but families are less able to stand up for themselves.

That is why the 'untouchable' retired public servants have been spared, but the 'easy-touch' families got hit in this Budget—just as they did in the last two.

It seems manifestly unfair that three pay cuts, starting from salaries as low as €30,000, for those still in work in the public sector, when their retired colleagues escape unscathed.

According to the ICTU, about 44% of the 350,000 public servants earn below €30,000 with 57% taking home less than €40,000.

=====

"MOST of the country's 340,000 public sector workers will get a pay rise next year—wiping out a quarter of the wage cuts imposed in the Budget.

"Public servants will be paid increases next year worth an extra €230m to their pay packets, which will counter the €1 billion Budget cuts.

"The pay system in the public sector allows most workers to go up the ladder each year, meaning their gross salaries increase on an annual basis.

(Irish Independent-14.12.2009).

=====

PROPERTY TAX

"Finance Minister Brian Lenihan last night revealed his plans to achieve €2 billion more in cutbacks next year through water charges, a property tax and public sector reforms" (*Irish Independent*, 10.12.2009).

But don't hold your breath!

"It may, therefore, be more difficult to sell the ideal of another tough Budget to

the public next December.... even if the dreaded property tax is postponed" (Brendan Keenan, *Irish Independent*, January, 2010).

Yes, the "*dreaded property tax*"!

When the second home levy, Local Government (Charges) Act, 2009, went through the Dail in July last year, Christy O'Sullivan, the Fianna Fail TD for Cork South-West described "*the law under which the controversial new charge came into existence as 'rushed legislation that is not working and that is not going to work'*" (*Irish Examiner*, 26.11.2009).

The Department of the Environment initially predicted €40 million would be raised; by December 9 last, €51 million was paid, and more coming.

"Although the charge has been paid on 240,000 properties it may be eligible on up to 400,000" (*Irish Examiner*-26.11.2009).

If Minister Lenihan is having difficulties with the proposed property tax, he might consult with Iris Robinson. The Robinson retreat-home in Florida, USA is valued for tax purposes at \$445,000.

They pay \$10,000 a year in Property Tax. If it's good enough for the Robinsons' and Florida, surely it is good enough for Dublin.

CAR SCRAPPAGE SCHEME

The 9th December 2009 Budget again demonstrated the total lack of innovation or vision, in other words, reform! The last thing we need in this country is more cars, it is damn near more car-dependent than the United States. Even the Green Party couldn't grasp the opportunity at a time of scarce resources and financial difficulty to suggest even a six-month embargo on the import of all non-commercial vehicles. What a boon for our exchequer figures and our external debts. But no!

Car scrappage was done on the pretext of "*reducing potentially dangerous cars on the road*", according to the Finance Minister.

But surely we have had an objective NCT test here for the past 10 years for all older cars. The second mantra of the car barons is, of course, their unquestioned trump-card, "*reduced emissions*".

Well, any car produced for the past 15 years or so is a very low-level polluter and its continued use is environmentally more sustainable than squashing it and introducing a new model with 20,000 worth of carbon footprint in its making.

There is no gain for Irish jobs in this move. We don't make cars: this is a subsidy for Britain, Germany, France and elsewhere. The few remaining gentlemen in suits in the glass emporia of the big dealers will shift whatever is bought in quick time ... game over. The people who will be

tempted to purchase, I suggest, will be mainly "marginal" buyers whose money would otherwise have been spent on purchases most likely of greater benefit to the economy and jobs here.

The basic philosophy of subventing an industry by subsidising premature destruction of its goods is flawed. Why not squash old fridges then if new ones are a bit better on energy use or, for that matter, let's have a scrappage scheme for the old three-piece suites while we're at it.

.....

Press Release ((3.1.2010)

Peace And Economic Stability

The report in today's *Irish Examiner* (3.1.10) by Mary Regan that the Irish Government had spent almost €10 million in just three years protecting US troops passing through Shannon Airport to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is just the latest example of an Irish political elite wasting Irish taxpayers money and leading this country deeper and deeper into an even greater economic disaster, one that will make the current situation in a few years look like the good old days.

Roger Cole, Chair of Peace & Neutrality Alliance said:

"What the people of Ireland want is peace and economic stability. What the Fianna Fail dominated government coalitions have given the Irish people is war and economic disaster. All they offer now is not just more of the same but an economic Armageddon by continuing to support the imperialist Bush/Obama wars in Afghanistan/Iraq/ Pakistan and now Yemen. The reality is Obama by pursuing the neo-liberal economic and militarist policies of President Bush in favour of the US bankers and its military-industrial complex is continuing to destroy the families of middle America as can be seen from the work of Elizabeth Warren which show a massive decline in the disposable income of the US family between 1970 and 2007. They are being sacrificed at the altar of war and greed, and the Irish government are doing the same to the Irish people. The *Irish Examiner* by drawing attention this wasted €10 allocated to war is to be congratulated. But the rest of the Irish media is totally silent. The usual "talking heads" on RTE and Newstalk are totally silent. The absolute reality is that the US and its vassal states like Ireland, just don't have the money to wage these wars any longer and if economic stability is to be achieved then those wars have to end, and this process should start by terminating the use of Shannon Airport in them. PANA has advocated this policy from 2001 because we believe that it is in the best interests not just of the people of Iraq and Afghanistan but of the US, as well as Ireland, Britain and the other vassal states. Ignoring this reality will not make it disappear or stop it from happening. Only peace will bring stability and economic recovery and PANA intends to continue to make that case via the democratic process."

web: www.pana.ie <http://lists.pana.ie/lt_t_go.php?i=162&c=MTc3NQ==&l=-http--www.pana.ie>

BUDGET continued

Commissioners.

Participation in the scheme will be capped at 5% of the existing workforce.

SERIOUS REFORM FOR WORKERS

In many respects, Minister Lenihan's proposed 'Universal Social Contribution' is the most serious proposal to come out of the 2010 Budget.

For the PAYE sector, the omens are not good—in the immediate you continue to pay your contribution and witness the decimation of your health benefits, meagre and basic as these are, Dental and Optical. If allowed, he won't stop at that.

A 'low rate' on 'a broad base', says the Minister but not a mention of what benefits.

The employer bodies and economists are as one on the 'penal' 10.75% PRSI charge to employers. This is going to be a 'battle royal'.

Workers don't dispute the necessity of urgent reform, and addressing also the crisis in the health service and Private Health Insurance.

Just how serious some of the anomalies are is provided by the Farm Assist Scheme.

Farm Assist is a means-tested income support scheme for farmers in Ireland. It is similar to Jobseeker's Allowance, but has a more generous means test. In addition, you do not need to be available for work in order to qualify for Farm Assist.

In order to qualify for Farm Assist, you must be a farmer, farming land in the State, aged between 18 and 66 and satisfy a means test. The means test takes account of virtually every form of income but assesses it in different ways and disregards various amounts. There are different rules applying to income from farming and other forms of self-employment, income from certain schemes, income from employment and income from property and capital.

Over 7,000 farmers avail of this scheme, very few of them contributor to PRSI. They receive €196.00 a week, similar to what a worker paying PRSI pays for years, receives.

The silence from the Trade Union movement over the destruction of the PRSI benefit entitlements is extraordinary.

You could be cynical and say that any Ministerial tampering or disembowelment of our PRSI benefit system would set off 'holy war' if it affected the great body of the public service—but this is the whole point: it doesn't.

From April, 1995, all new public service employees were compelled to pay the full rate of PRSI. Those already in the Public Service at that time were not affected by the new increase.

They do pay a contribution of 0.9% and in return are entitled to a limited number of benefits.

The rationale behind the classification of the population into different social insurance classes is related to work status. In the case of civil servants employed prior to 1995, the rationale for not pay the full contribution appears to be that, having secure employment and consequently being unlikely to be unemployed and having adequate occupational pensions, it was unnecessary for them to contribute towards such benefits.

The result is a rather complex system of social insurance classes.

SOFT TARGETS

Households with young children and a mortgage are under huge strain from the recession and hikes in levies in the past two Budgets, while also suffering job losses and pay cuts.

A cut of €16 a month in Child Benefit will remove €192 a year per child from the family budget.

Families with children under five are already reeling from the removal—from the end of November, 2009—of the early Childcare Supplement, which was worth €1,000 a year.

The changes in Child Benefit will hit families hard, particularly as it was tax-free income. A family paying tax at 41% would need to earn an extra €30 a month to make up for the €16 cut per child in the benefit.

Those families spending a lot of money on medicines will also lose out from changes to the drugs payments scheme.

Up to now, the State was picking up the tab for expenditure of more than €100 a month on prescription medicines. The threshold is now €120.

If the family has a medical card, it will now face a 50 cent prescription charge.

PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONERS

The old age pension escaped the Government's axe after Ministers vowed to protect it following a countrywide campaign of protests and petitions.

Conscious of the backlash that followed controversial changes to the medical card regime for over 70s last year, the Government side-stepped anything that might provoke a furious reaction and damage its support among 'grey voters'.

The first and most successful protest sponsored by the ICTU (21.2.2009) resulted in an embarrassing climb-down for the Government on the issue of the medical card for the over-70s.

What a success it proved for the toilers of the land—a medical card for anyone at 70 years or over on €700 or less per week; if you have a spouse this went to €1,400 a week ceiling.

There are tens of thousands of Trade

Unionists who will never attain €700 gross a week while working, not to mind or dream about receiving a pension of €700 a week.

In addition to leaving the state pension intact, all welfare payments to those aged over 66 years will also not suffer cutbacks.

Social and Family Affairs Minister Mary Hanafin claimed the €21 billion Social Welfare budget had been the last thing the Government signed-off on when agreeing the €4 billion in cuts.

She also signalled the axed Christmas Bonus could be revisited come the 2011 Budget, claiming Social Welfare in general would be the first thing to be supported if there's an improvement in the country's finances.

Of course, it will and the full Christmas bonus will be back in time for the 2012 General Election, even if they have to borrow the money from the IMF.

Brian Lenihan told the Dail on Budget Day that the Government was proud of its record of increasing pension rates by 120% over the last 12 years.

"In making adjustments to social welfare rates, we recognise that consumer prices have not declined at the same rate for all groups. Older people have experienced by far the smallest reduction in living costs. For that reason and in recognition of the contribution they made to the State, the Government has decided to leave the State pension unchanged" (Irish Independent, 10.12.2009).

BUDGET & PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONERS

There was definitely a case to pursue some cut in Pension costs particularly those on Public Sector pensions—one of the few groups who are benefiting from the bust.

But the hysterical reaction of pensioners last year to the move to take away medical cards from the over-70s seems to have made this group untouchable in political terms.

90,000 people on public sector pensions are costing €2 billion a year, a figure not dissimilar to what Child Benefit will cost after December's cuts.

Those with a public sector pension will have retired on half their final salary, and have received a tax free lump sum of one and a half times that final salary. They are benefiting from one of the best pensions in the Europe.

This means that a retiring principal officer on €100,000 will have retired with a lump sum of €150,000, and an annual pension of €50,000.

By contrast, a person still working as a principal officer will no longer be earning anything like €100,000 after the imposition of the pensions levy last year and December's pay cut to public servants.

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BUDGET continued

The imposition of the income and health levies means that higher earners are paying between 50% and 54% on the last Euro of income.

A new broadly based "universal social contribution" may be a way to get a much higher number of people into the tax net.

There was no change in the Income Tax rates of 20% and 41%, or in the Tax Credits, or the PRSI ceiling.

The Minister decided to leave the income ceiling on PRSI at €75,036, the level it was raised to in the April, 2009 Budget.

This was despite pressure from the Greens to get rid of the ceiling.

The Green Party had secured agreement in the revised Programme for Government that the PRSI ceiling would be removed.

However, the change to a new "universal social contribution" may mean that the Greens have achieved their aim.

'UNIVERSAL SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION'

Minister Lenihan's plans seem to centre on a new 'universal social contribution' which will be paid by almost all workers—this will come as a real shock to those currently not paying income tax. This contribution will replace the various levies and PRSI, which currently add up to about 10%—but the figure will have to be reduced for lower earners.

The tax base (the number of people who actually pay into the system) is shrinking—last year, 45.7% of the workforce paid no tax, and that going to increase to 47.6% this year.

A thorough overhaul of the PRSI contribution system is long overdue. What began as a relatively simple structure has evolved into an extraordinarily complex system.

It is a measure of that complexity, that within the PRSI system there are no less than ten "classes" covering different categories of employee. Each PRSI contribution class is further divided into three sub-classes. There is even a sub-class for Church of Ireland clergymen.

These sub-classes represent different bands of weekly earnings and categories of people within each earnings band. The result is that an employer paying wages to an employee has potentially to choose from more than 30 possible permutations in order to determine the rate of PRSI applicable.

The situation is further compounded by the existence of the Health and Income Levies, each of which is based on different legislation and its own system of rates, thresholds and exemptions.

The issue is not new. As far back as 1993, the then Minister of State at the

Department of Social Welfare commissioned an expert group to produce a report on the integration of the tax and Social Welfare systems.

The group's brief was "to identify the problems arising from the interaction of the tax and Social Welfare systems and to identify the steps necessary to achieve greater co-ordination/integration of the two systems".

The group's report was published in 1996 and considered a broad range of topics.

One of the principles laid down by the group was that the Tax and Social Welfare systems needed to be simpler. At the time the report was presented, the Minister for Social Welfare resolved to work towards that aim. The present state of the PRSI system suggests that this aim was not achieved, if indeed it was ever actually attempted.

Any social insurance system needs to be considered both in terms of the contributions that are paid in and the contributions that are paid out. The budget proposal for a universal social charge suggests a root and branch approach to reforming the contributions system, not just with regard to its administrative complexity, but also a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between contributions and benefits.

When the present system was introduced in 1979 it was, as the name indicates, a "pay-related" social contribution system.

Until the early 1990s, benefits carried a pay-related element in addition to a flat rate payment, so that the level of benefit paid bore at least some relationship to the earnings of, and therefore the contributions paid by, the claimant.

Pay-related additions have long since ceased to be paid and contributory benefits, such as jobseekers' benefit and the state pension are paid at a flat rate for all, regardless of the actual monetary value of the contributions paid by the claimant. It is unlikely that pay-related benefits will ever be reintroduced, given the potential cost involved.

However, some consideration needs to be given to the fact that, while all receive the same pension, some pay a great deal more for it than others. Put simply, there is almost no relationship between what is paid in and what is paid out.

At present, self-employed contributors pay PRSI on every Euro of income, employees generally pay contributions up to the earnings ceiling, while those on less than €352 per week pay no contributions, yet all receive the same level of benefits. This lopsided structure is clearly neither logical nor sustainable.

Mr. Lenihan has so far given only the

broadest indication of what the replacement "universal contribution system" might look like. He has, however, stated that the contribution would be charged at a "low rate" and on a broad base. This would suggest that various exemptions within the current structure would go, including the earnings ceiling (€75,036).

Whatever the form of the contribution, it must continue to generate the same level of revenue as the current PRSI, health and income levies, which would suggest that the scope for lowering the rates is very limited, unless income not currently charged to PRSI is brought into the net.

For example, at present, most PAYE workers are not required to pay PRSI on investment income, which is not the case for the self-employed. The Commission on Taxation has recommended the removal of this anomaly.

Finally, if Mr. Lenihan is feeling truly adventurous, he might wish to avail of this opportunity to consider the introduction of a truly universal social insurance system, which would incorporate the present PRSI system and private health insurance.

Such a system has been identified by many commentators as a means of addressing the funding crisis in the health service.

Whether he chooses to do so remains to be seen, what is clear however, is that the current PRSI system is not sustainable and is in need of urgent reform.

EMPLOYER JOB (PRSI) SCHEME

The cost of employing someone who has been on the Live Register for six months or more will fall by €3,000 in the first year under the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme, which was announced in the Budget on 9th December 2009.

Outlining further details of the scheme yesterday, Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin said it will "make it significantly easier for employers to create jobs and help get Ireland back to work".

Under the scheme, employers who create a new job and fill it with someone who has been unemployed for six months or more will be exempt from making employer PRSI contributions for one year.

Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan said during his Budget speech that €36 million will be allocated to the scheme.

Jobs covered under the scheme must be newly created posts and in addition to current roles in the firm. Employers will not be able to replace existing staff to avail of the scheme.

Under the terms of the scheme the new job must last for a minimum of six months. If it does not, the employer will be required to repay the PRSI-exempt amounts that they received.

Employers who wish to avail of the scheme will also have to provide a current tax clearance certificate from the Revenue

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BUDGET continued

cut Social Welfare rates since Ernest Blythe was Minister for Finance in the 1920s.

Social Welfare recipients will suffer an average cut of 4.1% in income as a result of Budget 2010, with the exception of pensioners. It is noticeable that Child Benefit and unemployment assistance were singled out for particular change.

For new claimants, the weekly rate of Jobseeker's Allowance available for those aged 20-22 will be halved to €100 while the payment for 22-25 year-olds will be reduced by €54 to €150. Equally, all other age groups on unemployment assistance who refuse a training course or job offer will receive a reduced rate of €150.

The reduction of Child Benefit by €16 per month, for the lower and higher rates, will hit families hard. While welfare-dependant families will be compensated through extra qualified child allowances and/or family income supplement, most households will bear the burden of having reduced income. In the absence of affordable childcare, the resulting hardship will be especially difficult.

PRSI DECIMATED

You have to wonder what Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) is, other than just another tax, following the move in the Budget to strip the benefits you get from it.

It is supposed to be a social insurance scheme with your contributions to it entitling you to a range of benefits administered by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

The benefits are determined by the PRSI class you are in. Most private sector workers pay at a rate of 4% on all income up to €75,036. Their employers pay 10.75%.

That is 14.75% of a worker's salary going into this social insurance fund.

But in the Budget it was announced that almost two million people covered by PRSI will no longer be entitled to free dental treatment or spectacles from now on. Harney's handiwork is written all over these vicious health cuts.

For those with sufficient PRSI payments, the Department of Health pays the full cost of an oral examination and gum treatment once a year, and scaling and polishing once every six months.

It also pays a contribution toward the cost of fillings, extractions, dentures and root canal therapy as often as the patients needs it.

There are subsidies towards other treatments—optical and hearing.

It is not hard to figure out the human consequences of these cutbacks. In 2009, 120,000 people opted out of the Voluntary Health Insurance (VHI), some to join other

private health schemes, the majority, part of the half million unemployed can't afford to subscribe any longer and with their families have been forced to opt out, having paid in billions over the years.

It is anticipated that a similar number or more will depart in the coming 12 months.

Yet these people who have contributed billions in PRSI are told by Mr. Lenihan and Madam Harney that they are no longer entitled to health benefits in future—just at the moment when such benefits are most urgently required. However, workers will still continue to contribute the 4%.

The €54 million cost-cutting move means they will be entitled only to a free dental or eye exam from January, with all other benefits—except for hearing aids—abolished this year.

The entitlements to a free clean-and-polish or reduced rates for extractions and fillings is gone after last month.

The Irish Dental Association has argued that the dental healthcare scheme built up over 50 years has been effectively wiped out in the Budget. Opticians have been getting €44 from the State for spectacles.

This covers the full cost for those who just require a basic pair of glasses. If bifocals are needed for long and short sight it might be as high as €88.

These changes are more evidence that PRSI is now being used largely to fund unemployment payments. This means for those in work it has become just another Government revenue-raising exercise.

In the past few budgets the Government has raised the ceiling on PRSI. In the October 2008 Budget the ceiling went to €52,000, and to €75,036 in the April Budget of last year.

The idea of having a ceiling is because the benefits from PRSI were, up to now, limited. You can't get more jobseekers' benefit because you are paying more PRSI.

STEALTH TAX

When Brian Lenihan, Minister for Finance introduced the Income Levy in October, 2008, and added a further increase in the emergency Budget of April, 2009, he indicated strongly that it was a temporary measure.

"The Levy will be kept under review in the light of economic conditions", he said in October, 2009.

Following the December Budget, it now appears that the Income Levy is set to be retained, but renamed and lumped in with other levies and PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance).

Mr. Lenihan signalled he wanted to replace the two levies and PRSI with a new *"universal social contribution"*, to be introduced in 2011, as he proceeds to tear social benefits apart.

Speaking about this new social contri-

bution, he told the Dail: *"It will be paid by everyone at a low rate on a wide base as a collective contribution to public services."*

The Income Levy has huge attraction for the Department of Finance as it is imposed on income from €15,028 up. It is applied to pensions, rental income and dividends.

In contrast, PRSI paid by workers does not apply to these types of income, while income tax is not imposed on earnings up to €18,300 for a single person.

Tom O'Connor, Cork Institute of Technology, said a self-employed person on €500,000 a year could avail of legal tax avoidance loopholes to pay just 20% tax.

Attacking the tax loopholes and removing the PRSI ceiling made more sense than attacking the pay of public servants.

"I have calculated that some on €34,000 will pay 36% tax. That includes the 20% income rate, 4% PRSI, 2% income levy, 6% pension levy and a 4% health levy.

"It is ridiculous that someone on €34,000 should be paying that much tax."

PDs HAVEN'T GONE AWAY?

The Minister is fooling no one, in his endeavour to retain the PD concept of low taxation—the Income Levy is a crude form of Income Tax which applies to your gross income before capital allowances and pension contribution.

Following last April's Budget, the Income Levy is 2% for income between €15,028 and €75,036, rising to 6% for income over €174,980.

PRSI is 4% on income up to €75,036 for private sector workers and those who joined the public service after 1995. For longer-serving public servants, PRSI is 0.9%.

The Health Levy is 4%, rising to 5% for those on income above €75,036.

This means the combined income and health levies and PRSI is between 9% and 15% depending on the income of the taxpayer.

In another part of his speech, Mr. Lenihan admitted that taxpayers were being hit hard by the Levies in the last two Budgets:

"The tax increases contained in my last two Budgets have placed the heaviest burden on those best able to pay.

"For example, a single person earning €25,000 now pays €500 more in tax and levies than in 2008," he said.

The Minister added a single person on €100,000 pays around €5,500 more, or 11 times more than the person on €25,000.

At €250,000, the additional taxes and levies amount to nearly €17,000 or 33 times the contribution of the person on €25,000.

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LABOUR

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 28 No. 2

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

The Irish Budget And

The Boston Burglar!

Writing in *The Irish Times*, on 30th December 2009, Niall O'Dowd, a founder of the New York *Irish Voice* newspaper declared that "Ireland has become something of a new poster boy for the American right".

"Is Ireland's deep budget cuts, an omen for a heavily indebted United States?" is a question posed by *The Washington Post* in late December, 2009:

"More than \$4 billion in cuts coming into effect after New Year's Day will slash salaries for 400,000 government workers, while making painful reductions in benefits for such groups as widows and single mothers, to the blind and disabled children."

Soon after the above article came out, O'Dowd was invited to go on the Murdoch-owned Fox News channel. "The producer could hardly contain his excitement at the news from Ireland. The main question asked was whether America had the bravery to attempt what the Irish had done."

"The host of *Fox and Friends* could barely control his enthusiasm—and I can see why. This is the kind of government-slashing which right-wing think tanks have dreamt of for decades. Forget stimulus packages: cut-and-slash Ireland may be the way for the US" (*Irish Times*, 30.12.2009).

If Ministers Harney and Hanafin were in the US to-day, they would be in the forefront of the campaign to block President Obama's Health programme.

A few weeks ago, a reader suggested that the Progressive Democrats had folded their tent up a little too hastily, that they would clean up come a General Election!

Wrong! The PDs achieved what they set out to do, convert Fianna Fail into an image of themselves and an economic programme based on globalisation. Despite the setback for the free marketeers following the global financial collapse, the 2010 Budget presented by Brian Lenihan is an affirmation that the Dublin Government is not for turning and has nailed it mast to the Ameranglian economic

model—like Mister Macabre, Minister Lenihan believes 'something will definitely have to turn up'.

Harney has played a blinder: you only have to look at the mess the health system is in, day-by-day it more and more reflects the American model of healthcare which was summed in one of the protest posters at the anti-Obama rallies: "Health is not a Human right!"

Day-in, day-out, Harney sits on the right hand of a Fianna Fail Taoiseach, this is a woman who set out to destroy Fianna Fail: she is adulated by most of the top Fianna Fail brass. Cowen and Martin hadn't the backbone to go in and clean up the public health system, even with the almighty advantage of Social Partnership. Harney had no difficulty in putting the public element of the health service in its place with the result that we now have damn near as many private hospitals as public, with the thrust of the system moving in a private and profit direction every day.

Minister Hanafin calls on Fiona O'Malley, the PD Senator, to return to her spiritual home, Fianna Fail.

In an *Irish Times* interview on 16th

January 2010: Charlie McCreevy, the former EU Commissioner (who jibbed at the final hour on a break with Fianna Fail to the Progressive Democrats), boasted that:

"His personal economic outlook is still very much in tune with that of the now-defunct Progressive Democrats. He claims that his policies helped to galvanise the Irish economy.

"But could more have been done to prevent the creation of a bubble in the Irish economy?"

"I'm only prepared to defend what I did—after the end of 2005, that's someone else's responsibility."

"Builders and developers weren't responsible for interest rates, he says. "The European Central Bank has been since 1999, right?" (16.1.2010).

"For business, Lenihan strongly reiterated the government's commitment to the 12.5% corporate tax rate stating that it 'will not change... it is here to stay'. Given the difficult budgetary situation, this strong commitment sends out a very clear signal of stability to the international business community, and is to be welcomed" (*Sunday Business Post*, 13.12.2009).

LENIHAN'S BUDGET

- * Families with children got clobbered in the 2010 Budget by a cabinet that seems hell-bent on hitting what it sees as a soft target.
- * The PRSI social insurance system has been decimated.
- * Introduction of a car scrappage scheme that this state requires like a hole in the head.
- * A refusal to impose any cuts or embargo for those on public sector pensions—one of the few groups who are benefiting from the bust. This group appears untouchable in political terms.
- * A marked silence on the Property tax proposals.

The Coalition earned itself the distinction of becoming the first Government to

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1 Sutton Villas, Lower Dargle Road
Bray, Co. Wicklow or

PO Box 339, Belfast BT12 4GQ or

PO Box 6589, London, N7 6SG, or

Labour Comment,

C/O Shandon St. P.O., Cork City.

TEL: 021-4676029

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