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The Imperial Elections

The British Election, which is also held in the North even though it can play no real part in it, sometimes throws up some things of interest, despite its essential irrelevance. It was suggested that this time it would really be part of the British Election. The *Irish Times*, which never admitted that the British Election in the North was bogus—and was praised by Martin Mansergh for never allowing our view of Northern affairs to be expressed in it—suddenly suggested that this time it would not be bogus, but would be about the real issues of British government. But of course it wasn't. The famous 'bread and butter' issue made no more than a token appearance. All the parties stood for more bread and butter.

Reg Empey's Unionist Party, even though it pretended to have become part of the Tory Party, did not advocate cuts in the supply of bread and butter. Empey's selling point was that, if he was returned with a little flock of MPs, he would use his influence to prevent party policy being applied to the North. He did not win a single seat—not even his own. He lost the only seat he used to have, Lady Hermon's in North Down. Lady Hermon held the seat, but left the Unionist Party when it attached itself to the Tories because she agreed with the policies and general outlook of Labour.

The DUP won the Protestant election—in the North the Election is always two elections—even though the Party Leader lost his seat. Empey says that he will resign the leadership of the Party that he got wiped out, and suggests that Peter Robinson should do likewise. Robinson rightly scorned the suggestion.

Robinson is the pro-Agreement leader on the Unionist side and will not create a crisis for the functioning of the Agreement just because of a set-back in the irrelevant election.

Empey is the Anti-Agreement Unionist leader. He took over after Lord Trimble had wrecked the Unionist Party by his antics. Empey said at the start that Unionists should stop living in the past, and should stop pretending they had no responsibility for Loyalist paramilitarism. He was unable to sustain that position when the DUP, having become the main Unionist party, accepted the Agreement and began to work it with a will—which Trimble had never done. The irrational hatred of Paisley, combined with party rivalry, then led to Empey becoming the Anti-Agreement Unionist, trying to upset the applecart—though remaining the 'moderate' to commentators with fixed ideas.

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The EU—

another crisis, another solution, another crisis, another...

The Eurozone countries took the 'nuclear option' on 9th May to ward off the speculators against the Euro. They created a 440bn Euro loan facility, the Commission provided 60bn, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) made a 250bn contribution, and the European Central Bank (ECB) agreed to a Bond buying programme of 265bn, breaking its own rules. A grand total of over a trillion Euro. Now the speculators know how much is in the kitty. Or rather what is supposed to be in the kitty because it is likely that most of this would be simply paper if called on. And even then this may be not enough if Spain is declared to be a bad boy by a credit rating agency. Europe is not calling the shots. It is being shot at.

And this nuclear option may have been caused by a 'fat finger'—somebody pushing the wrong button on a keyboard somewhere. Probably apocryphal but the message is clear—the Euro is on the run and the speculating wolves are on the prowl. And they smell a wounded animal.

But, as usual, before the EU analyses why it has a problem, it has a solution

continued on page 4

Yeats Studies ???

Yeats and Ulysses

UCD is putting on a history course during the Summer. This is how the course advertises a field trip to the *The Life and Works of William Butler Yeats* exhibition at the National Library of Ireland that the organizers have scheduled for Day Three:

"This exhibition has been described by the *Irish Times* as 'one of the most important literary exhibitions yet staged internationally'. It opened to unanimous acclaim on 25 May 2006 and shows the life of the Anglo-Irish writer **W. B. Yeats, most famed for his works *Ulysses* and *A portrait of the artist as a young man***. Yeats played a prominent role in the cultural nationalist movement, was a founder-member of the Abbey Theater and was later a liberal senator in the Irish Free State."

So, according to both *The Irish Times* and the History Department of University College Dublin, Yeats wrote *Ulysses*!

This same History Department features a nodule on *Coolacrease* on Day 5 of this course. (See page 14 for an *Aubane Historical Society* press release about this.)

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The Anti-Agreement candidate on the other side is the SDLP, the architect of the Agreement. Its leaders, Durkan, and now Margaret Ritchie, are driven by the same combination as Empey: irrational hatred of Sinn Fein and party rivalry with it.

Ritchie did her best to deprive Sinn Fein of the Fermanagh seat. Even though the various Unionist Parties all stood down and agreed on a common denominator Unionist candidate, and even though Sinn Fein stood down in favour of the SDLP in South Belfast so that it could gain the seat because of a split Unionist vote, Ritchie insisted on fielding the strongest candidate she could find in Fermanagh. She had no hope of winning the seat. Her only purpose was to lose it for Sinn Fein by giving it to the Unionists, and she came within a few votes of doing so. If there had not been a mass defection of SDLP voters to Sinn Fein, she would have succeeded.

She herself held Eddie McGrady's South down seat against Sinn Fein, but with a substantially reduced vote, and with the help, according to SDLP sources, of 4,000 Unionist votes (but in reality probably nearer 6,000). In Derry City, too, the SDLP is coming to depend on Unionist votes. But this does not mean that the SDLP is becoming a cross-community

party. It only means that it has now become the Anti-Sinn Fein-At-Any-Cost Party. In Constituencies where there is no hope of Unionist victory, Unionists are urged to vote against Sinn Fein by voting SDLP. And this appeal naturally has most force with Anti-Agreement Unionists.

The stability of the North, such as it is, depends on the willing co-operation of the DUP and Sinn Fein. There was no such willing co-operation between the UUP and the SDLP when they were the major parties. In those years after 1998 it was all stop-start-stop. (When the DUP had a hiccup last year, Paisley came back to explain things to them, and they took heed.)

The Traditional Unionist Voice, an Anti-Agreement breakaway from the DUP, did not make the expected breakthrough, and is now regarded as a spent force.

*

There has been little speculation on the probable effect of the Alternative Vote system, if the Tory backbenches allow it to be established. A possible effect would be to accelerate the decline of the SDLP. Under it in Fermanagh, Ritchie would have had no hope of giving the seat to the Unionist. The SDLP would have been eliminated on the first count and most of

its votes gone to Sinn Fein.

*

One of the last acts of Secretary of State Shaun Woodward, who defected from the Tories to New Labour, was to issue a statement that he did not consider that the quashing of the sentences passed on Danny Morrison and others in 1991, after they had spent some years in prison, entitled them to compensation. The sentences were quashed by the Appeal Court on the ground that evidence withheld by the Prosecution at the trials would almost certainly have led to Not Guilty verdicts if it had not been withheld. But Woodward does not accept that Not Guilty means innocent, even though the only verdicts known to English law are Guilty and Not Guilty. He said that those who served prison sentences under a Guilty verdict should not be treated as Not Guilty just because the Appeal Court set aside the Guilty verdict as unsafe because of prosecution chicanery in the use of informants, and that the victims of this officially-admitted miscarriage of justice must show that "*they are demonstrably innocent*" before compensation can be considered. In other words, he wants to go behind the law to some supposed reality which did not appear in the process of law.

But 'the rule of law' means taking what appears in the process of law to be the reality of a situation. Not doing so is usually called authoritarianism. The temptation to treat the outcome of the legal process as suspect, and likely to be perverse, is, however, almost irresistible even to very eminent English lawyers where Irish matters are concerned. When the Birmingham Six were acquitted after serving years in prison, Lord Denning suggested in the *Spectator* that they had 'got away with it'—and then beat a hasty retreat lest he should himself become a victim of the rule of law and be heavily out of pocket. But that was in England. And Northern Ireland is somewhere else.

In England the process of law has always been closely interwoven with the political process of government. In Northern Ireland the process of law operates in a political vacuum and was closely bound up with irresponsible authority—authority whose source lies outside the Northern Ireland jurisdiction. Without a democratic corrective force the law would probably have been a mere thing operated by irresponsible authority. In the absence of democratic process a different corrective force was applied.

Lord Reith, founder of the BBC, was once asked what he thought was the best form of government. He replied: "*Despotism tempered by assassination*". As we often commented during the 1970s and 1980s, the authoritarian tendency in the operation of law was tempered by assassination. It is well to remember the real history of the North in recent times. ●

Hunger Striker Liam Hannaway is seriously ill after ending his fast after 42 days. It appears that warders at Maghaberry Prison have used a spurious death threat to isolate him from other republican prisoners. A former Provo, Hannaway founded *Saor Uladh*, is serving time for possession of an improvised bomb in Belfast in September 2004. He is due for release in 2012.

New Justice Minister David Ford is also getting up the noses of Republicans. There are growing problems and protests in Maghaberry jail—especially at the decision by the warders to strip-search prisoners before and after visits. Ford says *"they [the prisoners] seem determined to create conditions which they will then complain about but they will have no-one to blame but themselves"*. Now, where have heard this before? Mr. Ford has refused to meet the prisoners or their families, relying on the word of the warders. So who is taking us back to the 'bad old days'—the so-called dissidents or Mr. Ford? Experience tells us that these liberals can get pretty nasty. Without doubt, the most vicious Home Secretary in Britain in the last 40 years was the nice Mr. Roy Jenkins. (Ford has claimed that his natural allies in the South were Fine Gael and the late Progressive Democrats.) A Sinn Fein delegation, including former Provo prisoners, has visited the Republican prisoners in Maghaberry.

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Ford's powers as Minister are rather limited: the 'legacy' issues from the Troubles remain a 'reserved' matter, under the control of the Secretary of State. His first target was the barristers and their fees. They are now on some kind of work-to-rule because Ford said he is reducing the cap on their fees from 180 pounds an hour to 152.50 pounds an hour—poor loves! Several trials have already been delayed.

REPORT

In Memory Of The Dead: *Who Fears To Speak?*

The following letter appeared in the Irish News on May 3rd:

On April 12 Athlone town centre was brought to a standstill as the community paid tribute to the 84 soldiers from the Irish Defence Forces who were killed on UN peacekeeping duties over the previous 50 years. This ceremony to honour Irish soldiers passed unnoticed and unreported by most of the Irish media. It is with some surprise and much regret that the commander-in-chief of the Irish Defence Forces, President Mary McAleese, and the new Minister for Defence, Tom Killeen, were not present for this tribute. What a pity that those who campaigned relentlessly for official Irish state recognition of Irishmen in British uniform, killed in the two world wars, remained unheard and unseen when fallen Irish soldiers in Irish uniforms were being commemorated in Athlone. If this commemoration had been to honour Irishmen in British uniform it is most likely that our president and minister for defence would be in attendance in dutiful quiescence.

Tom Cooper.

Cathaoirleach, Irish National Congress, Dublin.

May Day: Belfast Trades Council organised a spectacular parade on May Day. It was a real May Day, one genuinely representing all the Unions in the city, complete with their banners and flags. The parade more than filled the whole of Royal Avenue and ended up at a Marquee in the Cathedral Quarter, where the marchers were greeted by a kind of African reggae band. On the march itself were brass, flute and pipe bands. (At the marquee were some political groups selling their wares. Most peculiar were a couple of stalls selling books by both Leon Trotsky and Joe Stalin! Is there no end to the scope of the Good Friday Agreement?) Speakers included Jack O'Connor from SIPTU and Bob Crowe from the RMT. Derry held its first May Day march in 10 years which coincided with an Irish Congress of Trade Unions' conference in the city.

David Cameron, two days before the General Election, visited South Antrim to support his new friend, UUP leader, Sir Reg Empey. A kind of alliance between the Tories and the UUP was formed with UUP heading their election literature "Conservatives and Unionists". It was only about a year ago that Empey was courting the UVF! One assumption here is that all UUP members are conservative—which is very far from the truth. One wonders what Fred Cobain, a socialist, and one of the UUP candidates, makes of it all! Another effect is that Gordon Brown wrote to the DUP offering some kind of electoral pact. If they're not careful their could be a mild outbreak of class politics! When visiting Belfast, Cameron used the old UUP jibe about the "swish family Robinson". This was rich coming from the top drawer of British society. Maybe it also meant that he took the wretched Reg Empey's word that he would not have to deal with the DUP. He knows better now.

Gerry Adams on Peter Robinson: *"Politics*

is a tough game and I did feel sorry for him... I thought he might have taken some sort of hit, which I think he was anticipating himself, but I was shocked that he lost his seat... I think he should stay because he has the mandate."

The Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) candidate for East Belfast was a charming gentleman called David Vance. According to the *Irish News* of May 4th he was asked his opinion on Islam. *"A religion? No. A grotesque pathology"*. So there goes the Muslim vote on the Newtownards Road!

Margaret Ritchie, who was recently elected to replace to replace Mark Durkan as Leader of the SDLP, has resigned from the Stormont Executive, though not from the Assembly—as Durkan did—following her winning the Westminster seat of South Down in the General Election. This means that she resigns as Social Development Minister to be replaced by her appointee, Alex Attwood. This appointment seems to have caused a bit of controversy at the top of the SDLP—jealousy and favouritism have been mentioned. For a party with only a few hundred members, the SDLP seem to be quite a fractious lot.

Roy Garland in the *Irish News*, 10th May, said that Dawn Purvis of the Popular Unionist Party (political wing of the UVF) said *"you can't share power with Sinn Fein while trying to smash republicans at the same time"*. Purvis, like her late predecessor, David Irvine, is one of the most forward looking politicians in the Assembly.

A British Army return to the streets is being demanded by the two Unionist parties while being resolutely opposed by the two Nationalist parties. All sides seem to misunderstand the current role of the British Army in the North. Until the end of Operation Banner some years ago it was reasonable to see it as the front line of defence against a powerful Republican

assault. It was indeed an army of occupation. Apart from a few specialist units, this is no longer the case. It has little interest, one way or the other, in the Union. Its bases are training areas for occupying other unfortunate peoples, as England rediscovers the joys of unfettered imperialism. Thus a demand for the British Army to remove itself back to England is no longer a particularly Republican demand. No one in the North should condone the British Army's misuse of their territory—not to mention the fact that it now makes the North a legitimate target for liberation movements in Iraq, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Uganda, the Congo and elsewhere.

The British Ministry of Defence has had its request to fly the Armed Forces Flag for six days over Belfast City Hall rejected by the Council. Lord Mayor, and newly elected Alliance MP for East Belfast, Naomi Long, joined forces with Sinn Fein and the SDLP on the issue. The six day flying of the Flag is to be observed in most British Town Halls. However a compromise was reached in Belfast and the flag may be flown for one day. Recently Belfast City Council agreed to the draping of the City Hall with swastika banners to help in the making of a film. (It is interesting that the film makers thought this a favourite spot for the banners!) Permission has now been withdrawn. Surely a compromise could have been reached and swastikas allowed for one day? In these days of "parity of esteem", why should one group of mass murderers be discriminated against?

Tommy Burns is an SDLP MLA in South Antrim. It turns out that in September 2008, according to *An Phoblacht*, and according to the Register of Members' Interests, he linked up with a British Army unit in Afghanistan—all paid for by the Ministry for Defence. Otherwise he has been coy in the extreme about the matter. The duration of the trip, its purpose, what happened there, who he met, what if any were the results of his visit, and who did he report back to? These are all questions that remain to be answered. If it was a mere fact finding mission, he need only say that. Why all the secrecy?

Sir Ronnie Flanagan, the much unloved former Chief Constable of the RUC, has, according to the *Belfast Telegraph*, been appointed as the new Chairman of the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption and security unit. Dodgy cricketers and officials had better mend their ways immediately before a "shoot to kill" policy comes into force!

Informers are now being paid over 1,000 pounds a day by the PSNI says the *Belfast Telegraph*, 11th May. The actual money comes from MI5

Sectarian crimes increased by 24.3% in the last year (Irish News, 12th May). The Community Relations Council said that

this is "only the tip of an iceberg". That is probably true. The UDA and the UVF are more or less stood down. But there is no end of do-it-yourself gangs roaming around and plenty of taunting of "orangies" by Catholic gangs.

Marches: A new law is being proposed, and supported by Martin McGuinness, which would make any gathering of more than 50 people illegal unless 37 days notice was given to the police. In theory this is to curb such things as Orange and Republican marches. (Can anyone imagine the likes of the IRSP giving such notice before its Easter Commemoration?) But in practice it will apply to trade union protests and political reactions to such as the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, and indeed to the inevitable protests when PM Cameron begins his slash and burn programme.

Denis Bradley said in a column in the *Irish News*, 7th May, that anyone winning a Westminster seat in the North should automatically be entitled to a seat in the Dáil, and that Northern voters should have a vote for the Irish Presidency. He also pointed out that Southerners living in the North cannot vote for TDs or Councillors in their home areas—a situation almost unique in the world. Bradley, along with former Anglican Primate of Ireland, Robert Eames, chaired the Consultative Group on the Past. This former priest from Donegal finds himself on all sorts of quangos in the North.

Snapshot: Reading the Protestant press, reading letters to the papers, and listening to comments in cafes, on radio and TV, it appears that the Protestants in the North have no interest at all in British politics—except when it comes to protecting the bloc grant. Their Britishness is cultural rather than political. They get a bit nostalgic for the empire, though, but apart from the *Belfast Telegraph*, there seems to be no great enthusiasm for the new imperialism in Iraq or Afghanistan. It is difficult to know what they will think about the monarchy once the present reign is over. The only thing that gets them really going is the military—and yet they are no longer joining it in any great numbers.

Michael Doherty is chief executive of Craigavon Borough Council. He is paid 100,000 pounds for a 180 day year—compared to 132,000 that the CEO of Belfast gets. He lives in Scotland and has a rented place in Moira. This is a bit understandable since Craigavon barely exists. There is a bit more to it than the eight roundabouts between Lurgan and Portadown. Who Knows what more. It was originally meant to fill the space between Portadown and Lurgan to form a city. But neither town has expressed any enthusiasm for the merger. They are, to say the least, like chalk and cheese.

The Border seems to be on its last legs. The

Southern M1 is going North of Newry. The new motorway has begun construction from Derry to Aghnacloy, to also link up with the M1 near Ardee. And Derry city itself is being extended on a large scale (both residentially and industrially) along the "Buncrana Corridor" in Donegal. (Soon people can give their address as Derry, Co. Donegal!) The latest development is a takeover bid by Airtricity for the shambles that composes the electricity industry in the North. The company is Dublin-based, but Scottish-owned and specialises in energy from renewable sources.

A Head Shop opened recently in Derry selling copycat drugs which no one had yet got around to banning. Until they were recently banned in Ireland, they were opening all over the place, particularly in Dublin—where you could see queues of youngsters before eight in the morning and often staying open until 4am. These enterprises are drug pushers of the worst kind and parents are being driven mad coping with permanently drugged out children. Until now this has not been a great problem in the North. So some people decided to nip the problem in the bud, so to speak, and shot the Head Shop owner in both legs. The reaction was extraordinary. Eamon McCann organised a protest defending the "civil rights" of the "businessman", as some of the papers described the pusher. More than that, he was joined in his cause by members of the SDLP and Sinn Fein (though the latter rowed back afterwards).

The EU

continued

ready. This is more co-ordination and integration of the economies, and firmer implementation of the rules that have been in place since 1992, as agreed at Maastricht, but which were ignored. This time they won't be ignored. It is never specified who will do the enforcing. Who will bell the cat? People say 'Brussels', 'the Commission', 'Europe' but who or what exactly is meant?

The fact is that the people laying down the rules again will be those who broke them in the first place—the Member States. The Commission is now merely the postman. And the Member States have much more authority now than they had nearly 20 years ago in the EU structures. There will now be a 'peer review' by Member States of each other's budgets and economic policies. As, with very new solution, there is a neat euphemism. And these peer reviews will harmonise everything and all will be hunky-dory.

John Bruton explained the simplicity of it all:

"It was both fair and reasonable for Germany and others to insist on a long-term austerity programme from Greece. It is true that these measures will depress the Greek economy in the short term, but that had to happen sooner or later anyway, and the sooner it is done the sooner Greece will get back on a sustainable path. Those asking for these measures to be adopted by Greece should recognise that the obligation to follow a common economic policy within the euro zone applies to them too. All EU countries already have an obligation under EU treaties to treat economic policy-making as a matter of common interest. Germany and France have an obligation to open up their energy and service markets to other EU countries, to give other euro zone countries an opportunity to trade their way out of their difficulties..." (Irish Times 11 May 2010).

It is the Member States that make the decisions in these matters: and it is increasingly obvious that it is just one that matters, Germany, and that the other element which really matters is the IMF.

John believes there is something bigger at work than the interests of the Member States, there is some other 'obligation', i.e., that there is an European polity of some sort. If there were, we would not have the problem. But there is not and the EU and the Eurozone assumption that there is one means that they are therefore now building policies on sand. There are no 'obligations' in the EU beyond national interest.

When our Minister for Finance 'loans' 1.3bn Euro for the Greek bailout, he points out that it's a good investment for the country and that we will make money out of the Greeks. We borrow the money cheap and loan it to the Greeks at a higher rate but lower than they will otherwise pay. A good deal—for us. We are a speculator against Greece.

Someday the shoe may be on the other foot: will John and Brian then see the whole thing with the same equanimity as they see Greece and its problems today? John should be made an EU Ambassador to Greece to explain the facts of life to them. One thing is absolutely certain—this is not the way to build a European unity that has any meaning. It will ensure disunity and mutual dislike.

The justification for the 'peer review' of national budgets was explained as follows:

"Article 136 (of Lisbon) gives ministers the right to vote on these matters by qualified majority, meaning no minister has a veto over a decision of the wider group. Implicit in the proposal is recognition that toothless surveillance has only magnified the problems of the euro. When EU leaders decided to go for broke last weekend by creating a mammoth rescue fund, the message was the foundations of

the euro were under threat.

"The message from Barroso is that this move was but the first part of a new grand bargain, the second part being deeper co-ordination in return for hundreds of billions worth of solidarity. "Member states should have the courage to say whether they want an economic union because if they don't want that, it's better to forget monetary union altogether"... It's a fundamentalist argument. The counter-argument will be too..." (Irish Times, 13 May 2010)

So we need to talk fundamentals. Not a moment too soon. For Barroso Europe must integrate more closely for economic and monetary reasons. Economics is primary for him. The money has been put down, so the bargain must be made. Barroso represents that version of broken-down and perverted Marxism (or more specifically in his case, *Marxism-Leninism, Mao-Tse Tung Thought*, which I am sure he can recall from his formative years) that sees economics as primary in these matters. Marx was not an economist—he was a Political Economist, i.e., politics came first.

People like Barroso have become natural allies of the most right-wing economists, who also see the economy as primary and the sole *raison d'être* of life itself. If we can have monetary integration, then we need and can have economic integration—and political integration will follow: that is the neat little syllogism they work on. But it won't work like that. This is putting several carts before the horse of political unity and impeding the latter. It works exactly the other way round.

The most fundamental fact of all about the European project is that it has changed fundamentally from its origin of attempting to create a new European polity based on its history and the experience of the two World Wars, which were European civil wars engineered by Britain's balance of power policy in Europe. Christian Democracy led the way to a new Europe and it meant, for example, that Germans and Greeks would understand each other and their history and how that history could be a means of mutual understanding and unity. Instead their history is now used to heighten differences and aggravate each other. It should not, and need not, be like that. If Mr. Barroso could write a history book, even a small one, that would really explain recent Greek and German history to each other's mutual satisfaction, it would be worth more than the trillion Euro bandied about. It would be a much more useful use of paper.

We have Greece and Germany being looked at as economic entities and attempts being made to accommodate them to each other on that basis. The solution is simple to economists—the Greeks should become Germans. Everything else is unreal for

them.

Europe was never an economic proposition—it was a proposition for rebuilding European civilisation. Neither man nor Europe can live by bread, i.e., economics, alone. If the project is reduced to economics it is, and will become, a barren relationship; but more likely it will mean a return to barbarism and the relationships that go with that. And that is now the most likely future for Europe.

By the way, I did not notice any dancing in the streets on Europe day this 9th of May to celebrate 60 years of the EU!

MERKEL—ENLARGEMENT CAUSED THIS PROBLEM!
(*But don't mention that word*)

It's good to be able to report a glimmer of hope, however fleeting:

"German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the euro zone is suffering an "existential" crisis, behind which lies a unique opportunity to strengthen EU political and economic union. Speaking in Aachen yesterday, Dr Merkel said: "This is the biggest test that Europe has experienced since 1990, if not since the Treaty of Rome was agreed 53 years ago". In a keynote address as the Polish prime minister Donald Tusk was presented with the Charlemagne Prize for furthering European unity, Dr Merkel said the future of the EU was at stake. "If the euro fails it's not just the currency that fails, but Europe and the idea of European unification." Dr Merkel said the source of the EU's problems lay in how the union had grown geographically without keeping pace on other fronts. "We have a common currency but no common political and economic union. And this is exactly what we must change. To achieve this, therein lies the opportunity of this crisis. If we fail, the consequences cannot be foreseen. If we succeed, Europe will be stronger than ever before"... (Irish Times, 14 May 2010).

If the source of the problem was the Enlargement and how it was done, then—as that was a strictly political decision—politics caused the current economic problem: which proves that politics is the primary thing. But the problem is that political clocks cannot be rewound. And what political needs drove Enlargement? Surely Angela Merkel needs to tell us that, if it was such a serious mistake? and does she plan to reverse it?

Enlargement was of course the brain-child of Britain, its object being to extend and thereby dissipate the whole EU concept and reduce its aims to building a free trade area, as well as to take advantage of the perceived weaknesses of the Russians and to annoy them. It was the traditional British attitude to Europe, divide and rule, fish in troubled waters and let others pick up the pieces while it observes all from the sidelines. And Europe fell for it—again.

Europe was made to feel embarrassed and given a bad conscience at creating a 'fortress Europe'. That was equated with being inward-looking, backward etc. and the 'F' word (Federalism) was of course also outlawed. However, a few fortress walls would be useful now against the speculators!

And the British grand plan is not over. It wants the EU to expand to all of Eastern Europe, to all the Euro-Med countries from Algeria to Israel and of course to include Turkey. And why not if it's trade and economics that this is all about? If it's just like a collection of shops in a market bazaar—the more the merrier!

Could Angela Merkel object to all that and act on it? If she could, and did, the EU would have a future. The politics would begin to come right and all else would follow. But what does it mean fundamentally—Britain is destroying the EU as originally envisaged and should be thrown out. Could Angela contemplate that? I won't hold my breath but...

She later explained that:

"she expects conflict on the reform plans, in particular a proposal for greater Brussels oversight of national budgets. However, avoiding the EU's problems would cause greater problems, she said. "We haven't discussed certain problems in Europe because we tried not to see them, in order to be nice to one another"... "The crisis will teach us that we have to put all the problems on the table to find a solution. We will have to co-ordinate more closely and pay closer attention so that we really obey the rules." European Central Bank president Jean-Claude Trichet welcomed her remarks and called on Germany to act as a kind of "euro zone police"... "Germany is the biggest economy in the euro zone, with a tradition of healthier state finances", Mr Trichet told the *Handelsblatt* newspaper. His call was embraced in Berlin, where finance ministry state secretary Steffen Kampeter said it was time for Germany to "once again to lead by example". The way to do this, he said, was to push further budget austerity measures..." (Irish Times, 15 May 2010).

Well, she is quite right to say it's no longer time for the Mr. (or Mrs.) Nice Guy act for anyone serious about Europe. Unless she stands up for the real history of Europe and the real purpose of the EU, she and Germany will once again be blamed for its failure. She needs to be able to take on the '*Deutschland über alles*' jibes that will inevitably arise and say quite confidently that German dominance will be a fact of life or else we can kiss good bye to European unity. Which will it be? Germany was quite willing to be Europeanised, several times, but Europe has not delivered its side of the bargain and has lost its way and the only practical alternative is a Germanised Europe.

MORE OF THE SAME FROM THE UK

William Hague, the new UK Foreign Minister, has spelled out the future role of Britain in Europe. It's hardly a surprise to find that on offer is more of the same, under the guise of the usual diplomatic language. What is being advocated is an aggressive foreign policy and of course total indifference to the problems of the Euro. Britain will be 'European' when and only when it suits their Foreign policy.:

"Britain's new government will play a leading role in the European Union, writes the man set to shape that engagement, William Hague...

"...we have equally been the foremost champions of the EU's greatest achievements—the single market and enlargement... Just as the Conservative-led government in the UK will be active in these areas of internal EU policy, so will we be involved from the outset in the EU's external policy challenges.

"The Conservative party remains firmly convinced of the merits of further union enlargement. The prospect of membership is crucial in entrenching stability in the western Balkans, where much European blood has already been shed. The western Balkans are the backyard of the union, and its credibility in foreign affairs depends on the effectiveness of its policy there.

"In Bosnia in particular, there is a need for a more muscular and demanding approach, one that should focus on a single goal: a central government in Bosnia effective enough to meet the responsibilities of EU and Nato membership. Success in attaining that aim would be proof to the world of the EU's seriousness as a regional actor.

"The case for Turkey's accession to the EU is as strong as ever... The new Conservative-led government intends to play a leading role in discussion of the union's external affairs. While we Conservatives have taken a particular view on the utility and purpose of the EU's institutional structures, we have always argued it is in the common interests of the nations of Europe that we should use our collective weight in the world to mutual advantage and to promote our shared values... The union needs to show unity and purpose in its relations with Russia, where a balanced and constructive partnership would be desirable. Moreover, the union should also prove that we Europeans have the political will to deliver the appropriate response to the Iranian government's stance on nuclear proliferation.

"The European External Action Service (EEAS) is going to have considerable bearing on the future success of Europe's global role. It is true that we in the Conservative party were not persuaded of the case for the new EEAS as a service. But its existence is now a fact. Part of our critique of the Lisbon Treaty was that rather than making the EU more

efficient, its new arrangement of the union's structures held the potential for inter-institutional confusion and discord. Nevertheless, the UK's Conservative-led government will work closely with the high representative, whom we wish well.

"...It is right that we should establish the principle that European integration is not a one-way street so that powers can be returned from the EU to its member states, as was envisaged in the Laeken Declaration nearly a decade ago. Such a move would do a very great deal to reassure people that the union can be responsive to people's concerns and that it need not interfere in the nooks and crannies of national life..." (The Irish Times, Monday, May 17, 2010).

During his visit to Merkel, Cameron reiterated these issues and made clear that the Euro was not his problem but at the same time he made clear that any real solution to its problem would be vetoed by him because as everyone knows any real solution needs a Treaty change: "*It goes without saying, he said, that any treaty, even one that just applied to the euro area, needs unanimous agreement of all 27 EU states including the UK, which of course has a veto...*" (21 May 2010).

So Britain will dictate a solution, or rather a non-solution, to a currency it does not even belong to! Merkel did not seem to see the ridiculousness and arrogance of such a state of affairs. This is certainly the most obvious of those "*certain problems in Europe*" that hitherto "*we tried not to see... in order to be nice to one another*". But niceness won the day again on this occasion and both leaders were keen to demonstrate their agreement on war plans for Afghanistan and Iran.

It's so nice and agreeable to be at war with some lot of fuzzy-wuzzies. It kept Britain happy for centuries and the EU looks set to follow suit.

Jack Lane

Turkish Real-politik?

Turkish President Abdullah Gul has appealed to President Sarkozy and other European leaders to set out a "*50-year strategic vision*", envisaging eventual Turkish accession to Europe.

A senior official in the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Selim Yenel, added:

"We understand Sarkozy's worry. He doesn't want another rival. He thinks Turkey will be another UK but we intend to strengthen not weaken the EU..." (IT 12.5.10).

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

THE STATE AND COUNTER REVOLUTION

On the 1st of May this year Sylvia Kelly unveiled a portrait of her father Captain James Kelly.

The 1st of May, of course, is also a great day for the international working class. But V.I. Lenin said that if the working class does not have a State it has nothing.

Sylvia Kelly, in her moving speech, said that her father was loyal to the State. In another fine speech the artist Robert Ballagh said that he was proud to be associated with the campaign to clear Captain Kelly's name. He concluded by expressing confidence that the truth will come out in his lifetime.

But the truth has already come out and is plain for anybody who wants to see it. About ten years ago the foreman of the jury in the 1970 Arms Conspiracy Trial was interviewed for an RTE documentary. He said that it was so obvious that Captain Kelly was merely implementing Government policy that the jury could not understand why the Government had brought the case in the first place.

The late Justin Keating said in the documentary that he was a member of the committee to investigate the issue after the trial, but resigned when it was not allowed access to Military Intelligence files which would have vindicated the good name of Captain Kelly. When he saw the files 30 years later he concluded that the purpose of the committee was to overturn by political means the decision of the courts.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

"Neither a borrower nor lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

Maybe the advice of Polonius to his son Laertes was sound for the State of Denmark a long time ago, but capitalism is impossible without the expansion of credit. When a lender deposits his money in a bank he is in no danger of losing a friend. His money merely becomes a small part of a homogeneous lump of social capital. The borrower who draws on that social capital has no interest in where it came from even if it were possible to find out. Personal ties are dissolved within the banking system.

If there were no capital flows between States, a country's capacity to borrow would be constrained by its capacity to save. But in a global system no such constraint applies. This has enabled rapid

economic development in this country which would not have been possible otherwise. But perhaps, in the words of Polonius, our borrowing did indeed dull the edge of husbandry. Since 2001 we have been consuming more than we have been producing. In short we have been living beyond our means.

WHAT'S THIS "WE" BUSINESS?

Gene Kerrigan in his *Sunday Independent* column told the joke about the Lone Ranger and his faithful sidekick when they were surrounded by Apaches. "What's this 'we' business, paleface?" was Tonto's reply to the Lone Ranger's suggested escape plan.

The escape plan of Opposition Finance spokesman Richard Bruton is that we should ride into the sunset and not pay the bondholders in Anglo-Irish Bank. However, the bulk of the 17 billion held by them was bought after the State guarantee. Anglo-Irish Bank would not have been able to access this capital without this guarantee. Also, as Brian Lenihan pointed out (*Sunday Business Post*, 2.5.10), most of this 17 billion will mature before the expiry of the guarantee in September of this year.

The problem with Kerrigan's argument is that "we" live in a functioning State. Arguing that some of us should pay more than others does not alter the basic fact that we as a country have been living beyond our means.

About a year ago this column made the point that no value was generated by the property bubble since it—or at least the speculative element—was not created by socially necessary labour. Value as Marx noted can only be created by socially necessary labour.

If no value was created by the bubble then no value was lost when it burst. For every property developer who has gone bust, there is a landowner who made a fortune by selling to that developer. The crash resulted in a transfer of wealth from one group of people to another group. Since the State has had to underwrite the bad debts of the losers in the property game, it would seem reasonable for the State to require the winners to contribute. A Wealth Tax should be put back on the political agenda.

Of course, it is not true to say that "no value" has been lost. A recent RTE documentary showed the derelict housing estates, which were built in Mullingar and Longford. The value or labour expended in building these estates has disappeared because it was not socially necessary. The head of NAMA is on record as saying that some of these estates will need to be destroyed.

GERRY RYAN

The Long Fellow would have let Gerry Ryan rest in peace if he had not been told

about his true significance. He had thought that Ryan was a media buffoon who about 20 years ago was caught telling fibs on a reality show.

About a year ago, in between flicking channels, he saw Ryan ask the great Irish rugby player Brian O'Driscoll if he (i.e. O'Driscoll) was a homosexual.

At the time the Long Fellow thought about the Czech novelist Milan Kundera who remarked with horror that the media in the West believed that it had the right to the truth, something which only the Secret Police had arrogated to themselves in the Eastern Bloc. But since Ryan's death one has learned that this benign totalitarianism was merely an example of "pushing out the boundaries of broadcasting".

And then there was that long interview with David McWilliams. The economics pundit felt it necessary to confess to Ryan (and the nation) his "sexist" comments concerning Miriam O'Callaghan before being allowed to comment on the economy.

His beatification was confirmed by Pat Kenny on the Late Late Show, where he declared that Ryan was part of a blessed Trinity of Irish broadcasters, which included Gay Byrne and Terry Wogan.

And *The Irish Times*, through its columnist Fintan O'Toole, gave its imprimatur to the outpouring of grief. His column of 4th May indicated that Ryan was a "genius" and that the famous "Lambo" incident had transformed him from being a mere DJ into someone who had convinced us that the "puckish, prankish side of Irish life could have its own integrity". While Gay Byrne was the nation's "father confessor", Ryan "had metaphorically removed the grille in the confession box that separates the penitent from the priest" and "this brilliant chancer came to seem more real and more trustworthy than all those authorities and TDs because his listeners knew that he actually cared about them".

See how these media personalities love one another!

TRIBUNAL TRIBULATIONS

Fintan O'Toole is not noticeably circumspect when it comes to documenting the shortcomings of people outside the media. But, despite his extensive analysis of the Tribunals, he has been strangely silent in recent months on this subject. He has said nothing about Judge Mahon's mistakes or the letter from the Attorney General to Mahon which nobody including the Attorney General can lay their hands on. Nor had O'Toole anything to say about Justice Adrian Hardiman's recent Supreme Court judgement on the Flood Tribunal. The Flood tribunal was found to have suppressed evidence given by its star witness James Gogarty. If this evidence had come to light it would have called into question all of this witness's evidence. Justice Hardiman remarked:

"It is chilling to reflect that a poorer person, treated in the same fashion by the tribunal, could not have afforded to seek this vindication."

O'Toole's colleague Dr. Elaine Byrne stepped in to the breach (4.5.10). The headline was: *Focus on Tribunal flaws takes heat off the real issues*. As far as Byrne is concerned the Tribunals were a positive development because:

"Traditional values of blind deference, misguided loyalty and the fear of asking questions have undergone an electrifying process of clarification."

So never mind the flaws!

The funny thing is that the Long Fellow doesn't remember an Ireland of "*blind deference*" etc. before the first Tribunals 20 years ago. Was he living in the same country as Byrne in the 1980s? And has the country changed or just its nature undergone a "*process of clarification*"?

Byrne thinks the Mahon Tribunal will cost over 300 million euro and Moriarty over 100 million, but:

"As a consequence of the McCracken, Moriarty and Mahon tribunals, the High Court Ansbacher Inspector investigation and the Dirt Parliamentary Committee Inquiry, the Revenue Commissioners have to date collected €2.6 billion in special investigations into various mechanisms to evade tax."

Notice she compares the costs of two tribunals with the alleged benefits of three Tribunals, a High Court Inspector's investigation and a Parliamentary Committee Inquiry. So much for academic rigour! There is also the assumption that the collection of the 2.6 billion would not have been possible without the Tribunals. The Long Fellow thinks that by far the most effective inquiry was the DIRT Parliamentary Committee Inquiry the cost of which was minuscule compared to the bloated Mahon and Moriarty monstrosities.

No wonder Fintan O'Toole has been silent!

iate reaction was to reassure us. His explanation was simple: the threat was negated if it was written anonymously. As children we may have been reassured by this, but he wasn't. Throughout this period, every package delivered to the house was treated as a potential bomb.

As children, we got used to seeing Special Branch parked outside our home, we got used to being followed, we knew our phone was tapped, we even survived the shock of our father being arrested.

What we did not get used to was how unfairly he was treated. Prior to the Arms Trial Jim was a private citizen. He did not have an affiliation to any particular party. His allegiance was to the State. Following the Trial our entire world was turned upside down. Not by choice, Jim became a public figure. His good name was discredited. No one would employ him. We could not afford to live.

Jim was loyal to the State and the State let him down. That is why 40 years later we are standing in this room, still requesting an acknowledgement from the State that he should never have been tried, an acknowledgement that to date no Government is prepared to offer. As you can imagine, there is a strong reluctance among politicians to engage with us.

As a family, I do not think we could have survived without the goodness of others and the kindness of strangers. I would like to pay tribute to those who made a difference.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Colonel Hefferon and Kevin Boland. Both honourable men who stood up and were not afraid to be counted. I would like to thank Jim's brothers and sisters and their respective spouses for standing shoulder to shoulder with him and

REPORT: Sylvia Kelly's speech on the occasion of the unveiling of a portrait of Captain Kelly by Robert Ballagh, 1st May 2010

Remembering Captain Kelly

Forty years ago today, Jim was arrested and taken to the Bridewell. He was subsequently charged with conspiring to import arms into the country. Following a lengthy trial, he was acquitted, along with his co-defendants.

Ray Yeates, Art Director of The Axis Theatre, Ballymun, will read some extracts from Jim's book, *Orders For The Captain*, detailing his arrest.

Despite a verdict of 'Not Guilty', a feeling prevailed that this was an aberration, a mistake, a feeling that he was lucky to get away with it. Politicians talked in terms of the jury being 'got at'. This pervasive feeling was encapsulated in posters that appeared in University College Dublin some ten years later. They read "*Smokers die younger, gunrunners filter through*". As students we became inured to taunts of "*Closet Provo*". Through it all, our parents stood steadfast. They were a tremendous support to each other, as they were to us, their children.

It is difficult to think of Jim without Sheila and *vice versa*. In the acknowledgement section of one of his books Jim wrote, "*an especial thanks to a most loyal helpmate and friend of over 40 years, a woman of wit and good humour—my wife, Sheila*". She could have written similarly about him. They were very much a pair. When Jim's pension was withheld, it was Sheila who picketed the Dail. She continued her protest until she succeeded in having his pension reinstated.

The Arms Trial and its aftermath provided the backdrop to our lives. Throughout Jim's life, while fighting to clear his name, he was also fighting to protect ours.

He never spoke publicly of what we had to endure as a family, but privately he acknowledged it. Two weeks before he died he gathered us together and thanked us for our support. It was support we gladly gave.

The first death threat that I remember arrived in the morning post. Jim's immed-



supporting him both emotionally and, at times, financially. It could not have been easy for them and I'm sure they have their own stories to tell.

Sometimes it is more about the gesture rather than the word.

Sheila's father, George Kane, following the Arms Trial, quietly removed the photograph of DeValera that had hung on his sitting room wall for as long as any one could remember. This gesture was much appreciated by my mother, as was the unquestioning support offered by her family.

Albert Luykx, a co-defendant and gentleman, understanding children and much to our delight, delivered a basket of continental Easter eggs to our door one Easter, knowing that money was tight.

To the stranger who stopped my play one warm Summer's afternoon and handed me an envelope to give to my father: I passed it to him through an open window and was rewarded with surprised laughter. The envelope contained £100.

During this time Jim was invited on speaking tours of the United States and Australia. On a visit to New York, he was sitting on the flat bed of a lorry, preparing to be introduced to the assembled crowd. Suddenly the strains of the song, *Kelly the Boy from Killane* filled the air. It must have seemed appropriate to the organisers. After all, his name was Kelly and he hailed from the parish of Killane, but that is where the similarity ended. When he was called to speak, the words of the song rang out: "Seven feet was his height with some inches to spare, and he looked like a King in command". Jim said, "What could I do? I stood up, threw my shoulders back, stuck my chest out and stood tall, all 5' 8" and a half of me".

Our thanks to Michael Heaney for having the courage to make the PrimeTime documentaries; they stand as testament to a period so many would like to forget.

To the members of the 1916-21 Club for your continued support. You took Jim to your hearts and for that we are grateful.

To the people of Bailieborough who campaigned on his behalf, a heartfelt thanks.

Thanks to Angela Clifford for her numerous articles and forensic study of the period. Your tenacity is admirable.

Following Jim's death in 2003, Sheila continued to campaign. She received unstinting support from the Civil Rights Veterans' Association, in particular Fionnbar O'Doherty. Finn was responsible for the launch of an online petition to clear Jim's name. It continues to receive signatures to this day.

Sheila was extremely touched by the support offered by so many people and the belief they had in Jim's integrity. She was honoured to be invited to America to unveil a memorial stone in his honour, as she was to unveil a plaque in his home town of Bailieborough. Her greatest regret was that his name was never officially cleared.

Unfortunately by the time *Our National Games*, a play written by Gerry Humphreys, was staged, she was unwell and unable to attend the opening night. I travelled to Athlone the following day to see her. When I showed her the posters advertising the play, she was overwhelmed.

Sheila died in 2009. Following her death, while wandering through Dublin, I found myself in the National Gallery. I sat in front of Robert Ballagh's painting of James Connolly. The thought came to me that maybe Robert, or as I thought of him then, Mr. Ballagh, would be open to the idea of painting a portrait of Jim. When I got home to England, I wrote to him, and if I'm honest, I did not expect a reply. A reply came, and it came quickly, saying he was happy to do so, but currently was busy and could I remind him in the Autumn. Then one day, I think in July, a letter arrived from Ireland. When I opened it, a piece of paper fluttered to the floor. It was a copy of the portrait Robert had managed to complete.

So it is with great pleasure I unveil the portrait of Jim as painted by Robert and lastly thank him for doing so.

Report

Launch Of Dictionary Of Irish Biography

There was a seminar on the Dictionary of Irish Biography in mid-May. It was organised by the Newspaper & History Forum of Ireland in the Royal Irish Academy in Dawson Street.

The speakers were James McGuire (DIB), Regina Uí Chollaitáin, Ruth Dudley Edwards, Felix M. Larkin, Stephen Collins (The Irish Times), and Patrick Maume.

McGuire dealt with some of the technical aspects of the Dictionary such as who qualifies as Irish. He also said that the first call for this Dictionary was in a 1938 *Irish Times* editorial. He suggested that it wasn't an "official" dictionary, which seemed to imply that it was independent of the State.

Larkin had some interesting comments on the *Freeman's Journal*. He has a book about one of the satirists that wrote for it around the turn of the century. In the course of his speech he said that, when the *Irish*

Independent took over the *Freeman's Journal*, it included "incorporating the *Freeman's Journal*" in its masthead, as ownership of the title would lapse if it was not used.

Reginal Uí Chollaitáin's talk was about Irish language journalists, but I found it difficult to engage with it because it was full of sociological jargon.

Ruth Dudley Edwards had a talk about the various journalists in the DIB. Most of them had an English connection: Brendan Bracken, Brian Inglis, Cecil King (!), and Cecil King's uncle (a name like Harmsworth?). She also mentioned *Irish Times* columnist Patrick Campbell, well-known on British television for his stutter. She suggested that this impediment might have had something to do with the burning of his family home by anti-Treaty Republicans when he was a child. She thought the DIB project was wonderful and wouldn't accept any nit-picking criticism.

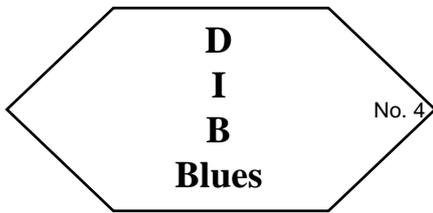
Stephen Collins said he had been interested in William O'Brien ever since an interview he had with Jack Lynch. O'Brien worked for the *Freeman's Journal*. Lynch said that his family were all O'Brien supporters. He made some comment to the effect that O'Brien's toleration of Unionism was similar to that of Jack Lynch, although no examples of Lynch's toleration were given. He also quoted O'Brien making some derogatory comments about Frank Gallagher (founding Editor of the *Irish Press*). Collins remarked regretfully that there were tours in the Dáil which talked about the Proclamation and the 1916 Rising and none about the democratic parliamentary tradition which preceded Independence.

Patrick Maume also discussed journalists in the DIB. His delivery was a bit machine like. He made a comment about new information being available through the internet, but this avenue has been closed off because of the prospect of the main newspapers like the *New York Times* operating behind a pay wall (but news-ers have to pay their way no less than the DIB).

The meeting was then open to the floor. Felix Larkin, speaking from the floor, asked if there had been any Irish journalists who had worked in England who returned to Ireland to work as journalists. Stan Gebler of the *Sunday Independent* was mentioned. After the meeting someone thought of Conor Cruise O'Brien. The implication seemed to be that an Irish journalist reached the pinnacle of his career in London.

All in all it was a very revisionist meeting. A lot of very Anglo-Irish accents beavering away at constructing/erasing a national memory.

John Martin



The following letter appeared in *The Irish Times* of 5th May 2010:

Today is the 94th anniversary of the execution of Major John MacBride. A recently published book on the Easter Rising by Fearghal McGarry, based on witness statements of the participants, testifies again to the bravery of MacBride at Jacob's factory. When he was encouraged to leave the building before the actual surrender took place, as he could have since he was dressed in civilian clothes, he declined to do so, saying, "Liberty is a priceless thing and any one of you that sees a chance, take it. I'd do so myself but my liberty days are over. Good luck boys". This echoed the bravery he had shown during his founding and co-leading an Irish-Transvaal Brigade during the Boer War.

Afterwards, he went to Paris where he

married Maud Gonne, despite advice from both their friends that such a marriage was foolish. They soon agreed to separate but could not agree on the fate of their baby son, the future Seán MacBride. A bitter divorce case ensued. Maud made allegations against John. She detailed them to W.B. Yeats, who, as her long-term suitor, was happy to believe them. He publicised them in his letters and poetry. Because Yeats has become such an icon to so many literary academics, his writing carries great weight. Some of those who have written of Yeats have pronounced his "verdict" on John MacBride authentic. The fact that MacBride successfully challenged the allegations in the divorce court in Paris and emerged with his good name intact has been ignored by some of these "scholars".

The latest addition to this ignoble band is found in the entry in the recently published and much feted Dictionary of Irish Biography. The extensive entry on Maud Gonne lists her allegations against her husband, but makes no reference to his successful rebuttal of them in court. To add insult to injury, the entry does not list as reference my book *The Yeats/Gonne/MacBride Triangle*—the one book that has comprehensively dealt with the divorce case. **Anthony Jordan**

which the government has locked us into with the European Commission. And, make no mistake about it, the Government will come back for more. It is impossible to anticipate the outcome of such an industrial conflict but it is clear that it will be represented as one sixth of the workforce acting against the interests of everyone else in society and, even if we win, we will still be faced with the enormous legacy of debt and the need to borrow in the financial markets to maintain the services that are essential to civilised living. The wealthy can and should pay more but, in and of itself, it is not sufficient to resolve the problem.

People ask as to how we can trust this Government which has twice reneged on national agreements with both private and public service workers. The point is that we did not just start mistrusting them when they cut pay and welfare in the December budget or when they did likewise the previous February in the so called Pensions levy or when they attacked the medical card entitlements of elderly people or when they reneged on commitments to improve employment protection legislation in the private sector. We didn't trust them when they were elected in 2007 or in 2002 or in 1997. We didn't adopt a neutral stance in those elections. We didn't because we could see that the queue of speculators, developers and financial parasites flocking to the tent at the Galway races didn't adopt a neutral stance. We did what we could to try to ensure that the voice of working people wouldn't be drowned out in the representation elected to the Oireachtas. But the government was elected and re-elected and as long as they are there we have to deal with them as we live in a democracy.

However in dealing with them we employed a medium term negotiation strategy that is not an end in itself but a surer way to a better outcome for our members and for working people. That is why the proposals guarantee jobs, preclude compulsory redundancy, minimise outsourcing, prevent further pay cuts and provide a framework for restoring lost pay over time. It is also why they ensure full participation by Union members in the restructuring of the public service, which is inevitable one way or the other. They offer the best guarantee of reflecting the interests of the citizens of Ireland in a way that is compatible with those of public service workers, rather than the ambitions of those focused on the accumulation of profit through privatisation of State assets and services on the pretext of correcting the national finances."

SCARGILL'S REMARKS

By way of contrast, with a headline of "Scargill tells public sector to fight on", the *Irish Independent* reported on 3rd May:

"Former British union leader Arthur Scargill has urged public servants to

What Would Larkin Have Done?

Strikes And Agreements

INTRODUCTION

What would Larkin have done? During the course of his May Day address outside Liberty Hall to a gathering of no more than 200, the statues of Larkin and Connolly were invoked by Arthur Scargill as he professed to see into their minds and proceeded to castigate the current leadership of the Irish Trade Union movement. Scargill rhetorically demanded: "I want to point out a number of things that need to be said: Where are all the Trade Union leaders that ought to be here today?"

Jack O'Connor was actually in Belfast that morning delivering a May Day address, as President of the ICTU, to a 4,500 strong rally, followed by his address that evening, as General President of SIPTU, to a May Day rally in Athy, Co. Kildare, where he made following points:

O'CONNOR'S SPEECH

"I find myself repeatedly being asked as to why it is that we are supporting the Croke Park proposals on pay and reform in the public service. Some level the charge that we have changed sides and that Larkin and Connolly would be turning in their graves. However, we have options which they did not have. None of them had the option of a negotiation strategy.

We have, and we have them and the people who stood with them to thank for it. It is fine to say that working people did not create this mess. That of course is true but it does not address the issue. And let us be clear. It is potentially the most serious problem that has confronted this country since the Second World War in terms of its capacity to compromise our economic sovereignty and independence. Even as we speak, a modern developed EU country and participant in the Eurozone is negotiating the surrender of its economic independence to the IMF. James Connolly understood the critical importance of national sovereignty from the perspective of working people. That is why he and the Citizen Army marched out along with the republican forces to assert that right by force of arms in 1916. But in doing so he envisaged a very different Ireland. We too envisage a different outcome from our endeavours than those who preside over decision making in Ireland today.

There are Trade Unionists who believe that the proposals can be rejected without any requirement to engage in industrial conflict as a consequence, but they are not calculating for the €3 billion cut in the deficit in 2011 and again in 2012 which are essential to the fiscal plan

continue their campaign of industrial action against pay cuts. Mr. Scargill warned accepting the Croke Park deal would be an 'unmitigated disaster' as it would freeze their wages. The Socialist Labour Party leader, famous for taking on former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during the miners' strike, said he was strongly opposed to these forms of social contract. Although the draft wage agreement freezes pay for four years, it does allow annual wage reviews that could lead to pay cuts being refunded. It also guarantees pay will not be slashed for the duration of the agreement, in return for wide-ranging reforms. Despite this, Mr. Scargill was heavily critical of the new deal, when he addressed a May Day rally in Dublin over the weekend."

Scargill proclaimed:

"I believe the campaign of industrial action should continue... Workers should demand their wage increases and if the government does not agree, it should call a general election... It reminds me of the social contract in the UK when workers and Trade Union leaders were asked to support an agreement that would freeze their wages in return for what was being promised by the government, which was an unmitigated disaster."

JIM LARKIN

But how could Arthur Scargill possibly know what Larkin would have thought or done in the circumstances of today? In 1965 Professor Emmet Larkin of Columbia University, New York—no relation of his subject—published his path-breaking biography, simply entitled *James Larkin—Irish Labour Leader*. Regrettably, it has been long out-of-print. Professor Larkin has his own *quantum* of radical blood flowing through his veins. As I drove him back to his hotel after he had delivered a "*Salute to Jim Larkin*" commemorative lecture in Liberty Hall in 1997, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Big Jim's death, he told me that his own father had been an agrarian agitator and incendiary, forced to flee his native Galway for the United States. But Emmet Larkin also fully grasped the complexity of what it means to be a true radical in coming to grips with the leadership required in order to adjust to rapidly shifting sets of circumstances. Often described as being like an Old Testament prophet, Larkin was a Christian Socialist who had thoroughly imbibed his Bible, and knew well those lines from the *Book of Ecclesiastes*:

"In everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose under heaven ...
A time to cast away stones, and a time to
gather stones ...
A time of war, and a time of peace."

Emmet Larkin fully grasped, and chronicled hereunder, the complexity of Big Jim's responses to the ever-shifting circumstances of a brief two year period,

1911-1913, when he moved from waging all-out strikes to advocacy of compulsory arbitration, but then to rejection of that option in favour of city-wide and sector-wide negotiations (of a Joint Industrial Council character), and back again to all-out class war in response to the Dublin employers' lockout of all ITGWU members in August 1913.

What would Larkin have done today? The only honest answer is that we do not know. But we can be more certain in saying that his starting point would have been based on the following advice he gave to a Special Delegate Conference of the ITGWU on 14 May 1923:

"Don't submit your minds to any one man. Think these problems out for yourselves. A leader who can lead you out of the wilderness can lead you back again. If there is a thinking intelligent movement, no leader can mislead you."

Manus O'Riordan

EXCERPT FROM

JAMES LARKIN—IRISH LABOUR LEADER:

"Beginning in August, 1911, the workers from one end of Ireland to the other made demands on their employers. From Jacob's biscuit factory in Dublin to the bacon factories in Limerick, from the dock labourers in Belfast to the Urban Council employees in Cork, spontaneous demands were made and quickly conceded. Newsboys, clothing workers, golf caddies, tanners, malsters, dairy workers, and tramway men all clamoured for an increase in wages. The *Freeman's Journal* had to open a special column for 'Irish Labour Troubles' in August to chronicle the sudden outburst of industrial unrest. The Transport Union had more than enough to do in these busy months. Larkin and Partridge were in Dublin. Daly was in Wexford, M'Keown was in Dundalk and Connolly was in Belfast. The general wave of strikes did not subside in Ireland until February of the following year.

The most novel feature in all these strikes in Great Britain and Ireland was their spontaneous and sympathetic nature. The victories won by the waterside trades and the railwaymen in the summer of 1911 were chiefly the result of the sympathetic and concerted action taken by all the men. In Ireland it was Larkin's use of the 'sympathetic strike' and his policy of refusing to handle 'tainted goods' that won for him, more than anything else, the reputation of being a revolutionary syndicalist. Yet he professed neither to believe in nor approve of strikes. In the course of a speech celebrating the victory of the dockers and coal men at the end of July, 1911, Larkin said '*I have told them again and again (the employers) that I don't believe in strikes—never did I believe in strikes.*' A year later, in giving evidence before the Industrial Council, he was even

more explicit when he said, '*I do not approve of strikes at all. I have been through too many. I have been through 33 of them both as a striker and a leader of strikers.*' How did this square with his approval and use of not only the strike but the 'sympathetic strike' and his policy of not touching 'tainted goods'? Essentially Larkin saw society in three stages—the present, the near future, and the millennium. Since even he admitted that 'some little time must elapse' before the coming of the millennium, it was the present and near future that concerned him most.

As for the present, Larkin realised that in 1911 in the face of the exploiting employers the working classes had no defence except their Trade Union and no weapon in their armoury except the strike. What existed between capital and labour was actually a state of war, and what had happened in the summer of 1911 'was no more than an episode in battle'. As regards the 'sympathetic strike', Larkin explained, '*We believe that when one of our friends is attacked anywhere we are attacked. We follow the same lines of organisation as the Shipping Federation. Wherever an individual shipowner is affected they are affected everywhere, and they take up the fight. When ever we find one of our friends attacked anywhere we take up the fight too.*' As far as 'tainted goods' were concerned, '*The principle I have been working on always*', continued Larkin, '*is that when the cabinet workers are on strike I am on strike, and if that stuff is made under unfair conditions I have no right to handle it.*' In justifying his use of the 'sympathetic strike' Larkin pointed out, '*If the organised employers are entitled to use the sympathetic lockout, then I say it must be available in logic that we should also use the sympathetic strike.*'

But was this state of war to continue indefinitely until the social revolution brought the millennium in its wake and there would be no need for strikes because the working classes would finally be in the seats of power? No, according to Larkin, order was to be brought out of chaos in the near future by 'compulsory arbitration'. As early as 1909 Larkin advocated 'Compulsory Arbitration Courts', and later enlarged them to 'Compulsory Wages Arbitration Boards'. In July, 1912, he made it clear he was in favour of compulsory arbitration and he would 'make' both employers and employees carry out their agreements under the penalty of 'either money or prison'. Larkin was at the same time convinced that 'voluntary arbitrations are no use to anybody'. When a proposal was made in the Dublin Trades Council to establish a Conciliation Board, which was in effect to be voluntary, Larkin objected. '*They wanted*', he said, '*something that would remove the state of disease that existed. They did not want a Conciliation Board...*

They wanted something that would prevent strikes.'

On April 26, 1913, Larkin wrote an **'Open Letter to the People'** in the *Irish Worker* on **'How to Stop Strikes'**. In a remarkable preface to an even more remarkable arbitration scheme, Larkin wrote:

"Friends, I appeal to you to read and study this letter impartially, not to be swayed by prejudice, personal antagonism, or false sentiment. My only reason for writing you is the ultimate benefit of this nation. What is the problem? Allow me to state it as I see it. The employers desire to carry on industry and accumulate profits. The workers desire to live. The employers cannot carry on industry nor accumulate profits if they have not got the good will of the workers or their acquiescence in carrying on such industry. The workers must want to live; therefore it is to the interest of both parties that a mutual arrangement should be brought about. A mutual arrangement, I repeat, is the only satisfactory medium whereby the present system can be carried on with any degree of satisfaction, and in such an arrangement the employers have more to gain than the workers. I am, of course, aware that the ultimate solution is the ownership and control of the means of life by the whole of the people; but we are not at that stage of development as yet. Therefore it is essential that some means should be sought whereby the work of the nation may be carried on without constant yet at present necessary dislocation. The Strike is a damnable but necessary evil at present, and if it is possible to limit them in number, place and magnitude, all thinking people should assist to that desirable end. I therefore place before you in a general way a scheme which I have submitted to employers and workers upon a former occasion, and to use a formalism, anything not set down in this scheme can be added thereto, anything objectionable therein will be, I hope, worthy of discussion."

In outlining his "Wages Board" scheme, Larkin classified industry in Dublin in four distinct categories. Shipbuilding and engineering were classified under one heading, while building, transport, and distribution made up the other three. An equal number of representatives of the employers and the workers were to be elected from each of the above groups and form a Trade Wages Board. All demands made by the men were to be first presented to the individual employers. If no satisfactory arrangement could be come to, the matter was to be submitted to the Trade Wages Board, which had full power to act on behalf of their respective sections. If the Trade Wages Board failed to reach a decision the matter was to be then forwarded to a City Wages Board. The Board was to be composed of ten members, five representing the employers and five

the men. If an employer or union flouted the decision of the Wages Board, Trade or City, they were to receive no help from their fellow employers or Trade Unionists.

What is there to be said about a scheme that was literally the antithesis of everything Larkin had been espousing for years? The inconsistencies are enormous and they are inexplicable except as absolute contradictions. Larkin had advocated 'compulsory arbitration', while this scheme does not even involve arbitration because there is no arbiter—only equal numbers of employers and Trade Unionists. He had defiantly denounced 'voluntary associations', while this scheme depended for its success on the faith and good will of the parties involved. He had advocated penalties of 'money or prison' while this scheme involved no more than the ostracism of the erring employer or Trade Union. The scheme itself, on the face of and in the light of Larkin's own experience, was unworkable. For this mess of pottage, he was consciously aware, he was giving up the principle of the 'sympathetic strike', since a dispute would have to run the whole gamut of Boards before a strike could be called. He even went further, as he set an abnormally high 80 percent as the figure which would justify a union calling for a 'closed shop' in any trade. It is difficult to believe that Larkin was not wholly sincere in presenting this scheme for settling strikes, for his preface reads with a deep sincerity. Though naïve and incomplete, the scheme itself is a straightforward exposition and not the least bit muddled. The only conclusion that can be arrived at is that Larkin changed his mind about 'compulsory arbitration' some time between the end of July, 1912, when he gave evidence before the Industrial Council, and the publication of the 'Open Letter' in April, 1913. This is substantiated by the fact that when a new Transport Union Rulebook was issued in October, 1912, the only change in the re-written preface was that the 'Compulsory Arbitration Courts' was deleted. What Larkin's reason were for changing his mind are not known, since he never acknowledged that he had changed his mind.

Undoubtedly, the change in the position of his union and the influx of new ideas were the chief external reasons for the change in his thinking. When his union was weak, the chief problem facing Larkin was securing recognition from the employers. He was, therefore, in those days an advocate of 'compulsory arbitration', which would assure him a position of equality with the employers in the councils of the state. As his union grew in strength, however, the principle of recognition did not loom so large. His union could now force the employers to recognise them without the aid of the state, and there was no longer any pressing need for the union

to limit its freedom of action. Also, of course, the new syndicalist ideas were in theory opposed to all contracts and working agreements. No contract should be made for more than a year at the most because agreements tended to dilute the militancy of the working classes. 'Compulsory arbitration' was, therefore, in conflict with the temper of the times, and with the new positions of strength the unions found themselves in after so many years in the wilderness."

Emmet Larkin, 1965

HIROSHIMA -

JUST ANOTHER WORK-DAY

Pika-don—flash-bang,
the human form as an inscribed shadow.
Everything melts, nothing clangs.

A pressurised cabin too high for fighter
planes.

6th August, 1945.

A small-town gangster in the reins,
Harry S. Truman on overdrive.

8.15 am, Japanese time, at work, school,
the peacock vain.

Pika-don—flash-bang, nuclear-brained,
a nation already defeated,
all war-lust sated.

In the human lab an experiment.
To halt the Soviet advance,
a former friendship fragments.

Twelve crew members years hence.
Is there a lesson they haven't learnt.
No, their work-a-day mission they
complement:
Did not Dresden have as many victims.
Was not fire-bombed Tokyo equally grim.
From the tool-shed of the White House,
rusted, blunted and soused,
each dies after this nuclear joust.

Except for one who still survives,
aged 89, he would gladly do it again,
using this atomic scythe.

His conscience is urbane.
His nation has no regrets,
making his opinion correct.

He visits Nagasaki after that event,
sees a rubble-covered plain,
says that's his job, keens no lament.
Journalist flock looking for his pain.

They interrogate in his gated community
but treat the US government with impunity
while writing of him with profanity.

Wilson John Haire.

25th May, 2010

Note: *pika-don*—Japanese for nuclear
flash-bang

HOW THE IRISH COPE

It has become a talking point with nearly everyone—what is really going on with our Government and NAMA, the banks and the developers and whether us—the taxpaying public—have any say any more in this country. Someone recently said in a newspaper that the so-called mobs attacking the Dail just showed how inertia ruled our response to the happenings of the economic crises. The numbers who turned out were so few that it seems we lack the appetite for action. But do we? Judging by the media—it seems the stuff that filters through shows us as angry and anxious, but is the media hype just "*full of sound and fury signifying nothing*". I had the great pleasure of returning to the place of my birth some weeks ago—Killarney—for a family get-together. As we drove through what surely is the most beautiful landscape in the world, I hummed with joy. The weather was perfect. The foliage was plentiful and green. And those mountains—I always remember Jack Lane saying that a Swiss woman complained that we had no mountains in Ireland and just leaping at the insult. Jack of course comes from near Millstreet and like the lady in question didn't think to know that we are talking about sea-levels here, unlike in Switzerland.

As we passed through Macroom there were lovely flags all about and a huge street banner proclaimed: "*Welcome to the St. Colman's Church Macroom Eucharistic Congress 6, 7 and 8th May 2010*". When we arrived in Killarney, it being Saturday evening, we went to Mass in the Franciscan Friary. The Church was full and that old Irish tradition of the men standing in the back porch had memories flooding back.

Before we went in—there were two local men outside church grounds collecting for Fianna Fail's National Church Collection and it was great to have a chat with them. They were surprised when I asked them if they had got much abuse. None at all, but even Mary O'Rourke also said this was the first year Fianna Failers had said they had come across no abuse. And in the *Mail on Sunday*, Joe Duffy—no less—said it was great to see the party faithful out and that there should be no abuse as they were the true democrats.

For my Kerry cousins there was nothing but contempt for the Dublin-based media and on the other hand a love for a rural Ireland that was not in the least out of sorts with itself. It was a *restorative* visit to say the least, but we left our hot water bottle behind which gives us an excuse for an early future visit.

It Is Time

THE NORTH

I read with interest Wilson John Haire's account of his recent visit home for a funeral in March 2010 of a Protestant family member (*Church & State* Summer 2010). His painful negotiation of the byways of Protestant and Catholic urban life had me on tenterhooks. It brought vividly to mind my one and only visit to Belfast and, knock me down if it wasn't himself who urged me back again in a letter to the *Irish Political Review*, with him being my home grown navigator. Well Wilson that is me out well and truly.

But I was watching the recent British elections and Sky for all its faults did a round up of the final tally in the North, with Sinn Fein outperforming all others and leading for the first time ever. An emotional Martin McGuinness—when the election of Michelle Gildernew was announced—told the TV audience that it had to be with Unionist votes and he thanked them very movingly I thought. But one would never have noticed that fact for the reporting from RTE and *The Irish Times* et al.

I recently saw a picture in DVD *Five Minutes of Heaven*, with Liam Neeson and James Nesbitt—both giving the performances of a lifetime. I think it was released to great acclamation in 1996 as a BBC co-production. Nesbitt was a revelation as his acting skills were first rate. He carried around the burden of a child who thirty years previously had seen his brother murdered by the UVF, the guilt of blame came from his unhinged mother and his murderous grief and rage were to be expiated finally by meeting the murderer (Neeson wonderfully underacting) who was living vicariously as a person going to the trouble spots of Europe as a conflict educator. But he was a hollow man and he knew it.

Nesbitt's character, with the enablement of a BBC programme, was to come face to face with his nemesis after all the years and they thought the meeting would be good for both men. But Nesbitt intended to kill the gunman. To this end he had a knife stored in his trousers which made for great comedic release as he tried out various means of pulling it out while in the toilet upstairs. Of course the British, true to their continual denial of their real role in Northern Ireland, were there as the peacemakers.

But this film had a real punch to its bite and I would highly recommend it. The only false note was the ending, when Nesbitt's character goes into group therapy and this definitely struck a wrong note with me but perhaps my readers in that part of Ireland will correct me on that.

MILITARY LIFE IN THE UK WITH THEIR QUEEN

In *Hello*, No. 1123, 17th May 2010, the whole magazine was given over almost to the role of the military and its rise once

again in popular culture. People think *Hello* represents celebrity culture and, while that is true, its real role is about Royalty and how it interacts in today's culture. And there is plenty too about the Nordic Royals and the other Europeans and indeed those of the Middle East, especially Jordan's beautiful Queen Rania who incidentally is great friends with that *arriesta* Bono.

But in this particular issue there was a huge spread, typically enough, about Prince Harry getting his wings as a helicopter pilot from his father the Prince of Wales while his adoring girlfriend, the multi-millionaire South African Chelsy Davy, looked proudly on.

But what really caught my eye was a rather quiet piece about the Queen officially opening a secret "*new military complex in north-west London*". Accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, she—

"toured the top-secret Permanent Joint Headquarters building in Northwood, which will house more than 900 military and civilian staff, many of whom are responsible for co-ordinating British forces in Afghanistan. The couple were greeted by Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, Chief of Joint Operations, who revealed how the military nerve centre commands and controls 19,000 people in 17 different countries. The Queen, who is head of the armed forces, also met Australian Colonel David Wainwright who quipped when asked by the royal visitor why servicemen from overseas played such a vital role at the base: "We look at things differently—and we like to joke about the cricket and the rugby".

"Rooms in the building, part of a huge redevelopment programme at the site are named after recent recipients of the Victoria and George Cross."

So war pays for some people evidently as the Duchess of Cornwall also paid homage to troops at Bulford Camp near Salisbury in Wiltshire. And her husband the Prince of Wales paid his respects by laying a poppy wreath at the Cenotaph for VE Day.

THE QUEEN'S WEALTH

In *The Observer* 25th October, 2009, in the Business section, there was very good news for the Queen of England. The monarch has seen a £500m boost to her estate—which is now worth £6.5bn—and is pressing ahead with major redevelopment schemes through the recession, in the hope of building longer-term success. Out of such largess she did return £220m to the Treasury but then of course her Civil List payments come back to her and her family.

While her property manager, the Crown Estate, has ticked up an impressive 8.3% increase over the past six months, the widely-used Investment Property Data-bank (IPD) index remains down 3.5%. Roger Bright, chief executive of the Crown

Estate, whose portfolio includes Windsor Great Park and Ascot race course said:

"Overall values have gone down over the last 18 months but ours have held up better than many others. This is because of the diversified nature of the portfolio, which includes agricultural land and the marine estate as well as commercial property."

"The Crown Estate announced this summer that the overall portfolio had dropped by 18% to £6bn year-on-year, the first fall in value for 15 years, but now it is saying it is "cautiously optimistic" about the future. In the past six months there has been an upward movement in the portfolio's value helped by a big increase in the value of farm land and by demand for the seabed estate due to renewable energy operators setting up wind turbines offshore."

This rather stodgy take on assets shows what long term portfolios are all about. Pit is against what *The Independent*, 21st December 2009 reported in their business diary: "*Making money out of nothing*":

"The former Lehman Brothers mergers and acquisitions analyst Nicolas Dickreuter has a new business, selling *hot air* to his chums in the city. The rather-of-the-moment website—which he has called psychobanker.com—allows City traders to play against each other buying virtual lots, simply for the fun of outwitting each other."

But who are the real mugs? Us actually. Because that is what carbon trading is all about—*hot air*. But *The Independent* journalist couldn't reveal the truth and was too thick to see the consequences of what he was saying. Ireland's Green Minister for Energy, talks carbon—hear *hot air*.

THE IPR

This week I had meant to do a longer article on Timothy Garton Ash and his new book but I have overshot my deadline. Also the *gabfest* on Bowen/Trevor in Mitchelstown will have to be in for the next issue. But some thing of real concern to this writer is the lack of feedback. It is hard to gauge our output when we don't know what our readers think about what we write. Surely the web could be a forum of some kind?

What really was so funny about Fintan O'Toole who showed for ever that he can dish it out but by God he can't take it? When Senator Terry Layden of Fianna Fail suggested he was a leader in the mob-attack on the Dail, he went ballistic. According to reports from *The Irish Daily Mail* he said that we are all treated as serfs and peasants by our parliamentarians and demanded action. This from a man who quadrupled the size of a second home in Co. Clare. Terry wished FOT an Irish blessing which was kindly translated by the paper and when the paper went after Terry himself he said in Latin a phrase which again they kindly translated as "*What I have written, remains written*." What class.

Julianne Herlihy

PRESS RELEASE

RTÉ atrocity propaganda in UCD History Course

RTÉ's discredited 2007 documentary on the 1921 execution of two Protestant farmers in Coolacrease, Co. Offaly features in a UCD Summer course in Irish history starting Tuesday, 8th June 2010, 11am—1.30pm, in Room Q005 of the Quinn School of Business in UCD.

The highlight of this five-day overview of Irish history for foreign students comes on the last day of the course:

"Day Five, Monday, June 15 2010 : 10am—1.30pm

Topic: The Two Irelands: 20th & 21st century Ireland

The Irish Revolution, 1916-1921, resulted in the birth of the Irish Free State in 1922. This class will examine how Ireland finally won her Independence and the immediate impact that had in the shape of a Civil War. It will also examine the two Irelands, looking at developments North and South of the border that still divides the island.

Afternoon Monday, June 15 2010:

A screening of *The Killings at Coolacrease* @ 2.30pm. (Location To Be Announced)

The Killings at Coolacrease is the bloody tale of a bitter land dispute, involving a family of Protestant farmers in County Offaly, which came to a deadly conclusion during the War of Independence. The documentary calls into question the idea of patriotism. When it was aired in October 2007, it proved extremely controversial and provoked much discussion and debate in the media.

Assessment:

Write a review of *The Killings at Coolacrease*.

Some questions you might consider when approaching it.

(Note: these are only guidelines & are not exclusive)

Which version is more credible?

What consequence does it have for our understanding of the 'four glorious years'?

As this assignment is to be written during, and submitted at the end of, class, please ensure that you bring pens and paper as they will not be supplied.

Word count: 800-1,000 words maximum."

The above is an extract from the official course description.*

The UCD history course culminates in RTÉ's flawed version of the 1921 Offaly events, suggesting that this version of a relatively insignificant incident is the essence of the "*Four Glorious Years*", or indeed of 800 years of Irish history.

The "*two sides*" mentioned in the course publicity above are to be the "*two sides*"

* For more, see:

http://74.125.155.132/scholar?q=cache:dNe415LYHYEJ:scholar.google.com/+Coolacrease&hl=en&as_sdt=2000
<http://www.arcadia.edu/abroad/default.aspx?id=28744>
<http://www.ucd.ie/quinn/studyabroad/>

tentiously presented in the RTÉ documentary: "*Few dispute the central facts of this event but, nearly a century on, the one story continues to divide itself into two—two sides, two sympathies, two truths*" (Narrator, *The Killings at Coolacrease*, RTÉ).

Never mind that the documentary conceals and distorts the real evidence and invents fantasy evidence as it deliberately and skilfully undermines "*one side*" and props up the other. As they view the film, the novice students of Irish history will hear the cream of the academic history profession confidently assert the message of this documentary's working title: "**Atonement: Ethnic Cleansing in the Midlands**".

Dr. Terence Dooley of NUI Maynooth said: "*The Revolutionary period was used essentially as a pretext to run many of these Protestant farmers and landlords out of the community, for locals to take up their land.*" This message was reinforced over and over again in the documentary by QUB Professor Richard English, and by a UCD alumnus now lecturing in the Mater Dei Institute in Dublin.

Before the documentary was ever broadcast Professor Roy Foster and Professor Lord Paul Bew, doyens of the Irish historical profession, referred to Coolacrease as proof that the Irish independence movement was sectarian rather than democratic. And revisionist hubris continues to attract academic historians to Coolacrease, like moths to a flame. Professor Marianne Elliott's book *When God Took Sides: Religion and Identity in Irish History—Unfinished History* (Oxford University Press, 2009) still peddles the Coolacrease sectarian murder thesis, long after it has been comprehensively debunked.

The ivory towers may be reluctant to let go of their discredited myths, but the real world has moved on. The Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC), which dutifully supported the RTÉ propaganda, has been abolished and replaced. Plans for a feature film on Coolacrease by director Perry Ogden, subsidised by the Irish Film Board, were also quietly dropped. And the droves of media types who descended on Offaly in search of Irish ethnic cleansing have packed their bags and gone home empty-handed.

The introductory synopsis above to the UCD history course includes a direct—but unacknowledged—extract from the

RTÉ publicity material: *"The Killings at Coolacree is the bloody tale of a bitter land dispute, involving a family of Protestant farmers in County Offaly, which came to a deadly conclusion during the War of Independence."*

But in spite of the RTÉ propaganda it is now widely accepted that this issue had nothing to do with land or religion. The execution of two Loyalist combatants after they attacked a local IRA unit was a legitimate action by the forces defending the elected Irish government against the war waged on it by the imperial power.

It seems the UCD history students will be given little if any opportunity to critique the RTÉ documentary objectively, to investigate how the *"two sides"* of the argument fared after the documentary was broadcast. They will not even be able to do what many students do these days—search the internet to see what material they can download for their coursework assignment. The instructions above say: *"this assignment {a review of the RTÉ documentary} is to be written during, and submitted at the end of, class"*—directly after watching the documentary.

The students will view, perhaps in a darkened auditorium, an hour-long film which won an international TV award for clever camera-work, editorial chicanery, emotional musical accompaniment and striking cinematography presents powerful footage of hate-filled assassins brutally gunning down pacifist Amish-type farmers in front of their mother and sisters; the motive being sectarian murder, land grab and ethnic cleansing. Ireland's top history academics dutifully endorse RTÉ's message.

And then, according to the official course description above, the students are advised to declare, without any further investigation or evidence, *"which version {which side} is more credible"*.

No doubt most of these overseas students, having written their assignment and received their marks, will heave a sigh of relief and get on with the business of enjoying the Summer. And their exposure to the RTÉ Coolacree propaganda, endorsed by UCD, will be their parting take on Irish history.

They will have little reason to investigate further—for instance to examine the information and evidence in

<https://docs.indymedia.org/Local/IMCEireCoolaCrease>

or the wide-ranging discussions in

http://www.drb.ie/more_details/09-09-19/A_House_Built_on_Sand.aspx

http://www.drb.ie/more_details/09-09-20/Frank_Gallagher_and_land_agitation.aspx

or in

<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/84547>

The students may never discover that, in a desperate and duplicitous defence of the documentary against Broadcasting

Professor Fanning And Major McDowell's 'White Nigger' remarks

Niall Meehan submitted the following letter to the *Irish Times* on 24th May: it was not published

On October 2nd 1969 the British Ambassador, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, reported to the Foreign Office that the then Chief Executive of the *Irish Times*, Major Thomas McDowell, regarded his "Protestant, Belfast-born editor, [Douglas] Gageby" as "an excellent man, but on Northern questions a renegade or white nigger". On January 27th 2003 McDowell denied he had ever used the term "white nigger". On Saturday last (May 8th) your obituary of Dermot James reported that James was "was convinced that "the Major" never described... Gageby as a "white nigger"...". The former personal assistant to the Major said McDowell "never used language like that".

Leaving aside the difficulty of conceiving of an ambassador being sent abroad to lie to his country, perhaps we have become too hung up on the objectionable phrase "white nigger". The Major did not deny calling Gageby "a renegade" or the substance of the ambassador's remarks. Perhaps a sectarian view that Gageby was a traitor to an assumed religious rather than a racial caste may become an agreed version of what McDowell said

There is one more point that should not be forgotten, because it is important. When Professor Ronan Fanning of UCD found the October 2nd letter in December 1999 among newly released papers in the PRO in Kew he sat on it. This was reported on Indymedia.ie in 2004 and in Mark O'Brien's more recent history of the *Irish Times*. Though working for the *Irish Independent*, Professor Fanning refused to show the October 2nd 1969 letter to the *Independent's* London correspondent, Bernard Purcell. On July 3rd 2000 in the *Independent* Purcell reported subsequent letters in the series more fully than did Rachel Donnelly on the same day in the *Irish Times*. The journalists reported later documents mentioning Gageby and McDowell that referenced the missing October 2nd letter. As I explained on Spinwatch.org * and in *Village* magazine in September 2005, the IT published an anodyne and also inaccurate account that airbrushed references to Gageby.

The October 2nd letter was re-discovered by Jack Lane of the Aubane Historical Society in January 2003 and published in the *Sunday Independent* on January 26th, in which newspaper Professor Fanning then wrote quite authoritatively about it. He did not inform his readers that he had suppressed publication some years earlier.

The reason the letter was not published in 2000 is because it does not fit a historical narrative of the troubles, and of Irish history generally, preferred by prominent Irish historians and members of the political elite since the mid to late 1970s.

Complaints, RTÉ recklessly claimed its flimsy thesis was proven by historical Land Commission documents vouched for by their academic "experts". A claim which was later proven (NOT by the now-abolished Broadcasting Complaints Commission, needless to say) to be an audacious lie. RTÉ never examined the documents in question.

These documents were published in the book

"Coolacree: the true story of the Pearson executions, an incident in the Irish War of Independence",

by Paddy Heaney, Pat Muldowney, Philip O'Connor and others

Aubane Historical Society, 2008,

€20 /£18, from

<http://aubanehistoricalsociety.org/>

In fact the documents prove conclusively the opposite case—there was no sectarian murder, land grab or attempted ethnic cleansing.

RTÉ's Coolacree travesty exposed

the methods of academic history. Far from its purported aim of removing misconceptions the academic history profession is avidly engaged in creating destructive myths. Public trust is eroded. Were it not for the role of conscientious citizens and local historians RTÉ's Coolacree myth, endorsed by academic "experts", would now be the accepted version of an unremarkable incident in the War of Independence.

It is difficult to imagine that Irish academic history could sink lower than the depths plummeted by Dr Dooley, Professor English and Dr. Murphy. But this UCD history course indicates that we have yet to hit rock bottom.

For further information and copies of the true account of what happened at Coolacree contact:

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Making Ireland Unlovable

A Call to Irish Historians

I am writing this to draw the attention of Irish historians to an Irish phenomenon of recent times which they have so far not researched and recorded. Because it is a phenomenon of a kind not normally to be expected in a liberal-democratic state, it might continue to escape their attention.

Our historians know well that, from the last two decades of the nineteenth century to 1916 and beyond, certain Irish individuals and organisations created an Irish identity that the Irish increasingly loved; and that out of this growing love the Revolution sprang. They have recorded the names, and the love-inducing deeds and words, of the individuals and organisations in question.

That collective self-love was possible because, as a result of those creative actions, the Ireland of the day possessed again, for the first time in many centuries, a coherent identity among the nations. Its past was as the nationalist historical narrative told it. Anciently, it had owned its entire land in freedom; spoken and written its own language; was illustrious for its learning and art and saints and missionaries. Then for long centuries it was blocked by an external intrusion against which it struggled repeatedly, and under which it suffered much and in great part abandoned its native ways and language. Always since St. Patrick a Christian people, it had remained even in the centuries of adversity and persecution staunchly Catholic. Characterised now by a largely agricultural economy and rural ways and culture, it was increasingly repossessing things previously lost—its land, native language and native field sports. Increasingly, too, it was resolute in its struggle for political freedom; and as always its Catholic faith and morality were strong.

The new, independent Irish state, and almost its entire mass media, promoted something close to this composite Irish identity. With the addition of heroes and events drawn from the Revolution and of achievements of the Literary Revival, Ireland in this guise remained loved by the Irish, albeit with less motivating force, until the 1950s.

As with any national identity, that Irish one would with time evolve and change. It was itself far from the image in which the Irish had last seen and loved Ireland, which in those days they called Éire. The economic and intellectual paralysis, and the heavy emigration, that characterised the 1950s suggested that an invigorating renewal of the nation's idea of itself—one that would reflect new circumstances and generate them—was urgently due. New

circumstances flowing from Seán Lemass's new departures, and from the innovations of the Second Vatican Council, suggested forms that such a revision might take. Most of the nation now had its own sovereign republic. So in the normal course of events, that new, updated Irish identity, like the one it would replace, would be mainly shaped by realities present in the nation and by new ideas and actions sprung from them. Useful elements arriving from outside would be reworked and fitted in by Irish minds and feelings. But that, as it turned out, was not to be.

I come now to the phenomenon that has been neither researched nor narrated by our historians. From the early 1960s onwards, an increasingly successful effort was made, first by some elements of the national mass media centred in Dublin, then by those media as a whole, to cancel piecemeal the established Irish identity, while replacing it with nothing. This offensive, as it might well be called, was propagating an imported, very alien ideology that had powerful foreign backers. Large and increasing sums of money underpinned it. By 1985 it had so progressed that in his book *Memory Ireland*, published in that year, an observant Australian wrote:

"Ireland is not a nation, once again or ever, so the new story runs, but two nations; maybe several; it does not have its characteristic religion—or if it does, it ought not; it does not have its characteristic language, as anyone can see or hear; it has no particular race or ethnic integrity. Ireland is nothing—a no-thing—an interesting nothing, to be sure, composed of colourful parts, a nothing mosaic. It is advertising prose and Muzak."

That 'new story' that William Buckley heard and read was emanating from the Dublin media which had become the unchallengeable definer of Ireland's identity. Unchallengeable because who could hope to compete successfully with that unelected, wealthy and sovereign image-making power?

That same power has in recent months (I am writing in April 2010) brought its 'new story' to a chorused climax of assault: the 'interesting' nothing of twenty-five years ago has become, a criminal, perversely stupid and disgusting one. This barrage by printed word and cartoon, and broadcast sound and image, has been enacting the sort of overkill that was sometimes engaged in by aerial bomber fleets of the Allies towards the end of the Second World War, when they rebombed the rubble of a well-bombed city to drive

victory home.

The build-up began when the worldwide economic recession made itself felt, in local forms and for local reasons, in one of the world's richest countries. The climax these last months, as our local recession was ending and growth returning, has been a raging exposition of general rottenness of mind and morals in the Irish Republic and the Irish Catholic Church. On page after page of Dublin's newspapers, among the reports of murders and drug seizures—the suicides and self-mutilations are not reported—headlines large and small have been accusing stupidity, cover-up, corruption. It appears the dim-witted Irish people have used an ill-conceived political system to elect stupid selfish persons to govern them and no rescue is in sight. The Catholic Church of the majority has so discredited itself that it finally and rightly belongs to the past.

The national broadcaster has been amazing civil citizens in their homes. On radio its main news programmes are mainly not news but for the most part 'interviews' resembling police interrogations. (I discovered that one of my daughters calls 'Morning Ireland' the 'We Hate Ireland' programme, but I would not single it out.) The station's employed correctors of the nation shout and bark at summoned holders of public office, repeatedly interrupting their attempted answers, zealous only to establish 'blame' and to extract 'apologies'. On television the main 'talk-shows' with audiences, having planted in the audience selected angry men and women, call on each of them in succession to continue the barrage about the awfulness of life in the rich and well-fed Republic of Ireland.

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The evidence of this fifty-year old phenomenon, from its tentative beginnings to its present climax, is there in the archives of the national media for our historians to research. Their task and purpose would be to produce a structured account of its origins and development, together with an explanation of how its successive agents saw what they were doing. Obviously the reduction of a loved Irish identity to an unlovable nothing is of equal historical importance to the construction of that same identity which nourished the Irish Revolution.

There is, as I said, some danger that Irish historians might continue to ignore it. Historians in dealing with the role of mass media in the affairs of a democracy tend to have regard only to particular influences of certain media, or of the media generally, in particular circumstances. A continuing purposeful influence of certain media, and all the more of the entire national media functioning for decades as a purposeful, extra-constitutional institution—could escape their notice.

I have lived through the entire phenomenon. I paid close attention to it in its early years, and subsequently noted some of its high moments. Many others who have been coeval with it since early adulthood are still around, including a fair number of the Dublin media managers and foot soldiers who were involved. So the research in the archives could be supplemented with many contemporary observations, anecdotes and explanations.

A curious thing I would point out is that the Republic of today is not the first Ireland that the Dublin media have pronounced unfit for self-respecting human beings to live in. Back in the 1970s when they had just about lost their ideological pluralism, and become univocal like the media of a Communist state or of any dictatorship, they were saying much the same about the Ireland of the years from Independence to 1960, which they called, for short, 'the de Valera era'. So in fact the hysterical message of recent months amounts to telling us that we have gone and disgraced ourselves again!

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That negative verdict on the 'de Valera era' was pioneered by *The Irish Times* in the 1960s, as indeed that paper pioneered and led the entire new departure. At the time its new ideological line seemed a purely commercial decision. Struggling bravely since Independence to remain true to its Unionist past without remaining Unionist, its circulation had fallen to crisis point. Those were boom years in Ireland as in the West generally. In 'Swinging London', as it got called, a section of the mass media had become the standard bearer in Western Europe of the new consumerist liberalism that had won the support of state and business in the USA. (Strictly speaking, it was left liberalism, but its key contribution to the consumerist economy makes that word a more apt qualifier).

For *The Irish Times* in difficulty to adopt a tentative, junior-school version of this new liberalism, and to refocus the paper on the young Irish who were enjoying the boom, seemed to be a wise commercial decision, and proved so. Moreover, the renovated orientation towards London fitted with the paper's ideological inheritance.

Researchers will notice that a frequent exhortation of the *Times* in those years was that 'we must become outward-looking', and that in effect this meant outward-looking towards London. It was a remarkable giveaway of the paper's ingrained out-of-touchness with ordinary Irish reality—as if looking out and going out, including a huge missionary movement to three distant continents, had not been massively engaged in by Irish people in the previous hundred years!

In 1961 Telefís Éireann began transmitting. The old Radio Éireann was

replaced by RTÉ, which covered radio and television. Many bright young Irish people worked in the tv station, along with some English people in management positions who had experience in British television and took it as their model. Soon both RTÉ services were reflecting, if in milder terms—they had a wider public—the new ideological allegiance of *The Irish Times*. A relationship of leader and follower was established which lasts to this day.

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Deserving of investigation is whether there was a background of political or other persuasion to the *The Irish Times's* decision to become a consumerist-liberal organ, and to the subsequent falling into line of the tv station. Certainly at the time, at the height of the Cold War, America wanted an ideological conformity on consumerist-liberal lines of its West European satellites. It was the ideal ideological tool for producing in face of the Communist East a tantalising display of prosperity. That would in turn generate in revenue and profit more money for armaments and the space race. And a display of consumerist liberalism in practice would confront the Communist indoctrination of the Soviet satellites with a way of life that seemed challengingly libertarian.

And it did in fact come to pass that consumerist liberalism, spearheaded in each nation-state by elements of the national media, gradually became the public orthodoxy in all the states of Western Europe. It became, to boot, the bureaucratic orthodoxy of the European Economic Community under its successive names in its successive guises. Given this ideology's bold rejection and replacement of many key European and Christian rules for living, as well as its utopianism, it also constituted in effect the West's counterpart to the Soviet Communist ideological experiment. (I have dealt with this aspect of the matter and related matters in an essay currently on my website.)

In this broad context it is evident that the introduction and preaching of consumerist-liberal doctrine in Dublin in the 1960s was a small and marginal item. If it had not been initiated by *The Irish Times* it would have happened somehow; imperial requirement and *force majeure* were at work. But, given that it was part of an ideological offensive that had powerful backing, it was for Ireland no small matter. It was an intrusion as alien to the nation's established way of life and values, and as intrinsically hostile to and subversive of these, as was the contemporary intrusion and preaching of Communist doctrine in, say, Romania.

Consider. The consumerist-liberal vision of the good life was a godless, democratic fraternity of individuals equal before the law, in which men, priests, religious, teachers, parents and the aged would be deprived of their traditional

intrinsic authority; all adults including women and older teenagers would contribute financially to the economy; the unavoidably poor would be equipped by the state with buying power, the disabled facilitated in every possible way, education and health care made available to all, along with sex of all kinds by mutual consent of adults, with pornography legitimate, divorce available, and contraceptives and abortion readily obtainable. Integral to the scheme would be new rules about what to say, think or feel, and what not to, about certain groups and categories of individuals, and certain sacrosanct matters.

Clearly, the men and women who held this vision of the good life would find the way of life, values and behavioural rules of 1960s Ireland in many respects abhorrent. And they would perceive in the main sources of how the Republic was and saw itself—the nationalist historical narrative and aims, mass belief in Catholic teaching about supernatural reality, mass adherence to Catholic morality, and proud attachment to the Irish Constitution—major obstacles to the realisation of their vision there.

Necessarily, if they were to achieve that, the enterprise would begin with the capture of some suitable elements of the national mass media. Thus based, it would set about dishonouring and discrediting those pillars on which the established Irish identity rested, while persuading and recruiting Irish adherents. It would move on to the capture of the national media as a whole; the gradual replacement of the Catholic Church and the nationalist ideology as the principal moral influences on law-making; and the pushing through of amendments to the Constitution to facilitate the new rules. The ultimate goal would be the complete annulment of the previously existing notion and reality of Ireland. Then the liberal Correctorate, already established in the national mass media, the universities, and at key points in the civil service, would have a free hand to build a liberal Eden on the debris.

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However, in the 1960s, most of that hoped-for course of things was far away. The new doctrine that was making its *debut* in Dublin was, as I said, a tentative beginner's course. This was due both to the good sense of the evangelists and to the fact the public had to be familiarised with the basics of the new vocabulary.

Classical liberalism had been a tacit shaper of Irish nationalist politics since O'Connell's day and was a central element of Bunreacht na hÉireann. It was tinged with Catholicism as the British liberalism from which it was derived had been tinged with Dissenter Protestantism. But having been a tacit presence before the 1960s, 'liberal' was not a current word in Irish ideological discourse; and anyhow this new liberalism was very different from

the old. So it was now necessary to get across that 'liberal' meant good and liberating, and was a synonym of 'enlightened'. Its opposite was 'conservative', which meant not only bad but impervious to 'change'. 'Change' was a good word, frequently clanged out like a bell, as something that was needed and would be intrinsically good.

Actually much of the basic verbal pedagogy was done in terms of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, which had a 'liberal' wing to be supported, as opposed to the 'conservatives' who were to be rejected. This allowed references to the supposedly 'Irish Catholic' view of sex as intrinsically sinful or dirty, an attitude which the good liberal doctrine of the Council would surely get rid of. It was in this context that *The Irish Times* began to capture as its special people the new-rich Catholics among the Protestants of South Dublin, who wanted to feel that they were a cut above the rest of the Catholic Irish. No worry to them that their favourite paper and RTÉ gave a drubbing to that pillar of Catholic and nationalist Ireland, the Christian Brothers. They sent their sons to classier schools.

When did we begin to hear that the Irish, who had abandoned more of their past culture than any other European nation, and who took to aeroplanes and television, and the women to the mini-skirt, like fish to water, were unfortunately a 'conservative people'? When was it that the term 'rural Ireland' was invented as a derogatory term for the Republic outside Dublin (strictly South Dublin), where stuck-in-the mud rednecks were blocking the 'liberal agenda'? RTÉ television had for a time on weekdays a programme featuring news items from around the Republic. Its nickname among the studio boys and girls who made it was '*Redneck Round-up*'. I think those things were later, probably in the 1970s.

In the 1960s I cut two snippets from *Irish Times* editorials. Both struck me because, while in form they were descriptions of the current young generation, they were in fact exhortations or instructions. In the one I quote first, I was struck also, amid the general promise of glamour at hand, by the coded reference to "*coffee-skinned girls*". The Christian modesty and chastity of most Irish girls was a block in the way of the consumerist programme. Media advertisements that progressively unclothed women were a help towards removing it. But a hint that the colleens had dangerous foreign competition at hand in Dublin might jolt them to their senses. The following is from an editorial of 13th January 1966:

"Young people want things in a hurry, and want to forget the past... The young man sees himself appearing in the pages of *Paris Match* or *Life* magazines... Without any trammel of the past, whether

Protestant/Catholic or Separatist/ex-Unionist, the differentials are disappearing in our country. Our young people want to forget. Boys in Dublin gravitate to coffee-skinned girls... The past is not only being forgotten by the young, it is being buried with great relish and even with disdain."

My second snippet illustrates how historical revisionism—in effect the ideological undermining and replacement of the nationalist narrative—was popping its head up before the 70s when it became rampant. It is from an *Irish Times* editorial of 21st October 1965.

"Young people of today are, in their own phrase, tough-minded... Young people coming up, no matter what allegiance their fathers had, can look at the evolution of other countries from the British Commonwealth and wonder honestly if 1916 was really necessary. They can ask if, with Home Rule on the statute books, we would not today have a united Ireland, with or without some tenuous links to the British Commonwealth."

The fact that the 50th anniversary of 1916 was to be celebrated in 1966 was an embarrassment for the liberals. Telefís Éireann, where elements of the old Radio Éireann survived, dealt with the matter old-fashionedly in a fine tv drama. The *Times* sidestepped by making the Rising more a Connolly than a Pearse affair; more about social welfare—a liberal concern—than national liberation.

On the face of it, it is not clear why our consumerist liberals have consistently been opposed to Irish nationalism as such. To its inherited association with Catholicism and a certain historical narrative, well, obviously; but to Irish nationalism as such? Opposition to nationalism, let alone to American nationalism, had never been on the left-liberal programme in that ideology's mother country. Indeed, American liberals had even approved of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their Irish brethren, after discrediting the inherited Irish nationalism, could have produced their own liberal version. In Romania the Communists made a strong Romanian nationalism into their best selling point. Castro learned the advantage of integrating Cuba's anti-Spanish nationalism into his Communism. In mainly Lutheran East Germany the Communist regime, after a kneejerk downgrading of Luther and removal of Frederick the Great's statue from the centre of Berlin, had second thoughts. They organised a big celebration of a Luther anniversary and restored Frederick to Unter den Linden.

The formal explanation seems to be that in the American imposition of consumerist liberalism on Western Europe, its imposition on the united-Europe enterprise was a key element. That enterprise was by nature anti-nationalist. Thus the liberals put in charge of it were

necessarily opposed to nationalism in the member nations, and so, too, by *esprit de corps*, were and are their colleagues in those nations. A self-explanatory historical truth is verified again. The state-sponsored ideology of an imperial power is never anti-nationalist in that power's home nation, but always in its subordinate nations.

However, the special vehemence of Dublin liberal antagonism to Irish nationalism, and Irish pride in what Ireland is, suggests that this ideological import has doubled as an outlet and launch pad for Irish colonised self-hatred.

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I think I have made a sufficient case for a thorough exploration by Irish historians of how an offensive begun by some of the Dublin media in the 1960s, and later engaged in for decades by all of them, reduced the established Irish identity to a blurred and repellent nothing, thereby rendering Ireland unlovable. I think I have made that case while merely nibbling at the theme, leaving untouched by far the greater part of the 50-year offensive: the great onslaughts in the referendums of the 1980s to the early 2000s, and the story of how the Northern War, the misdeeds of some Catholic clerics, and the banking crisis of 2008-9, were used by the assailants to finish the job.

Desmond Fennell

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REPORT

Jobs centre funded by Fás offers careers in British Army

By Scott Millar

A FÁS-funded Limerick jobs centre has been ordered to stop promoting careers in the British army, a criminal offence under the Defence Act of 1954. The act states that anyone attempting "*to induce, procure or persuade any person in the state to accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in any military, naval or air force maintained by the government of any other state*" is liable to a large fine and/or six months in prison.

The controversy erupted when jobseekers on the north-side of the city received letters alerting them to positions available in "*the Royal Irish Army*".

The jobs are actually in the Royal Irish Regiment, which has suffered casualties in Afghanistan. The regiment is currently recruiting, in contrast to the Irish defence forces, which are subject to the public service recruitment moratorium.

The letters were sent out by the Moyross-based Millennium Jobs Club.

When people registered as unemployed with the jobs club receive such a letter, they are obliged to call in and enquire about the job in question. If they fail to respond to the offer they risk being removed from the register, with potential loss of dole payments.

Local Sinn Féin councillor Maurice Quinlivan said the letter has caused consternation among several Limerick families: "... a failure to respond to the letter could affect their children's benefits and future job applications at the centre."

A Fás spokesman said although funded by the agency the jobs club "*operated at arms-length*".

He added that the agency was promoting jobs abroad. (*Irish Examiner*, 27 April 2010)

Belittling Moylan

When the Bosnian electorate voted for Bosnian independence from the Yugoslav state, the Yugoslav Army in Bosnia was immediately described by the media of the democratic West as an Army of Occupations, and the Governments of the EU and USA treated Yugoslav military action in Bosnia as terrorism. The election was taken as authenticating the assertion of Bosnian independence as democratic, even though the Bosnian electorate was made up of three mutually hostile national sections, none of which constituted an overall majority. The vote itself was held to be morally binding, regardless of complicating political conditions.

The Yugoslav Constitution provided a process for a peaceful separation of the constituent republics of the state from the state. The Bosnian electorate was encouraged by the West European democracies to ignore those Constitutional means of achieving its independence, which would have involved some negotiation with the Yugoslav Government, and to assert its independence by a simple vote of Croats and Muslims, who had profoundly antagonistic relations with each other and were agreed only on separation from the Yugoslav state.

The vote for independence, recognised as democratically legitimate by the powerful states of the democratic West, did not lead to the establishment of stable Bosnian government in the form of a Croat/Muslim regime. The formation of a harmonious regime by the majority Croats and Muslims was not a practical possibility. Nevertheless, the assertion of Bosnian independence by a majority constituted by antagonistic Croats and Muslims was recognised as democratically legitimate by the Western democracies and by the United Nations.

That conflicted majority, that was unable to establish a functional state because of the antagonism by which it was riven, was treated as democratically legitimate. I never heard it described as a confusion of rebels.

The general ideology under which the Bosnian secession was handled was the ideology established as the dominant world ideology at the end of the 1914 War. Between the League of Nations and the United Nations there is no difference of principle in that respect that I can think of. Britain declared in 1914 that it was fighting a World War to establish democracy and the right of self-determination by small nations as components of a world order.

The Irish electorate in 1918 voted democratically to avail of the right of national self-determination. The British

Government, even though its war propaganda was at the source of the League of Nations, decided to continue governing Ireland, despite losing the election there. The majority of the elected Irish representatives, in accordance with their election programme, met in assembly in Ireland and declared independence. It would have been futile for them to go to Westminster to negotiate independence. In order to sit in Westminster they would have had to swear allegiance to the Crown. The British Constitution included no provision for the peaceful separation of Ireland, or any part of it, from the UK state, and British Governments had repeatedly made it clear that Irish independence was simply out of the question, regardless of how the Irish electorate voted.

The elected Irish representatives took Britain at its word. They set up an independent Government without seeking permission, which it was clear to them would not be given, and when Britain set about destroying that Government by force, they defended it by force. This led to the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21. In the midst of that War the British Prime Minister said that Britain could not recognise Irish independence because the Act of Union (achieved in 1800 by bribing off the Protestant aristocracy which controlled the Irish Parliament) was an incorporating Union, like that of the United States, which could not be broken. He was obliged to put down the Irish Republicans as Lincoln had put down the Confederates.

In 1922 the Prime Minister succeeded in splitting the Irish Government of 1919-21, and manipulating the two parts into warfare. The first shots in that war were fired by the party that signed the Treaty. The Treatyites won the war with British armaments and British backing and set up a Government under the authority of the Crown. But, ten years after winning the Treaty War, the Treaty party was voted out of office—that was in 1932—and it has never since won an election on its own.

But at no time did the Treaty Party (Cumann na nGaedheal, remade as Fine Gael in the early 1930s), any more than the anti-Treaty Party, doubt the democratic legitimacy of the 1918 Election, or of the Government established under it. This is made clear by the recently reprinted collection of writings by General Sean Mac Eoin, Major-General Piaras Beaslai, and others.

But in recent years it has been evident that elements within Fianna Fail have been anxious to downgrade the status of the Government of 1919-21 to that of a

Rebellion. I first noticed this in the writings of Martin Mansergh some years ago. (I made a collection of his revisionist writings, which were to have been published, with some critical comment, last year under the title of *The Mansergh File*. This was actually advertised. Publication was delayed because of a fairly serious accident, but it should happen this Summer.)

And now we have *Sean Moylan: Rebel Leader* by Aideen Carroll, published by Mercier Press, Cork.

The first sentence in the book is: "*Sean Moylan was my grandfather and the bond was a strong one.*" But the content of the book suggests that the bond was personal only.

The second sentence is: "*As no historian has come forward to write his biography and make use of the family archive, this book seeks to offer a fair and balanced account of his life.*" I did not know that there was a family archive available. In fact, I had the distinct impression that there was not.

The blurb states that Moylan (the rebel), "*gave up a sound family business for a life of hardship and danger in pursuit of an ideal*", but later "*made the difficult transition from guerilla leader to constitutional politician*".

The "*ideal*" was not a will-o-the-wisp, but an elected Government. And in what way was his military activity as a Volunteer unconstitutional? He engaged in military activity in defence of an elected Government that was under attack. Unless one takes the British view of these things, and treats the election as a mere rebellion, Moylan's military activity was entirely constitutional. And a constitutional soldier who becomes a constitutional politician—which often happens—is not usually described as making a "*difficult transition*".

And, anyway, Moylan is better understood as a politician who found it necessary to become a soldier for a while.

It is mentioned that he campaigned in the 1918 Election, refused nomination in North Cork, and when there was no contest there he electioneered in Donegal: "*Here the elections were keenly fought, although when the votes were counted Sinn Fein won by a landslide*" (p27). That is really all that is said about the Election. There is not a word about what its democratic significance was, or why it had no democratic significance.

The Irish Government sent delegates to the Peace Conference at Versailles but were locked out. Apparently in justification of this it is said: "*In addition to maintaining the British Empire... the British were concerned with other strategic issues connected with their rule in Ireland: manpower for the armed forces, control of the Atlantic ports and the links forged by centuries of union*" (p28)—

links that were so strong that no British Party contested the election in Ireland outside the North East, and that the Home Rule Party, which had become a British proxy, was swept aside.

There is much throughout the book about the bravery and courage of the Imperial forces (e.g. in the Clonmult massacre, p94), as if these were self-justifyingly moral qualities in war, regardless of what the war was about. If we take that to be the case, we must (especially with Clonmult in mind) see German military action in 1944-5 as outstandingly virtuous.

Much is made of Soloheadbeg, where the RIC—who could no longer plead that they were acting on behalf of the populace (the Home Rule Party fig-leaf on British coercion having been torn away)—are praised for their "*courageous resistance... typical of RIC men in the coming conflict*" (p29). Soloheadbeg "*is an identifiable moment that marked the re-opening of hostilities*" and it led to "*the culture of using violence to achieve political ends which dogged Ireland for many years*".

A region governed as Britain governed Ireland in 1916-1918 would have been described by Britain as being held by terror if Germans had done it. The governing of Bohemia was so described by Britain, even though it had not returned even a Home Rule party in the Austrian elections, and had a Czech University. And the incident in Alsace, which the British propaganda presented as militarist terrorism by the Germans, was a minor local scuffle (the Zabern Incident).

The change from 1917-18 to 1919 was not determined by the incident at Soloheadbeg but by the incident at the polling booths a few weeks earlier.

Aideen Carroll seems to disapprove of the kind of war fought by her grandfather, guerilla war, i.e. small war:

"Had the guns promised by Roger Casement arrived, it is likely that the Volunteers would have fought a conventional battle against British troops, the notion of guerilla warfare not yet having taken hold. In these circumstances... they would undoubtedly have lost and suffered devastating casualties" (p29).

But, for better or worse, they did fight a conventional battle—and they did lose. They were able to fight a conventional battle in 1916 because the British were getting cannonfodder through Redmond's Volunteers and did not interfere with the armed drilling and parading of the Irish Volunteer splinter lest this should undermine Redmond's recruiting. In the post-1916 situation, a conventional battle formation simply could not have been got together under RIC espionage.

It is said that the Volunteers of the 1919 Republic were autonomous, not under Dail direction, liable to take local initiative,

and—

"often took their lead from the Volunteer journal, *An tOglach*. In this unusual arrangement lay the future seeds of discontent over the terms of the Treaty, the Civil War that followed and the culture of using violence to achieve political ends which dogged Ireland for many years. The genie was out of the bottle..." (p29).

Beaslai, the Free State Major-General, ridiculed the idea, implied in Dan Breen's book, that Soloheadbeg was unauthorised by the Dail. It was, of course, not directed by the Dail. Parliaments do not direct the military activities which they authorise. And there was a time, not long before Soloheadbeg, when the British Parliament was close to being marginalised by the military, even in war strategy.

Beaslai says that one of the first things done by the Dail Government in January 1919 was to authorise military action against the coercion apparatus of the British state, of which the RIC was a major part. And *An tOglach* was the means by which the direction was given.

Aideen Carroll does not give any hint of how she thinks the War of Independence arrangements contained the seeds of the Treaty War.

As to the genie of political violence being let out of the bottle by Soloheadbeg etc. dogging us ever since—I assume that this is a reference to the North. It seems to be impossible for middle class Dublin to actually look at the thing called Northern Ireland that was set up in 1921—I do not mean Partition: I mean a regime, which had nothing to do with Partition essentially, but was set up to accompany it—and to imagine themselves living in it and putting up with it quietly. I lived in the 26 Counties and in England before going to live in Belfast. I was not aware that the 26 Counties was dogged by political violence in the 1940s and 1950s. It is true that the First coalition (Fine Gael/ Clanna na Poblachta/Labour) stirred up a great Anti-Partition propaganda, which led the Anti-Treaty rump to organise an invasion of the North in 1956. But even then it was clear enough that it was not Partition *per se*, but the utterly abnormal mode of government of the 6 Counties, outside the democracy of the UK state, which made life intolerable for the Catholic community, that kept strong feelings active about Partition in the South.

If the North had been governed as part of the democracy of the state which held it, and if Catholics had been participating in the political life of that democracy—and I think they would have done it if it had been open to them to do so—then I think the heat would have gone out of the Partition issue for the Southern populace, and it would have declined into into a superficial sentiment. But, when the North was cut out of the Irish state, it was also cut

out of the political life of the British state and made into an inferno of communal antagonism. and the long war, from 1970 to the mid 1990s, was generated by the Northern Ireland hothouse. The entry of Southern anti-Treatyism into the North in 1956 aroused little enthusiasm amongst the Catholics. When they created a new IRA in the Winter of 1969-70, and joined it in large numbers in the 1970s, that had little to do with what was said or done in the South, by Dan Breen, or Sean Moylan, or John A. Costello, or Jack Lynch.

When I proposed the 'two nations' view in September 1969, it was denounced by Taoiseach Lynch in October. That denunciation had drastic consequences for the political health of the Republic—as denials of sharp realities at critical moments must always have. I doubt that it had much effect on the course of events in the North.

As a 'two nationalist' arguing for incorporation of the North into the democracy of the British state, in a weekly publication that was read by Protestants as well as Catholics, I had to use words carefully—to use words like *democracy* with their hard central meaning, instead of emotively and demagogically. By using words meaningfully and describing the actual situation, I survived in West Belfast for 20 years while publishing material against the Provos, but explaining them as a response to, or product of, the perverse form of government that Britain chose for the North when partitioning the country.

When I started to take an interest in Southern politics again in the 1990s the first thing that struck me was the looseness and subjectivism of the language of the new, modernising, middle class—and the inadequacy, to the point of emptiness, of its fashionable concepts.

That is Aideen Carroll's medium of thought and language. Of course she is neither the founder of that fashionable sloppiness, nor the worst example of it. But she does present herself as Sean Moylan's granddaughter, and one would have expected some of his precision to have rubbed off on her as she read his *Memoir*.

There are at least ten mentions of Moylan as a rebel in the book. Some of them are in the *6th Division Record Of The Rebellion*, from which she quotes extensively. And of course in the British view the whole thing—voting and fighting—was mere rebellion. But most of the uses of the word *rebel* are her own.

On page 36 she lists, among the other places where British troops were needed, "*new territories acquired as a result of the Versailles Treaty*. But weren't all the new territories got by Britain in its Great War (in which it said it had no territorial aims) acquired in the old-fashioned way, by military conquest?

The biography is not uncritical, but the criticism tends to be ill-considered. For example: *"There is evidence of ongoing debates in the IRA about the propriety of taking hostages. Moylan's witness statement... is unaccountably silent on important issues such as this..."* (p108). This comes after British hostage-taking, including the use of hostages as human shields on military convoys, has been mentioned matter-of-factly.

Britain both caused the war by overruling the election, and established the practice of fighting by means of what Aideen Carroll calls *"atrocities"*. Thus: *"The second half of 1920 will always be remembered for atrocity and mayhem"* (p62). She also puts it another way: *"Army [British. of course, not 'rebel'] tactics became increasingly robust"* (p74). And what was one to do in the face of *robust* tactics, employed by the state which had just won the Great war for Democracy and the Rights of Nations, when putting down the democracy of a nation?

I do not recall that Moylan did any hostage-taking or conducted any reprisals. He was a citizen obliged to go to war and was reluctant to let go of civil standards. He had the outlook neither of a rebel nor a soldier. And, while one might admire him for this, it should be recognised that it was chiefly due to a soldier—Tom Barry—and an assassin who never lost the outlook of a rebel—Michael Collins—that the British were fought to a truce.

I do not know what Republican debates about the propriety of meeting *robustness* with *robustness* are meant, but I see no reason why Moylan should have raked it over thirty years later. He was very English in ways, and that is the English way.

There is a *"shadow that hangs over Moylan's tenure as Minister for Education"*. A question was asked in the Dail in April 1954 by Peadar Cowan of Clann na Poblachta about a beating administered by a Christian Brother to a boy in Artane Industrial School (p255-259). The tenor of Moylan's reply was in sympathy with the tenor of Cowan's question. He concluded by saying that a system of inspection was in place and that: *"This is an isolated incident; it can only happen again as an accident"* (p257).

Fianna Fail lost the election a month later. The new Coalition Government did not pursue the matter, and *"Moylan did not raise the issue from the Opposition benches"* (p259).

It is not mentioned whether he was Opposition spokesman for Education. If he was not, it was not his business—not under Parliamentary democracy, and Fianna Fail had defeated the Fine Gael campaign for a corporative, and therefore more directly responsible, system in the 1930s. The Parliamentary system is adversarial. So I cannot see what casts the

shadow, unless it be the altered views and circumstances of half-a-century later.

The author lists a number of points in extenuation: 1. *"corporal punishment was widespread"* then; 2. *"the Catholic Church retained a very powerful influence"*; 3. *"the ban on Catholic students attending Trinity College"* continued; 4. *"there was deference shown to the clergy in every aspect of Irish life"*; 5. *"he was not a past pupil of the Christian Brothers"*

There were no Christian Brothers schools in North West Cork. All schools, Primary and Secondary, were secular. So Moylan did not know what the Brothers were like. Neither do I. I don't think I have ever even seen one. I do not recall that there was any opinion about them in North Cork. Later on I noticed that horror stories were told about them by people of a rebellious disposition, while they were held in high regard by people of an orderly disposition. And I found that M.J.F. Mc Carthy of Middleton, who came to hate the Catholic Church and published powerful books against it, made an exception of the Christian Brothers and saw them as an admirable institution.

I don't know that the Catholic Church approved of beating children. I would guess that in Ireland this was a practice learned from England.

I just don't see what the Trinity ban had to do with it.

In the secular primary school that I went to there was beating (if one wants to call it that) as a matter of course. It suited me. You got beaten if you did not do your homework. I chose the beating.

In the school I sat with Michael Cronin, a healthy farmer's son who liked farm work. One day, when we were eleven I think, his patience snapped and he chased the teacher out of the room. What he objected to was not the beating as such, but being harassed about subjects that he had no interest in and that were of no use to him. That was effectively the end of his education, though he kept on attending for a while longer. (The leaving age was 14.)

My education ended the following year, so I know nothing about what went on in second-level schools.

As to the deference shown to the clergy—in my experience it was conditional on the conduct of the clergy. It was not extraordinary to hear the suggestion being made to a Curate that he might take off his collar and say that again. So the Curates learned. And the two Parish Priests I knew never interfered with me.

I don't mean sexual interference—I'm sure a priest who tried that with anybody would have been threshed. I mean that, when I became wayward philosophically around the age of 13, the priests let me be. But the militant laity—the rudimentary middle class of the region—didn't.

It is relevant to mention the Mercier

Press (publisher of the Moylan book) here. When I was working as a labourer on the electrification of the country, and then in the local Creamery, I wanted books that were not locally available to feed my curiosity. It was suggested that I might get them through Mercier Books in Cork city. So I wrote to Mercier and they were helpful for a while. But then they noticed the tendency of the books I wanted and refused to get them any more. So I started getting them through Odhams Press in London, which advertised in the *News of the World*.

I understood from its name that Mercier was an enterprise of the militant laity of the church, and from some of its books that it was Free State-oriented. Anyhow it lacked the free spirit one tends to associate with bookselling and publishing.

Mercier's lack of spirit was confirmed when it withdrew a job offer to Colonel Hefferon upon his retirement as Director of Military Intelligence. His fault was to give truthful testimony in the Arms Conspiracy Trial. Giving him a job would have ended official patronage from the Lynch Government.

It is suggested that, towards the end of his life, Moylan might have had second thoughts about it all. It is not made clear whether this is based on something he said to his children.

A couple of paragraphs are quoted from *"thoughts written in the mid 1950s"*, but these are from papers held by the author, and the quotes do not suggest regret at what he had done.

Then his granddaughter writes:

"If he had a regret, it might have been failing to prevent the Civil War or failing to bring it to a swift conclusion. But if he had such thoughts he never expressed them publicly" (p265).

And, if he never expressed them privately either, what is the point of suggesting that he might have had them if it is not to suggest that he ought have had them?

If Moylan regretted failing to prevent the Civil War, he was a megalomaniac. And a megalomaniac is what he was not. Britain was determined to bring about a 'Civil War' over the Treaty, and what Britain wants in such things it usually gets. It has a gift for causing wars and pleading innocence. Its purpose in bringing about a Treaty War is obvious enough. It went beyond the formal terms of the Treaty, which were used as a means. The purpose was, when conceding a measure of power, to disrupt the political/military combination that had forced it to make the concession.

Consider this statement: *"The architects of the Treaty were under pressure from the British cabinet to frame a constitution acceptable to both Britain and the anti-Treaty forces"* (p185). The British Cabinet was the architect of the "Treaty" which the Irish delegates signed under threat of war.

And, when Collins tried to devise a Free State Constitution that the Anti-Treatyites could live with, Whitehall told him to stop it. And then he was told to make war, or Britain would.

The de Valera-Collins pact fell apart (p185). Collins broke the Pact after a summons to Whitehall.

There is much else that might be taken up, but I will end on this: In Dunmanway in April 1922 *"Thirteen Protestant civilians were killed by elements of the IRA"* (p178).

The author draws on discredited historian Peter Hart (who has been given refuge with the Mercier Press) but rejects Hart's suggestion that Moylan had some responsibility for the Dunmanway killings. But there is no evidence whatever for her own definite statement that *"elements of the IRA"* did it.

The book is reviewed by T. Ryle Dwyer in the *Examiner*:

"He had a tendency to talk first with his fists... Despite his part in the war of independence, he resented being called a gunman... "If they want a war of extermination on us", Moylan told the Dail during the Treaty debate, "I may not see it finished, but by God no loyalist in north Cork will see it finish..." Historian Peter Hart was particularly critical of those comments and the subsequent Dunmanway massacre... Moylan is remembered for opening 38 vocational schools, but also for his failure to act in relation to a complaint against a Christian Brother... Moylan told the Dail "This is an isolated incident..." We now know that Moylan was terribly deluded..."

The review is a reflection of the book.

Dwyer adds an anecdote of his own to show that Moylan was not afraid to stand up to the religious. He *"interrupted the sermon of Fr. Jeremiah Bick, parish priest of Kiskeam, who had a tendency to wander into politics in his sermons. "Stop your politics, Father, and preach the Gospel", Moylan shouted."* This Fr. Bick must be Fr. Brick, who was almost my next door neighbour, and with whom I got on particularly well. I often discussed the affairs of the world with him.

Moylan was not alone in telling the priests to tend to their proper business, which was not the business of telling people what to do. And, if he was neglectful in the Artane business (Artane, as I recall, being very highly regarded), I suppose it came from having grown up in one world and having administrative responsibility in a world of a different kind. How could a product of the freedom and individuality of rural Ireland understand the cowed mentality of dwellers in the cities built and controlled by the English during their great days in Ireland, and then gradually taken over by institutions of the Catholic Church as the Ascendancy declined fol-

lowing the Act of Union? It took Dublin a very long time to become civilised after the Ascendancy that created it abandoned it. When I first saw it, it struck me as consisting of Churches and their precincts.

And my understanding of his religious position is that it is greatly understated to say that he was not afraid to stand up to the religious.

Brendan Clifford

Seán Moylan—was he a rebel?
by Jack Lane. A review of Aideen Carroll's *Seán Moylan—Rebel Leader*.
20pp . €5, £4.

Was Moylan A 'Rebel'?

The following letter was published in the *Irish Examiner* on 26th May

Mr Ryle Dwyer says in his review of the new biography of Sean Moylan, 'Rebel with a cause' (15 May) that "Despite his part in War of Independence, he resented being called a gunman in the Dáil." It was precisely *because* of his part in the War of Independence that Moylan could not be described as a gunman, or indeed as a rebel.

He acted as a soldier of the free and democratically elected legitimate government of the country. It is an insult to language as well to him and his comrades to describe such a person as a gunman or a rebel. **Jack Lane**

Israel Pushes Out The Envelope

Brave Israel Has Every Right To Bomb Hamas: that was the headline on Ruth Dudley Edwards' article in the *Sunday Independent* early last year.

The major political effect of that bombing of a defenceless population was that it lost Israel its only substantial ally in the Moslem world, Turkey. And no doubt it helped with the Islamic political revival in Turkey, which had until then been subject to dictatorial secularist curbing by the Turkish Army and by the Turkish Courts, acting as an agency of the secularist Constitution. They ruled certain democratic political developments illegal. It might be said that the Turkish reaction against Israel's *brave* bombing of the people in Gaza, who were without means of defence, broke the military and judicial shackles on Turkish democracy.

We do not know if Ruth Dudley Edwards has praised the bravery of Israeli piracy on the high seas at the end of May. It happened too late for the Sunday papers.

Ms Edwards is, of course, not alone in holding these views. They are, by and large, the views of the Lynchite media middle class of Dublin, reacting against the Irish nationalism with which they flirted for a brief moment around 1970. They could not abide the upsurge of *"irredentism"* in, or with relation to, the North—and could not trouble to find out what it was about the North that gave rise to it. They fled from it blindly, and many of them turned to the thing that was farthest removed from it: the Jewish nationalism that was conquering and colonising Palestine on the basis of an irredentist claim that was two thousand years old!

The reassuring thing about irredentist Jewish nationalism was that it was launched by the greatest military power in the world in 1919, the British Empire, and after the decline of Britain was guaranteed, armed, and urged on by the greatest military power there has ever been in the world, the USA.

And it is, of course, supported by the Europeans who, making amends for what

they did to the Jews, give the Jewish State *carte blanche* to do what it will to the Palestinian Arabs, and to any neighbouring Arabs or Muslims who get too uppity. And Ireland has become European—and, as a good European of our time, it has agreed to the admission of Israel to the OECD, even though it is comprehensively in breach of the conditions of OECD membership.

While Jewish nationalism rejected its intended status of a British colony in 1945-7, it often pleads precedent from its British origins for what it does. It can do so again for its act of piracy. Britain at war has always blockaded the enemy and interdicted trade with him, and any other contact that might offer him comfort. And the humanitarian convoy was a brazen attempt to give comfort to the enemy.

What Israel does is what the objective of Zionist Jewish nationalism makes it necessary for it to do. The object is to recover the land of Judah—which was *not* Tel Aviv. It could only be done in the manner of Joshua. And a conquest and ethnic cleansing would not be an easy thing to call off peacefully before it was completed—if Israel wanted to call it off and settle for part of what it set out to gain: which it does not.

The only authoritative act of the General Assembly of the UN was the vote awarding over half of Palestine in 1947 to the Jewish minority there—or, rather, to the Jews of the world—to establish a Jewish State. After that the General Assembly became a place for idle chatter. And the borders which it set out in 1947 for the territory of the Jewish State were over-run by the Jewish nationalists in 1948. And who can now remember what they were?

There is no Israeli nationality. Israel is a state without national borders. It is driven to expand by the dynamic of its politics—its political parties. This dynamic is not concealed. But the EU pretends not to see it.

Expansion could not continue in the

open 1948 mode. It has to proceed by pretexts by which supporters pretend to be deceived. The limits of what 'the world' will swallow must always be pushed against and exceeded, so that the swallowing capacity of the world is made to expand. And, so far, the world has always swallowed the extra bit.

It is complained that Israel's neighbours are hostile to it. The British Empire first, and then the United Nations and United States, decided to build up a Jewish population in Palestine and impose a Jewish State in the region, against the opposition of all those who were forced by 'the world' to become its neighbours.

General Election Results In Northern Ireland

DUP—Democratic Unionist Party UUP—Ulster Unionist Party. This Party contested the election as the UCUNF, The Ulster Conservatives and Unionists New Force.
SDLP—Social Democratic and Labour Party (a rather misleading title).
TUV—Traditional Unionist Voice, opposed to any unionist being in government with Sinn Fein. Led by Jim Allister, a former DUP MEP.

East Antrim:

Sammy Wilson, DUP 13,993
Rodney McCune, UUP 7,223
Gerry Lynch, Alliance, 3,377
Oliver McMullan, Sinn Fein 2,064
Justin McCamphill, SDLP 2,019
Samuel Morrison, TUV 1,828
MAJORITY 6,770; Turnout 50.7%

NOTE 2005 Sammy Wilson DUP 15,766
MAJORITY 7,304; Turnout 54.5%

North Antrim

Ian Paisley Jnr, DUP 19,672
Jim Allister, TUV 7,114
Daithi McKay, Sinn Fein 5,265
Irwin Armstrong, UUP 4,534
Declan O'Loan, SDLP 3,738
Jayne Dunlop, Alliance, 1,368
Lyle Cubitt, UK Unionist 696
MAJORITY 12,558; Turnout 57.8%

NOTE 2005 Ian Paisley Snr 17,865
MAJORITY 7,304; Turnout 61.7%
This was the main target of the TUV and was the only area which may gain them a seat in the next Assembly elections. Paisley did extremely well. His acceptance speech began with he and his followers singing a hymn, which was quite uplifting rather than naff. After the election, Declan O'Loan (Nuala's husband) called for the SDLP to merge with SF to form a single Northern nationalist party. He subsequently withdrew his call. Some years ago he declared a united Ireland should not happen until there was a majority for it amongst Unionists.

South Antrim

William McCrea, DUP 11,536
Reg Empey, UUP 10,353
Mitchel McLaughlin, Sinn Fein 4,729
Michelle Byrne, SDLP 2,955
Alan Lawther, Alliance 2,607
Melwin Lucas, TUV 1,829
MAJORITY 1,183; turnout 53.9%
NOTE 2005 Willie McCrea 14,507
MAJORITY 3,448; turnout 56.7%
The UUP leader normally stands in East Belfast but was parachuted into South Antrim and lost. This will mean that he loses the leadership

of the UUP. His insistence that all his candidates also stand as Conservatives bitterly split the Party, and the arrival of David Cameron did neither of them any good.

East Belfast

Naomi Long, Alliance 12,839
Peter Robinson, DUP 11,306
Trevor Ringland, UUP 7,305
David Vance, TUV 1,856
Niall O'Donoghue, Sinn Fein 817
Mary Muldoon, SDLP 365
MAJORITY 1,533; turnout 58.5%

NOTE 2005 Peter Robinson DUP 15,152
MAJORITY 5,877; turnout 58.0%
Peter Robinson has recently had his financial dealings questioned—rightly or wrongly. His wife, Iris has had her sex life gone over with a fine tooth comb by our gallant press. Neither helped. Having said that Robinson seemed to have bounced back with astonishing vigour in recent weeks and the rest of his Party did very well—which can't be said for Reg Empey's UUP. As leader of the DUP in the Assembly it is possible that he will continue as First Minister. He is being vigorously encouraged in this by Gerry Adams. Time will tell. Robinson, like the rest of the DUP, has been under constant vicious fire from the *Belfast Telegraph* which seems to hate them more than they hate Sinn Fein.

North Belfast

Nigel Dodds, DUP 14,812
Gerry Kelly Sinn Fein, 12,588
Alban Maginness SDLP, 4,544
Fred Cobain, UUP 2,837
William Webb, Alliance 1,809
Martin McAuley, Independent 403
MAJORITY 2,224; 56.5%

NOTE 2005 Nigel Dodds 13,935
MAJORITY 5,188; turnout 57.7%
The SDLP vote declined by around 500 over 2005, while Gerry Kelly's increased by nearly 2,000; Sinn Fein appears to be within striking distance of taking the seat.

South Belfast

Alasdair McDonnell, SDLP 14,026
Jimmy Spratt, DUP 8,100
Paula Bradshaw, UUP 5,910
Anna Lo, Alliance 5,114
Adam McGibbon, Green 1,036
MAJORITY 5,926; turnout 57.4%

NOTE 2005 Alasdair McDonnell SDLP 10,339
MAJORITY 1,235; turnout 60.8%
Sinn Fein's popular candidate, former Lord Mayor of Belfast Alex Maskey (2,882 votes in 2005), withdrew from the contest to give McDonnell a clear run. The old sectarian headcount again. The SDLP failed to do the same in Fermanagh/South Tyrone.

West Belfast

Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein 22,840
Alex Attwood, SDLP 5,261
William Humphrey, DUP 2,436
Bill Manwaring, UUP 1,000
Marie Hendron, Alliance 596
MAJORITY 17,579; turnout 54%

NOTE 2005 Gerry Adams Sinn Fein 24,348
MAJORITY 19,315; turnout 64.2%
There was a steeper fall in turnout than in other constituencies. There has been a vicious and prolonged newspaper campaign against Adams, particularly in the *Irish News*, over sex abuse charges against his younger brother and other matters. Just before the Election, Ed Moloney published claims from the late Brendan Hughes that Adams was an IRA commander who had ordered the execution of several informers. Hughes had left Sinn Fein

but remained firm friends with Adama, who visited him regularly when he was dying and attended his funeral. Moloney, an *ex-Irish Times* journalist, in a previous book strongly implied that Ian Paisley was connected with a cover-up, if not more, concerning the Kincora Boys Home scandal. There was not a grain of truth in this.

North Down

Sylvia Hermon, Independent 21,181
Ian Parsley, UUP 6,817
Stephen Farry, Alliance 1,876
Mary Kilpatrick, TUV 1,634
Steven Agnew, Green 1,043
Liam Logan, SDLP 680
Vincent Parker, Sinn Fein 250
MAJORITY 14,364; turnout 55.2%

NOTE 2005 Sylvia Hermon UUP 16,268
MAJORITY 4,944; turnout 54%
Sylvia Hermon has voted consistently with Labour in her time in the Commons, and broke with the UUP over their link up with the Tories. It was said during the election that she had a huge personal vote. While true enough, it is more accurate to say that she accurately reflects the views of the North Down electorate, which is quite well off and is also left-liberal in outlook. She is the widow of Sir Jack Hermon, former Chief Constable of the RUC. Ian Parsley was formerly a member of the Alliance Party and stood as their candidate in the last European Elections. He then joined the UUP. There was no DUP candidate this time around: in 2005 Peter Weir got 11,324 votes.

South Down

Margaret Ritchie, SDLP 20,648
Caitriona Ruane, Sinn Fein 12,236
Jim Wells, DUP 3,645
John McCallister, UUP 3,093
Ivor McConnell, TUV 1,506
Cadogan Enright, Green 901
David Griffin Alliance, 560
MAJORITY 8,412; turnout 60.2%

NOTE 2005 Eddie McGrady SDLP 21,557
MAJORITY 9,140; turnout 65.4%
McGrady seems to have been the local MP forever. He was never really SDLP, but old-fashioned Nationalist. And South Down is also old-fashioned Nationalist, if anywhere is. How the people of the area will take to Margaret Ritchie, one of the last of the real SDLP, is anyone's guess. The media built up this contest as a real battle between Ritchie and Ruane. This was never likely to be the case. Ritchie had McGrady's powerful machine behind her. Also Ruane, as Education Minister at Stormont, was going from one crisis to the next as she abolished the 11-plus and the Grammar Schools without having the legislative power to set an alternative system in place. This problem is likely to be sorted out before the next election. Furthermore she is a "foreigner" from Galway!

Fermanagh and South Tyrone

Michelle Gildernew, Sinn Fein 21,304
Rodney Connor, Independent 21,300
Fearghal McKinney, SDLP 3,574
Vasundhara Kamble, Alliance 437
John Stevenson, Independent 188
MAJORITY 4; turnout 68.9%

NOTE 2005 Michelle Gildernew SF 18,638
MAJORITY 4,582; turnout 72.6%
Both the DUP and UUP stood aside in favour of an agreed Unionist, Rodney Connor, who had been Chief Executive of Fermanagh Council for the last 10 years. And it very nearly came off, though he still did not reach the combined votes of the DUP and the UUP in the 2005 election. The SDLP vote was

halved. Gildernew has been also a very popular Agriculture Minister in Stormont, both with Protestant and Catholic farmers. After the poll, McGuinness thanked those Protestants who had voted for her. Incidentally, this seat was won on the 9th April 1981 by Bobby Sands. Immediately the British passed a law that no one serving more than one year in jail could stand, to prevent any other of the hunger strikers from standing. In her acceptance speech, Michelle Gildernew quoted Bobby Sands.

Foyle

Mark Durkan, SDLP 16,922
Martina Anderson, Sinn Fein 12,098
Maurice Devenney, DUP 4,489
Eamonn McCann, People Before Profit 2,936
David Harding, UUP 1,221
Keith McGrellis, Alliance 223
MAJORITY 4,824; turnout 57.5%

NOTE 2005 Mark Durkan SDLP 21,119
MAJORITY 5,957; turnout 65.9%
Mark Durkan was John Hume's anointed successor and yet his vote fell by about 4,000 from 2005, following on his resignation as leader of the SDLP. He will not stand again for the NI Assembly where all the action, if not all the money, is. Last time out he faced Mitchel McLaughlin, a kind of saintly member of Sinn Fein, who got 15,162 votes. Martina Anderson, by contrast, was a very active IRA Volunteer. She went on the run after being captured with arms at the age of 18. Later she was arrested in England charged with conspiracy to cause explosions in 1985. After spending 13 years in prison, she was released in 1998 under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. So she is unlikely to be picking up very many Protestant tactical votes in the way that Durkan does! (The Unionist vote declined by about 2,000 since the 2005 election.) McCann's vote increased by about 1,000 over the 2005 election.

Lagan Valley

Jeffrey Donaldson, DUP 18,199
Daphne Trimble, UUP 7,713
Trevor Lunn, Alliance 4,174
Keith Harbinson, TUV 3,154
Brian Heading, SDLP 1,835
Paul Butler, Sinn Fein 1,465
MAJORITY 10,486; turnout 56%

NOTE 2005 Jeffrey Donaldson DUP 23,289
MAJORITY 14,117; turnout 60.2%
Donaldson took a hefty drop in vote, while the UUP dropped about 2,000 votes. (Daphne is David's wife. David is now a Tory Peer.)

East Derry

Gregory Campbell, DUP 12,097
Cathal O hOisin, Sinn Fein 6,742
Lesley Macaulay, UUP 6,218
Thomas Conway, SDLP 5,399
William Ross, TUV 2,572
Bernard Fitzpatrick, Alliance 1,922
MAJORITY 5,355; turnout 55.3%

NOTE 2005 Gregory Campbell DUP 15,225
MAJORITY 7,727; turnout 60.3%
William Ross' humiliation as TUV candidate is interesting. For 27 years he was the quite popular UUP MP for the area and the "great white hope" for unseating Campbell. Sinn Fein moved from 4th to 2nd place, picking up around 1,000 votes, while the SDLP dropped over 600.

Mid Ulster

Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein 21,239
Ian McCrea, DUP 5,876
Tony Quinn, SDLP 5,826
Sandra Overend, UUP 4,509
Walter Millar, TUV 2,995

Ian Butler, Alliance 397
MAJORITY 15,363; turnout 63.2%

NOTE 2005 Martin McGuinness SF 21,641
MAJORITY 10,976; turnout 72.5%
One of McGuinness' first statements was to confirm the policy of abstention at Westminster. He added "I've been in Downing Street more often than many Labour MPs over the course of the last 15 years". Martin McGuinness came on the scene in 1997 when he took the seat from William McCrea of the DUP.

Newry and Armagh

Conor Murphy, Sinn Fein 18,857
Dominic Bradley, SDLP 10,526
Danny Kennedy, UUP 8,558
William Irwin, DUP 5,764
William Frazer, Independent 656
Andrew Muir, Alliance 545
MAJORITY 8,331; turnout 60.4%

NOTE 2005 Conor Murphy Sinn Fein 20,965
MAJORITY 8,195; turnout 70%
Willie Frazer leads a Protestant victims group. Conor Murphy is a very effective Transport Minister at Stormont. He has a special gift when it comes to getting lots of money from the South. So he is extending the Southern M1 to join the Northern M1 and has begun a motorway from Derry to Aughnacloy to also link up with the Southern M1. While his vote was down, his decrease has been less than that of the SDLP which dropped over 2,000, while Unionism dropped a couple of thousand also. There was a significant drop in turnout.

Strangford

Jim Shannon, DUP 14,926
Mike Nesbitt, UUP 9,050
Deborah Girvan, Alliance 2,828
Claire Hanna, SDLP 2,164
Terry Williams, TUV 1,814
Michael Coogan, Sinn Fein 1,161
Barbara Haig, Green 562
MAJORITY 5,876; turnout 53.7%

NOTE 2005 Iris Robinson DUP 20,921
MAJORITY 13,049; turnout 53.6%
Following the lurid tales about Iris Robinson, the DUP still held the seat with a comfortable, though much reduced, majority. And these lurid tales were spun for all they were worth in the local press right up to polling day. The UUP candidate, Mike Nesbitt, had been a Victims' Commissioner and a former UTV broadcaster. Claire Hanna is the daughter of former MLA, Carmel Hanna, who fell foul of the Alasdair McDonnell faction in the South Belfast SDLP.

West Tyrone

Pat Doherty, Sinn Fein 18,050
Thomas Buchanan, DUP 7,365
Ross Hussey, UUP 5,281
Joe Byrne, SDLP 5,212
Michael Bower, Alliance 859
Ciaran McClean, Independent 508
MAJORITY 10,685; turnout 61%

NOTE 2005 Pat Doherty Sinn Fein 16,910
MAJORITY 5,005; 72.1%
Doherty increased his vote and his majority. This may be because Dr. Kieran Deeny, an Independent who campaigned on the hospitals issue, did not stand. He got nearly 12,000 votes in 2005. The SDLP also gained something over a thousand votes. The DUP vote remained much the same, while the UUP gained a couple of thousand.

Upper Bann

David Simpson, DUP 14,000
Harry Hamilton, UUP 10,639
John O'Dowd, Sinn Fein 10,237

Dolores Kelly, SDLP 5,276
Brendan Heading, Alliance 1,231
MAJORITY 3,361; turnout 55.4%

Note 2005 David Simpson DUP 16,679
MAJORITY 5,398; turnout 61.4%
In 2005 former UUP leader and Stormont First Minister lost his seat to Simpson, getting 11,381 votes. Sinn Fein increased its by around 900 votes, while the SDLP lost around 400.

GENERAL NOTES

The biggest story of Westminster Elections in recent years has been the steady decline in turnout. Whereas around 80% of the voters used to vote in the past, 50-60% is now nearer the mark

In spite of Naomi Long winning East Belfast for the Alliance Party, for the most part Alliance candidates did not do well. And, apart from Jim Allister in North Antrim, much the same goes for the TUV candidates.

It is likely that some of the Independents were "dissident" Republicans.

The UUP is without a single seat and there is talk of its soon to be ex-leader, Reg Empey, being given a seat in the House of Lords. What David Cameron was doing with this sorry lot is beyond comprehension.

Sinn Fein now have the largest share of the vote with 25.5%. The DUP have 25%. These two parties have shown themselves likely to dominate politics in the region for the foreseeable future

The Workers' Party did not put up any candidates this time around.

Belfast Confetti 2010 Style?

Voters in Northern Ireland got lots of bits of coloured paper through their doors in the course of the 2010 General Election. Despite the intervention of Mr. Cameron (his lash-up with the Ulster Unionists) it had nothing to do with the election in the 'rest' of the UK. The Ulster Conservatives and Unionists—New Force tended to present themselves as either Unionists or Conservatives. Cameron appeared on a handout with pen in hand looking studiously down at—something. It claimed among other things "...many local decisions... made at Stormont. We support that". The Cameroons are not enthusiastic about the Welsh Assembly or the parliament at Holyrood. Why is Stormont privileged? It goes on "...Conservatives and Unionists will end Northern Ireland's semi-detached political status." Linking up with the Ulster Unionists (quite apart from the fact that the latter are a dying force) is not the way to go about 'integrating' the place into British politics. (Assuming that's what he was about—he may have had a daydream about the good old days when the Tories had twelve Orange Unionist votes to fall back on without having to put an ounce of effort into acquiring them.)

If the Conservatives had decided to take their already existing organisation out of mothballs and set up shop as a definite entity, the LibDems in the Alliance Party would have had to 'come out'. Trade Unionists opposed to Labour organisation would have been in a problematical position. If the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats were seriously campaigning in Northern Ireland, New Labour would have rushed to join in. The major principle of British politics since WW2 is that every constituency has to be contested. Wannabe MPs are 'blooded' in constituencies where the party they represent have not a hope

of ever winning. The rise of the LibDems has emphasised this trend.

Cameron's letter promised laws to ban political "double-jobbing" (essentially a UUP dig at the DUP. The latter have an irritating habit of winning elections. The UUP doesn't). Furthermore, "We'll galvanise the churches, the charities and the voluntary sector". How? The 'voluntary sector' in Northern Ireland was 'professionalised' decades ago, actual volunteers were squeezed out. Many once thriving voluntary groups are now defunct. The 'mainstream' churches are zooming towards irrelevance. The 'happy-clappy' Pentecostals have no social mission. Many charities, especially the shops, have genuine volunteers. But they too have 'professional' management.

Vast quantities of voluntary effort have been expended in the North over the past four decades—mostly in the military and political spheres. Persons connected with this publication expended ludicrous amounts of energy and money on political projects designed to end the shooting war. And were generally abused as extremists for their pains. Cameron's whinging about a 'big society' opposing 'big government' is even more shallow in Northern Ireland, than in GB. The UK government allowed linen and engineering to disappear, the shipyard to be closed down, and the aircraft factory to become an adjunct of a Canadian firm. Conservative Ministers at the NI Office constantly whined about how much money the place cost.

The Green Party's handout was carbon-neutral and all other good things. It promised a Green New Deal which would "create 33,000 new jobs", but there were very few specifics about how the jobs would come about. It might all be on a website, but a bigger bit of paper and bullet-points would have been handy. (As would an adult voting system—the first past the post system is still probably best overall for the UK—but it feels a bit odd making an illiterate's 'x' on a voting slip).

The SDLP and Alliance Party's material was carbon neutral too, and other good things. The SDLP's adventures could be followed on facebook, YouTube, flickr and twitter. Alliance did not use electronic media, but had instructions on how to vote in Chinese and Polish. But not Irish nor Ulster Scots—neither did the SDLP, and the persons pictured on one of its handouts were decidedly 'Caucasian'. At the Euro-election the party went pluralist in a big way, with four languages (as did SF) and a pic of an Indian constituent of Alban Maginess, their candidate for humiliation.

The DUP's slogan was "Lets Keep Northern Ireland Moving" (though it did not mention in which direction). Jimmy Spratt, the Belfast, South candidate (he is ex-RUC—quite definitely R. U. C.) makes the point that he is the only Unionist who can defeat the "outgoing Nationalist MP", Alasdair McDonnell. He claims he will "Stand Up for Diversity" (and is pictured with a Muslim—probably Somali—woman). But he can't resist a swipe at "the outgoing MP" because he has "attacked Unionists" (code, in this context, for "Prods"). McDonnell has had the odd dig at the Unionist parties, but has been on his best behaviour so far as Prods as such are concerned. (He enjoys being MP for Belfast, South.)

The handout attacks the UUP, then boasts

about selling the DUP's votes to the highest bidder. The TUV (Traditional Unionist Voice—about which the DUP were genuinely worried) is attacked because it would have created a situation where such fearful matters as an Irish Language Act, a Single Equality Act, and "a greater role for Dublin" would have become realities. What the "greater role" would have consisted of is not specified.

Two unnamed female figures are pictured, along with a slogan "The UUP would say yes to anything: the TUV would say no to everything..." unlike the DUP which likes to say no, only occasionally. Another section of the A3 fold-over gives 30 examples "of how we are making a difference". Most are Sinn Féin initiatives. The Irish Language Act and the Single Equality Act get mentioned again—as does Academic Selection. They've capped the rates and given money to Orangefest, and to former Police Reservists, it's a jumble of odds and ends.

The Alliance electoral theme was "Alliance (or 'unity') works, division costs". Máire Hendron's handout in West Belfast turned this into "Alliance works... building a united community". A subheading reads "Sharing works, Segregation costs". Anna Lo's South Belfast handout reads "...tribal politics costs". The subheading being "Sharing works, Division costs", a different kettle o'fish from "segregation".

Sinn Féin's Election Communication for West Belfast (the bumpf the Post Office delivers) has a pic of Gerry Adams with a big cheesy grin (it isn't quite as frightening as the Tory, Bill Manwaring. But they were both ill advised to unveil their teeth. SF's sheet has a sentence in Irish, and positions itself as a Nationalist (as opposed to Republican?) party. It attacks the SDLP for putting up a candidate against Michelle Gildernew, in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and congratulates itself for allowing McDonnell a free run in Belfast South. Most of the matters SF claims credit for are actually to their credit. One is "progressed the A5 upgrade between Derry and Aughnacloy, as part of the all-Ireland dual carriageway between Derry and Dublin". Somebody in 'WOBland' (WOB meaning 'west of the Bann') probably really enjoyed putting that in. It is meaningless to most in West Belfast who pushed Adams's percentage share of the vote to what Brian Feeney in the *Irish News* described as the "almost unbelievable 71%". (More to the point, nobody breathed a word about intimidation or the rest of the media's stock in trade in regard to SF since it entered electoralist politics in the early 1980s.)

The two big stories of the night were Gildernew's winning of her seat by four votes, and Peter Robinson's losing his in East Belfast after nearly thirty years. Sinn Féin was very quick to underline the fact that the Conservatives, despite big talk about changing Ulster's politics, went along with the pan-Unionist candidate in Fermanagh, Rodney Connor. Certainly Cameron, who has been in Northern Ireland on shooting expeditions (innocent birds and animals, as opposed to Croppies standing up) is basically a Real Unionist. The SDLP stood, as did an 'Independent'. The Workers' Party did not stand anywhere. Possibly funds are constrained now that the Official IRA is trying to get money out of the UK State by decommissioning. The Progressive Unionist Party helped

Naomi Long (Alliance) to win the Belfast, East seat. Possibly the Stickies helped out too. Certainly the (non-Alliance) Catholics in East Belfast voted tactically in the election. The Catholic population has risen somewhat. Short Strand, like the rest of east Belfast, has no industry anymore.

The space taken up by factories (mostly employing 'loyal' workers) has been used for housing. Many of those housed were returned Sticky émigrés from Downpatrick who were loathed by the locals. There are middle class blow-ins living in former Housing Trust flats at the far end of the constituency. The WPI hasn't gone away. A May Day handout, by the Belfast Workers' Festival Committee invited participants to a Poets and Pints gig in the Lower Falls Social and Recreation Club (the erstwhile 'Sore Tooth'). It used a dentist's former premises. The current premises were built in the early 1980s. The spooks in the Northern Ireland Office thought they could break up Republicanism by subsidising a Fifth Column. The Taigs weren't quite as thick as the spooks had assumed.

Sinn Féin and the DUP were pretty satisfied by the results of this election. SF held onto its Westminster seats, it's handy having the letters 'MP' after your name. Some local commentators were angry that Robinson was not purged from the leadership of the DUP. (*The Belfast Telegraph* was very upset, and put forward lots of reasons why he should go—the DUP's public representatives gleefully ignored them all). The Party had the (probably extreme) pleasure of seeing the UUP (and the Tories) plummet towards total irrelevance. It was probably even happier that TUV (Jim Allister's Tradition Unionist Voice group), in practice, made no electoral impact. The DUP made the commonsensical decision not to oppose Sylvia Hermon in North Down. It may have gone to the UUP. Hermon defended her vote quite vigorously. She said it was not an eccentricity, the voters in the constituency agreed with her (somewhat) left of centre views.

The SWP (Socialist Workers' Party—which has had a breakaway by some Belfast members) stood in the election in Foyle. It ran on the People Before Profit ticket. The handout concentrated on the candidate Éamonn McCann. His membership of the SWP was mentioned (his membership of the NILP wasn't). His 'Civil Rights', anti-war, journalistic and trade union background was emphasised. (McCann had a campaign song by Paddy Nash, try <http://paddynash.co.uk/web/music.asp>.)

Socialist Democracy (the People's Democracy as was) issued a comparatively flash handout on Mayday. It is two (unstapled) A4 fold-over sheets. It has a number of colour images. One is of possibly the only member of the Orange Order under forty. The caption is 'Increasing Sectarianism'. It becomes clear in the body of the text that 'sectarianism' is largely one-sided. Sinn Féin is chastised for trying to cut a deal with the SDLP. SD is referring to the patent national division in Ireland, but it would burn its collective tongue (or at least, that of Comrade John McNulty (PhD) who does the thinking). It makes most of this analysis (which could have been produced by a mousy 'right-wing' Labourite) pretty pointless. SD still regards itself as the brains of the 'national liberation' struggle.

Apparently Danny Morrison mischievously suggested the PD could use the IRA's weaponry, in the course of an IRA ceasefire PD disapproved of. The PD/SD were horrified. But the implication of this mini-pamphlet is that the Provis should be out shooting, and the PD / SD inside doing the thinking. The Provis think the PD are planks barely worth chatting to in the pub. The handout, *Elections a sectarian carnival* is quite well produced, but the word-check could have been used. 'Pursue' comes out "peruse" and bits of text repeat like a person who has had one scallion too many.

Another agency taking an interest in the election was *Precious Life ... a voice for the unborn child*. Its leaflet is slightly shrill about an international campaign "to legalise the killing of unborn babies in our country". This is incorrect, it's now sixty-five years on from the 1945 Criminal Justice Act of the Stormont' parliament which (at the least) decriminalised abortion. But then, the 'pro-choice' elements are hardly going to rush to correct them. The rest of the text simply suggests vigorous campaigning.

The run down of the seven main parties standing is pretty sharp. TUV is anti-choice (not a great surprise), so is the DUP (but it is not going to rescind the 1945 Act). The SDLP is anti-abortion. Alliance and the Green have no official policy. Neither does UCUNF—which *Precious Life* describes as "[t]he Parties"—it clearly saw through the nonsense from Cameron and Empey. SF "has a contradictory policy on abortion". Or, to put it another way, Sinn Féin has been known to talk out of both sides of its mouth on the matter.

It is a comparatively minor matter. None of the major Parties of State has any intention of doing anything about it. But it can be useful to have genuine fanatics in the society asking searching questions. The Review has one point of agreement with Socialist Democracy. It is a great pity that the trade unions don't take the same searching, unforgiving attitude to the 'Stormont' parties.

Seán McGouran

Dardanelles Debate

The *Irish Examiner* continues to carry a discussion in its Letters Columns on Turkey in the Great War. (See April and May issues of *Irish Political Review* for preceding letters.)

Dr. Gerald Morgan (3 May 2010):

Britain wanted Turkey to remain Neutral

I was interested in the letter from Dr Pat Walsh (April 26) on the justification—or lack of it—for the invasion of Gallipoli by the British and French in 1915.

I am chiefly interested, however, in the effects of Gallipoli on Ireland and Home Rule, since surely that is what still matters to us here in Ireland in 2010.

I am baffled by Dr. Walsh's use of English and British as synonyms. Surely they are not, especially when imperial ambitions are at stake.

On last Sunday week (April 25) I was among the congregation in St. Ann's Church in Dawson Street, Dublin, for a commemorative service for Anzac Day.

What an irony that we still need to honour the Irish dead in the guise of honouring the dead of other nations.

In my mind I tried above all to imagine the Christian sacrifice of Fr. William Finn, chaplain

to the Dublin Fusiliers, ministering to the dying on V Beach exactly 95 years earlier—April 25, 1915—at the expense of his own life.

We have a special need in Ireland to recall such heroic examples of Christian devotion in the midst of harrowing tales of child abuse within the church so that we may still see what is possible for us by way of a true Christian love.

We have still properly to remember the heroic Irish dead in Gallipoli (Catholic and Protestant alike) and to sorrow for the fact that, to date, that sacrifice appears to have been in vain.

Dr. Pat Walsh (12 May 2010):

It is a welcome development that awareness has been created about the Great War on Turkey and Ireland's part in it. Dr. Gerald Morgan letter headlined 'Let's honour Great War dead as our own' (May 3) comes from a perspective similar to that of a previous writer in urging equal status for all commemorations. I think the nub of the issue contested can be summed up with reference to the song, *The Foggy Dew*.

In that song there is a line about Gallipoli which says: "Twas better to die neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud el bar".

I think that line sums up the fundamental worldview of independent Ireland and its traditional foreign policy.

In recent years some historians have emerged who would wish to rewrite that line in favour of: "Twas better to die at Suvla or Sud el bar than 'neath an Irish sky."

In doing so they have disparaged the efforts of those who died at Easter 1916 and those who later fell in achieving our independence and democracy. And they have, by implication, viewed our independent presence in the world as something of a mistake.

Others have not gone as far as that. But our current President, and correspondents to your letters page, seem to be in the camp of those who would wish to rewrite the words of the song to: "Twas equally good to have died at Suvla or Sud el bar as it was 'neath an Irish sky."

This is the political and historical logic of the arguments for remembrance commemoration.

Could we honestly imagine Americans saying it was equally valid for their countrymen to have died in supporting the British as it was to be a patriot at Lexington or French people saying it was equally honourable to have died for Vichy France as for the French resistance? I think not.

If we depart from the view that "twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud el bar", we are effectively giving away our independent view of the world.

It is a credit to the Turks that they have never done this and have defended their history vigorously.

Perhaps that part of their character is one reason why they won the battle of Gallipoli.

J.A. Barnwell (14 May 2010)

Gerald Morgan (Letters, May 3) salutes the "heroic Irish dead" of the Great War. Yet losing their lives was scarcely the sole sacrificial service.

They killed, as warriors do. However, their victims – Germans, Austrians, Turks, etc – never did anything against Ireland. Rather the reverse. Hence the 1916 Proclamation praises them as "our gallant allies."

W.B. Yeats realises a telling truth in his poignant poem, *An Irish Airman Foresees his Death* (1916):

"Those that I fight I do not hate.
Those that I guard I do not love".

Mark Cronin (24 May 2010)

Again, Dr. Pat Walsh (Letters, April 26) refuses to face up to the facts of how Britain declared war against Turkey in November 1914.

Not only does he not acknowledge the facts, he purposefully obfuscates them to marry his ideological aim of denigrating and tarnishing Britain's declaration of war against Turkey (and by implication the Irishmen who fought for Britain).

Britain never provoked Turkey into launching its raid on Russian ports and ships. Britain wanted Turkey to remain neutral. These are the facts of the matter. No amount of supposition on Dr. Pat Walsh's part can change the course of events that occurred.

His charge sheet against Britain rests on the previous 14 years of conferences and treaty negotiations, but Dr. Walsh plucks these belligerent soundings from British diplomatic history and denudes them of context and historical balance. He never mentioned that when Britain devised contingency plans in relation to the febrile Balkans and the Mediterranean in general, its navy consistently ruled out the possibility of an attack on Turkey and specifically on Gallipoli. It just goes to show how war changes expectations and demands.

The only evidence Dr. Walsh has of British provocation of Turkey is their confiscation of the two battleships they were building for the Turkish navy. They didn't offer compensation.

This was a mistake on Britain's part. Why they didn't remains unclear, but it gives ground to conspiracy theorists like Dr. Walsh.

The fact that it was Winston Churchill who made the decision gives the conspiracy greater credence as he was the most belligerent government Minister in relation to military matters and the British Empire.

But Churchill was part of a British cabinet that was staunchly anti-war and was more than a counter to any imperial expansionist direction in British foreign policy.

The reason I think Churchill confiscated the battleships without compensation was the expectation that Turkey would side with Germany in the war eventually.

Churchill might have known (but I doubt it) about the secret military deal made between Germany and Turkey a few days before Britain entered the war on August 4, 1914.

But he did know about the intimate ties, commercial and military, that Turkey and Germany had fostered over the previous years. He knew of the historical antagonism between Russia and Turkey.

In this context and the context of the existential struggle that the Great War became, the confiscation of the battleships was the safest thing to do. No compensation was offered for the same reason—why give money to your very potential enemy?

The British Government could have dangled compensation and delayed, but maybe Churchillian forcefulness would not have tolerated such nuances.

There was no ultimatum by Turkey to "give us compensation or we will go to war". When Turkey attacked Russian ports and ships, it was done after Russia had suffered defeats in the war with Germany.

Britain could not have but joined Russia in its war against Turkey as both of them were fighting the war together already as allies and Turkey was a very real threat to Russian territory.

Dr. Gerald Morgan (24 May 2010):

Like Dr. Pat Walsh (Letters, May 12), I too

continued on page 27

Does It Up

Stack

?

CHILD ABUSE AND THE STATE

As I was saying in the May issue of the *Irish Political Review*, Minister for Children, Barry Andrews TD (not a Cabinet Ministry), got it badly wrong when he told a whopping lie to the effect that twenty-three children had died in "State care" in the past ten years. He was caught out and he later agreed on RTE News at Six (24th May 2010) that it could be more but he did not know how many as the HSE—(Health Service Executive) the State organisation responsible—could not tell him, even though his department has an ongoing investigation of two months already into this issue alone. This is a two panel investigation team of "child law expert Geoffrey Shannon" and Norah Gibbons of the Child advocacy group Barnardos, according to *The Irish Times*. Fergus Finlay, Chief Executive of Barnardos was

welcome the debate on Gallipoli in the columns of the *Irish Examiner*.

How else can we hope to understand the complexity of Ireland's history and resolve present disagreements and differences of perspective? It is a hard matter indeed to put ourselves in the hearts and minds of the Irish on V beach on April 25, 1915 and in the GPO on April 24, 1916.

As an Englishman I try to form a sympathetic insight into the events of 1914-15 and 1916 alike since these have determined for better or for worse our present view of Ireland in 2010. I would ask Dr Walsh what he thinks patriotic Irishmen and women ought to have done in 1914 and 1915 with no sense of an Easter Rising to come in 1916?

It is clear that after September 18, 1914 and John Redmond's speech at Woodenbridge in its immediate wake the Irish who fought in the 10th and 16th Divisions believed they had already secured their freedom by an act of the Westminster parliament and were fighting to consolidate that freedom as independent Irish allies of the British and French cause in World War I. After all, it was Germany that had initiated the war by its invasion of an independent and sovereign Belgium in 1914 and to this day the memory of Willie Redmond (Clongowes) is honoured in the village of Loker where he is buried.

My own regret is that it was necessary for the Irish to fight for their freedom at all. The constitutional struggle for Home Rule had been won in the parliament of 1910-14 by the Irish Parliamentary Party under John Redmond in coalition with the Liberals under Asquith (much like the present coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats). Instead of calling into question the patriotism of Irishmen and women in this confused and turbulent period of Irish history we ought to ask the British to explain why they set aside in so disastrous a manner an act of their own sovereign parliament?

also on the same News programme as was the Minister.

Finlay, a former spinmeister for Dick Spring, is harbouring intent to run for the Presidency of Ireland for Labour, though up against the more popular party member Michael D. Higgins. Finlay is using all of his superb PR skills scooping out new angles for publicity and RTE is ever helpful in this regard. After his (disputed) success in getting Mary Robinson into the Presidency, Finlay also worked in his PR job in Wilson Hartnell PR where he was a lobbyist and in charge of campaigns for P.J. Carrolls, Players and Gallaher's tobacco companies (Phoenix April 23rd 2010).

I would question Finlay's presence on the News programme because surely, with one of his co-employees involved in the investigation, there was an obviously conflict of interest. But such things seem never to bother that golden circle involved in the media, one that never answers questions about their own involvement in areas under question—*such is only* for certain other people and that usually is based on sectarian anti-Catholic lines. But Minister Andrews, TD refused to speculate in the numbers game when asked if it could be in the forties, fifties or was it near the 200 as a weekend paper suggested? It was hard to remember these were children in State care who died that were being talked about. The inference to be drawn was that it appeared not to matter. After all Andrews is the Minister for Children—surely these children should have received his and his public servants first attention.

He was the executive Minister in charge, so how difficult was it to ask *his* department and *his* staff to get the files, the figures and the reports immediately. But no—apparently his staff would not or could not do this work or else, the only alternative was that this work could only be done because the Minister wanted to appoint a Committee of specially paid people who would do the job the civil servants couldn't or wouldn't do. We need to be told immediately why this was so. After all, the tax payer is footing the bill so why the special two-man paid Committee? And this committee got nowhere in the two months since their appointment until the *Mail on Sunday* shocked the Minister into a response.

But again the HSE would not give any files on the dead children to the Committee established by the Minister. Children in State care are the responsibility of the HSE and the HSE does not yet know how many children died in its care nor the identity of the children who died. It seems that they don't literally care or are afraid for their jobs because of their shoddy inattention to these obviously needy children. In the News at Six, RTE (25th May 2010) the Taoiseach has announced emergency legislation is needed to get the necessary information. It seems the HSE

are now invoking the *in camera* rules about confidentiality which seems to be astonishing considering the Minister didn't see any legislative impediment to his pursuit of the facts.

What all this throws up is a picture of such monumental mistakes that it really does beggar belief. What child-related problem could be more serious than deaths by such violence as murder and suicide? What has the Minister for Children and his staff been doing every working day since the problem of the deaths was brought to light over two months ago by Fine Gael's Alan Shatter TD in the Dail when, as spokesman on Children, he published a draft report into the death of teenage mother of two, Ms Tracy Fay.

The HSE has refused to publish any other reports into deaths of children in its care. On 23rd May, *The Sunday Business Post* (yes, "*children in state care*" is big business but that aspect is well hidden from an uncaring public unless tabloid headlines are involved) published the appalling revelation from "a senior figure in the HSE that it still did not know the precise number of children that had died while in its care, but it was feared that the true tally could be in the order of two hundred in just one decade alone. Remember this is ten times what the Minister said it was. As I said elsewhere—Public servants are not good at sums, but this is awful—they cannot even count!

The HSE is subject to the Minister for Health, Mary Harney TD. Her remedy for the HSE's conduct is to remove the persons responsible from office and appoint people who will deal with the problems properly and immediately. Why hasn't she done this before now? There is obviously incompetence of a huge degree in the HSE, not only in this matter but specifically in the matter of children in State care. Heads should roll if the HSE does not co-operate with the Department of Children within days on this matter. Believe it or not but in addition to the HSE staff, Minister Andrews and his staff and his two-member committee and their staff, there are over ninety voluntary bodies and their staff represented by The Children Rights Alliance. What have they all been doing about children's deaths in state care? Nothing much apparently until Alan Shatter, TD. raised the question in the Dail.

No one, it seems wants to upset the apple cart. And a fine big apple cart it is. There is an enormous amount of money in 'children in state care'. About 5,000 of them or more at the latest reckoning, but this figure is a state secret also. The number of adults involved and making money from all of this must be up to 10,000—taking into account public servants, carers, foster-parents and staffs of voluntary bodies. The staff of voluntary bodies are

very well paid indeed if we are to judge by Fergus Finlay's salary in Barnardos. None of them cared enough to blow the whistle on this one.

And then look at the farce which is the reaction of Ireland to Judge Yvonne Murphy Report into the Dublin Archdiocese. The media and the country (or at least those that starred in the media accounts) went into frenzied overdrive to bash the Catholic Church, notwithstanding that 98% of child abuse is non-clerical, that the Catholic church is not the only Church in Ireland, that the responsibility of the Gardai, the Judiciary and of the Health Boards and HSE were glossed over and barely mentioned—and that it all happened 30 to 60 years ago and that, even according to the Murphy Report, procedures have been put in place years ago and are now in place in the Dublin Archdiocese to deal effectively with child abuse.

Compare that over-the-top farce with what is happening to children now. Or don't we want to talk about it.....? For example, the *Irish Examiner* recently reported "there are 1,000 abuse cases reported in Cork each year". Why are there no demonstrations against this? The total abuse cases reported in Ireland must now be about 10,000 a year. If two hundred or more died in state care in the past ten years, then the number of abused children in state care must be enormous. Why is it not the subject of an inquiry? It doesn't stack up. It is a horrific scenario and much of it must be laid at the door of increased secularisation. You may say not, but the evidence is against you. Fifty or sixty years ago the Catholic Church and the other Churches also had more influence on the formation of moral and social mores. This much is now admitted even if only negatively. It is even formulated as an accusation of "control by the Catholic Church" etc. etc. But in 1950 there were few murders in Ireland, the streets were safe, and people's homes were safe, whereas by 2000 violent crime had increased by 1000% and it is still rising each year. By the year 2000 the guiding influence of the Catholic Church had been subjected to systematic attack and the secular state had taken over the citizen's lives. Unarguably secularisation has led to a violent corrupt society in which child deaths and child abuse and even elderly abuse are of only passing interest. *Quo vadis?*

HOW CREDIT RATING WORKS

Following the events in Greece, all eyes are on the credit ratings agencies which only last year were still describing Greek debt as "stable". This enabled Greece to keep borrowing and acquiring more debt. Not until just days before the Euro/IMF rescue package was the debt

marked down to "junk". But actually disaster for ordinary Greeks is great news for the bankers who make money on creating the crisis and are then protected from the fallout by the tax-payer bailout. So guess who runs these credit rating agencies—well it is the same bankers! The most influential is *Standard and Poor* and is owned by the US firm McGraw-Hill. Among its Directors is British businessman Sir Mike Rake, former chairman of accountants KPMJ while it was giving clean audit certificates to banks heading into the abyss such as Britain's HBOS. Another director is the current chairman of the audit committee of Barclays Bank, a £10bn-plus investor in Greece. Rake is joined on S&P board by one of UK Government's favourite bankers, Sir Win Bischoff—who chairs the financial policy committee and sits on the pay board. He became Chairman of Citigroup Europe in 2000 and its world wide boss in 2007-2009. Bischoff was thus at the top of the bank that was busy trading in sub-prime backed AAA-rated "collateralised debt obligations" and the agency that was rating the junk so highly.

As a US Senate finance committee noted last month, S&P was even issuing these ratings when it knew they were wildly inappropriate. (Citigroup was duly bailed out by the US tax-payer to the tune of \$45bn.) S&P's and Bischoff's roles in the world economic meltdown did not deter then Chancellor Alistair Darling from appointing Bischoff to run a review on the future of financial services (answer don't do anything drastic), nor from appointing him chairman of partly taxpayer-owned Lloyds Banking group last year.

Another suspect credit-rater from S&P to find favour with the British Government was their head of ratings in Europe from 2004-2008, Barbara Ridpath. She boasts of having "spearheaded S&P move into international securitisation" in London (smart move) and is now chief executive of the International Centre for Financial Regulation, set up by the British Government and the City in the wake of the 2008 crisis. (See *Private Eye*, 14th -27th May 2010, No. 1262, for more on this subject).

Now with our new Financial Regulator, Matthew Elderfield, coming from a similar (but lower pay-scale obviously) background—doesn't it warm the Irish tax-payer's heart to have such a fiscal hard-hitter on our pay-roll? It took—as per usual—the *Irish Daily Mail* to suggest Matthew has no economic expertise really, only having (somewhat oddly) Foreign Service for the UK experience. Which is, come to think of it, a rather odd qualification—or is it, knowing what we do know about MI6 and the Foreign Office?

Michael Stack

CRISIS continued

damaged the mortgage market with a very aggressive advertising campaign Halifax—in the words of Seamus Martin—has done a bunk and gone back to Britain. Royal Bank of Scotland has closed its First Active branch network and it is possible that it would have closed or sold off its Ulster Bank network if it were not heavily tied in to it by lease agreements on its property. Ulster Bank showed a loss of 400 million last year. But the true extent of its losses was greater because about 17 billion of its impaired loans was transferred to its parent company RBS in order to participate in the UK Government's bank scheme. If these loans are included, the losses on its Irish operation would have been closer to 2 billion euros.

One of the great illusions about economics is that competition is always a good thing. In fact excessive competition is one of the elements that caused the crisis. The last thing that a society needs is competition in the Financial/Insurance sector. In manufacturing competition can stimulate innovation, but it is precisely innovative financial "products" that have caused so much damage. Provided the sector is tightly regulated—if not entirely State-owned—there are advantages in having national monopolies in banking and insurance. Economies of scale could keep down costs. Obviously this could run into problems with European competition law, but the free market ideologues must have been severely chastened by the experience of the last couple of years. The free market in the financial sector has been underwritten by the State. Now that Humpty Dumpty has fallen, why should the State be obliged to put it back together again in the way it was before the crisis?

CONCLUSION

It is very likely—but by no means certain—that the economy and the fortunes of the banks will improve in the next year (although there may be more bad news concerning Anglo and Irish Nationwide). If this does happen, the popularity of the opposition parties will quickly wane. Fianna Fáil has reached a floor and, despite all the unpopularity, it has held itself together very well. Opinion polls between elections give a guide to the public mood but at a General Election the minds of the electorate will be more focussed on the alternative to the Government. At the last General Election the Opposition did not bear up well to such scrutiny. In the light of this it is much too early to write off Fianna Fáil.

CRISIS continued

An insurance business like a bank needs to be regulated. It can generate cash up front in premiums. If it is expanding rapidly, as Quinn Insurance was, it can postpone the financing of claims by continuing to accumulate premiums, but at a certain stage the claims will catch up on the premiums with disastrous consequences for the company and, if it is big enough, the State.

It appears that Quinn has had a record of not complying with solvency ratios. In such circumstances the Regulator may not have been wrong to prevent the company from writing new business in the UK.

It looks like Quinn had an unlimited capacity to borrow when he met FitzPatrick, who had an unlimited capacity to lend. His insurance business enabled him to generate cash for his other businesses. The insurance business is now by far the largest element of the Quinn Group, which includes Cement, radiators, plastics, property and hotels/leisure (e.g. the Belfry Ryder Cup golf club).

When BUPA pulled out of Ireland, Quinn took over as the main competitor to VHI. While this preserved existing employment, the question arises if this was a positive social development? Did competition bring down costs? In this writer's opinion we would have been better off with a monopoly State owned Health Insurer.

A second element that strikes the outside observer is that many of his businesses are capital intensive. The Cement industry for instance involves a massive investment in capital and has very few employees. The plastics industry (or the part that he's in) is also capital intensive. The Arabs own the largest plastic manufacturer (Sabic which used to be GE plastics). It's also not insignificant that the Irish were competing against the Arabs in buying up property in London at the top of the market.

It seems that Anglo was providing a small group of people with a massive amount of capital to finance their businesses. The problem may not be confined to property developers as the example of Quinn shows.

It has been suggested that we have a choice. In the past it was Berlin or Boston, but now it is Greece or Germany. The manner in which the Quinn Group and the Banking system has been dealt with by the Government would suggest that we prefer Germany.

POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

Not surprisingly, given that GNP has dropped by one sixth since the peak level at the beginning of 2008, there is a lot of anger among the Irish people. There is a feeling that people should be punished. The most recent *Red Sea/Sunday Business Poll* shows that Fianna Fáil has had its vote drop from 42% at the 2007 General Election to 23%. But interestingly the Green Party's vote is marginally above its General Election level (from 5% to 6%). The fact that the Greens have recovered from their dismal local election performance, would seem to indicate that people do not blame the current Government for its current policies, but want to punish Fianna Fáil for mistakes during the Ahern era.

The opinion polls show that Fine Gael is the largest party, but it has only increased its vote from 27% to 33%. This is below the FitzGerald era, when it obtained 39% in one of the General Elections in the early 1980s. Enda Kenny, its leader, is not convincing. He finds it difficult to go beyond sound bites. The Party has a few loose cannons which are liable to explode at any time. Charlie Flanagan supported the outrageous attack on the Government by the outgoing leader of the Garda Representatives, an attack for which even *The Irish Times* felt it necessary to give him a slap on the wrists. Richard Bruton is the most impressive member of Fine Gael, but Brian Lenihan, in my opinion, has been much more convincing on the banking crisis. Fine Gael has oscillated from the left (renege on the debts to bondholders) to the right (keep Halifax in the market to preserve competition). Neither position is convincing.

Labour has been the beneficiary by default of the anger. The opinion poll indicates that it has more than doubled its vote since the General Election (from 10% to 24%). However, in my view, this share is very fickle. Gilmore looks more credible than Kenny, but Labour is not offering an alternative to Fianna Fáil. The party has had a number of new high profile recruits from Sinn Féin. One ex-PD politician has recently joined the party, which shows how apolitical the increased popularity of Labour is. It is possible that Labour is also benefiting from not supporting the Government Guarantee scheme (unlike Fine Gael). This puts it in a better position to criticise Anglo.

As regards the Trade Unions, they have been blown out of the water by the Government. However, unlike the opposition parties they have to live in the real world and have made a clever tactical retreat which they hope will prevent further cuts in public sector wages.

Sinn Féin has not been at the races. It has no credible economics spokesman and its long-term prospects in the South do not look particularly good. It has not benefited at all from the current discontent, which must be very demoralising for it. The political environment in the North is so different from the South that it might be that that party's success in the North has disabled it from functioning in the South. It is now sharing the protest vote with the Socialist Workers Party/People before Profit and Joe Higgins's Socialist party. The latter party won a European parliament seat at the expense of Sinn Féin.

Labour and Fine Gael, if able to form a new Government after the next election, will implement the same policies as the Government. As with the last election, they are hoping that the electorate will feel that Fianna Fáil has been in power for too long and will give them a go. This in my view is an extremely risky strategy. However, it may be that they are incapable of developing any alternative strategy.

Fianna Fáil has responded very effectively to the crisis. However, there is a basis for opposition to the party because it is in danger of learning the wrong lessons. There is a widespread view—indeed a consensus—that the cause of the crisis in Ireland was crony capitalism. Of course, within this consensus there is a vague acceptance that the crisis had an international dimension, but the predominant view is that there is something inherently corrupt about the Irish bourgeoisie. The so-called "*Galway Tent*" (now defunct) has become a symbol of this.

Incredibly, Fianna Fáil has not been immune from this misdiagnosis. Last Sunday Batt O'Keefe (the Minister for Enterprise) said that the Government would FAVOUR a foreign buyer for the Quinn group. The justification for this policy was that foreign competition would bring down premiums and give a better deal for the consumer. The other argument is that foreign competition would preserve jobs because an Irish company would naturally shed jobs quicker because its existing staff could perform the task of the Quinn Group. A third reason may be pressure from Europe. I have not seen the Labour Party dissent from this view.

There is a very strong case for the opposite view: the cause of the crisis in the banking sector was *excessive competition*. The mainstream banks felt that they had to compete not only with Sean FitzPatrick but also with the foreign banks: Ulster Bank owned by RBS and Halifax owned by Bank of Scotland (now HBOS). Having

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CRISIS continued

With the exception of Garret FitzGerald in *The Irish Times*, along with Pat McArdle tucked away in the business section of that paper and Brendan Keenan for the *Independent* group, commentary verges on the apocalyptic. *The Irish Times*, in its editorial section, has given pride of place to at times hysterical commentary from TCD academic Brian Lucey. RTE, which follows the lead of *The Irish Times*, has been particularly negative.

Before the current crisis David McWilliams in the *Sunday Business Post* and *Irish Independent* had been one of the most interesting commentators. However since the crisis he has indulged himself. Much of what he has said is just rhetoric without any substance.

His argument has been that although the national debt in percentage terms is less than it was in the 1980s—when it reached 130% of GDP—the crisis is more severe because of the explosion of private debt. However, in the last couple of years, there has been a massive de-leveraging (i.e. reduction) in private debt. It is anticipated that in 5 years we will return to a position of being a net lender to the rest of the world.

Emigration among the native Irish has been at a trickle. Most of the emigration has been of recent immigrants who were disproportionately represented in the building industry.

McWilliams argues that, given the severity of the crisis (in his view), the banks should default on part of their debts. Anglo-Irish Bank, in particular, should not pay its bondholders, inter bank debt and European Central Bank debt. This would probably result in Ireland being kicked out of the Euro, which in fairness to McWilliams he has been advocating anyway.

The problem is that the State—in particular Anglo-Irish Bank—needs continued access to international capital. McWilliams claims—in my view bizarrely—that if we, or specifically our banks, renege on our debt, international capital will be only too willing to continue to lend to us. According to this view, International capital has no memory; it always looks to the future, never the past. He claims special knowledge of this because he worked in the banking sector. His views, in my opinion, are complete nonsense. Countries, which defaulted on debt are charged a premium long after they have defaulted. Also, new loans which are given to such countries are given with

strict conditions concerning "reform" or liberalisation of the economy. We can forget about Social Partnership if McWilliams's policy is followed.

Also, the countries which defaulted could not pay. That is not as yet the situation in this country. Creditors take a very different attitude to a debtor that can't pay compared to one that won't pay.

The most notable aspect of McWilliams recent articles is that while he has advocated leaving the Euro he has not discussed at all the logistics of how we will return to our own currency. In my view, apart from the logistics, this would be a regression and a return to the sterling zone.

THE IRISH BANKING CRISIS

I have already touched on the Irish banking crisis, which cannot be divorced from the economic crisis. In September 2008 the banking system was about to collapse. If this had been allowed to happen, the sheer panic caused would have resulted in a collapse in the economy. The State undertook to guarantee depositors and bondholders. There is a case that it should not have extended the guarantee to bondholders. But it is a very arguable case. The guarantee was not given free. The participating banks were obliged to pay an insurance premium to the State. The guarantee's term is 2 years and is due to expire in September of this year by which time the State will have been paid 1 billion euros by the banks.

The guarantee was a sticking plaster, which enabled the banks to buy time. However, the big problem was that international capital no longer believed what Irish banks said about their figures. The Irish banks were by no means unique in this respect. British, German, Swiss and US banks had a similar problem. However, the one silver lining is that the assets (i.e. its loans to borrowers) of the Irish banks were transparent. They did not buy the opaque toxic assets that the US passed on to British and Continental European banks. An analysis of Irish loans was relatively straightforward. Following the recent Goldman Sachs investigation, an email has been made public indicating that AIB was "too smart" to buy toxic assets. However the intelligence of our banks did not prevent them from lending recklessly to developers in this country.

The Irish State through NAMA has taken development land and associated loans off the balance sheets of the participating banks. This has been done in a transparent fashion, unlike State interventions in other countries. But what has been revealed has not been pretty. The

State has not bought a pig in a poke. The loans have had independent valuations and accordingly the State has bought the first tranche of loans amounting to 16 billion at a discount of about 47%.

Fine Gael has characterised the process as a bail-out for developers and the banks. Last year Enda Kenny described it at a function for Irish businessmen in London as "*criminal*". At the same meeting an economist said that it was an innovative solution to the crisis and added that, if Japan had done the same thing, it might not have had its lost decade of economic stagnation.

If the Government had not taken these development loans off their balance sheets, the banks would have hid them and slowly built up their capital ratios over many years by not lending to business—with disastrous consequences for the economy.

The transparency of the process has been painful politically for Fianna Fáil. The State has had to recapitalise the banks with the billions outlined in the May issue of the *Irish Political Review*. But the capital has given the State extensive ownership of the banking system. The Labour Party hasn't seen this as a positive development, but merely as an opportunity to rail against the alleged corruption in Irish life.

There are signs that the Government strategy is working. Bank of Ireland recently had a Rights Issue in the middle of the Greek crisis, which raised over half a billion in private capital. Lenihan with some justification has claimed it as a vote of confidence in the Government's strategy.

The problems of the banks reflect a legacy issue rather than current trading. Now that all the Irish banks have taken an enormous hit in terms of potential bad debts, it is possible that some or all of them may return to profitability this year.

QUINN GROUP

The natural inclination of the present writer is to suspect the motives of the new, British, Financial Regulator appointed by Brian Lenihan. However, it appears that Quinn's relationship with Anglo-Irish Bank was a little incestuous. When Sean FitzPatrick came to him to shore up the bank's share price, Quinn felt he couldn't refuse. Quinn lost about 1 billion on his Anglo share transaction, but he still owes the bank 2.8 billion so he was already heavily dependent on the bank before he bought the shares. The Group also owes another 1.2 billion to a group of creditors led by Barclay's Bank, which has first call on Quinn's debts in the event of a liquidation.

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CRISIS continued

Although in recent months the Dollar has appreciated again in relation to the Euro, it is still a long way from parity which was the rate at the launch of the Euro.

In the last year there has been a lot of attention devoted to arcane financial products such as hedge funds, credit default swaps and securitised debt. However, although such products might have exacerbated the crisis they are not its cause. The cause of the crisis is imbalances in World Trade. There will be a painful adjustment process while the wealth of the world is transferred from the United States to emerging economic powerhouses such as China.

THE IRISH ECONOMIC CRISIS

Ireland, as one of the most open economies in the world, benefited from the growth of the world economy disproportionately and has accordingly suffered disproportionately in the current crisis.

David McWilliams has documented some of the elements of the Celtic Tiger era. In one of his television programmes he described the liberating effect of access to cheap credit. Borrowers no longer had to go to the right schools or golf club to access credit. We were no longer dependent on savings in this country to borrow. We could access the savings of the Germans (through our own banks). And, since there was an almost infinite supply of credit from the rest of the World, an increase in Irish demand had no effect on interest rates (the normal effect of increased borrowings). A political effect might have been the wresting of control of the banking system from the Anglo-Irish class. McWilliams refers obliquely to this in his description of the former Chief Executive of Anglo-Irish Bank, Sean FitzPatrick. (This come-uppance for the rising forces also explains the sheer glee of *The Irish Times* and its satellites in the Irish media at the crisis.)

It is generally believed that up until 2001 the Celtic Tiger's growth represented a genuine sustainable increase in the wealth of the country. From 2001 onwards a large proportion of the economic growth was fuelled by consumption on the basis of a bubble in the property market which created the illusion of wealth.

A wise Government, impervious to democratic pressure, would have prevented the growth of private credit. It would also have reduced the State's dependency on taxes on property transactions (as distinct from the

ownership and use of property). However, neither the Government nor the Opposition advocated such policies. Indeed the Opposition parties were at least as irresponsible as the Government. At the last election Labour advocated retaining the top tax rate at 42%. Fine Gael and the PDs wanted it to be reduced to 40%. In the event Fianna Fáil reduced it to 41%. Fine Gael and Labour rowed in behind the *Sunday Independent's* campaign to reduce stamp duty without advocating an alternative property tax. This would have expanded the property bubble leading to an even more dramatic collapse. There were no calls for greater regulation or control of credit.

At around 2008 international fund managers stopped believing in the Irish economic story. The banks were unable to obtain foreign capital and therefore were not in a position to lend. The property market was fuelled by cheap credit and once this stopped flowing, the market collapsed. Also, since much of the banks' lending was secured against property, the solvency of the Irish banks was called into question. This was first presented as a liquidity problem, but the last couple of years show that it was a solvency problem. Banks stopped lending. The contraction in the building industry led to redundancies and had knock-on effects on the rest of the economy, which was already adversely affected by economic conditions in the rest of the world. From a situation of practically full employment, the economy had an unemployment rate of almost 14%. High growth rates were replaced by a double-digit percentage contraction in the economy.

The collapse of the property market led to a loss of VAT and Stamp Duty revenue. The dramatic increase in unemployment in turn led to a reduction in income tax revenue and an increase in social welfare costs. All this caused a serious deterioration in the State's finances. From having a budget surplus, our current budget deficit as a percentage of GDP is running at double digits. We have one of the highest budget deficits in the Euro zone. Eurostat has recently included the State's capital injection into Anglo-Irish Bank in the budget deficit figure, which puts our deficit at about 14%, marginally above that of Greece. If this injection is excluded we have a budget deficit that is about the same as the UK, but ours is falling.

The Government has acted in a decisive and competent fashion. As the *May Irish Political Review* editorial indicated, its analysis of what needed to be done was correct and the prescription of the Trade Unions was wrong. The Government believed that it had to act decisively in

order to reassure international Bond markets. The Trade Unions, on the other hand, believed that a too decisive correction would cause permanent damage to the economy and that the correction in the public finances should be spread over 5 years.

Unlike with Greece the Government has had no difficulty selling Bonds. The premium over German interest rates was 3% but had reduced to less than 1.5% before the reverberations of the Greek crisis. There is no immediate pressure on the State to sell more Bonds to finance its borrowings. For a while we were replaced by Italy in the PIGS (Portugal, Greece and Spain being the other countries in the acronym) category of countries most likely to default on debt. However, in the last few months we are back in the PIGS category. The thinking appears to be that as a small country we are more vulnerable than a large country such as Italy, which cannot be allowed to fail.

The perception of business people last year was that we were in free fall but now there is a sense that the economy has reached a floor and it is widely predicted that it will return to modest growth in the second half of the year. Last year there was talk of unemployment reaching 20% but it now looks like it has peaked at 14%.

Earlier I have said that we have one of the highest current budget deficits as a percentage of GDP in the Euro zone. This is an annual measure. However the National Debt figure measures the accumulated debt. Ireland's National Debt as a percentage of GDP was one of the lowest in the Euro zone; it will be at about 77% this year (if the Anglo capital injection is included), which is below the average and also below that of France and Germany. If the pension reserve fund is deducted from our debt, the ratio falls back to 47%, giving us one of the lowest debt ratios in the Euro zone. Greece has about 120% and Italy is also above 100%.

This year as a result of a decline in imports our balance of payments (or trade with the rest of the world) will return to a surplus. Significant reductions in private and public sector wages have improved our competitiveness. This puts us in a completely different position to Greece, Portugal and Spain (Greece with nearly 10% balance of payments deficit and the other two over 7%). This is an important indication of a country as a whole's ability to pay (not just the State).

Most international commentators have been impressed by the ability of the State to respond to the crisis. However this is not reflected by domestic commentary.

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The Economy

An edited version of a Talk delivered to the *Irish Political Review Group*
by **JOHN MARTIN** on 8th May

The Irish economic crisis has Global and domestic dimensions.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

For decades manufacturing in the West (i.e. Advanced Capitalist countries including Japan) has been relocating to countries with low labour costs. The reduction in transport costs and improvements in communication have enabled an intensification of this trend. There was a view in the West—or at least the Anglo-Saxon part—that all of this was progressive. The theory was that manufacturing was no longer viable in advanced capitalist countries and that workers should accept their lot. The loss in jobs in manufacturing would be compensated for by an increase in the number of service jobs.

This has had a damaging effect on the working class. There has been downward pressure on wages in manufacturing because of the threat of relocation. Service jobs have not been as well paid. And the decline in large-scale manufacturing has had a damaging effect on class consciousness and Trade Union power.

A basic Marxist understanding of economics would indicate that this state of affairs could not be sustained, or at least could not be sustained unless the West had an exploitative relationship with the rest of the world. Value is only created in Agriculture and Manufacturing. Service industries are only possible because of the wealth created in Agriculture and Manufacturing (although certain types of service industries such as software design could be categorised as "manufacturing"). A country cannot live on services alone unless it can extract surplus value (i.e. profits) from countries with Agriculture and Manufacturing industries.

The West has had this exploitative relationship with the rest of the world. In the initial phase of imperialism this exploitation was mainly through mining and agriculture. In the last 60 years the surplus value has been extracted from manufacturing, mainly in East Asia.

However an obstacle to Western exploitation has been the fact that many of the exploited countries have functioning States. A dramatic example of such States acting in their interests was in the early 1970s when Oil Producing countries formed a cartel to increase the price of oil. There was a massive transfer of wealth from the West to the Middle East which caused a recession in the West. The wealth that accrued to the oil-rich countries had nowhere to go and found itself in mainly US Banks. The banking system was awash with funds in a period of recession in the West and was looking to lend these funds. A Chief Executive of Citibank at the time thought he had the solution to the problem. He made a famous statement to the effect that, while individuals and companies could go bankrupt, whole countries could not. However the subsequent experience of international banks with Latin American countries demonstrated that this was not the case at all.

An element that exacerbated the crisis was the Vietnam War. The United States mitigated the effect of this on its national debt by breaking the link between the

Dollar and Gold. It started printing money, which had the effect of reducing the value of the debt held in dollars by creditors outside the US. In other words other capitalist countries were forced to share the pain of the US.

There are similarities between the current crisis and that of the 1970s. However, the elements of the previous crisis are now on a greater scale. China has been able to generate a larger surplus than the oil-producing Countries in the previous recession. Also China has more ambitious plans in the world. It has attempted to secure its supply of raw materials by buying mines and land in Australia and Africa. It has also developed friendly and mutually-beneficial political relations with oil producing countries, such as Iran and the Sudan. Surplus funds have also been generated by Germany and Japan. Although Japan has a very large State debt, it continues to generate balance of payments surpluses with the rest of the World.

The United States is the largest debtor nation. It is still fighting expensive wars and its Federal debt has been accentuated by massive private debt. However, despite its position as the world's largest debtor nation, a large portion of the capital swirling around the global banking system is owned by Americans. Although the US economy has grown significantly since the early 1970s, the average income of American workers has stagnated. Their living standards have been maintained by access to credit. This has enabled a massive accumulation of American capital. American Keynesian economists argue that inequalities in American society have created a problem of aggregate demand which has reached a crisis point now that credit has been choked off.

As with the early 1970s America has shared her pain. The Dollar has depreciated and US banks have been able to sell worthless debt to the European banks.

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