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Many A Slip—

The great Tory-Unionist alliance projected by David Cameron seems to have come to grief. The Ulster Unionist Party agreed to become part of the Tory Party a couple of years ago. It was declining to the point of extinction and Cameron's proposal came to it as a lifeline. And Cameron became doubtful that he would have a clear win in the forthcoming Election, so he refurbished the Tories' 'Ulster' credentials in the hope of picking up a few seats there. Unfortunately the only UUP member with a seat in the Commons rejected the merger with the Tories on the ground that she agreed with Labour's policies.

The UUP then made overtures to the Democratic Unionist Party with a view to preventing nationalists taking seats because of a split Unionist vote. Talks were held for that purpose at the headquarters of the Orange Order. But this led to trouble with Catholics who had joined the Tory-Unionist set up (which called itself *Ulster Conservative And Unionist New Force*) thinking that it was a new departure transcending the Protestant/Catholic division. When they heard of UUP (or UCUNF) talks with the DUP, held under Tory auspices at Hatfield House, they were allowed on British network television to say that, if a connection with the DUP was established, they would resign. They would not be Tories if that meant supping with the Orange Order. Cameron was then interviewed about the matter and said—or seemed to say—that, if the UUP made arrangements with the DUP, the Tory merger with it would be off.

The UUP has been put in the position of choosing between the Tories and the DUP. As we go to print they have not yet made a decision.

We have always thought a Catholic Unionist was an absurd political animal—unless he happens to be an English gentleman, like Sir John Gorman, and therefore has nothing to do with the life of the place despite his membership of the UUP. Forty years ago Louis Boyle put it to the test. He joined the UUP and made all the right noises, but found that he would never be anything to his party colleagues but a Taig who was trying to play a diabolical trick on them and should therefore be treated with caution.

David Cameron's Tory project is starting on the ground vacated by the Campaign for Equal Citizenship of two decades ago. That movement paralleled the Campaign for

continued on page 2

Post-Lisbon EU

The EU is rolling out its international diplomatic service at the moment, in keeping with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. This is somewhat ironic since it appears that the international status of the EU is going downhill. It was sidelined at the Copenhagen Conference and its silence is deafening on any international issue when it is not echoing the USUK line. Despite this subservience, Obama appears to have decided this year to break with the tradition of attending the annual EU-US Summit, organised by the Spanish rotating Presidency. This is a great blow to the EU but it's quite understandable from President Obama's point of view. Why bother talking to one's echo.

In any case, the Lisbon Treaty has downgraded the rotating Presidency as it existed and now the old problem for the US *vis a vis* Europe is even more problematic—who does the US President call? He has a choice of four fellow Presidents to call. Despite all the hype needed to pass Lisbon, claiming the Treaty was needed in order to give the EU a clearer purpose and profile, the functioning of the EU appears more anarchic than ever before to anyone except those blinded by the hype.

continued on page 6

Ireland And Gallipoli

President McAleese is to visit a Great War cemetery in Turkey in March. Mark Langhammer, a member of Labour's Northern Ireland Constituency Council, put out the following Press Release

PRESIDENT MCALEESE'S GALLIPOLI "PILGRIMAGE"

News has broken recently that Mrs Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland, will be paying a State visit to Turkey and during it will spend a day in the Suvla Bay

area—where the 10th Irish Division operated—and will dedicate the foundation stone of the proposed memorial to Irish casualties at one of the cemeteries.

To coincide with Mrs McAleese's visit, the Somme Association have invited participation—particularly from local Councils—in a "Pilgrimage" to the graves in Turkey of Irish soldiers killed at Gallipoli in World War 1.

Should this invitation be accepted?

Like the Crusaders of old, the Irish soldiers were members of Western Christian armies invading a faraway Muslim country which had not invaded us, or attacked us, or threatened us.

Turkey was a benign and tolerant country in which, before the Western onslaughts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the various branches of the Islamic and Christian and Jewish faiths generally enjoyed harmonious relations with each other.

In preceding centuries Turkey and the lands linked to it had often been a haven for Christians and Jews who sought refuge from violent, intolerant western regimes which persecuted and killed their religious minorities. In Jerusalem, Turkey kept the historic sites open to all religions and used its power to keep the peace between the Christian sects there.

continued on page 7

CONTENTS

	Page
Northern Ireland: Many A Slip — Editorial	1
Post-Lisbon EU. Jack Lane	1
Ireland And Gallipoli. Report of Mark Langhammer PR and Sinn Fein response	1
Liberal Bloodletting. Wilson John Haire (poem)	3
Adamsgate. Editorial (with extract from Connolly's <i>Press Poisoners</i>)	5
Minister Hanafin On Social Partnership. Report	9
Shorts from the Long Fellow (Trust In The President; A Straightforward Lie; Insider Trading; <i>Irish Times</i> Standards; George Flees; Hunting The Tiger; The Irresponsible Party; Halifax Ireland; Ryan And Bluster; Ryanair Tax Dodge?)	10
One Secular Nation? Wilson John Haire replies to Roy Johnston	12
Death Of A Dilettante. Wilson John Haire (poem)	12
Memoir Of A Non-Conformist. John Martin reviews Dennis Kennedy's book	13
The Spy Who Grew Up With The Bold, <i>the Irish Republican education of John Betjeman.</i> Manus O'Riordan (part one)	15
Biteback: Blindness On Iraq. Philip O'Connor email to Pat Kenny show	17
Fintan O'Toole On Captain Rock. Pat Muldowney	18
DIBlues No. 1: Entry On D.D. Sheehan in Dictionary of Irish Biography report of letter from Jack Lane, Aubane Historical Soc. to James McGuire	22
US Weapons Test Aimed At Iran Caused Haiti Quake. Report	23
Haiti—The Unforgiven. Wilson John Haire (poem)	23
America's Warfare State. Patrick J. Buchanan (report)	23
Postscript On George Lee. Editorial	24

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

Hands Off Our Social Insurance!

(back page)

Compulsory Pensions

Passports

(page 24)

Labour Representation, in seeking to allow would-be Conservatives in Northern Ireland an opportunity to participate in State politics. It was not unionist. The CEC was diverted into a Unionist side-track: it dropped its initial agnosticism on the Partition issue and became another form of Unionism. When that happened, it had no hope of attracting Catholics and was bound for failure. Cameron is an active British Unionist and has made that a selling point of his party. That is underlined by his alliance with Ulster Unionism. But the whole point of Unionism is that it is not a social or class movement, but a one-issue alliance. The semi-merger with the Tory Party strikes at its popular base, with its Labour sympathies.

From a unionist viewpoint, an electoral alliance between the UUP and DUP is essential to maximise Unionist seats but, when the DUP alliance was mooted, Conservative Catholics understood that they had not joined a Conservative Party, but a Unionist Party and become part of the Orange continuum. That proved to be unacceptable.

Northern Ireland was made by Britain for Protestants and Catholics to feud in. The Protestants, being a 2 to 1 majority at the outset, were to keep the Catholics down. They succeeded in this for half a

century. Then things went wrong, and now the Catholics are up. But the feud continues. In that respect at least Northern Ireland is a success.

Brian Feeney published a tirade, in his *Irish News* column of 17th February, against "*Frank Allaun, a stick-thin far left MP*" who "*represented one of the safest Labour seats in England, Salford East for 28 years*". Frank Allaun, is dead and he is not much remembered. What he stood for in British politics was wiped out by Tony Blair and his acolytes, amongst whom was Peter Hain, once our Pro-consul. Why does Brian Feeney remember him so vividly? Because he wanted to end the Pro-Consular relationship between the Six Counties and Britain.

Allaun "*extolled the virtues of East Germany as a model of socialist society and ignored the realities of the vicious oppressive regime*". We don't know whether he did or not. We held no brief for the East German state, and we did not expect it to last. We paid no heed to the good things said about its living arrangements for ordinary people who wanted to raise a family, and take part in sociable pleasure, and who did not make it a priority to ignite the Cold War by subverting the regime in the Western interest.

East Germany was a construct of the Second World War which Britain launched in 1939 but reneged on the fighting of—and expanded at every opportunity so that others would be compelled to fight it—and which Communist Russia won between 1941 and 1945. In 1945 Russia found the Western Allies, for whom it had destroyed Nazi Germany, actively arrayed against it, and so set up a series of buffer-states between it and its Western Allies who became enemies in the moment of victory against Germany. (In 1919 Britain and France had set up a series of buffer states against Communist Russia.)

East Germany was one of those buffer states. It was not an independent state, and there were never serious grounds for mistaking it as such. It was the front line in the Cold War between the Allies of the World War.

There is nothing wrong, from the Western viewpoint (of which Brian Feeney is clearly an advocate) in maintaining buffer states against an enemy. The West does it all the time. (Iraq was a buffer-state against Iran until the West went crazy and decided to destroy it.)

The three Western Occupation Zones of 1945 were constructed into the state of Federal Germany. The Russian Occupation Zone was made into the People's Republic.

East Germany was Anti-Nazi Germany. Nazism arose in Germany after the defeat—and added Versailles Treaty humiliation—of 1919, when the country became a battleground between Communism and Capitalism. Neither of the major parties based on the policy of preserving capitalism as the socio-economic medium of life—the Social Democrats (who had become ineffectual Marxist conservatives) and the Catholic Centre Party (which had not yet become Christian Democratic) could stabilise the situation against the Communists. The Nazi Party became the major party in the state because its undertaking to do it was found credible by the electorate. It took power in 1933 and was actively supported by Britain during the following years.

Britain decided to make war in Germany for reasons that had nothing to do with protecting Jews or with hostility to Nazism as an ideology or as a political system. The balance-of-power strategy, through which Britain saw the world, determined that the strongest state in Europe was Britain's enemy. Having helped to make Nazi Germany the strongest power in Europe (against France), Britain could then do no other than treat it as an enemy.

The Nazi movement in Germany came close to being all-embracing in the course of the 1930s (as, for example, the Imperialist movement in Britain was during the generation leading up to 1914). Liberals, Catholics, and Protestants all found a place in it. And there was even a degree of

collaboration between the Zionists and the Nazis. Of the German political forms, only the Communist Party was outside the Pale.

When it came to constructing a West German state after 1945, there was no possibility of staffing it with anti-Nazi personnel—unless the Communists were brought in: and West Germany was constructed as an anti-Communist state under American hegemony. There was token, superficial, de-Nazification of Germany after 1945, and a few score of the Nazi leaders were killed after Show Trials, but there was substantial continuity of personnel from the Third Reich to the Federal Republic, and various pension rights were carried over from the one to the other. It was in East Germany that the anti-Nazi Germans were in office.

Each side in the Cold War made its German state a showpiece for its system, and each ensured that the region served its interests. The West was no less an Occupied Territory than the East down to the 1980s. But in the West Konrad Adenauer (a pioneering Christian Democrat not implicated in the Nazi regime) had three masters and he maximised his freedom of action by playing the Americans against the British and establishing a special relationship with the Gaullist French, and De Gasperi's Christian Democrats in Italy. But the East had only one master.

At certain point (about 1980, as we recall), it began to be said that the Partition of Germany was not an accidental military product of Britain's Second World War, but expressed a long-term underlying national division in Germany—Prussia versus Bavaria. And the strange thing was that Irish anti-Partitionists became enthusiastic German Partitionists—and those who would not accept the word of the Ulster Protestants that they were not part of an Irish nation began to say that we should recognise the fact of 'two German nations, even though the Germans said they were one.

We held that there were two German states brought about by an accident of war, but German national unity persisted, while the division in Ireland was not only political but national. Thirty years later Germany is united, and not even the deliberate and systematic humiliation of the Easterners by the triumphalist Westerners after unification could generate a Prussian nationalism. While in Ireland—

If Frank Allaun "*extolled the virtues of East Germany as a model of socialist society*", we can see why he did so. Its arrangements, made for sociable living by ordinary people, were beyond anything ever attempted in Britain or Ireland, and they still survive in some degree. But the state is of crucial importance in the modern world, and it was because of the position

of the East German state, not because of its arrangements for sociable living, that we took it to be destined to failure.

Feeney's article is entitled *Tory Meddler Has Lost None Of That 'Invincible Ignorance'*. So was Frank Allaun a Tory admirer of East Germany?

The article is a venomous tirade against Allaun. Nobody else is named in it. He was "*a leftwing loony*". More than that, he came under Einstein's "*definition of insanity—doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results*": a thing never done in Northern Ireland, of course—except perhaps by Unionists, although there are signs that Feeney would exempt the Unionists from the charge.

But the "*Tory meddler*", mentioned almost in passing, is "*the Conservative proconsul designate*", not named. We must confess that we cannot think of his name just now. We leave it to the reader to find out the name if he really wants to know.

So, Allaun was an invincibly ignorant, insane, left looney, and now "*we have the Conservative proconsul designate mouthing exactly the same rubbish from the opposite direction*".

And what exactly is this 'exact same rubbish'?

It is that Allaun wanted to end the Pro-Consular mode of governing Northern Ireland—thus demonstrating that "*He knew nothing about 'Norn Irn'*". (It is nice to see one of our little inventions—Norn Irn, which we first heard from Sean McGouran—coming back to us from the *Irish News*.)

Allaun wanted to end the Pro-Consular mode: the prospective Tory-Proconsul wants to increase his chances of becoming Pro-Consul by attaching a handful of Ulster Unionist MPs to the Tory Party. Which appears to be the same thing from Feeney's vantage point. It puts us in mind of a famous couple of lines by some famous poet:

"Norn Irn is too much with him, late and soon,
Getting and spending he lays waste his powers".

Feeney harps on continuously about Pro-Consular Government. That is how we described the way Northern Ireland came to be governed after 1972. It was governed by a Secretary of State from Britain who had no representative connection with the Six Counties. We proposed as a remedy that the North should be brought within the representative system of British politics. Frank Allaun, a traditional Labour MP from a constituency with a strong Irish presence, took the point and supported the campaign to bring the North within the politics of the State. And he did this without prejudice to his support for Irish unity.

LIBERAL BLOODLETTING

Nour Salman, aged 14,
is an orphan,
Bagdad, were death has
immortality,
a sectarian attack killed
her family.
Night and day it stalks the street,
this gorgon,
let off the leash for this
free-for-all,
claiming that democracy
is its name,
so ferocious flesh and blood
became rain.
Shiite versus Sunni, even saints
brawl.
He must hang screamed
the axis media,
this secular shepherd hid his
cloven-hoof,
but still they can't build
Arcadia,
though Punch and Judy rules
the polling booth.
Their sins fill an
encyclopaedia,
catch amnesia,
we still have the proof.

Wilson John Haire.
21st February, 2010

The SDLP was utterly opposed to this. By mindless reflex it took it that opening up the democratic politics of the State to the Northern electorate would kill off the Anti-Partition movement. But it seemed to us that the Anti-Partitionism of Catholic versus Protestant in the closed political system of the North, which kept the Protestant community together as Partitionist, meant that Anti-Partitionism was a non-starter in Constitutional terms.

But the Constitutional nationalists—who, judging by what they said in their waking ours, must have carried on condemning Republicanism in their sleep—were always on the point of making a breakthrough to the Protestants. But what happened in fact was that the SDLP lost most of the handful of Protestants they had at the start. And John Hume could not appear on television without causing Protestant hackles to rise.

There was, in our experience, significant support amongst Catholics for the campaign for British politics, but suspicion of it among Unionists. If the CLR had depended on support in the Protestant community to get off the ground, it would have fallen flat. As it was, the CLR conducted a worthwhile campaign for about 15 years, and a very strong campaign for the last 5 of them, before being subverted by Unionism.

The opening up of British politics to the Northern electorate would have tended to unfreeze Protestant/Catholic relations by involving them in the politics of governing the State. And that was why Unionism was against it. It wanted Partition politics. That gave it its secure majority, endangered only by 'demographics' (in plain language, breeding) in the distant future.

Forty years ago the SDLP thought (or said) that, if the residual connection with the Tory Party was ended, the Unionist monolith (the comprehensively communal structure of the UUP) would crumble, and the Irish nationalism latent in the Protestant community would assert itself. Well, the Tories broke up Unionist Stormont in 1972, and the UUP monopoly was broken by the rise of Paisleyism, but the more Unionism suffered in these superficial politics of the situation, the more cohesive and determined and belligerent the Protestant community became in its rejection of things Irish.

An opening up to British politics would have threatened that cohesion.

According to Feeney, Allaun gave a radio interview in the early 1980s in which he thought Labour could win 4 seats. The interviewer asked which four.

"With the assurance of total ignorance Allaun instantly replied that the most obvious one was East Belfast. 'Why?', asked the astonished presenter. 'Because there's a shipyard there, Allaun answered confidently. With his background in engineering work he naively believed that shipyard workers would automatically vote Labour. Needless to say, Peter Robinson increased his majority in East Belfast. The result of the 1983 general election showed that even in England Allaun was wrong"—as the Tories won.

So Peter Robinson gave one in the eye to Frank Allaun by increasing his majority against a UUP candidate. Good for him! But we must say that we do not recall Feeney heaping praise on Peter Robinson in 1983.

Of course the Labour Party refused to organise in Northern Ireland, and did not contest any election there in 1983, or before 1983, or after 1983. And what we get here is Feeney's feelings in a situation which he finds increasingly problematic. And we suspect that Allaun is a whipping boy for Catholics who are trying to break loose from SDLP futility, but not in the Sinn Fein direction.

Feeney was once an SDLP activist. He resigned from the SDLP but did not go to Sinn Fein. He became an independent commentator in the *Irish News*, from a common denominator, nationalist, viewpoint. He teaches history at a Catholic College in Belfast. He sets up to be an intellectual. He sometimes appears to be an Anglophobe in the proper sense (his

critique being beyond rationality, as in his tirade against Allaun). But he also takes part, representing Norn Irn, in that quintessentially British institution, the BBC's *Round Britain Quiz*.

If Frank Allaun was an ignorant English leftie whose views on Norn Irn were self-evidently absurd, why this venom directed against him so long after his death? Because Catholic Tories have appeared on the scene, and have been nominated as candidates in the General Election. (But Unionist leader Sir Reg Empey's project has little in common with Cameron's. He wants to maintain Ulster Unionism in an attachment to the Tory Party.)

One of the Catholic Tory candidates who stood down when the UUP negotiation with the DUP became public, was Sheila Davidson, who was a Catholic looking for a way of being Unionist which did not involve a connection with the Orange Order. She thought she had found this in the UUP as an attachment to the Tory Party. And she stood down when the overture to the DUP threatened her with Orangeism.

But the DUP has never been the party of the Orange Order. The historic association has been between the Orange Order and the UUP. The former leader of the UUP, David Trimble, an Orangeman, often said he would dissociate the Party from the Order, but he did not do it. As we understand it, the Order facilitated him by putting itself at a distance from the Party, formally at least. But it acted as a facilitator of the UUP in its attempt to make a pact with the DUP.

The DUP, on the other hand, has no historic association with the Order. It arose in opposition to the Orange/UUP combination in the 1970s and became dominant over it. Paisley did not take part in Orange Order celebrations on the Twelfth. He went instead to the event put on by the Independent Orange Order, that was founded around 1904, and arose, as far as we recall, out of the united tenant-farmer movement of Catholics and Protestants which drove the land purchase movement. The leaders of the Orange Order at the time were the great landlords, and they tried to use the Order against the land reform.

If the Constitutional Nationalists were even half in earnest about winning Protestants to their cause, they would get to know the history of Protestant Ulster better than the Protestants themselves, and would try to make something of events like the formation of the IOO, which once had a kind of Irish unity policy.

As things stand it is not easy for a Catholic to be a Unionist. And Feeney's great concern is to keep it so.

A big Sinn Fein Conference was held in the TUC building in London during the

month. It was addressed by Professor the Lord Bew, who was to make the case against Irish unity. He said that public opinion surveys showed that 28% of the Catholics were Unionists, though he thought the percentage was slightly lower. Twenty-five years ago the figure was around 40%. But that was in the sphere of abstract answers to abstract questions. In the actuality of current politics there were virtually no Catholic Unionists then and there are none now.

The 40% then, and the 28% now, relate to a willingness to take part in the political life of the State—the conflict of the Labour, Tory and Liberal Parties. It did not express support for any of the Unionist Parties, which are all Protestant communal parties of the Unionist Family.

What Ulster Unionism, in any of its forms, stands for is the maintenance of a semi-detached connection with Britain through a Northern Ireland structure which assures it a communal majority. Catholics who would willingly participate in British political life cannot do so through Ulster Unionism.

Lord Bew said Gerry Adams must explain what he intends to do about winning Unionist support for a United Ireland. But it is Lord Bew, the Unionist, who should address the problem of the Catholics who are potential participants in British politics but are prevented from becoming so in practice by the only kind of Unionism that exists. After all, Lord Bew is a Lord in reward for services rendered to the Northern Ireland Office, through the Unionist Party, in preserving that system.

The Sinn Fein Conference in London was also addressed by Conall McDevitt, Assembly Member for South Belfast in replacement of Carmel Hanna, and Chair of the Balmoral Branch of the SDLP. In criticism of Sinn Fein, he said the war was futile. That idiosyncratic view is possibly explained by the fact that, according to the biographical notes for the Conference, he is a Dubliner. In criticism of the Unionists, he said that they brought down the Sunningdale Government. They did not. The SDLP undermined it when it absolutely refused to delay implementation of the Council of Ireland, after the chicanery of the Dublin Government had been exposed in the Dublin High Court, and denounced the demand for an election before proceeding with the Council as Fascist.

And he explained that the SDLP policy on the ending of Partition is that it should not happen if there is a majority for it in Norn Irn, but only if there is a majority in the Unionist community for it. This is a very big change indeed since 1974. And, working out the implications of it, one can only conclude that the only reason the SDLP does not declare itself a party of the Union is that it doesn't have the nerve.

There was a while when the SDLP campaign against Sinn Fein, after the latter consolidated its position as the major party, could be seen as arising from mere resentment over the past. But the new leader, Margaret Ritchie, has been putting forward a ground of policy difference. In a letter to the *Irish News* (Jan 27) she sets out four differences with Sinn Fein.

1. The SDLP is for a "social democratic, mixed enterprise economy", while Sinn Fein is "an old-style class warfare" party, which is complete nonsense. SDLP has become an elite party detached from the mass, while Sinn Fein is a popular party that arose out of the mass and remains connected with it, but is at ease in a middle class milieu.

2. is support for Europe—which, given the condition of Europe, we will pass by, as in fact Ritchie almost does.

3. "The SDLP genuinely believes in building a shared future with greater integration. They are content with equal but still separate treatment". In other words, Sinn Fein operates the Good Friday Agreement system. But it was the SDLP which negotiated the "equal but separate". Ritchie's predecessor, Mark Durkan, toyed with rejecting the GFA system and making an alliance with the UUP to establish a weighted majority rule system in its place, but dropped it. If Ritchie does not take it up in earnest, her rejection of "equal but separate" is only verbiage.

Under the same heading she says:

"We would embark on a radical programme of measures to normalise our society [make it a normal part of Britain?!]. Sinn Fein is content with permanent division. We call dialogue with unionists "further engagement". Sinn Fein call it "outreach". We believe reconciliation is worthwhile in itself."

We have no idea what all of this means.

4. In the event of Irish unity—which on the SDLP's new terms means when a majority of Protestants become Irish nationalists—it will be done "with the Stormont institutions and protections still in place". But the only Stormont institutions and protections that exist are the equal but separate structures that she rejected in paragraph 3. And she describes the Sinn Fein policy as "a takeover into a unitary state".

So the SDLP will only agree to a United Ireland when a majority of Protestants become Irish nationalists. An, if that comes about, it will retain the present Stormont system, and thus seal off the Protestants from the political life of the Irish state as the Catholics have been sealed off from the political life of the British state. And a Pro-Consul from Dublin will replace the one from London.

It's no wonder Brian Feeney is going hysterical.

Adamsgate

Gerry Adams's niece, his brother's daughter, made a complaint twenty-five years ago about having been abused by her father. When the complaint was brought to Adams's notice, in 1987, he suggested it should be taken to Social Services—and thereby the police—and it was.

The case against the Catholic Bishops is that, when allegations of abuse were brought to their attention, they did not refer them to the police but dealt with them within the structure of the Church. The case against Gerry Adams, insofar as we can make any sense of it, is that he did not deal with it authoritatively within the structure of Sinn Fein—by doing what? nobody says what he should have done—but sent it to the police.

The matter was taken to the police. But the girl's mother thought that the police took no interest in the complaint as such, and only wanted to use it to gather information about other things, or to recruit informers. So she decided not to pursue the complaint, and the police lost interest in it.

Disregarding the complaint, the police subsequently cleared the girl's father for youth work. Although the father denied the allegations, Adams interfered to arrange that he should move out of this sensitive area. But the police cleared him a second time for youth work, and Adams again interfered for the same purpose.

Eventually a charge was brought against the father, who now lives in the Republic, and extradition proceedings have been started. Adams was officially advised that the matter is now *sub judice* and that he should make no public statements that might prejudice the hearing of the case. And of course his silence is being represented as a cover-up.

The *Irish News*, which has never reconciled itself to the decline of the SDLP, gives massive coverage to anything that anybody cares to throw at Adams. Its ambition seems to be to do to Sinn Fein what the *Irish Times* did to Fianna Fail. It gives greater coverage to the wild allegations of disgruntled nationalist elements than to the real and present corruption of the Robinson affair. And, with its columns full of this stuff, it can gloss over problematic statements issued by the SDLP. And its campaign is seconded by Sir Anthony O'Reilly's loss-making *Sunday Tribune*, where former *Irish Times* correspondent Suzanne Breen is venomously inventive. Breen is also prominently featured in another O'Reilly paper, the *Belfast Telegraph*.

Right-thinking people and wrong-

thinking people have engaged in fruitful collaboration in the affair. There is no need to say which is which. They are the 'extremists' on either side of Sinn Fein. Perhaps the 'dissident' bomb in Newry will have a sobering effect on the extremists on the other side of Sinn Fein and lead them to moderate their efforts to destroy it.

As to the *Irish News*, here are some extracts from an article which James Connolly wrote about it. It will not be found in Connolly's supposed 'Collected Works', published a few years ago. It was republished by us around 1970. If the word *Republican* is added to *Labour* it will be found to be as much to the point today as it was 97 years ago:

James Connolly: *Press Poisoners in Ireland* (1913)

"We have in Belfast a Home Rule journal, the *Irish News*, a careful study of whose columns would be an enlightenment to those Socialist comrades in Great Britain who imagine in their innocence that an enthusiasm for Labour is the inevitable accompaniment of the advocacy of a measure of political freedom for Ireland.

They would find that that journal is one of the most deadly enemies of the Labour movement that this country possesses, and that it never lets slip any opportunity to wound that movement even whilst softly purring its sympathy for Labour on all possible occasions. In all Ireland there is no journal more ready to proclaim from the housetops its readiness, and the readiness of the party whose mouthpiece it is, to do something for the working class, and in all Ireland there is no journal more ready with the poniard to stab to the heart every person on party that dares to organise the workers to do anything for themselves.

In this treacherous attitude it is more up-to-date, more thoroughly modern than its rivals in the Tory press. The latter are clumsy and antiquated in their methods, as befits the exponents of an antiquated doctrine, they still clumsily adhere to obsolete methods of attack.

Let me explain. If you wish to point out the attitude of the Orange Tory press towards the aspirations of Labour, you have just to turn to their editorials, and there you will find their hostility openly and undisguisedly expressed to all that Labour holds dear. Having read the editorials, you know immediately where you are, and how far to discount the manner in which the paper chronicles the news of the day.

But if you turn to the editorials in the Home Rule Organ, you get no such infallible index to the editorial mind.

On the contrary, you find always a sloppy sentiment sloppily expressed in favour of Labour in the editorials, but all

through the news columns, and in all its headings and sub-headings, you notice that always undue prominence is given to every item that tells against Labour, the views of its most unimportant enemies are heralded forth with the utmost prolixity, and the views of its most eminent partisans are slurred over and made to read as unintelligibly as possible. If you compare the telegraphic news printed in the *Irish News* with the telegraphic news printed in the *Daily News* or *Daily Record*, you will find that all three Organs, having the same service and the same material to select from, the *Irish News* has carefully rejected everything that tells for the organised Labour movement, and has carefully suppressed every item the mere chronicling of which might convey to its readers an idea of the justice, power, or growth of the working class in any part of the world.

It has brought to bear against the Labour movement the most refined and insidious arts of character assassination.

It never moves against Labour by direct attack. It suppresses here, exaggerates there, distorts this bit of news, omits this qualifying sentence from some speech, drops casually a favourable paragraph from the report of some strike or Labour meeting, and is ever alert to seize every opportunity to spread the slime of poisonous suggestion over the most apparently innocuous report of the activities of Labour.

As I have said, it is up-to-date. The more astute of the capitalist politicians have long since discovered that the effectual hoodwinking of the working class must not be done by impassioned or long-winded editorials, that in fact the working class voters do not devour editorials as their daily food, but that this hoodwinking and hocussing, to them so necessary, can best be done by a clever manipulation of the news items, by an unscrupulous use of their power to suppress truth and suggest falsehood when apparently only retailing the daily happenings.

You can attack an editor and impale him for false doctrine or slanderous statement in his editorial, but you cannot attack him when your only complaint is that his choice of what he shall or shall not report is different to what you think the circumstances warrant.

And this line of poisonous suggestion is just the line in which the natural instincts of the editor of the *Irish News* enables him to excel above his Orange contemporaries. Their line is that of naked, unashamed reaction stirring up the blackest passions in the lowest depths of human nature – the line of the obscurantist and the bigot. His line is that of the treacherous feline who purrs, and purrs, and purrs, and scratches with poisonous claws when the purr is most seductive...

"The methods of the *Irish News* are the methods of a good many of the Irish Home

Rule papers; as they have to cater for a class of members whose instincts are all rebellious and revolutionary, and who are therefore drawn towards the Labour movement, it is necessary that the anti-Labour bias of the newspaper proprietors and professional politicians be hidden as carefully as possible, and the anti-Labour campaign conducted as discreetly as it can..."

Post-Lisbon EU

continued

REGIONAL POWER V. A WORLD POWER

Arthur Beesley in the *Irish Times* reports that there are:

"... fears readily expressed at high levels of the Brussels machine that the union risks being consigned to a mere regional role if it fails to harness its power in the wider world. For some, this raises the spectre of European decline. In his stock speech, for example, Van Rompuy says the present economic malaise is so grave as to threaten the European way of life. If that is indeed so, then global marginalisation takes the union into risky territory. If you're not in the meeting, you can't shape the outcome —European politicians learned that the hard way in Copenhagen. They are still smarting from the experience" (*Irish Times*. 2.2.2010).

This is a back to front way of looking at the EU and its influence in the world. The EU consists of a region of over half a billion people but with a confusing political structure, to put it mildly. (The same report quotes an EU diplomat as saying that its workings are like "*wading through treacle*".) But why should such a region ever feel marginalised? There is nothing it is deprived of. Getting such a region co-ordinated should be the first and only priority and be done for its own sake. The economic crisis in a number of Member States is sufficient reason alone to concentrate exclusively on that. The world is likely to survive quite well on its own in the meantime.

Some people in the EU apparently think it must work the other way round. This is a policy of trying to run before one can walk and will inevitably weaken the EU— which is a positive thing for the world in view of the EU's attitude towards it but potentially ruinous for the EU itself.

The EU leadership seems to have convinced themselves that, if they have the paraphernalia of power—Constitution, President(s), Parliament etc., that they will have the reality of power. To put it in Marxist terms they think the superstructure will determine the base. They are living in a fool's paradise.

Beesley's report goes on:

"EU members, particularly the larger

ones, are inclined to hoard power and fight among themselves. They have learned, however, that they are stronger together than as individuals" (*ibid*).

This behaviour is in no way unique to EU states, or any other states since states came into existence. All states are inclined to increase their power and all states have conflicts and all realise they are stronger if they have allies. That is why the world is a myriad of alliances and organizations among states. But the reality he describes means that the EU as an organisation means nothing in particular to its members, its larger members particularly, and is certainly nothing unique. It's just like any other part of the world. It was intended to be something else but that is dead and gone. As Europe has no longer anything distinctive to say or do in the world, it's quite logical that it is not creating any new polity and there is therefore a careless attitude to its structures and organisations.

A PURPOSE FOR THE EU AND NATO

If the EU is a bit confused about what it is, the US has some proposals about how Lisbon and the EU can be used to deliver them. This was outlined by Hillary Clinton during her recent visit:

"Clinton calls for deeper ties between EU and Nato"

"Hillary Clinton has called for closer co-operation between the EU and NATO, arguing that the Lisbon Treaty provides a platform for deeper ties with the military alliance. She reaffirmed the US's commitment to European security in a speech at the French military academy in Paris and stepped up pressure on China to support moves in the UN to impose new sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme.

"Answering a question from her audience, Mrs. Clinton said EU's energy policy in particular would benefit from closer co-ordination with NATO. "They are no longer separated. It's hard to say that security is only about what it was when Nato was formed and the EU has no role to play in security issues", she said. . . "Take, for example, energy security", she said. "It would be the EU's responsibility to create policies that would provide more independence and protection from intimidations when it comes to energy markets for its member nation. But I can also see how, in certain cases respecting energy, there may be a role for NATO as well." ... Citing moves to reform NATO, Mrs. Clinton said reforms at EU level would make co-operation with the military alliance easier. "Under the Lisbon Treaty, with more focus and specific leadership attached to foreign policy and development assistance, there will be a way to better co-ordinate", she said" (*Irish Times*, January 30, 2010).

What this boils down to is that the EU should essentially become a gas/electricity supplier with NATO as its muscle when

and if necessary. This must assume that Free Trade may not deliver energy for us even though that is supposed to be the golden rule of the EU for trade success—which policy it is trying its damndest to promote via the WTO. Privatisation and deregulation of such services is the order of the day for the world. Of course the WTO is in limbo at present and that is the result of another diplomatic disaster for the EU which caused the collapse of the Doha Round.

But now the supply of energy may have to leave the market and come under military control to guarantee supply! What else can be concluded from Hillary's suggestions? Surely this will break some WTO rules? If water supply becomes a problem, I assume NATO will be our water carrier as well. Where might it end?

AND THE ECHO COMES BACK...

"German Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle has called for the EU to proceed with plans for a European army under the Lisbon Treaty... "The long-term goal is to build up a European army under parliamentary control. The EU has to live up to political expectations of its role as a global player." The foreign minister sketched out a role for such an army as crisis management in a time of resource scarcity, to be developed by willing member states over time as a "motor for closer co-operation" in the EU. In a nod to Nato, Mr Westerwelle said such EU structures would not replace other military structures" (Irish Times, 8.2.2010).

Creating a new army is a rather serious business and I hope Mr. Westerwelle will spell out his proposal in more detail as it raises some obvious questions. He must be referring to the European Parliament as the parliamentary control mechanism, which would be rather bizarre. That Parliament runs nothing except itself at the moment—and it cannot even decide on a specific location in which to sit! It would be very odd indeed to give it control of an army.

Mr. Westerwelle should explain what the relationship of the new army is to be with existing Armies and Governments and who exactly would have political control. He seems to assume that it will consist of a minority of Member States and that it will be used to, literally, enforce unity. This is all a pretty daunting prospect, and it is a strange thing for a Member State to be proposing—or maybe flying a kite for.

ANOTHER ECHO OF US POLICY: FRANCE

Obama, in his thrashing around on the international stage, has been trying to up the ante against Iran, a move for which France has declared itself a very enthusiastic supporter:

"US and France agree to impose fresh

sanctions on Iran

"The United States and France said yesterday it was time to impose new sanctions on Iran after Tehran announced it was planning a major expansion of its nuclear programme... "Therefore, this is real blackmail", he (Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner) said. "The only thing that we can do, alas, is apply sanctions given that negotiations are not possible." Speaking at a separate event in Paris, US defence secretary Robert Gates also said more pressure had to be applied" (Irish Times, 9.2.2010).

As with the other proposals above, France does not appear to have consulted the EU Council or the new High Representative about its decision.

ISRAEL AS EU MEMBER?

Another dramatic proposal came in early February from another Member State. "Speaking on arrival in Israel, Berlusconi told Netanyahu that "my greatest desire, as long as I am a protagonist in politics, is to bring Israel into membership of the European Union"... " (The Guardian, Feb. 1st).

This was quite an important statement and it begs several questions. Has it been discussed in Brussels? There was silence from there, even from the new High Representative who is supposed to be responsible for foreign policy and could any proposal be as important? Berlusconi is acting like other Member State leaders, led by the UK, in doing his own thing. So much for the streamlining promised by Lisbon and the transparency and accountability etc. etc.

And why not have Israel as a Member? The EU accords it privileged treatment despite all its aggression, racism and contempt for the rest of the world. Membership would be a logical continuation of present policy.

And of course it's in the Eurovision Song Contest and EU membership can now be treated by it as about as important as that. Good PR for Israel and a lot of ballyhoo but otherwise no need to take any notice of it when it suits them.

WHAT OF MICHEÁL MARTIN?

Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Martin has been saying a lot about the post Lisbon EU in recent weeks but the more he says the emptier it becomes. One regular theme is the virtue of EU unity: "Never has it been more important that Europe speak with one voice in global affairs; and there is a real need for united and decisive European action" (Irish Times, 9.2.2010).

But to do what? Mr. Martin is never clear on such specifics. He could do us all a favour and start by giving his views on these two foreign policy proposals from other leading Member States. He could tell us how and why any or all of these are in the EU's interest, and if not, will he

oppose them as clearly and openly as they have been proposed? This could bring some reality to all the palaver and *plamás* that bedevils debate about the EU and its foreign policy.

If the proposals outlined above are followed through, they would be disastrous for the world interests of the EU—and disunity and dissent would then become a virtue. Moreover it is certain that growing disunity would be inevitable if such policies were pursued and all Mr Martin's sweet talk would not prevent it.

Jack Lane

Ireland And Gallipoli

continued

In 1915 Irish, Australian and other invaders descended on Turkey armed to the teeth with the most powerful weapons and technology of destruction available at that time. What were they doing there?

The Gallipoli attack was the beginning of a campaign by which the Western powers secured control of most of the Middle East and its valuable oilfields. They continued to wage war throughout the twentieth century in order to keep control of the region. Since Gallipoli, Western armies have plagued the Middle East, so that it is now one of the most dangerous and tormented areas in the world.

It is unlikely that most of the individual Irish soldiers buried in Gallipoli went out there to capture oil and territory, or to start a century of western military aggression, colonisation and domination in that region. So why were they out there trying to kill Turks? The Irish in Gallipoli were not conscripts—they were there voluntarily. What were their reasons and motivations?

Some of them were poor men who thought they could better themselves if they signed up for killing other people. In other words they did it for the money. Others were persuaded by patriotic propaganda that it was a good idea to invade another country and kill people there. In other words, they were duped. Some people signed up in order to get a gun and have adventures. In other words they wanted to kill for pleasure.

Which of the Gallipoli dead should be admired, honoured and commemorated? Those Turkish soldiers who heroically sacrificed their lives defending their homeland from foreign invasion? Or the invaders who engaged in aggressive warfare for money, for pleasure, or to help their governments to steal the territory and natural resources of other people?

How would we feel if a foreign head of state came to our country to honour and commemorate jihadist soldiers who died while trying to conquer us, change our

way of life, and seize our land and resources, using religious words like "Pilgrimage"?

It may be that the Irish President thinks that the population of Ireland can be brought together by focussing on some military event in which both sides participated, while mindlessly closing our eyes to the meaning, purpose and consequences of that event.

The reality is that we are just emerging from a period of armed conflict in Ireland. Such violence creates division, not harmony. The militarism and slaughter of the Great War generated anger, disillusion, bitterness, destruction and chaos. The Middle East in particular is still suffering grievously from the consequences of Gallipoli.

The Irish dead in Gallipoli should be allowed to rest in peace. If anything, some official amends should be made for the horrific crime they helped to perpetrate on the people of the Middle East.

Peace has arrived in Ireland because most people turned their back on war. Without surrendering our inherited allegiances, we agreed to work together in a peaceful way to try to solve our common problems and to improve our conditions of life by non-violent means.

There are many peaceful and honourable projects in which people of good will can join together in common cause.

So why should we now dwell on some violent project which Irish people got involved in, for opposing and mutually contradictory reasons, in order to inflict death and destruction on people in a faraway country who had never done us any harm?

And why should we now expect to be inspired and elevated by the uninspiring fact that armed unionists and nationalists were prepared to defend each other from a third party against whom they had joined together in a savage and unprovoked attack?

The real meaning of Gallipoli is carefully concealed from us. Why? Could it be that we are being softened up to make us amenable to present-day Gallipoli-style savagery in faraway countries? If Gallipoli is so commendable as to be worthy of State Visits and "Pilgrimages", surely we should be eager to involve ourselves in similar military activities today?

In fact, Gallipoli was one of the most shameful, divisive and brutal episodes in our history, and that is what we should remember about it.

Mark Langhammer, Belfast

NOTES:

1. <http://www.oneconnect.ie/content/view/163/1/> (Irish ex-Army members website)

"Memorial to the Irish Casualties of the Gallipoli Campaign

"News has broken very recently that a long overdue memorial to the Irish casualties of the Gallipoli campaign will be erected in the area where the 10th Irish Division operated at Suvla Bay. The President of Ireland will be paying a State visit to Turkey and during it will spend a day on the Peninsular and will dedicate the foundation stone of the proposed memorial at one of the cemeteries in the Suvla Bay area."

2. [www.derrycity.gov.uk/Agenda/.../PR%20%2014th%20Jan%20\(open\).doc](http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/Agenda/.../PR%20%2014th%20Jan%20(open).doc) (Derry City Council Minutes Thursday 14 Jan 2010):

"Invitation to 2010 Gallipoli Pilgrimage.

"I am writing to enquire if your Council wish to be represented at the above pilgrimage to Gallipoli, Turkey departing in March 2010. The [Somme] Association has not had a pilgrimage to this area for a number of years but has maintained formal relations with the Governor and Mayor of the Province of Cannakale that was established by Councillors back in 2002.

"During the Pilgrimage, a Foundation stone will be laid for the new Memorial to the 10th (Irish) Division at Chocolate Hill."

3. Mark Langhammer served three terms as Labour Councillor on Newtownabbey District Council, North Belfast, being elected on the first count on each occasion, and topping the poll in 1997.

Chair Economic Development, Newtownabbey Council 1995-2001 Inaugural Chair of the Newtownabbey Peace & Reconciliation Partnership National Executive member of the Labour Party 2005-08

His grandfather served on the German side in WW1. Subsequently, his grandparents (active Social Democrats) and his father, Sudeten Czechs, came to Belfast in 1938 as refugees from a Nazi-ism set loose by the Chamberlain/British appeasement of the time. His father served on the Allied side within the Czech Army in exile (—it's a family joke that they were on the right side of both world wars!). More recently, his cousin fell victim to jihadism in the north Twin Tower, New York on Sept 11 2001.

He believes that the Irish President's efforts to sanctify an aggressive war the consequences of which are still being lived with are at best naïve, at worst tendentious.

He is currently a Trade Union Official.

SINN FEIN RESPONSE

A representative of Sinn Fein responded as follows to Mark Langhammer's Press Release

"In response to your email regarding the President of Ireland, I believe it is right that the Irish president is visiting Gallipoli to honour the Irish soldiers who

fought there.

To put the Gallipoli campaign into context, the Turkish government had entered World War I on the side of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire.

The Dardanelles peninsular overlooked the straights leading to Constantinople and the vital entry to the Russian ports on the Black Sea. To take these straights would have been of critical strategic importance.

Many Irish people, both nationalist and unionist, for a range of reasons decided it was their duty to fight in British Divisions in the Great War. It has been a long running issue in Ireland that these soldiers have not been adequately remembered by the 26 county state. It is a sign that Ireland is coming to terms with its past that the President plans to visit the battlefield where so many Irish soldiers fought and died bravely."

SOME COMMENTS BY *IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW*

By celebrating the attempted invasion of Turkey at Gallipoli, Ireland is not so much coming to terms with its past as rejecting it. Nationalist Ireland participated actively in the attempted conquest of Turkey. The Home Rule leaders subordinated Irish national interest to British Imperial interest.

It was by rejecting that subordination and re-asserting Irish national interest that the Sinn Fein/Republican combination grew in strength during the World War and demolished the Home Rule Party at the end of it. The sympathy of the Sinn Fein leader, Arthur Griffith, lay with Austria-Hungary—which was the inspiration of his Sinn Fein policy. The Republicans, Roger Casement and James Connolly, were active supporters of Germany—facts which are now being written out of history.

To say that Turkey "entered the war" on the side of Germany and Austria is to accept the British war propaganda. Tsarist Russia was intent on acquiring Constantinople (Istanbul) for itself and Britain had made preparations to seize another part of the Turkish state. That was the basis of their alliance against Germany and Austria. (Germany was helping Turkey to modernise its defences and its communications infrastructure, and Austria was an obstacle on the way to Constantinople.)

Turkey declared neutrality in August 1914, but was represented by British propaganda as a tool of Germany, and was subjected to provocations. Then, at the end of November, Russia declared war on Turkey following some obscure minor incident in the Black Sea. Britain declared war on Turkey a couple of days later, and immediately launched its Indian Army to a conquest of Basra and Mesopotamia.

With Britain and Russia having made a military alliance with the object of dividing Turkey between them, there was no way

Turkey would have been allowed to wait out the War as a neutral.

When Britain declared war on Turkey, the Home Rule press declared that the War had become a general war of human liberation. If Sinn Fein has now discarded the opinions of its founders (both Grif-fithite and Republican) and gone over to the British propaganda view, then of course it must see that Tsarist possession of Constantinople was of vital strategic interest to humanity.

Or is it the Sinn Fein view that militarism is a good thing in itself, and that the purpose for which a war is fought is irrelevant? That is a current British view of things. There is a widespread opinion in

Britain that the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan are not a good thing, but that those who enlist to fight these wars must be honoured as heroes. The demonstration of protest against the Army has been made a crime.

Or is it the Sinn Fein view that if it rejects its own historical understanding of these things and adopts the British Imperialist view, that will enable it to catch the Protestants? If it is, then they are still a long way from understanding the Protestants.

The nationalist Irish who flocked into the British Army at the urging of the Redmondites fought in a bad cause. The ongoing shambles of the Middle East is a

continuing consequence of their military intervention. And what they fought for was the policy of the state that directed the army, and not some illusion they were sold by the Redmondites. One can sympathise with them as having been misled and duped, but anything beyond that becomes acceptance of British Imperialist destructiveness.

During the Second World War large numbers of Dutch joined the Nazi war effort against Communism. No doubt they were as well-intentioned as the Irish who took part in the British invasion of Turkey, and are deserving of sympathy. But Holland does not set aside the nature of the war in which they fought in order to celebrate their futile good intentions.

Report

Minister Hanafin On Social Partnership

The "European Anti-Poverty Network" (Eapn) is an EU-wide coalition of social NGOs that plays quite a significant role in social policy at EU level as well as at national level. In Ireland it has over 200 affiliates, including well-known organisations such as the INOU, NWCI, Irish Travellers Movement and others, who have played a part in social partnership. Eapn has been influential over the years in getting specific social policy goals into European treaties (including the Lisbon Treaty) and has worked closely with MEPs and Governments to this end. At EU level it is led very effectively by Fintan Farrell, a man with roots in Fianna Fail and all the more able to deal with the real world as a result. There are Eapn networks in 27 member states, some very strong (including the Irish one) and some much weaker. It held a Conference in Croke Park on 19th February to mark the opening of the 2010 "European Year against Poverty". Various sessions were chaired by Philip O'Connor (Chair, Eapn Ireland), Hugh Frazer (a former Commission official in the social policy area) and Prof. Brigid Laffin (UCD and a former leading Lisbon campaign activist). There is a link to the conference programme ("Building Social Europe") and presentations on the Eapn homepage (www.eapn.ie).

During the first session the chair, Philip O'Connor, used the opportunity of the presence of Social Affairs Minister Mary Hanafin to challenge her to distinguish the Government position on the welfare state from that of Ed Walsh, the neo-liberal head of the University of Limerick who advocates Australian style workfare and had been getting a high RTE profile lately. O'Connor pointed to the achievements in building a substantial welfare state in Ireland in the last 12 years. But he challenged Hanafin on the current course of Government policy in this area, especially its role

in allowing the breakdown of the Social Partnership agreement, and warned of the profoundly negative consequences if the deep structures of Social Partnership were now to begin to unravel.

Minister Hanafin, to be fair to her, rose to the challenge, and responded in an interesting way regarding the Government's view of the welfare state and the role of social partnership into the future. A flavour of her comments can be seen from the following reports that appeared in the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times*:

HANAFIN CALLS FOR RESURRECTION OF ABANDONED SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP TALKS

Irish Independent

"A senior minister has sent out a strong message on the resurrection of the now defunct social partnership talks.

Social and Family Affairs Minister Mary Hanafin voiced hopes the process still had a future, as she stated the economy was turning a corner with an "upturn" expected by the end of this year.

Ms Hanafin pointed out positive progress in eliminating poverty in Ireland had been made through the agreements struck over the past two decades.

"Social partnership in Ireland is experiencing a difficult time at the moment", she told a European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) international conference staged in Dublin yesterday.

But I would hope that when all of the social partners stop to look at how much progress we have made in the last few years by working together that they will all realise the best progress in the interest of the wider community can actually be gained by working together again."

Fr Sean Healy, the spokesman for the Community and Voluntary Pillar umbrella group engaged in the talks, said the resumption of discussions to target poverty and social inclusion would be a fitting way to mark the European Year for Combating Poverty.

After two decades of social partnership, the talks floundered just before the last Budget as sides couldn't reach agreement over a €1bn payout for public servants.

Fr Healy called on the Government to

engage on those parts of the 'Towards 2016' agreement which concerned inclusion, securing adequate income and services.

More than 225,000 were lifted out of poverty in the six-year period to 2008. Fr Healy said the challenge was now to keep that progress.

Anna Visser, director of the EAPN, said the EU must learn from its mistakes by adapting policies to serve society rather than the "obsessive focus on growth".

Louise Hogan

PLAN TO END POVERTY WILL BE RETAINED - HANAFIN

Irish Times

"Government targets to eliminate consistent poverty by 2016 will be retained despite economic difficulties, Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin has said.

Speaking at the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) international conference in Dublin yesterday, Ms Hanafin also said the social partners needed to look at the progress they have already made and work together again.

The conference, Building a Social Europe: From Boom to Bust, was held in Croke Park. Delegates from 26 countries attended to discuss proposals for building a social Europe as part of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

She said the rate of consistent poverty, defined as the percentage of people who are deprived of two or more essential goods or services, had halved in Ireland since 2003. The Government aimed to eliminate it by 2016.

"We will continue to keep those targets despite the economic difficulties we have at the moment", she said. Ms Hanafin also said Ireland's social partnership model was experiencing difficulties, but she hoped that would change.

"I would hope that when all the social partners stop to look at the progress we have made in the last few years working together, they will all realise that the best progress, in the interests of the wider community, can be gained by working together", she said.

Opening the conference, Anne Visser, the network's director in Ireland, said the EU needed to learn from its mistakes and adapt policies to serve society.

Fiona Gartland

Saturday February 20 2010

Shorts

from

the Long Fellow

TRUST IN THE PRESIDENT

The *Sunday Independent* (24.1.10) revealed that the estate of the late Major McDowell, the President for Life of *The Irish Times* group, was worth 13 million euro. The former British Army Major and MI5 operative came from a lower middle class background and needed a scholarship to attend a Protestant fee-paying school in Belfast; therefore his wealth was not inherited. There is also no evidence of significant business interests outside *The Irish Times* so the wealth was generated almost exclusively from his controlling interest in the newspaper.

In 1974 he set up a Charitable Trust which underpinned his dominance of the organisation. The Trust has been described as a "tax dodge" by former Deputy Editor James Downey in his recent autobiography. And it appears that McDowell's aversion to paying taxes to the Irish State continued until the end. His estate was bequeathed to another Trust for the benefit of his two daughters.

The periodic financial crises of *The Irish Times* and consequent round of redundancies never affected the financial well-being of the Major. The crusading journalists who worked for that newspaper never questioned the Major's role and were happy to let him laugh all the way to the bank.

Towards the end of his life he gave an interview on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the newspaper but then decided that he had revealed too much and prevented it from being published. The Editor of the newspaper meekly acquiesced and even after the Major's death the veto remains in force.

A STRAIGHTFORWARD LIE!

Fintan O'Toole, who is one of *The Irish Times*'s crusading journalists, has never concerned himself unduly with the institution that he works for. But his zeal for openness, transparency and high standards knows no bounds when it comes to *other* institutions in Irish life. In his column of 26th January, entitled *Insiders Deal Fatal Blow To Capitalism's Good Name* he took upon himself the task of defending the integrity of the capitalist system against Irish capitalists!

Apparently, Jim Flavin, the former Chief Executive of the Venture Capital Company DCC, has let the capitalist system down. And, since a High Court inspector's report has exonerated him, this is yet

another indication of the low standards in Ireland's high places.

But what was so shocking about his behaviour? According to O'Toole, Flavin allowed the Board minutes of DCC to describe the transfer of shares that it owned in another company (Fyffes plc) to a Dutch holding company as "*corporate restructuring*". Since this was a means to avoid capital gains tax, O'Toole concludes that it was a "*straightforward lie*".

The term "*corporate restructuring*" might fairly be described as being a meaningless phrase. It covers a multitude of actions, such as making employees redundant, relocating to a low-cost country, as well as avoiding tax. But it is difficult to see how the expression can be considered a "*straightforward lie*" in the context which Flavin used it.

However, *The Irish Times Trust*, which controls the newspaper that O'Toole works for, claims among other things, to be in favour of advancing education, relieving poverty and the maintenance and service of lifeboats. These objectives are not contained in some hastily written Board minutes, but in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, which is, in effect, the Constitution of the company.

The Irish Times Chairman admitted to *Business and Finance* magazine (19.10.00) that it doesn't give charitable donations over and above what a normal commercial company would for PR purposes. So how would O'Toole describe the Memorandum and Articles of Association of *The Irish Times Trust*? Misleading, perhaps? Hypocritical? Or maybe even... A STRAIGHTFORWARD LIE?

INSIDER TRADING

The other accusation that O'Toole makes against Flavin is that he was guilty of Insider Trading. It is certainly the case that the latter sold DCC-controlled shares in Fyffes. He was also a Director of Fyffes and therefore had access to financial information that would not be generally known.

When Fyffes brought a case against him, the High Court ruled that he had done nothing illegal (could elements in the judiciary be affected by the malaise that O'Toole attributes to Irish business?!). However, when the case was appealed to the Supreme Court, Flavin lost.

Flavin's defence was that he believed that the information he had was not price sensitive. In other words, if the Stock Market knew what he knew, the information would not affect the share price. This has a certain amount of credibility since Fyffes did not deem the information price-sensitive at the time of the sale and did nothing to prevent the transaction.

Secondly, his solicitor (from the prestigious law firm *William Fry*) advised him that if he (i.e. Flavin) believed that the information was not price-sensitive the

transaction could go ahead.

A third defence was that the sale of shares would have gone ahead regardless of whether Flavin had insider information or not. There were other reasons for the sale.

However, a damning fact in this case was that, when the information (not deemed price-sensitive by either Flavin or the plaintiffs Fyffes at the time) was released, the market got the jitters and the share price dropped by 25%. Perhaps the market's awareness that Flavin had already sold the DCC-controlled shares had contributed to the panic.

Alan Ruddock summarised the Supreme Court's finding quite well:

"Flavin's information about Fyffes poor trading was indeed price sensitive. He had traded unlawfully, it did not matter that he did not believe it to be price sensitive, or even that Fyffes, at the time of the share sale, had not deemed it to be price sensitive.

"Nor did it matter that Flavin had other reasons to sell the shares and had not been motivated to sell because of the information in his possession. The fact that he had sensitive information that the rest of the market did not possess meant that he could not lawfully take advantage of any offer for those shares until that information had been shared with the market" (*Sunday Independent*, 24.1.10).

In the Long Fellow's opinion, the Supreme Court decision was correct. The law cannot be dependent on subjective factors such as what the defendant or his solicitor believed; it must be clear and unambiguous. However, since the law had been vague up until now, it would have been unfair to impose legal sanctions against Flavin or DCC beyond the €40 million in compensation and legal costs it had already paid to Fyffes. Now that the law has been clarified there will be no excuse in future for such behaviour.

IRISH TIMES STANDARDS

Of course, *The Irish Times*, unlike the newspapers of the rival *Independent Group*, is not subject to stock market rules. It is a private company and therefore is not legally obliged to publish frequent financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements for 2008, which showed a loss of 38 million euro, were only made public 9 months after the year end.

Although in the normal course of events the 2009 figures will not be available until September of this year, the resignation of its Managing Director Maeve Donovan is a good indication of how the newspaper group is doing. On matters relating to itself the newspaper tends towards the evasive, but its reporting of this development bordered on the delusional.

The Irish Times (6.2.10) said that MD Donovan did not stay on because she is a

"great believer in short term leadership positions". The Long Fellow suspects that in the case of Donovan, *The Irish Times* Trust would agree!

The Irish Independent of the same day reported that the person who claimed to believe in "short term leadership positions" has been with *The Irish Times* for 32 years! Her new "leadership" position after her "resignation" will involve spending more time with her family and doing a course with the Institute of Directors where, presumably, she will learn how to be a Director.

The facts of the matter are that her disastrous investments in *myhome.ie*, the *Metro* free newspaper, the *Gloss* magazine and *4FM* have brought the newspaper to the verge of bankruptcy. The Trust has obviously decided that, if it didn't do something in the short-term, there would be no long-term! Interestingly, her replacement (Liam Kavanagh) is also an *Irish Times* "lifer". The paper's enthusiasm for external appointments for the Irish banks does not apply to its own organisation. Perhaps it is not completely wrong. Even a highly competent externally appointed Managing Director would find it difficult to adapt to the peculiar organisational structure of *The Irish Times* group. Unless the structure itself is changed—an unlikely prospect—executive appointments will be restricted to *The Irish Times* gene pool.

But *The Irish Times* is not the only element within the media that is delusional. . .

GEORGE FLEES

It turns out that the Clark Kent of Irish economic commentary is not Superman! He can certainly fly, but not in any useful way.

About five years ago George Lee had a moment of clarity. He spotted that Charlie McCreavy had introduced Individualisation of the Tax Bands and denounced it as anti-Family. By doing this he had overstepped the line between a commentator and a 'player'. The Government must have been furious, but it could do nothing because he had struck an emotional chord, which it and the Social Partners only heard after the event. The mind of the Irish people had been touched without being mediated through the system of party politics.

And then a whistleblower chose Lee and Charlie Bird to tell the nation about malpractice in National Irish Bank, before we found out about *all* the banks. It was understandable that Fine Gael and the voters of Dublin South could mistake a messenger boy for a prophet.

In the uncritical, self-congratulatory ambience of the media his words had the lustre of a precious gem but, when they were subjected to the scrutiny of democratic politics, they shattered into a thousand pieces. And after eight months he had nothing left to say.

The Irish Times in its editorial of 9th

February said that his resignation damaged the "body politic". On the contrary, it is a **vindication** of the body politic and a perfect illustration of the media's vacuity.

HUNTING THE TIGER

The *Sunday Independent* is dimly aware that the origins of the Celtic Tiger can be traced to the late 1980s, but it cannot admit to itself that the policies were initiated by Charles Haughey. Nor can it admit that those policies are precisely the ones that the newspaper wants to abandon.

Perhaps it thought that Haughey's right-hand man, Ray McSharry, would confirm it in its prejudices. But McSharry blurted out what it did not want to hear:

"I believe that partnership, employers, unions, government, social partners of all description, have to go back to the table and should really make every effort to ensure that we get back into partnership because that was one of the major issues to help us through the last 20 years (*Sunday Independent*, 31.1.10).

THE IRRESPONSIBLE PARTY

Sean Lemass once said that Fine Gael was the "irresponsible party". Perhaps this was unfair. Garret FitzGerald and Alan Dukes have shown a sense of patriotism in the current crisis. But the same cannot be said of the current leadership.

Senator Eugene Regan, on behalf of Fine Gael, has lodged a formal objection to the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) with the European Commission, "a move that represents a last ditch effort to scupper the Government's 'bad bank' scheme" (*The Irish Times*, 21.1.10).

Fine Gael claims in its Submission that the NAMA plan "is non compliant with EU State aid rules in general and the commission's guidelines on the treatment of impaired assets" in particular.

It is perfectly in order for private citizens or groups to appeal to Europe to vindicate their rights. But here we have the main Opposition party attempting to use Europe to override the decision of the national parliament. In the Long Fellow's opinion this is almost national treason.

HALIFAX IRELAND

Over 700 people are to lose their jobs following the announcement that Halifax's retail bank network in Ireland is to close. This is a tragedy for the people involved but may not be such bad news for the economy as a whole.

Certainly, it is difficult to understand Fine Gael's calls to save the jobs in order to create a Third Force in banking to rival the AIB and Bank of Ireland. This is the rhetoric of a bygone age. The hard fact is that these jobs are not sustainable. Halifax is owned by HBOS (Halifax and Bank of Scotland). This group lost a massive £10 billion in 2008 and has now been taken

over by Lloyds. Its investment in Ireland was misconceived and was based on an inflated property market.

If the jobs had not gone in Halifax they would have gone in the rival Irish banks. The Long Fellow is of the opinion that it is in the national interest for the soon-to-be-nationalised Irish banks to retain a dominant position in the Irish market.

RYAN AIR BLUSTER

Yet again the Opposition parties have shown themselves to be unfit to govern. They allowed themselves to be bounced into supporting the private agenda of Ryanair's Michael O'Leary in an attempt to obtain short-term political advantage.

O'Leary decided that he wanted Hangar 6 in Dublin Airport and, since he could not obtain it by normal commercial means, he attempted to overturn legally binding contracts by political means. He dangled the **promise** of 300 jobs in front of a credulous Opposition and the Fine Gael/Labour Opposition was happy to do his bidding. Unfortunately for Ryanair there are 230 **actual** Aer Lingus jobs already in place in that location.

Hangar 6 was available last year following the collapse of the aircraft maintenance company, SRT. Ryanair had no interest then in the facility and a contract was signed on Christmas Eve by Aer Lingus for the lease of the premises from the Dublin Airport Authority (formerly Aer Rianta) at an annual rent of 2.25 million euros. Aer Lingus was able to employ 96 former employees of SRT. All of this was made public in early January and yet no objection was raised by Ryanair.

Then suddenly in mid February, for no apparent reason, O'Leary became obsessed with Hangar 6. There are five other hangars available but the **promise** of 300 jobs was conditional on obtaining Hangar 6. While this hangar is suitable for the wide-body Airbus aircraft that Aer Lingus uses, it is way above what would be required for the maintenance of Ryanair's narrow body Boeings.

Ryanair is building a 6,000 square metre maintenance facility in Prestwick airport (outside Glasgow) for a similar amount of jobs that it is promising at Dublin Airport. But O'Leary is only interested in Hangar 6, which is 23,000 square metres. Why is O'Leary only interested in a facility, which is nearly four times larger than his stated requirement when other more suitable facilities are available at the airport? Michael Kennedy (Fianna Fail TD for Dublin North) suspects that his real reason is to open a new terminal, which would result in a loss of jobs elsewhere in the airport as well as a loss of revenue for the Dublin Airport Authority.

The Irish Independent (19.2.10) suggests another reason: *Ryanair* wants to move its head office, which is located elsewhere at Dublin airport.

A RYANAIR TAX DODGE?

The *Irish Independent* article raises far more questions than Ryanair's *bona fides* in relation to Hangar 6.

Apparently, about 20 years ago Ryanair leased land from Aer Rianta at Dublin Airport for its new Head Office. The annual rent was to be €244,000 per annum. However, no rent was payable to Aer Rianta for the first 12 years of the lease and only 50% of the rent was payable for the next 6 years up until 2008. 2009 was the first year that the full rent was paid to Aer Rianta (now the Dublin Airport Authority following Seamus Brennan's act of vandalism of a few years ago). The reason for such a deal was that Ryanair bore the cost of building its offices on the site. In exchange for the rent relief, the ownership of the building passed to Aer Rianta when Ryanair occupied it. It is certainly plausible that Ryanair would want to break the 30-year lease agreement now that it is required to pay the full annual rent.

But the most interesting aspect of the article is the description of how the deal was structured on Ryanair's side. Darley Investments was the company that initially owned the building. This company was controlled by a Trust Fund for the benefit of Tony Ryan's sons: Cathal, Declan and Shane. The building expenses were financed by a loan from Ryanair. However, even though the ownership of the premises passed to Aer Rianta on occupation, Ryanair paid an annual rent to Darley Investments of €254,000 from 1992 until mid 1996 when Ryanair bought the company! Also in 1999 the premises was accounted for as an asset worth 1.2 million euros in Ryanair's books.

It appears that Darley Investments was not in substance a landlord. So why did Ryanair pay rent to it? The only reason that the Long Fellow can think of is that the payment of rent is tax deductible, but the payment of dividends to the Ryan family is not.

Could these guys be as disreputable as Major McDowell of *The Irish Times*? Surely not!

The death has occurred of Inga Haag, a spy against Nazi Germany.

DEATH OF A DILETTANTE

Like Stauffenberg, a Prussian socialite dies, these aristocratic acolytes, one suffers hanging by piano wire, one in Marylebone, a cosy expire. To overthrow the Führer was the game when his armies in the East became lame. A new German leader would sue for peace and halt the Red Army with this caprice? Honoured by those who sold Sudetenland, the promises to Poland signed in sand. Two breaches blown in two buffer states, two Nazi roads to Russia and its fate.

Wilson John Haire. 16th January, 2010

One Secular Nation?

"We have the makings of one secular nation, with a substantial element of Protestant culture embedded in it" is the gist of Roy Johnston's thinking on the problems of Partition (*Irish Political Review*, February 2010). Yes we do if we had the might in Ireland for a re-conquest of lost territories held by the settler community. But we are not the old Soviet Union. Though there are still violent undercurrents in Ireland North and South which can't be eradicated because of its violent history put upon it by the invader. Nothing much has been resolved to anyone's satisfaction. We live from one truce to another. Of course Roy doesn't mean it to happen in this way but such thoughts can be dangerous when there is no sense of reality about Ulster Protestantism.

Take mixed marriage in the North for example—don't think because two people of different backgrounds marry, or become partners, that they merge into either one or the other's background or become secular. I come from a mixed family. My father, a Protestant, married my mother in a Catholic Church, and agreed that any children born would be brought up as Catholics. Thus he eventually became surrounded by six Catholics of his own making. But he remained a Presbyterian, reading his bible, maybe under the pretence that he was contradicting it. He agreed with the Protestant rebellion against Home Rule in 1912, even having outbursts of sectarianism during some domestic rows. After these rows if I was beaten by him, as a child, I had the image of being beaten by a Protestant. My mother also had outbursts of sectarianism but I saw her outrage as a cry for freedom.

Mixed marriages continues in my family. One of them is between people of totally opposite views: Free Presbyterian and Andersonstown Republicanism. Both hold to their political and religious views. Yes, married in a Catholic Church, vowing to raise any children as Catholics, though agreeing not to use any overt Catholic first names for the children such as Liam, Seamus, Nuala or Siobhan. Much in the same way my first name is Wilson or in my four sisters' cases, names like Jane or Betty, thought of as Protestant names.

This is for the job market. I was once asked by a family member, not so long ago, if I had any suggestion for the name of a son soon to be born—something not Catholic or Protestant. My reply was Biliam—a joke of course. A bit of both. Not possible. You must be one or the

Wilson John Haire replies to Roy Johnston

other, though I once heard of someone being described as being half Protestant and half Catholic. This rare, if possible creature, would be as strange as a liger (half lion, half tiger) walking down Royal Avenue in central Belfast.

These young mixed-marriages in my family are also prone to squabbles resulting in sectarian outbursts. There is love but love doesn't solve everything. But hate does something, for both parties eventually agree to differ. I'm talking about the 1990s into the present 2010 and not solely about 1931 when my parents married. Oddly enough sectarian outbursts in a marriage doesn't break it, it is only the outside world drifting in on occasions. There is remorse and tears afterwards as if people had been possessed. Indeed, so much is out of people's control in the Six Counties.

The Connolly Association, in which I was a member, did bounce about the idea of a secular Irish nation with Protestantism embedded in it. There were a few Protestants in the Connolly Association, and I mean a few. One was a friend of mine from Belfast, and a couple from south of the border. We lived in a rarefied atmosphere of regular meetings in a mystical secular republic. But when we hit the streets in Kilburn, London, to sell the *Irish Democrat*, we appealed to Catholic Ireland who loved the songs that were printed in the paper.

I think we all felt pretty superior back then in the 1950s. Most of us had the added armour of belonging to the Communist Party of Great Britain. On occasions we did bump into Ulster Protestantism in the shape of two lads in a pub snug insisting that our Protestant member was beginning to look like a *fenian* when he identified himself not as a secular person but as a *Prod* like them. Catholic Ireland again came to his aid when he pointed out to them that they were on dangerous ground—drinking in a Corkman's pub. The sound of feet running. An old Desmond Greaves trick when up against it.

I can't see a secular nation on the horizon. Catholic Ireland is still Catholic Ireland even without the full control of the Church. The millions or so didn't convert or become atheists. They are still uncomfortable with Northern Protestantism, either loathing it or licking its boots, never understanding it, never understanding a United Ireland will not change its destiny.

Wilson John Haire
1st February, 2010

Memoir Of A Non-Conformist

This is a fine, if slightly whimsical autobiography by a former *Irish Times* journalist.

Dennis Kennedy comes from a Non-Conformist, enthusiastically evangelical, Ulster Methodist background. He says that when he went to Queens University in the 1950s he caught the "nationalist virus", but it seems to have been a very mild strain since, when his bible classes clashed with his Irish language classes, he had no hesitation in opting for the former.

Not long after graduation he worked for the *Belfast Telegraph* under the Editorship of Jack Sayers. Kennedy says that in the early 1960s the newspaper's editorial line was supportive of Terence O'Neill and critical of Faulkner who was not then considered to be on the liberal wing of Unionism. It also appears that Ian Paisley was upset by the *Belfast Telegraph* and in particular some of the leading articles that Kennedy himself had written. Kennedy gives a detailed description of a protest demonstration by Paisley and his followers, who intended—in the manner of Martin Luther—to nail their objections to the door of the *Belfast Telegraph* offices; not realising that the Thompson Group, which owned the *Telegraph*, had recently installed a glass entrance to the premises.

The most interesting aspect of this incident is that, while Kennedy describes the demonstration in detail, he does not indicate what precisely the Paisleyites objected to. The impression that this reviewer has is that Kennedy has a disdain for the cut and thrust of politics.

There are numerous examples of this disdain throughout the book. Even though he was friendly with Paddy Hillery and Jack Lynch, he has little to say about their humiliating defeat by the British at the United Nations in 1969. All he says is that the British and Irish were talking about Northern Ireland, a place that neither of them had ever visited.

He describes a riot in Northern Ireland, but there is very little about the politics. There is an interesting description of a trip he made to South Africa, which includes a discussion of the logistics involved in the trip, a description of the court proceeding and the mechanics of the Pass Laws, but again nothing about the views of political leaders or even activists. He mentions that he went to the USA in the Autumn of 1963 to pursue further journalistic studies, but there is no reference to the assassination of the President who shared his name.

Kennedy says that his interview with Lord Brookeborough for *The Irish Times* was criticised by Douglas Gageby for

humanising the Northern politician. Kennedy's description of Lady B's interjections during the interview is certainly amusing, but Gageby might well have felt that Brookeborough's politics were a more significant element of his humanity.

Kennedy seems to think it is a badge of honour that his relationship with Charles Haughey was strained. He is particularly proud of an incident in which he badgered Haughey regarding the appointment of Richard Burke of Fine Gael as EU Commissioner rather than Michael O'Kennedy of Fianna Fáil. This reviewer found it quite amazing that the author doesn't explain the political context. The appointment of Burke reduced Fine Gael's representation in the Dáil by one in a situation where Haughey was leading a minority Government and there was an expectation that Fianna Fáil would win the subsequent by-election. The political stroke went awry when Fine Gael won with a particularly energetic candidate. The fact that none of this is explained is typical of Kennedy's apolitical approach.

In my view Haughey comes out quite well out of the incident. According to Kennedy, Haughey insisted that Burke was the best man for the job. While everyone knew that this was a political stroke the Taoiseach must have felt it important that the Irish representative in Europe should not be undermined by a public admission of the real reason for the appointment.

The other encounters with Haughey also do not reflect particularly well on Kennedy. He says that he was invited with other journalists to Haughey's mansion in Kinsealy. Haughey showed them into a room that was designed in the style of a pub. Kennedy noticed that there was a series of drawings of the 1916 leaders on a frieze and asked facetiously if they were the previous owners.

Incredibly, Kennedy asked one of Haughey's civil servants why the Fianna Fáil leader did not appear to like him. He was told that he was the only journalist that did not address him as "Taoiseach". Kennedy explains this away as a non-conformist dislike of "titles".

It must be admitted in defence of Kennedy that his disdain for politics was not confined to Irish politics (North and South). He says that in 1966 he was fed up with Northern Ireland and also British politics to such an extent that he had exchanged his blue passport for a green one, because he had become "uninterested in whether Wilson or Heath reigned supreme in Downing Street".

Remarkably, for a journalist, he says he rejected a tentative offer of a job with the prestigious *Insight* team in the *Sunday Times* in favour of working for a missionary radio station in Ethiopia. He is a little coy as to his motivations and suggests that one of the attractions was that journalists who were missionaries were exempt from tax in Ethiopia. Nevertheless the name of the organisation he worked for—the *Lutheran World Federation*—suggests that it was a *bona fide* missionary organisation.

On his return from Ethiopia in 1968 he settled in Dublin and successfully applied for a job with *The Irish Times*. One of the strengths of the book is the entertaining account of his house hunting and then the trials and tribulations of living in Glencullen, by the Dublin mountains, with the attendant heating and plumbing disasters. He has some marvellous descriptions of the gale force winds assailing his home and his adventures with the 44b Bus negotiating the "North face" of Glencullen mountain. However, I found his descriptions of some of his colleagues in *The Irish Times* a little stilted. For example:

"Being drawn into a seminar in the Pearl Bar one evening I joined Donal Foley in some mild criticism of the Women's page, then in the hands of Mary Maher and her new assistant, Maeve Binchy. Foley rather enjoyed provoking the wrath of Miss Maher, late of Chicago, and playing on the ample insecurities of Miss Binchy."

He seems to have had an exotic view of the "South" from his youth and in some ways when he moved there he was not disappointed. He is favourably impressed by the friendliness and helpfulness of his neighbours. However, even in paradise there are serpents! His main complaint is the influence of the Catholic Church. He remarks disapprovingly on the broadcast of the Angelus and the fact that the Archbishop of Dublin used to bless the Aer Lingus fleet. There is a slight resentment at local community announcements of general importance being made at Mass. He also regrets the intolerance shown to poppy sellers. Although he doesn't say it, the impression he gives is that he wishes that we were all just a little bit more like the English.

There is a sense of not being fully part of the community because of his Methodism, but I think his abstemiousness in regard to alcohol might also have been a factor. There are some famous traditional music pub venues in that area of Dublin, but he has nothing to say about this aspect of life.

However, he did find a kindred spirit in the person of Colonel Manners O'Connell FitzSimon, who lived in Glencullen House. This person was a descendant of Daniel O'Connell and yet had served in the British Army. He thinks the contradiction is marvellous and contrasts this with a "narrow concept of Irishness". The reader can almost sense the ecstasy the author feels when he discovers in the Colonel's home a volume of

poems written by the Liberator's daughter praising Queen Victoria.

He says that the Colonel remembers the announcement of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921. He was stationed in either Germany or Austria when some of his compatriots told him: "*The British, they've given us our freedom*".

It is possible that some Irish did indeed experience the Treaty settlement as an example of the benevolence of Britain, but they would have been in a tiny minority. The mainstream was split between those who thought we had fought a war and had achieved the freedom to achieve freedom and those who thought that we had fought a war and been denied our freedom. Kennedy wishes that the trickle was in fact the mainstream.

The book has some interesting comments on Major McDowell the dominant influence on *The Irish Times* from the mid 1960s to the turn of the century. For example:

"...Major Thomas Bleakley McDowell was the Chairman and Managing Director and the ultimate controlling authority. To most of us journalists he was a name often heard, but the man himself rarely seen, except perhaps fleetingly as he slipped into his office in the D'Olier Street side of the building. I had been two or three years Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Irish Times* before I even met him, and that was by accident when he introduced himself to me at a reception at Glencairn, the British Ambassador's residence.

"He was a very hands-on chairman, in the office everyday, with a finger on every pulse and an eye on us all. Douglas {i.e. Gageby—JM} was for ever scurrying down the stairs 'to see McDowell' and made no secret of his admiration for him both as a company lawyer and as a manager."

Interesting, the location of Kennedy's first meeting with the Major! I was surprised to read of Gageby "*scurrying*" down to meet McDowell. This is more reminiscent of Fergus Pyle, and seems to contrast with James Downey's perception of how things were, even though Downey's book confirms McDowell's dominance.

Later on Kennedy says that McDowell modernised *The Irish Times* before Gageby. This is a mistake. Gageby was joint Director of *The Irish Times* in 1959, three years before McDowell joined. But the mistake is interesting because it reflects Kennedy's perception that McDowell was the senior of the two.

Kennedy refers to my own book on the newspaper and, in particular, the controversy surrounding the "*white nigger*" letter. He concedes that the substance of the letter is accurate and notes other British Foreign Office documents supporting it. Nevertheless he expresses doubt as to whether McDowell actually used the phrase "*white nigger*" on the grounds that that was not the type of language that McDowell used. He thinks it is more likely a phrase that the British Ambassador Andrew Gilchrist used,

even though Gilchrist attributes it to McDowell. For what it's worth this reviewer has been told that a senior figure in *The Irish Times* who was quite close to McDowell believes that the phrase was precisely the type of "*barrack room language*" that McDowell would have used.

In my opinion Kennedy, whose views on the North are closer to those of McDowell than Gageby, is quite *blasé* on the implications of this and other documents dating from 1969. He seems to regard it as a fact of life under "*western capitalism*" that the owners determine the editorial line. I have two responses to this view. Firstly, in 1969 McDowell was no more of an owner of the newspaper than Gageby: each of them owned 20%. The remaining 60% was owned equally by the other three directors George Hetherington, Ralph Walker and his brother Philip. It was only after 1969 that McDowell's influence increased culminating in the dominance he achieved with the setting up of *The Irish Times Trust* in 1974. It is my belief that this dominance was achieved with the help of the British.

Secondly, while it may be a fact of life that owners determine the editorial line of their newspapers, it is not a typical characteristic of "*western capitalism*" that such owners would enlist the aid of a foreign state to ensure their policy is implemented. That is something that is unique to *The Irish Times*.

This reviewer was not surprised that Kennedy defended the record of Fergus Pyle, the Editor who succeeded Gageby in 1974. It is clear that the author felt more comfortable with Pyle's view of the world than Gageby's, but even he has to admit that Pyle was disorganised and had great difficulty in making timely decisions. While he blames Pyle's failure on external factors, such as the downturn in the economy following the oil crisis, he admits that prior to Pyle's editorship the newspaper's circulation had been increasing. This trend was reversed under the latter's editorship. External factors could not explain this since during the same period the circulation of the *Irish Independent* held up, while the *Irish Press* had a small increase.

Probably the most interesting chapter in the book relates to an 'offer' that the author "*could refuse*". This was an attempt to recruit him as a spy for the British Foreign Office. In the late 1970s an Englishman approached him, claiming to be an academic and invited him to lunch at Blooms Hotel in Dublin. After discussing Irish politics Kennedy was given £50, which was not an inconsiderable sum at the time. This continued on a monthly basis for 5 months. The Foreign Office man was interested in such questions as who was Haughey's advisor on the North and the extent of John Hume's influence on Government policy.

All the meetings had been in Dublin

with the exception of what turned out to be the last meeting, when Kennedy was invited to Belfast at short notice. When he agreed to meet, the British official must have thought that *The Irish Times* man had been caught. After Kennedy showed his guest the sights of Belfast, they repaired to the Europa hotel for lunch where the Englishman revealed what the real purpose of the meetings had been. He elaborated by stating that the Foreign Office "*needed first-hand information on individuals, what they were thinking, what they were doing*".

This was a difficult hook for Kennedy to wriggle off. After all he had already accepted money for the services he had provided. He searched his memory bank to assess if he had given any information of substance about Irish politicians beyond what was public knowledge. He concluded that he hadn't. Nevertheless he felt unable to tell even his closest friends about this embarrassing episode until years after the event. And he received a Christmas card from the official to remind Kennedy that he had not gone away.

Tim Pat Coogan is also on record as having been approached by the British who were similarly rebuffed. But are we to believe that the British Foreign Office has a zero success rate with respect to Irish journalists? Kennedy suggests darkly that some of his colleagues spoke highly of the restaurant at Blooms hotel!

When I was researching my own book on *The Irish Times* a senior Fianna Fáil politician said to me that one of the tasks of the Irish Special Branch is to find out which journalists are working for the British.

The title of Kennedy's book is "Square Peg", which in my view is a perfect description of the author. Throughout the book there is a sense that he doesn't quite fit in either in the North or South of Ireland. He refuses to accept the label of nationalist or unionist, which seems to me a reflection of his political disengagement. Although many of his observations are apolitical, this is not to say that he doesn't have a philosophical or ideological perspective. In the book he expresses admiration for Conor Cruise O'Brien. A brief search on the Internet suggests that he is one of the intellectuals behind the Cadogan Group. He appears to regret the movement for Irish independence and seizes on every opportunity to give examples—even unrepresentative ones—of the affinity of Irish people for Britain.

I found the autobiography entertaining. His writing style displays a wry Northern sense of humour, which might occasionally grate with a Southern audience. He is more at ease describing places than people. However, the book is worth reading and all the more interesting for coming from a perspective that is the diametric opposite to this reviewer's Republican one.

John Martin

The Spy Who Grew Up With The Bold:

the Irish Republican education of Sir John Betjeman

Almost a century ago an Irish city was gripped by such a wave of xenophobia that a Jewish city councillor with a quarter of a century of service behind him felt his family so threatened by the associated anti-Semitism that he was compelled to uproot them across the water. No, that city was not Nationalist Limerick. It was Unionist Belfast.

Sir Otto Jaffe, compelled to resign his seat and flee Ulster in 1916, had twice served as Unionist Lord Mayor of Belfast (in 1899 and 1904), as well as being Life-President of Belfast's Jewish congregation. Despite the fact that he had lived in Ulster for over sixty years and had both a son and nephew in the British Army that was waging war against Germany, his own German birth now made him a marked man among his fellow Unionists.

The ahistorical (and, indeed, anti-historical) projection backwards of the Second World War onto the First World War has obscured from the public eye the fact that *anti-Semitism* was a central plank in *British* imperialist racist propaganda *against Germany* during that earlier inferno. Russian-born but Newry-reared Leonard Abrahamson observed in 1914 that "*the virus of anti-Semitic feeling, born of ignorance and fostered by unrelenting prejudice, still courses in the veins of numerous—if not the majority—of Britishers*". And Leonard's own father became a target of such anti-Semitism. The fact that he had not the remotest connection with Germany did not spare the Yiddish-speaking David Abrahamson from being subjected to both the physical and verbal "*anti-German*" attacks of Ulster's Empire Loyalists in both Newry and Bessbrook, Co. Down. Leonard further observed:-

"Since the outbreak of the war, the belief generally rampant that all Jews are Germans, has given rise to many unpleasant and reprehensible occurrences. Not only has this erroneous notion gained ground amongst the un-educated but it has been fostered by the repeated linking in several journals—amongst others, the *Times*—of the term Jew and German." (as quoted in Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 1998).

Britain's First World War race-hatred of anything that smacked of being German—the Royal Family excepted—had left a deep psychological scar on one particular figure of culture widely regarded as quint-essentially English. Indeed, the family of British Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman had been English since the end of the 18th Century. But as a seven-year-old Londoner he had been accosted by a woman who charged: "*When war began: Your name is*

German, John!—*But I had always thought that it was Dutch*". And a few years later he was systematically tormented by school-mates who danced around him shouting: "*Betjeman's a German spy—Shoot him down and let him die*". (John Betjeman, *Summoned By Bells*, 1960) This so traumatised the poet that on 10th December 1936 he also recalled for T.S. Elliot:

"I hated the school. They all used to shout '*Betjeman's a German spy—a German spy—a German spy*' and dance around. I came to the conclusion that I was."

And even as late as 1976 Betjeman observed: "*I have a terrible guilt about not having any right to be in this country*" (Bevis Hillier, *Young Betjeman*, 1960).

The irony is that Betjeman did in fact become a spy—not a German one, but a British spy in Ireland. His childhood experiences had, however, predisposed him to be sceptical of any rose-tinted presentation of why England would be at war again in 1939. We are indeed indebted to his Dublin-born daughter Candida for editing Betjeman's personal correspondence and enabling us to read his innermost thoughts at that time in his letters to friends (Candida Lycett Green, editor, *John Betjeman—Letters*, 1994).

Betjeman's letter to Cyril Connolly on 19th October 1939 revealed an outright cynicism about the 'phoney war' period. He both summarised and lampooned Britain's supposed war aims in an extremely tongue-in-cheek fashion, in which the somewhat notoriously controversial poem that he had satirically addressed to the German Luftwaffe in 1937—"*Come, friendly bombs, and fall on Slough*"—was called to mind. He told Connolly:

"Give Jerry what for. Teach him to take a sloss at the British Lion... We must all do our bit. There's a war on you know... We are fighting for LIBERTY to make the world fit to live in for Democracy, to keep our splendid system of Local Government going, to make the world safe for Slough to go on ... Jolly, all this isn't it?"

In February 1940 Betjeman commenced employment with the British Ministry for Information, but at the end of that year the Secretary of State for the Dominions, Viscount Cranbourne, requested him to undertake another assignment. And so it was that in January 1941 Betjeman proceeded to Dublin as Press Attaché to the UK Representative in Ireland, Sir John Maffey. Two months into the new job his cynicism concerning the first year and a half of the War had not abated one iota. On February 12th he wrote to John Leh-

man: "*They are all very fearful of British propaganda here. I don't blame them*". On March 2nd he was far more despondent in his letter to John and Myfanwy Piper:

"I wish I cared more about the war; then I would care more about my job. All able-bodied pro-British have left Ireland for the English services and we are at the mercy of people who are either anti-British, anti-German and pro-Irish (faintly a majority), and there are pro-Irish and pro-German (about forty-eight percent) and two percent pro-German above everything... I am beginning to hate Ireland and the Irish".

By that Summer the character of the Second World War was to change direction. On the day that Hitler invaded the Soviet Union—June 22nd 1941—the British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill declared in a radio broadcast:

"No one has been a more consistent opponent of Communism than I have for the last twenty-five years... but all this fades away before the spectacle which is now unfolding... I see the Russian soldiers standing on the threshold of their native land, guarding their fields which their fathers have tilled from time immemorial... Any man or state who fights on against Nazism will have our aid... It follows, therefore, that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and the Russian people".

The following month Betjeman gave evidence of beginning to care more about the War and, consequently, to also care more about his propaganda/intelligence job as well. He was becoming more sophisticated and perceptive in his understanding of Irish society. Gone was his previous writing off of half the Irish population as outrightly pro-German. That position he now recognised to be a minority one, far down the scale of public opinion. On 14th July 1941 he wrote to his friend Douglas Golding:

"It is so bloody political, dividing itself into these categories in descending order of magnitude—

1. Pro-British with relations fighting, but above everything Pro-Irish.
2. Pro-Irish and not caring who wins, so long as Ireland survives as a united nation.
3. Pro-Irish and anti-British, but also anti-German.
4. Pro-Irish and pro-German.

But it doesn't really matter what they think. One friend gained for England, is one enemy for Germany and that is my job."

Before discussing Betjeman's engagement with Irish society during the War years it is necessary to point out that there had been one previous intervention by him in Irish affairs. And this intervention had in fact been exercised on behalf of Fascism. On 19th April 1933, Betjeman wrote to a very close friend, the Anglo-

Irish peer Michael Parsons, the Earl of Rosse, at his home in Birr Castle, Co. Offaly. This letter was, according to Betjeman's daughter, on behalf of another Irish friend, Dr. T.F. O'Higgins (brother of Kevin), who was Eoin O'Duffy's predecessor as President of the Army Comrades Association, the Fascist-saluting Blueshirts. Betjeman explained:

"I have a friend who is one of the Big Three in the new White Army in Ireland. As you are an Irish Citizen and I expect have opinions about Dev's (de Valera's) actions and politics at the moment, I thought that you might be interested in the enclosed pamphlets about the ACA—the White Army... All people who have property and TREES in Ireland are bound to be a bit anxious now and it looks to me as though their only hope lies in the ACA. Cosgrave's party is full of corruption, though Cosgrave himself is all right and I shouldn't think Cumann na nGaedheal will ever get in again. The Centre party doesn't count and the IRA is Communist, as we all know.... If you would let the Captain see you either... in Dublin or... in your Gothick Castle, he would tell you all about it, what it has done and what he wants to do... He merely has you on a list of people who might be interested in the ACA... I hope your trees are doing nicely. The Captain is a nice man. Do see him. He is interested in Hindu eroticism as well as the ACA."

The Earl of Rosse, however, fought shy of rising to such Blueshirt temptations. As Betjeman's daughter Candida relates:

"MR {Michael of Rosse, later to become stepfather-in-law of England's Princess Margaret, as well as Chancellor of Trinity College Dublin—MOR} had written (undated): *'The President (of the ACA), I think, O'Higgins, called on my agent the other day and was only with difficulty prevented from coming and laying his suit before me! I have no political views myself and though I understand the aims of the ACA are excellent, one is better not involved in any organisation at present.'* The ACA later became the Blueshirts. In their early days... they were encouraged by many, W.B. Yeats among them, before anyone knew how they would turn out."

Having been a sympathiser with Irish Fascism in 1933, Betjeman did not himself become an anti-Fascist until some time after taking up residence in Ireland, as the Second World War itself developed into an anti-Fascist one. His political consciousness in this regard was undoubtedly helped by Shevawn Lynam who, although also an anti-Communist leftwinger who would later work for NATO, had been a consistent anti-Fascist from the time of her support of the Spanish Republic during the 1936-39 War, through to her post-war novel (*The Spirit And The Clay*, 1954) inspired by the Basque Catholic resistance to Franco. On 12th October 1941 Betjeman

wrote to John Piper: *"I have been given an assistant. A woman called Miss Lynam.... She is left... On the other hand she is Irish and more pro-Irish than any of us"*.

Robert Cole's study of Betjeman's direction of British propaganda efforts in Ireland between January 1941 and August 1943 was published in the Winter 1996 issue of *Éire-Ireland*. Cole rhetorically posed the question in several places as to whether Betjeman was more than a mere press attaché; was he in fact an espionage agent as well? But while he found it *"amusing to speculate that Betjeman's propaganda work was linked to intelligence"*, Cole concluded *"the evidence suggests"* that he was not in fact engaged in anything *"covert"*.

In his otherwise authoritative account of Ireland's wartime neutrality, *In Time Of War*, Robert Fisk had also arrived at a similar conclusion in 1983:

"Rumours still persist in Ireland that the English poet John Betjeman, who was attached to Maffey's department, was a British spy... In fact, Betjeman—far from being anything so preposterous as a spy—was a cultural attaché in whom even Colonel Bryan could find nothing more suspicious than an interest in Gaelic poetry and a predisposition *'to go around calling himself Seán Betjeman'*..."

This assessment had behind it the weight of Colonel Dan Bryan, Director of G2, the Irish Army's own wartime intelligence service. And the stature of Fisk's own research is such that for years his was the one work to detail the British espionage reports of the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen, until the publication in full of several of these reports by the Aubane Historical Society in 1999. But what if both Bryan and Fisk had been fooled by the bold 'Seán'?

Another expert on Irish wartime history, while allowing for some attempts at espionage on Betjeman's part, differed little from the other two, in maintaining that they had little or no significance. In his 1985 book, *Neutral Ireland And The Third Reich*, Lt. Col. John P. Duggan came to the following conclusion:

"The way John Betjeman of Maffey's staff related to Éire's salon society was symptomatic. He represented the acceptable face of espionage: he was a marvellous verbaliser, a lush and a bit of an eccentric, qualities which immediately endeared him to the Natives... Betjeman was Ireland's favourite spy and his activities in this field could be laughed off. No one took them seriously"

But Betjeman was no longer stuck up the Earl of Rosse's trees nor did he continue to derive his view of Irish society from some smoke-filled Anglo-Irish salon. He established close personal friendships with the Fianna Fáil Minister Seán MacEntee and the former Cumann na nGaedheal

Minister Desmond FitzGerald. Much more significant political interactions and friendships (which continued into the post-war years) were established with Frank Gallagher, de Valera's Director of Government Information Services, and M.J. MacManus, Literary Editor of the *Irish Press* and de Valera's biographer. Also to be found at the *Irish Press* was Brian O'Neill who during the 1930s had been the Communist Party of Ireland's most talented propagandist, both as Editor of the *Irish Workers' Weekly* and author of such influential radical works as *The War For The Land Of Ireland* (1933) and *Easter Week* (1939). And it is the same Brian O'Neill whom Cole quotes as writing the following to Betjeman at the end of the War on 12th August 1945:

"It is the fact you have made so many friends among the Left which only a few years ago had hostility to Britain as its sole common plank that best measures the success of your personality and understanding."

That in itself establishes Betjeman as a persuasive propagandist, without necessarily proving that he was an accomplished spy as well. And if Cole's definitive 1996 account of the former role throws cold water on the idea that Betjeman also performed the latter one, then perhaps a certain amount of sensationalism would have been understandable in promoting the April 2000 TV documentary on Channel 4 entitled *The Real John Betjeman*, which proceeded to raise this issue in the following manner: *"But there was another side to Betjeman's work in Ireland, something about which he would only speak 40 years later?"* This documentary reproduced an excerpt from a TV interview which Betjeman had given not long before his death in 1984. In response to a question as to what exactly had he been doing in Dublin, Betjeman candidly replied: *"I was the Press Attaché in Maffey's office—one of what they call Maffey's spies"*.

Far more revealing than that Easter Sunday documentary, however, was the press coverage it stimulated on the following day, April 24th. Fiachra Gibbons of the Guardian Services reported that Betjeman's biographer, Bevis Hillier, had got his first inkling that Betjeman was a spy when he interviewed Professor Nicholas Mansergh, of St. John's College, Cambridge, who as Head of the Empire Division had been Betjeman's superior in the Ministry of Information during the War and had read many of the poet's reports from Dublin. *"As soon as I arrived in his room to talk to him, he (Mansergh) prefaced it by saying that he would not discuss whether Betjeman was a spy. I hadn't even raised it"*, Hillier said.

But was Betjeman a good spy? In her 1994 edition of her father's personal

correspondence Candida Lycett Green commented:

"JB took his work more seriously than he pretended in letters to his friends. In his reports and dispatches to the Ministry of Information... he thought that de Valera believed the interests of Ireland would best be served by a British victory—and concluded that de Valera was Britain's best friend in Ireland."

But this volume of personal correspondence also made it clear that Betjeman did not wait for 40 years before alluding to his role as a spy. To those he deemed discerning enough to rumble him, he decided to strike first by coming out up front. In a letter to the writer Frank O'Connor on 7th March 1941 Betjeman declared:

"Delighted to hear from Sean O'Faolain that you are back. Look at me, a bloody British spy (open) Press Attaché here. Now can you both come in to Dublin for lunch...? The O'Faolains are coming."

To which Candida added the important footnote: "Sean O'Faolain, editor of *The Bell*, was a man of letters and a lover of Elizabeth Bowen."

Now in the case of Bowen we are indeed dealing with a particularly talented spy. Intelligence reports on any political organisation are useless unless they grasp the variety of opinion therein. Elizabeth Bowen was present in Dublin's Mansion House on 10th February 1942 to witness the Fine Gael Ard-Fheis. It was there that its Vice-President James Dillon made such a vehement attack on Irish neutrality that he was forced to resign from that Party. In her report of February 20th Bowen astutely observed:

"I should say that of the people there, one third were strongly with Mr. Dillon, one third were neutral (temporarily swayed, but due to react against him later)—one third definitely hostile... The most bitter attacks on Mr. Dillon were to come, I was sorry to note, from younger members of the Fine Gael Party, at the back of the room... Mr. Cosgrave and the rest of those on the platform preserved, during Mr. Dillon's speech, resolutely expressionless faces. Not an eyelid was batted... *En masse*, I did not care for the looks of the Fine Gael Party... Their main function appeared to be, to carp at the de Valera government and this, as a function, appeared to content them... Among the younger men—who attacked Mr. Dillon after his speech—there were one or two crypto-fascists; nasty pieces of work. Their complaint that the Party needed younger leaders... did, however, seem justified."

But it was not only among Dillon's opponents in Fine Gael that Bowen had discovered crypto-fascists. The great merit of a good intelligence operative is to be able to disengage from the propaganda of one's own side in order to grasp and report on the full complexity of the subject being assessed. In her espionage report of 9th November 1940 detailing "a long and very interesting talk" with Dillon, she dismissed

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Blindness on Iraq

The following email was sent to the Pat Kenny Show on 29th January

Listening to the discussion of the latest British enquiry on the Iraq war on your show today (Friday), I found the comments on Blair and Iraq a bit depressing. The fact is that by subterfuge and illegality he launched a war on a Third World country and destroyed it, killing 1.4m people.

Many things can be said about Saddam's Iraq. Iraq was a state cobbled together by the British Empire from incompatible parts in 1921 and after Saddam came to power he established a strong state that urbanised, modernised and secularised the society. He ran it with an iron fist. But what was created was the socially most advanced society in the Arab world, prosperous, literate and liberal, the one closest to the western model in the region. It should be remembered that Saddam's military side was built up, funded and armed by USUK in the 1980s to attack and destabilise Iran, then seen by the leaders of the West as the "evil" state. As regards Saddam's methods of rule, how do the 5,000 Kurds killed in an insurrection compare to the 1.4m who have died in the war started by Blair's invasion?

Blair's war (and it was his more than anybody else's) tore that society apart, threw it back to the stone age and so far has killed 1.4m people. At Nuremburg in 1946-7 the main crime the Nazis were found guilty of was not genocide but launching a war of aggression. This was the first such crime tried under 'International Law'. Blair—after he failed to get support under International Law—launched a war of aggression which destroyed a society and killed 1.4m people. If that doesn't make him a war criminal under the same 'International Law' that condemned the Nazis, then that term has lost all meaning.

Philip O'Connor

accusations of pro-Germanism that had hitherto been made against him as "wild". She found that "in his morbid interest in Hitler's personality he struck me as following a private bent of his own". But, while she found him important, if only as a pro-British "counterpoise to Mr. de Valera", it did not at all follow that Dillon was an anti-Fascist. Quite the contrary:

"He is very much disliked, and I must say that, though liking him very much personally, I see why. He holds some views which even I distrust, and which are abhorrent to many Irish people whose integrity I respect... While Mr. de Valera's fanaticism is on the surface, Mr. Dillon's, which exists quite as strongly, is deep-down; it exploded once or twice towards the end of our talk—religious fanaticism of the purest kind I have ever met. This streak in Mr. Dillon might be strongly felt in this country if he ever came into full power... I could gather Mr. Dillon's own strong feeling for power from his speaking to me of his mistrust of it... I have heard Mr. Dillon labelled a Fascist—which is I am afraid partly true... Mr. Dillon said that his fear for the world was, that we should be left, at the bitter end of this war, with the idea ('fallacy', Mr. Dillon called it) that it was the form of government that mattered: Forms of government (said Mr. Dillon) do not matter... Mr. Dillon then explained to me what he felt to be the constitutional importance of the spiritual-moral. So far as I could see, Mr. Dillon believes in government by divine inspiration."

Could John Betjeman's efforts ever measure up to the quality and sophistication of Bowen's espionage reports? The Channel 4 documentary stated that Betjeman "provided insights into the activities of the IRA". And, by way of illustration, it went on to provide

the following excerpt from one such report: "*The IRA is divided into Republicans, placehunters and gun maniacs, Nazis, anti-Christian and pro-Hitler*".

If that was to be the sole end product of Betjeman's spying on Irish Republicanism it would indeed add weight to John P. Duggan's view that "his activities in this field could be laughed off". It betrayed a complete lack of analysis. Such a combination of blind prejudice and buffoonery in Betjeman's remarks was no better than the idle tittle tattle to be found in "*Éire's salon society*", either then, or as now represented in the columns of the *Sunday Independent*. But a closer look at the TV screen told a different story. As the actor's voice declaimed these puerile words, their source in the original documentation appeared on screen, to be briefly followed by a second document. In the blink of an eyelid, however, one had only the time to absorb from that second document the capital-lettered words of Fascism and Nazism, with their subliminal appearance of underlining the message of the spoken word. But when one proceeded to freeze the frame on a video recording of the programme, that screen moment told a very different story—**The words Fascism and Nazism only appeared on this second document in the context of pointing out that such ideologies were meeting with the violent opposition of 35 percent of the IRA!**

But who exactly was being monitored, who was Betjeman's intelligence source, and to whom was he reporting back on such an espionage coup?

(to be continued)

Manus O'Riordan

Fintan O'Toole On Captain Rock

"Now, now we'll teach the shameless
Scot to purge his thieving maw,
Now, now the Court will fall to pray, for
Justice is the Law,
Now shall the Undertaker square, for
once, his loose accounts,
We'll strike, brave boys, a fair amount
from all his false amounts.

Come, trample down their robber rule,
and smite its venal spawn,
Their foreign laws, their foreign church,
their ermine and their lawn,
With all the specious fry of fraud that
robbed us of our own;
And plant our ancient laws again, beneath
our lineal throne."

In his February 13th *Irish Times* column, Fintan O'Toole says that Irish Catholic peasants across Munster and south Leinster, in the grip of a religious cult inspired by the fanatical, bigoted doctrines of a chillingly named "*Signor Pastorini*", embarked on a cult-inspired killing spree against innocent Irish Protestants in the name of "*Captain Rock*".

Reviewing the 2009 book *Captain Rock: the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821-1824* by American academic James S. Donnelly, O'Toole says:

"Before the fury finally abated more than 1,000 people had been murdered, mutilated or badly beaten. ... As an exposure of a hidden mental universe, an exploration of the roots of a particularly psychotic strand in Irish Catholic nationalism and a reflection on violence itself, *Captain Rock* is as important as it is startling. ... It is easy enough to understand why the Rockite upheaval has been left out of the official narrative of Irish revolts. It did not have a middle-class urban-intellectual leadership. It has none of the romance or nobility of Robert Emmet's speech from the dock or James Connolly's execution. Its violence is utterly shocking: women and children were murdered, rape was used as a weapon of terror and revenge, and bodies were often mutilated. (In at least three cases the victims were decapitated.)"

So, in other Irish affrays, respectable cover was provided by, well, rather interesting Fintan O'Toole types. But to see what was driving it all we have to expose the horrible secret which has been carefully concealed by official propaganda.

Unfortunately the situation is even worse than Fintan seems to realise. It may be hard for Dublin Four to believe that, in these more enlightened times, the Culchies are still at it. They are still singing Rockite songs and holding rallies and candle-light processions at the scenes of Rockite terror

and attempted genocide.

At least, this is the case in the parish adjoining the one I grew up in. The Battle of Carrickshock took place in 1831, after Captain Rock and his cohorts had been finally subdued in Munster by bayoneting, hanging, transportation, eviction and recurrent famine; and even after Signor Pastorini's prophecies of the 1825 demise of the Lutheran heresy turned out to be a deluded fantasy.

Here is the voice of Carrickshock:

Is fada atá deacuithe ag cealg ar Ghaeil
bhocht,
Cé gur crochadh na céadta 'á ndeasga
gan ábhar,
Ón am inar ceapadh an bheatha ar an
gcléir úd
Nár dh'orduigh Mac Dé dh'aoine dá sort;
Ba ard é a rachmas i ngradam faoi réim
Ar eachanna caol' donna ag triall ar gach
sport,
Nó gur tharla leo an tarbh ar thalamh
Chill Chéise
A leagfadh na méithphoic 'á bhfaigheadh
dul ina gcomhair.

Inar dtáinig de bhuachaillí bána agus
uaithne
Ó aimsir Rí Séamas níor ghéilleas dá
nglór,
Gur chuala mé an treascairt a tugadh don
Major,
Agus Flaitheas Mhic Dé go bhfaighe
Seán an buailteoir!
Bhí *Baxter* ann sínte, *Prescott* agus
Eagan,
Is fear na *citations* ag tréigean an tsnó,
Budds – an cneamhaire – gur sátheadh é
le bayonet –
Is le háthas an scéil sin bímidne ag ól!

Beidh parlaimint feasta aige Ó Conaill
in Éirinn –
Caithfeas na tréanphoic seo géilleadh 'á
ghlór!
Leagfaidh sé fearannta fairsinge ar
Ghaelaibh,
Is cuirfeas sliocht Éibhir ón réal go dtí an
choróin;
Beas aige *Hamilton* treascartha
créimeach –
A theampall dá réabadh le saorthoil dá
namhaid –
Is gach pílear buí smeartha a thug a anam
ón scléip leis
Ní raghas go Cill Chéise ag déanamh
aeir ann go deo!

[Tithes have been oppressing the poor Irish for a long time/ And hundreds were hung unjustly because of them./ From the time when the livings were conferred on that clergy/ That the Son of God never authorised;/ Their opulence, prestige and authority were great/ Attending every sporting venue on graceful roan steeds/

Until they encountered this bull of a man at
Kilcasey/ Who smote the fat bucks who
dared to oppose him./ Of all the White
Boys and Green Boys who ever were./
Since the time of King James – I never
acknowledged them./ Until I heard of the
defeat inflicted on the Major –/ May Seán
achieve God's Paradise for it! –/ Baxter was
stretched, Prescott and Eagan./ And the
citations server "lost his colour"/ Budds –
the knave! – was stabbed with a bayonet –
/ And let us have a drink in delight at this
news!// O'Connell will henceforth have a
parliament in Ireland./ And these great bucks
will have to submit to its authority!/ It will
bestow wide tracts of land on the Irish./
And will raise the Sons of Éibhear from the
sixpenny place to the crown;/ It will subdue
and corrode Hamilton/ And his temple will
be destroyed at will by his opponents/ An
every greasy Orange Peeler that escaped
with his life from [Carrickshock]/ Will never
again go taking the air at Kilcasey!

A song similar to this one, still very popular, was composed by Máire Bhuí Ní Laoghaire in honour of the Rockite victory at Céim an Fhia (Keimaneigh) on Friday, 11th January 1822, when a body of men from the neighbourhood of Ballygeary raided houses of loyalists in the Bantry district in search of arms, and defeated a force of militia raised by the Earl of Bantry. Similar sentiments are expressed in the verses at the start of this article, which are in a seventeenth century voice.

Irish Catholic "*sectarianism*" has little or nothing to do with Pastorini and his supposed cult following. The eighteenth century has lots on the lines of the following:

Lycet, Leader, Clayton, Compton &
Coote,
Ivers, Damer, Bateman, Bagwell &
Brooks,
Ryder, Taylor, Manor, Marrock &
Moore,
Is go bhfaiceam-na traochta ag tréin-
shliocht Chaisil na búir.

[may we see these churls shattered by the
brave breed of Cashel]
(Eoghan Rua O Sullivan, 1770s)

The tithe exactions of the clergy of the Established Church were even more onerous than rackrenting landlords. Tithe proctors could legally seize even the potatoes from the mouths of people on the edge of starvation. Despite attempts at mediation and negotiation throughout 1830 the Rev. Hans Hamilton of Knocktopher, Co. Kilkenny, insisted on his rights. A 37-strong force of armed police led by James Gibbons of Piltown escorted process server Butler to enforce a writ or citation on Dick "Waterford" Walsh near Carrickshock, between Thomastown and Ballyhale (where present-day hurling star Henry Shefflin comes from). Chapel bells were rung all around and crowds of men and women gathered, demanding "*Butler or Blood*". The police were trapped at

Carrickshock. Gibbons, Butler and eleven policemen were killed. Only three of their opponents were killed, unlike similar events at Bunclody (Co. Wexford, 1831, where thirteen people were killed, none of them police) and at Rathcormack (Co. Cork, 1834, fifty people killed).

The subsequent trial and retrial did not convict anyone charged for Carrickshock. Daniel O'Connell defended the accused. Locals arraigned were John Kennedy, John Daly, Pat Dwyer, William Walsh, Thomas Ryan, Richard Grennan, Edward Duggan, John Ryan, William Voss, Thomas Egan, and Patrick McCarthy.

The Carrickshock victory was recorded in his *Cinn-laé* or Diary by local Callan schoolteacher Amhlaoihbh Ó Súilleabháin, a studiously conservative, respectable and measured individual, without so much as a trace of Pastorini-type fantasy or hysteria in his make-up, who noted matter-of-factly that, as a tiresome necessity, the foreigners would eventually have to be got rid of because of the condition to which they had reduced the country. (Well, since they had exercised exclusive control of the running of the country for a century and a half, who else could be held responsible for it?)

It would appear that both sides regarded the situation as a "them or us" contest. In Summer 1847, holding power of life and death over millions and with an amazingly fortuitous circumstance at its disposal, the newly installed British Government made an astute, opportunistic policy decision which saw off a few million of "them"—or "us" if you like—in such a brilliantly conceived manner that it incurred only a minimal amount of international and historical disgrace. The extermination was still in progress when, on 2nd January 1852, the *Times* gloated:

"We need not prove the existence of such a class {as the native Irish cottier} incompatible with civilization [and] we now thank Heaven that we have lived to speak of the class as a class that has been. ... We may possibly live to see the day when [Ireland's] chief produce will be cattle, and English and Scotch the majority in her population."

But despite the extermination, the "them or us" grind continued almost unabated.

The reference to "*graceful roan steeds*" in the Carrickshock poem is related to the *uebermenschen* passion for hunting/shooting/racing. In the 1880s the peasants used an anti-fox-hunting campaign as one of many ploys in their great Land War contest with the *uebermenschen*. Carrickshock was not fought in vain. My grandfather received a plea almost as an equal from Lord Desart, dignitary of the Carrickshock area, for permission to hunt there—changed times! My grandfather's canvas anti-hunt banner says "*Down with Exterminators*".

Some relief of the Tithe issue was granted in 1838, and Church Disestablishment was enacted in 1870. For this, puritan Prime Minister Gladstone was feted by "them" as a liberator in Pastorini-like terms.

Native Irish "*sectarianism*" was, on the whole, not prejudice or bigotry. It was a perfectly rational and realistic reaction to the system imposed on 'them' by violent conquest and maintained by fanatical sectarian bigotry backed up by brutal armed force. The people accepted anyone, native or foreign, who seemed to be in any way sympathetic towards them. They could hardly afford to be choosy!

(Incidentally, Fintan O'Toole never bothered to disclose in his *Irish Times* article that Pastorini (Charles Walmesley), who he claims the Irish peasants were besotted by, was actually English.)

Rebellious West Indian-African slaves who sought to wipe out the West Indian whites were no doubt "*racist*" and "*genocidal*", never mind "*sectarian*". But their valiant attempts to overthrow the slavers are no less commendable for that. And a timely genocide of a small number of white settlers in Virginia and New England by the indigenous peoples there could have prevented their own extermination and reduced the sum total of human misery. What a pity that Princess Pocahontas was such a wet!

An element among the British settlers recognised the attractions of Indian life, and a few actually became Indian. Thomas Morton's sympathetic 1637 account of the Indians includes: "*Of their Houses and Habitations: The natives of New England are accustomed to build themselves houses much like the wild Irish ...*" (that's "us", I suppose).

The Indians were too civilised and humane to engage in a little small-scale pre-emptive genocide. They paid a terrible price for this weakness. Here is a small sample, from 29th November 1864, of what Anglo-Saxon order and civilisation had in store for them. A campaign of extermination was waged against the Colorado Indians after they were falsely accused of stealing 175 cattle, after they had attempted to make peace, and after they had handed over most of their weapons. The kind of scenes described below by eye-witnesses were replicated over and over again through the centuries, in America as in Ireland.

When a junior officer, Lieutenant Cramer, protested to Colonel Chivington against his attack on an Indian band (that means families of men, women and children), Chivington said: "*I have come to kill Indians, and believe that it is right and honourable to use any means under God's heaven to kill Indians.*" According to Cramer, Chivington ordered his troops to: "*Kill and scalp all, big and little; nits make lice.*"

Chivington, a former Methodist minister, commanded a force of 700 soldiers against 500 Indians at Sand Creek, of whom about 100 were men of fighting age. The rest were women, children and old men.

Robert Bent, Chivington's guide, reported: "After the firing the warriors put the squaws and children together, and surrounded them to protect them. I saw five squaws under a bank for shelter. When the troops came up to them they ran out and showed their persons, to let the soldiers know they were squaws and begged for mercy, but the soldiers shot them all ... There were some thirty or forty squaws collected in a hole for protection; they sent out a little girl about six years old with a white flag on a stick, she had not proceeded but a few steps when she was shot and killed. All the squaws in that hole were afterwards killed, and four or five bucks outside. The squaws offered no resistance. Every one I saw dead was scalped. I saw one squaw cut open with an unborn child, as I thought, lying by her side. Captain Soule afterwards told me that such was the fact ... I saw quite a number of infants in arms killed with their mothers."

First Lieutenant James D. Connor, New Mexico Volunteers: "About day break on the morning of the 29th of November we came in sight of the camp of the friendly Indians aforementioned, and were ordered by Colonel Chivington to attack the same, which was accordingly done. The command of Colonel Chivington was composed of about one thousand men; the village of the Indians consisted of from one hundred to one hundred and thirty lodges, and, as far as I am able to judge, of from five hundred to six hundred souls, the majority of which were women and children; in going over the battleground the next day I did not see a body of man, woman or child but was scalped, and in many instances their bodies were mutilated in the most horrible manner—men, women, and children's privates cut out, etc.; I heard one man say that he had cut out a woman's private parts and had them for exhibition on a stick ... according to the best of my knowledge and belief these atrocities were committed with the knowledge of J.M. Chivington, and I do not know of his taking any measures to prevent them; I heard of one instance of a child of a few months being thrown in the feed-box of a wagon, and after being carried some distance left on the ground to perish; I also heard of numerous instances in which men had cut out the private parts of females and stretched them over the saddle-boxes, and wore them over their hats while riding in the ranks ..."

Lieutenant Cramer: "We arrived at the Indian village about daylight ... Colonel Chivington moved his regiment to the front, the Indians retreating up the creek, and hiding under the banks ... White

Antelope ran towards our columns unarmed, and with both arms raised, but was killed. Several other of the warriors were killed in like manner. The women and children were huddled together, and most of our fire was concentrated on them ... The Indian warriors, about 100 in number, fought desperately; there were about 500 all told. ... Our force was so large that there was no necessity of firing on the Indians. They did not return the fire until after our troops had fired several rounds ... I told Colonel Chivington ... that it would be murder in every sense of the word, if he attacked those Indians. His reply was, bringing his fist down close to my face, 'Damn any man who sympathizes with Indians' ... he had come to kill Indians and believed it to be honourable to kill Indians under any and all circumstances."

Ashbury Bird, Company D, 1st Colorado Cavalry: "I went over the ground soon after the battle. I should judge there were between 400 and 500 Indians killed ... Nearly all, men, women, and children were scalped. I saw one woman whose privates had been mutilated."

Corporal Amos C. Miksch, 1st Colorado Cavalry, Company C: "Next morning after the battle, I saw a little boy covered up among the Indians in a trench, still alive. I saw a major in the 3rd regiment take out his pistol and blow off the top of his head. I saw some men unjointing fingers to get rings off, and cutting off ears to get silver ornaments. I saw a party with the same major take up bodies that had been buried in the night to scalp them and take off ornaments. I saw a squaw with her head smashed in before she was killed. Next morning, after they were dead and stiff, these men pulled out the bodies of the squaws and pulled them open in an indecent manner. I heard men say they had cut out the privates, but did not see it myself."

Sergeant Lucien Palmer, 1st Colorado Cavalry, Company C: "The bodies were horribly cut up, skulls broken in a good many; I judge they were broken in after they were killed, as they were shot besides. I do not think I saw any but was scalped; saw fingers cut off [to get the rings off them], saw several bodies with privates cut off, women as well as men."

David Louderbeck, 1st Colorado Cavalry: "The dead bodies of women and children were afterwards mutilated in the most horrible manner. I saw only eight. I could not stand it; they were cut up too much ... they were scalped and cut up in an awful manner ... White Antelope's nose, ears and privates were cut off."

John S. Smith, interpreter: "All manner of depredations were inflicted on their persons, they were scalped, their brains knocked out; the men used their knives, ripped open women, clubbed little children, knocked them in the head with their guns, beat their brains out, mutilated

their bodies in every sense of the word ... worse mutilated than any I ever saw before, the women all cut to pieces ... children two or three months old; all ages lying there, from sucking infants up to warriors."

In celebration, Denver Opera House strung Indian scalps across the stage during intermission, to standing applause. A few months later, in July 1865 Senator James Doolittle of Wisconsin addressed the Denver audience, and said that the choice was to put the Indians on reservations or to exterminate them. Doolittle wrote that the audience gave "*a shout almost loud enough to raise the roof of the Opera House—'Exterminate them! Exterminate them! Exterminate them!'*"

(Doolittle's proposal was for mere ethnic cleansing as opposed to genocide. Early photographs show the concentration camps or death camps—stockades guarded by military watchtowers—into which the Indians were sometimes herded to rot, starve and be murdered.)

Like the anti-Hitler resistance, the Indians often displayed spectacular heroism. Hitler was defeated by his intended victims in Russia within a few short years. The American ordeal went on for three centuries. The system was world-wide. Not long before Sand Creek, in India proper, Dublin-born psychopath Brigadier-General John Nicholson was organiser of the British terror which killed 100,000 Indians.

But that's the British figure. Historian Amaresh Misra puts the number at ten million. Charles Dickens wanted to kill them all:

"I wish I were a commander in chief in India. The first thing I would do to strike that Oriental Race with amazement ... should be to proclaim to them that my holding that appointment by the leave of God, to mean that I should do my utmost to exterminate the race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested; and that I was there for that purpose and no other, ... now proceeding, with all convenient dispatch and merciful swiftness of execution, to blot it out of mankind and raze it off the face of the Earth".

So Anglo-Saxon savagery did not begin and end in Hiroshima and Fallujah. The world-conquering Mongols settled down in a few generations as normal Chinese, Ukrainians, Poles, Indians etc. In comparison, it is a moot question whether humanity can ever learn to cope with the savagery which was born in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.

Who was Captain Rock? It seems that anybody who was prepared to oppose the *uebermenschen* regime could be Captain Rock.

But, believe it or not, the real Captain

Rock was none other than FINTAN O'TOOLE HIMSELF!

How can this be, you might ask? The explanation is as follows. Captain Rock was not the secretive, menacing enigma portrayed in O'Toole's 13th February *Irish Times* article. While Donnelly and O'Toole quote various crude notes and warnings in the name of Captain Rock, the Captain actually published his autobiography at the time—in 1824.

So the strongest claim to the Rock personality must be given to the strongest Rock voice—as expressed in his complete autobiography and family history, no less. This Rock was the poet and songwriter Thomas Moore. Moore is mentioned in two footnotes of Donnelly's book, and not mentioned at all in Fintan O'Toole's article. He was the darling of enlightened, liberal-radical England, friend of Lord Byron and other fashionable intellectuals of the time.

According to twentieth century Irish Republican Dominic Behan:

Tom Moore made his waters meet fame and renown,
A great lover of anything dressed in a crown,
In brandy the bandy oul' Saxon he'd drown,
But throw ne'er a one into the ocean.

If this assessment is right (I'm not saying it is!), Moore was the early nineteenth century Fintan O'Toole/Eoghan Harris/Kevin Myers. You might say Moore was a kind of Bono or Geldof to Lord Byron's Tony Blair. And that implies that the real Captain Rock was actually a Fintan O'Toole-type. After all, the pen is mightier than the sword (or the pitchfork in the case of the Rockites), and Moore's powerful exposition of the Rock philosophy must count for a lot more than a spot of peasant brawling.

So let's put Donnelly's and O'Toole's Pastorini nonsense aside and see for ourselves who and what Captain Rock really was. The source is *Memoirs Of Captain Rock, the celebrated Irish chieftain, with some account of his ancestors — Written by Himself*, which, by 1824, had run to five editions.

According to the Captain, the Rock family were prominent players ever since the English came to Ireland. Quoting the poet Fielding, Rock explains how England brought peace to Ireland:

The Irish had long made a deuce of a clatter,
And wrangled and fought about meum and tuum,
Till England stepped in, and settled the matter,
By kindly converting it all into suum.

He quotes the historian Leland:

"In many places where the English had

obtained settlements, the natives were first driven into insurrection by their cruelty, and then punished with double cruelty for their insurrection."

Here is an extract from a diary kept by a Rock ancestor:

"November 18 (1641)

Tidings just come to hand, that on the night of the 13th ult., the English and Scotch of Carrickfergus, did issue forth, and attack and murder, in the island Magee, 3000 men, women and children, all innocent persons, there being as yet no appearance of revolt in that quarter. If this doth not cause all Ireland to rise on the sudden, then is the blood of her Mac's run dry, and her ancient O's become ciphers indeed.

And here is the Captain's translation of verses composed by another of his ancestors in after the Islandmagee massacre:

Where art thou, Genius of Riot?
Where is thy yell of defiance?
Why are the Shea's and O'Shaughnessy's quiet?
And whither have fled the O'Rourke's
and O'Briens'?

Oh! When rebellion's so feasible,
Where is the kern would be slinking off?
CON OF THE BATTLES! What makes you
so peacable?
NIAL, THE GRAND! What the de'il are
you thinking of?

[Con is Conn Céadathach—Conn of the Hundred Battles; Nial is Niall Naoighiallach—Niall of the Nine Hostages, both ancient Irish kings—PM.]

The Captain comments:

"If such transactions as these are held up as examples of the *innocent* and the *laudable*, then ... remove all those landmarks of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, by which honest men have hitherto steered; let tyranny and turbulence, perfidy and plunder, be the order of the day among rulers and their subjects; and let Captain Rock and the Czar of Russia divide the world between them... All this time the Catholic "Enemy" (as the laws called their own manufacture) went on increasing in silence and in darkness, like the fire which some French philosophers suppose to exist at the centre of the earth—working its way upward in secret, till it will make at last the surface to hot to hold us. So little were they attended to, except for purposes of persecution, that ... it was stated gravely from the Bench that "the laws did not presume a Papist to exist in the Kingdom, nor could they breathe without the connivance of Government"..." (p217, 1824 edn.).

"Such were the bungling bigots and oppressors whose handiwork we see before us in the present condition of Ireland." (p221).

"The first great favour granted to the

Catholics {in 1772} was an Act empowering them to take leases of "unprofitable bog"—half an acre of arable land being thrown in as a douceur with fifty acres of bog ... The next great benefit bestowed on {them} was the allowing them to take the Oath of Allegiance: and this kind permission to the victim to come and swear eternal fidelity to his tormentors—though as insulting a piece of mockery as can well be imagined—was received with the warmest gratitude by the Catholics, because it at least acknowledged their existence as subjects" (p. 223).

"The exorbitant rise in rents and the severe exaction of tithes were the grievances that, in the year 1787, drove the wretched peasantry of Munster to my banners {to rebel in the name of Captain Right/Captain Rock}. Lord Clare, who was then Attorney-General and, of course, defended the {Established} Church, said "he knew the unhappy tenantry were ground to powder by relentless landlords". Mr Grattan, on the other hand, proved that "the landlord's over-reaching, compared to the tithe-farmer, was mercy". No wonder therefore that, between both, the wretched people were maddened, to the full pitch that Captain Right (as I was then nicknamed by my followers) required. But not even those double scourges, middlemen and tithe-takers, efficient as they were, could have accomplished the object for me so completely, had not the Government as usual come to their assistance, and, by its premature and unqualified severity, exasperated discontent into frenzy" (p93).

"The constancy of our State Doctors to their old remedy, the bayonet, is miraculous. Having exhibited in 1787 with their accustomed vigour and success, they continued to administer it at convenient intervals and with increasing exacerbation until 1798 when it brought on that violent but imperfect crisis, the Rebellion. They then resumed the same course of physic immediately after the Union and have persevered in it, only with a greater frequency of doses, down to the present day.

"These extracts {from the Rock ancestor's diary}... contain the concentrated essence of Irish history."

Here is Rock's description of the Hedge School curriculum around 1824:

"In History: Annals of Irish Rogues and Raparees.

In Biography: Memoirs of Jack the Batchelor, a notorious smuggler, and of Freney, a celebrated highwayman.

In Theology: Pastorini's Prophecies, and the Miracles of Prince Hohenloe.

In Poetry: Ovid's Art of Love, and Paddy's Resource {*Tionsgnaid Páidín*}

In Romance: Don Belianis of Greece, Moll Flanders &c. &c.

"Such being the leading works in that choice Catalogue, from which, according

to the taste of the parties, is selected the chief reading of the Cottagers of Ireland."

Captain Rock concludes:

"There are but two ways of keeping down the Rock family—either by restoring the Penal code to its full, original perfection, or by abolishing, in spirit as well as in deed, all the odious remnants of it. The former of these modes our rulers cannot adopt, the latter, I know, they will not.

"As long as Ireland shall pretend,
Like Sugar-loaf turn'd upside down,
To stand upon its smaller end,
So long shall live old Rock's renown.

As long as Popish spade and scythe,
Shall dig and cut the Sassanagh's tithe,
And Popish purses pay the tolls,
On Heaven's road, for Sassanagh's souls;

As long as Millions shall kneel down,
To ask of Thousands for their own,
While Thousands proudly turn away,
And to the Millions answer "Nay";

So long the merry reign shall be
Of Captain Rock and his family."

The two verses at the start of this article are in the voice of a 1641 Ulster Catholic rebel, speaking after the Islandmagee massacre mentioned above in the diary of the Captain's ancestor, and after the retaliatory 1641 massacre of Protestants by the rebels—though Catholic clerics tried to protect them from rebel vengeance. The speaker continues:

"Pity! No, no, you dare not, Priest—not you, our Father, dare
Preach to us now that Godless creed—the murderer's blood to spare;
To spare his blood, while tombless still our slaughtered kin implore
"Graves and revenge" from Guibin-Cliffs and Carraic's bloody shore!

They banned our faith, they banned our lives,
they trod us into earth,
Until our very patience stirred their bitter hearts to mirth;
Even this great flame which wraps them now,
not we, but they, have bred,
Yes, this is their own work, and now
THEIR WORK BE ON THEIR HEAD."

Gubbin Cliffs are in Islandmagee, near Larne, County Antrim. Orange songs commemorate this event, recalling Belfast Lough "*running red with Fenian blood*" at Carrickfergus. This poem, called *The Muster Of The North*, was written by a future Member of Parliament at Westminster, and future Premier of the State of Victoria in Australia. Charles Gavan Duffy was very far removed from Pastorini, to whom Captain Rock owes very little indeed.

In his *Irish Times* article, Fintan O'Toole

mentions various Rockite atrocities. The bogtrotting Culchies have been portrayed as savages by the *uebermenschen* and their apologists for centuries. Only recently we had the Coolacrease fiasco, which demonstrated that academic historians cannot be trusted. I don't know whether or not the IRA committed atrocities during the War of Independence. But we keep getting presented with "atrocities" which, when examined, turn out to be something quite different. As to the 1820s Rockites, maybe they committed atrocities as O'Toole says. I wonder whether the evidence for them is as strong as the evidence for the Sand Creek atrocity, or for the following events mentioned in O'Toole's article:

"It took large-scale military occupations, mass hangings (about 100 prisoners were executed), transportations, the introduction of the brutal Insurrection Act, the suspension of civil liberties (most of those tried and sentenced were accused of nothing more than breaking the curfew), assisted emigration from Cork to Canada and an upturn in the economy to end Captain Rock's three-year reign of terror."

Pat Muldowney

The Life And Poems Of Thomas Moore by *Brendan Clifford*.

A biography of the author of the well-known Irish Melodies, of the lesser known erotic verse of "Thomas Little" (which was denounced by the *Edinburgh Review* as the most insidious pornography of the age), of the first and best *Life Of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, and of the *Memoirs Of Captain Rock* (which defended Irish "agrarian terrorism" to the British establishment), along with a selection of his poems.

96 pp.

€10, £7.50.

Thomas Moore: Political And Historical Writings On Irish And British Affairs.

Extracts from works on Lord Edward/ Whiteboys/ Byron / Sheridan/ Whig Politics/ Irish History/ Religion.

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268pp.

€20, £15.

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Dr. Pat Walsh

€20, £15

D I Blues

Entry On D.D. Sheehan In Dictionary Of Irish Biography

I have just had an opportunity to consult the DIB which you edited.

The first entry I read was that of D D Sheehan, the first Irish Labour MP, who represented the Irish Land and Labour Association and the All for Ireland League for Mid-Cork for 17 years. I have a personal and political interest in him as he represented this area and both my grandfathers supported him.

In contrast with all his Irish peers, in late 1918 he decided to contest the General Election of that year for a London constituency in the Labour interest. Logically enough he left Cork to facilitate his future as a London MP. As he failed to get elected and as he remained absent from Ireland during the most crucial years in its modern history his decision to leave proved to be a political and personal disaster for him. His decision to quit Ireland was therefore a central fact in his life and deserves a full explanation in any account of his life.

In later years a myth was created to the effect that he left because of some threats to him in Cork for his political position on WW1 and that he returned when these threats were withdrawn.

The entry by Patrick Maume perpetuates this myth when it says that "*Sheehan's position in Cork grew increasingly untenable. The Sheehan family faced intimidation and were obliged to leave their home on the Victoria Road for London... Sheehan moved to Dublin in 1926 after learning that the threats against him had been lifted*" (Vol. 8, 877). No actual evidence is provided for these assertions. There is none.

When Sheehan left he was a well known MP, a journalist and a barrister. He had every opportunity to refer to any threats but nowhere did he do so. Neither did anybody else. Hitherto he had never been backward in coming forward to deal with his political opponents. I am sure the press would have been more than eager to report on threats to a sitting MP if there were any. There is not a contemporary hint of such threats.

None of his fellow Irish MP peers who also supported the war felt the need to leave the country and his closest colleague, William O'Brien, was later asked to stand for Fianna Fail.

In London after losing the election he went bankrupt and to cope with this he engaged in nefarious activities and became effectively a conman trying to obtain

The new *Dictionary of Irish Biography* is modelled on the *British Dictionary of National Biography*. It suffers from many flaws. The letter below was sent by AHS to James McGuire, Managing Editor, Dictionary of Irish Biography Project, which is situated at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. It forms the first of a new series in this magazine on DIB

24 February 2010

money from a variety of sources by fraudulent means. This got so notorious that in October 1924 it was reported to the Irish Grants Committee in London that the Commissioner of the Police in London had said "*the whole matter was under the consideration of the Director of Public Prosecutions with a view to criminal proceedings being taken. Captain Sheehan at that time disappeared*" (National Archives, Kew, CO 762/24/14). This Committee dismissed the claim he made to it as yet another attempted fraud.

He returned to Ireland to escape the consequences of his behaviour in London. Therefore the only indisputable, documented, threat ever made to him was by the London police and he sought refuge in Ireland to escape it. There were no recorded threats that drove him in the opposite direction.

I must also draw your attention to Mr Maume's bibliography.

He appears to ignore the only biography ever published on the subject, "*The Life and Times of D.D. Sheehan B.L.*" (3 Bridges Publishing, 2008) by John Dillon which makes no reference to threats that drove him out of the country. He gives no publisher for any book listed.

Mr Maume gives Wikipedia as a source for claims that Sheehan left because he was threatened. Wikipedia is notoriously unreliable because of its polemical 'do it yourself' nature. It is not subject to editorial checking for accuracy. The D D Sheehan "threat" was fully discussed and refuted in its 'Discussion pages' when it first appeared but those pages have been removed. The entry that remains reflects the tenacity of certain polemicists with an axe to grind.

Surely your Dictionary contributors and particularly "*a member of the project staff*" like Mr Maume should not give credence to such an ephemeral, censored and discredited source and at the same time ignore properly published, verifiable and uncensorable sources.

This Society has comprehensively refuted the allegations of threats against D D Sheehan in Cork and Mr Maume must be aware of this. Yet he has been allowed to use the Dictionary to perpetuate a myth that misleads and distorts the biographical facts on D D Sheehan.

I hope this entry will be suitably amended in future issues and an addendum issued as soon as practically possible.

Jack Lane

US Weapon Test Aimed at Iran Caused Haiti Quake

An unconfirmed report by the Russian Northern Fleets says the Haiti earthquake was caused by a flawed US Navy 'earthquake weapons' test before the weapons could be utilized against Iran.

United States Navy test of one of its 'earthquake weapons' which was to be used against Iran, went 'horribly wrong' and caused the catastrophic quake in the Caribbean, the website of Venezuela's ViVe TV recently reported, citing the Russian report.

After the report was released, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez also made a similar claim, saying that a US drill, carried out in preparation for a deliberate attempt to cause an earthquake in Iran, had led to the deadly incident in Haiti, claiming more than 110,000 lives.

Though Russian Northern Fleets' report was not confirmed by official sources, the comments attracted special attention in some US and Russian media outlets including Fox news and Russia Today.

Russia Today's report said that Moscow has also been accused of possessing and utilizing such weapons.

In 2002, a Georgian Green Party leader claimed that Moscow had instigated an earthquake on Georgian territory, the TV channel said.

According to ViVe, the unconfirmed Russian report says earlier this month the US carried out a similar test in the Pacific Ocean, which also caused another 6.5 magnitude earthquake in an area near the town of Eureka, California.

The California quake resulted in no deaths or serious injury, but left many buildings damaged.

The Venezuelan news website said that the report also introduced the possibility that the US Navy may have had "full knowledge" of the damage that the test could cause.

The report also speculated that knowledge of the possible outcome was why the US military had pre-positioned the deputy commander of US Southern Command, General P. K. Keen, on the island so that he could oversee relief efforts if the need arose.

Based on the alleged report, the ultimate goal of the US weapons tests was to initiate a series of deadly earthquakes in Iran to topple the current Islamic system in the country.

The tests are believed to be part of the United States' High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP), which has been associated with many conspiracy theories.

Other than being blamed for earthquakes, HAARP has also been associated with weather anomalies that cause floods,

droughts and hurricanes.

Some sources have even linked the 7.8 magnitude quake that shook the Chinese city of Sichuan in May 12, 2008 with the program.

Allegations have been made that since the late 1970s, the US has 'greatly advanced' the state of its earthquake weapons to the point where it is now utilizing devices that employ a Tesla Electromagnetic Pulse, Plasma and Sonic technology, along with 'shockwave bombs.'

Russia has accused the US military of employing such devices in Afghanistan to trigger the devastating 7.2 magnitude earthquake that hit the country back in March, 2002.

In the mid-1990s the Russian State Duma issued a press release on HAARP, which was signed by 90 deputies. The statement said the US was

"creating new integral geophysical weapons that may influence the near-Earth medium with high-frequency radio waves.

"The significance of this qualitative leap could be compared to the transition from cold steel to firearms, or from conventional weapons to nuclear weapons.

"This new type of weapons differ from previous types in that the near-Earth medium becomes at once an object of direct influence and its component..."

In 1997, US Secretary of Defense William Cohen also expressed concern about activities that "can alter the climate, set off earthquakes, volcanoes remotely through the use of electromagnetic waves."

The US government, however, has chosen to stick to its position that HAARP is merely a program aimed at analyzing the Earth's ionosphere for the purpose of developing communications and surveillance technology.

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HAITI—THE UNFORGIVEN

A victim of Imperial abuse,
they use its tortured body in a ruse,
so many, an Israeli rescue team —
while the ruins of Gaza lies unredeemed.
The United States send in the marines,
maybe munitions tastes better than beans.
Tears rain down like bombs in
Afghanistan,
soaked hankies among Whitehall's
permatan.
Predators call it a poor black nation
after crippling its rice exportation,
also called a banana republic
when United Fruit made it shambolic.
Despite all their startling aggressive
might
Toussaint Louverture still gives them a
fright.

Wilson John Haire
28th January, 2010

REPORT

America's warfare state.

Liquidating the Empire

By Patrick J. Buchanan

February 23, 2010

A decade ago, Oldsmobile went. Last year, Pontiac, Saturn, Saab, and Hummer were discontinued. A thousand GM dealerships shut down.

To those who grew up in a "GM family," where buying a Chrysler was like converting to Islam, what happened to GM was deeply saddening.

Yet the amputations had to be done—or GM would die.

And the same may be about to happen to the American Imperium.

Its birth can be traced to World War II, when America put 16 million men in uniform and sent millions across the seas to crush Nazi Germany and Japan. After V-E and V-J Day, the boys came home.

But with the Stalinization of half of Europe, the fall of China, and war in Korea came NATO and alliances with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, and Australia that lasted through the Cold War.

In 1989, however, the Cold War ended dramatically with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the retirement of the Red Army from Europe, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and Beijing's abandonment of world communist revolution.

Overnight, our world changed. But America did not change.

As Russia shed her alliances and China set out to capture America's markets, Uncle Sam soldiered on.

We clung to the old alliances and began to add new allies. NATO war guarantees were distributed like credit cards to member states of the old Warsaw Pact and former republics of the Soviet Union.

We invaded Panama and Haiti, smashed Iraq, liberated Kuwait, intervened in Somalia and Bosnia, bombed Serbia, and invaded Iraq again—and Afghanistan. Now we prepare for a new war—on Iran.

Author Laurence Vance has inventoried America's warfare state.

We spend more on defense than the next 10 nations combined.

Our Navy exceeds in firepower the next 13 navies combined. We have 100,000 troops in Iraq, 100,000 in Afghanistan or headed there, 28,000 in Korea, over 35,000 in Japan, and 50,000 in Germany. By the Department of Defense's "Base Structure Report," there are 716 U.S. bases in 38 countries.

Chalmers Johnson, who has written books on this subject, claims DOD is minimizing the empire. He discovered some 1,000 U.S. facilities, many of them secret and sensitive. And according to DOD's "Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country," U.S. troops are now stationed in 148 countries and 11 territories.

Estimated combined budgets for the Pentagon, two wars, foreign aid to allies, 16 intelligence agencies, scores of

Pensions

Compulsory Pensions

And, whilst we're on the issue of Pensions and Minister Lenihan's aspiration to simplify the entire tax system : it is very clear that the only way to extend pension coverage to all workers is by compulsion.

There are almost a million workers in Ireland facing retirement with nothing more to live on than their Social Welfare Pensions. Should they be forced into pension schemes or simply encouraged to save?

It's time to do something. Our population is ageing and, while the recent influx of immigrants may have slowed the process, it is being forecast that by 2031 there will only be 3.3 workers for everyone over 65 compared to 5.6 now.

The time is also ripe for major changes to the iniquitous system of tax relief on Pension Contributions whereby the greatest benefit goes to the highest earners. Ignoring charges, a Standard Rate taxpayer pays €80 for the same pension benefit that a high rate taxpayer gets for €59.

Letting the problem sort itself out by adopting a pay-as-you-go approach and encouraging people to retire later is not the answer. The conventional wisdom is that we need to get more people to put more money aside for their retirement.

That has been official Government policy for some time.

Employers are against any form of compulsion and, while it hasn't said so, that's likely to be the Government's preference too. But the turmoil on the world's stock markets has greatly enhanced the case for compulsion. It has graphically illustrated the fact that investment values can go down as well as up thereby making voluntary saving much harder to encourage even with greater incentives.

Most of those million or so workers who are not in pension schemes are only paying tax at the standard rate. The tax relief on pension contributions is less attractive for them than for those able to claim at the top rate.

Incentives have existed for decades, as has the Government's desire to extend pension coverage. Yet little or no progress has been made. The truth is that no matter how well the carrot is repackaged or even improved, it will not be enough to encourage significant numbers of low paid workers to save for their retirement.

The easiest, cheapest and most effective solution would be to simply extend PRSI, the State Social Insurance scheme. It already provides pensions to most workers. The collection system is in place and operated by all employers and, the existing National Pension Fund offers ideal investment vehicles from the very risky to the very safe.

Of course, there is no money in that for

the pensions industry and a few months ago any move to even partially nationalise pension provision would have been unheard of. But not now, when even hardened right-wing commentators are calling for bank nationalisation.

The Trade Union movement is in dire need of again connecting to the masses, a call for the defence and expansion of our Social Insurance system could well spark that rage which is so lacking in the community at this moment.

Passports—More than 50,000 passports were either lost or stolen over an 18-month period.

The startling level of misplacement and theft emerged during a week when five fake Irish passports were used by members of a team of Israeli assassins who shot a senior Hamas figure in Dubai last month.

The Department of Foreign Affairs figures show that:

☛ In 2008, 36,264 passports were reported either lost or stolen. Of these 31,262 were reported lost and 5,002 were reported stolen.

☛ In the first six months of 2009, 14,413 passports were reported lost and 2,422 were reported stolen.

Close to 900,000 passports were issued during the corresponding 18-month period. The Population of Republic of Ireland was 4,234,925 in 2006.

What do you think?

thousands of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, and our new castle-embassies: \$1 trillion a year.

While this worldwide archipelago of bases may have been necessary when we confronted a Sino-Soviet bloc spanning Eurasia from the Elbe to East China Sea, armed with thousands of nuclear weapons and driven by imperial ambition and ideological hatred of us, that is history now.

It is preposterous to argue that all these bases are essential to our security. Indeed, our military presence, our endless wars, and our support of despotic regimes have made America, once the most admired of nations, almost everywhere resented and even hated.

Liquidation of this empire should have begun with the end of the Cold War. Now it is being forced upon us by the deficit-debt crisis. Like GM, we can't kick this can up the road any more, because we have come to the end of the road.

Republicans will fight new taxes. Democrats will fight to save social programs. Which leaves the American empire as the logical lead cow for the butcher's knife.

Indeed, how do conservatives justify borrowing hundreds of billions yearly from Europe, Japan, and the Gulf states—to

defend Europe, Japan, and the Arab Gulf states? Is it not absurd to borrow hundreds of billion annually from China—to defend Asia from China? Is it not a symptom of senility to borrow from all over the world in order to defend that world?

In their Mount Vernon declaration of principles, conservatives called the Constitution their guiding star. But did not the author of that constitution, James Madison, warn us that wars are the death of republics?

Under Bush II, conservatives, spurning the wisdom of their fathers, let themselves be seduced, neo-conned into enlisting in a Wilsonian crusade that had as its declared utopian goal "ending tyranny in our world."

How could conservatives whose defining virtue is prudence and who pride themselves on following the lamp of experience have been taken into camp by the hustlers and hucksters of empire?

Yet, now that Barack Obama has embraced neo-socialism, Republicans are about to be given a second chance. And just as Rahm Emanuel said liberal Democrats should not let a financial crisis go to waste, but exploit it to ram through their agenda, the Right should use the opportunity of the fiscal crisis to take an ax to the warfare state.

Ron Paul's victory at CPAC may be a

sign the prodigal sons of the Right are casting off the heresy of neoconservatism and coming home to first principles.

Information Clearing House

Postscript on George Lee

George Lee took leave of absence from his high-profile position as a popular RTE reporter on economic matters to take a seat for Fine Gael in a Dail by-Election less than a year ago. Recently he shocked his constituents and everyone else by resigning from both the Dail and the Party, in what looked like a huff.

The outcome of the Lee fiasco was politics 1 media 0, and the people got the message.

This led to a temporary surge in the self-respect of politicians—who Ivan Yeates described to an approving TV audience as driven by a passion for "public service", while media personalities were driven by meglomaniac. Fine Gael, in the weeks following Lee's defection back to the media, actually began functioning as a creditable party for the first time in a long time, with even Enda Kenny coming out of it as a political leader.

PRSI continued

🍏 The State Pension (Non-Contributory) is subject to a means test, so we will take into account any other income you and your spouse or partner have when deciding if they qualify for that pension. (Leaflet SW118).

QUALIFICATIONS

In assessing whether a commercial partnership actually existed, the Department takes a range of factors into account. Each case is taken on its merits. All the following criteria don't have to be met but some of them do.

1. There is a written partnership agreement—the law doesn't require this but it's obviously a fairly conclusive indication that a partnership does exist.
2. There is a joint business account on which each partner writes cheques.
3. The existence of a partnership is apparent to those doing business with it.
4. Each partner makes a significant contribution to running the business.
5. The profits and losses of the partnership are shared by the partners.
6. Business stationery reflects the existence of a partnership.

"You should meet some of these general criteria if you are claiming to be in a partnership with your spouse. If you cannot do this, you will be deemed not to be in a business partnership." (*Social Welfare booklet*, SW124).

Was there ever a more vague or meaningless set of criteria thought up by a bureaucracy?

No. 1 is not legal; No. 2 only requires a new cheque book with both names. As for No. 6, all you need is a computer with a printer. And to top it all, the applicant has only to "*meet some of these general criteria*".

SHOCKED FARMERS' WIVES

"Farmers' wives shocked by a decision by the Department of Social and Family Affairs to take back their pensions have appealed the move to the Pensions Ombudsman.

"However, the ombudsman has been told the situation it is 'totally discriminatory against older females' who worked with their husbands on farms for 30 years while their neighbour who is under 65 has time to arrange their partnership scheme and their PRSI before they reach the cut off age of 66, the woman's letter says" (*Irish Examiner*, 10.2.2010).

This is a dead give-away! It is obvious that if you get your leg in the door, before your 65th birthday, they will take retrospective payment and "Bob's your

Uncle". You end up on the same rate as a PAYE worker

A PAYE man pays stamps all his life, yet his "Home-maker" wife or partner will only ever be entitled to the State Pension (Non-Contributory).

FINE GAEL RAGE

"The Minister of Social and Family Affairs has been accused of engaging in an attack on farm spouses, who had been awarded pensions retrospectively but are now being asked to refund what has been awarded to them by the Department.

"The accusations were made by Fine Gael community, rural, and Gaeltacht affairs spokesperson Deputy Michael Ring.

"Hundreds of pensioners who have been awarded a contributory State pension in recent years are now being asked at the behest of the Minister to refund the sum of their pensions to the department," he said.

"This is despite the fact that in all cases the Department granted the pension and in many cases demanded a PRSI contribution be paid retrospectively by the applicant.

"This situation arises due to Minister Mary Hanafin reneging on a commitment made to farming organisations which allowed applicants to claim, despite having passed the age threshold of 66 years of age as described in the legislation. In all these cases the department first required applicants to prove that a farm partnership existed and also sought a payment from the applicant to reconcile their PRSI record. This figure often amounted to thousands of euro. The legislation clearly empowers the Minister to ignore the 66 year threshold and award the pension, as has been the case to date," said an outraged Deputy Ring.

"For the Minister to turn around and seek repayment from hundreds of pensioners is nothing less than vulgar and cynical. Fine Gael is formally calling on Minister Hanafin to reverse this appalling decision," he concluded. (Mayo Advertiser, 23.1.2010).

Well, the bloody cheek, just imagine the Taxpayer seeking to clarify the status of a rancher's wife. Then, demanding a petty back payment despite the fact that a clear reading of the legislation entitles to no such payment. But, being so used to hogging every entitlement going, they just can't restrain themselves and keep demanding more—whether entitled to such or not!

"But many spouses understandably like to get a pension in their own right rather than being treated as an appendage to their partner's pension", which was quoted by Colm Rapple, above, is not correct! *"Since 24th September 2007, by law we must pay the increase for a qualified adult directly to the spouse or partner concerned*

unless they specify that it can be paid to you" (Leaflet SW118).

🍏 You need a yearly average of 24 full-rate contributions to get the minimum rate State Pension (Transition). You need an average of 48 full-rate contributions to get the maximum rate pension.

🍏 A yearly average of 10 full-rate contributions will give you the minimum rate State Pension (Contributory). For the maximum rate pension, you need a yearly average of 48 full-rate contributions.

EU EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME FROM FARMING

The Early Farm Retirement Scheme is a scheme co-funded by the European Union (EU) to encourage farmers aged between 55 and 66 to retire from farming and transfer/lease their land to a younger farmer. The younger farmer must meet certain conditions. Farmers who retire and meet the conditions of the scheme qualify for a Farm Retirement Pension, which is jointly funded by the EU and the National Exchequer. There is also a pension scheme for workers aged between 55 and 66 who lose their employment as a result of the farmer's early retirement.

The main conditions of the scheme relate to the ages of the retiring farmer and the eligible younger farmer, the commitment of the retiring farmer to cease commercial farming and of the younger farmer to continue in farming and the viability of the younger farmer's holding.

The amount of the Farm Retirement Pension is a flat rate plus an amount related to the number of hectares of land transferred/leased. If you become eligible for a Social Welfare Pension, the amount is reduced.

RATES—PAYMENTS TO RETIRING FARMERS

The basic rate of the Farm Retirement Pension is €9,300. A sum of €300 per hectare of agricultural land up to a maximum of 24 hectares may also be paid. The maximum payment under the Scheme is €15,000 per annum.

The Pension is payable for 10 years or until the retiring farmer reaches 66.

If the retiring farmer dies, the entitlement to the remaining pension may be transferred to the spouse and/or dependent relatives in certain circumstances.

RETIRING FARM WORKERS

The annual payment to workers is €4,000. This is payable for 10 years or up to age 66. If the worker dies, the entitlement to the remaining pension may be transferred to the spouse and/or dependent relatives in certain circumstances.

continued on page 24

PRSI continued

business together. This partnership can arise in any business venture, ranging from building contracting to share investment clubs, horse racing syndicates or rock bands.

"The third category of partnership is the investment partnership and the number of these has exploded in recent years. In film finance schemes, carpark investments and holiday home schemes, partnerships are often formed because of their tax advantages over companies.

"If the partners fail expressly or implicitly to exclude these terms, they will apply to the firm. One such implied term is that, if a partner dies, his or her estate can force the sale of the practice, regardless of its profitability, the damage to the firm's goodwill or the wishes of the surviving partners. Obviously, a better solution would be for the law to provide that the surviving partners should be allowed to buy out the deceased partner, as is the situation in the United States.

"Another problem with these implied terms is that they do not entitle the partners to expel their co-partner, no matter how negligent or fraudulent he might have been.

"Their only option in such a situation is to apply to court for the firm to be wound up. Instead, the courts should be given the power to order the buy-out of a partner's share, as happens in company law..." (*Sunday Business Post*, 27.8.2000).

Could you imagine for a single instant the farmers of Ireland allowing such impediments to hang over their precious properties. "*Partnership*" my eye. This is just another sop to the IFA at a time when other social payments are being cut to the bone!

FARMERS APPLAUD MINISTER

Colm Rapple explained:

"Minister Hanafin gained plaudits from the farming lobby in 2008, when she unveiled details of how farmers' wives could, in their own right, qualify for contributory old age pensions. She had come up with an answer to the long-standing complaint that the spouses of the self-employed, even when formally employed in the business, are not normally covered by PRSI.

"It may not be worth all that much in money terms. If only one spouse qualifies for the old age pension he or she is entitled to claim an additional payment in respect of a spouse. The pension for a spouse and partner is currently €446.60 a week while two individuals pensions amount to €480.60—a difference of €34.

"But many spouses understandably like to get a pension in their own right rather than being treated as an appendage to their partner's pension.

"Ms Hanafin had come up with a solution. A spouse working in a family business, such as a farm, can easily be deemed to be a partner rather than an employee. As such, he or she, could pay PRSI at the self-employed rate and thereby qualify for a contributory State pension on retirement.

"She went so far as to promote the idea with a leaflet explaining how the existence of a partnership could be established and back payments of PRSI contributions made. In many cases the back payments need not be substantial since the spouse who was always paying PRSI may well have been paying it on the total income from the business." (*Irish Examiner*, 29.1.2010).

According to the Minister about 1,000 people, mostly farmers' wives, applied under the scheme. Some 579 cases have been processed and 508 were deemed to have a partnership in existence. Of those, 268 have applied for a pension. The rest have not reached pension age yet.

The 'discrimination' against the spouses of the self-employed mainly affects women, the bulk of them farmers' wives. But it can affect any family business where both spouses contribute to the workload but only one is covered by social insurance.

What Ms Hanafin highlighted back in 2008 was that it is possible for both spouses to pay PRSI contributions and be each covered in their own right if the business is established as a limited company, or if a formal commercial partnership is deemed to exist. The latter requirement is the easiest to comply with and the Department may accept that the partnership is of long standing.

So a farmer's wife, for example, coming up to retirement without having made PRSI contributions, may be able to backdate contributions for earlier years and thereby qualify for a pension.

The rules are fairly clear and they haven't been changed. But the booklet draws attention to the fact that the restrictions on social insurance cover do not apply to spouses who are formal partners in the family business or where the business has been incorporated as a limited company.

But if your spouse is a sole trader i.e. self-employed, you are not covered by social welfare, whether you are formally employed or simply assist in the business. Before the individualisation of tax bands, there was no tax benefit in formally employing a spouse even if he or she worked full time.

The family income tax bill would be the same either way. But that's no longer the case. There can be a tax advantage in formally employing a spouse and actually paying a wage. A two income couple benefits from wider standard tax bands than a single-income couple.

But to be covered for Social Insurance it takes more than simply getting a wage from the business. The business must be a partnership or a limited company. If that is the case and you are employed by the business you are liable to pay 'Class A' PRSI which can entitle you to Unemployment and Disability Benefits in addition to building up entitlement to a State Pension.

If you work as a self-employed person for the partnership or company, you are liable for 'Class S' contributions, which don't provide entitlement to Unemployment or Disability Benefits. But you do build up entitlement to a Pension. You must have an income of at least €3,174 a year, but that's all you need. You simply pay contributions on whatever income you have at the "S" rate of 5% and you are credited with a year's contributions which goes towards building up your pension entitlements.

"You must have an income of at least €3,174 a year, but that's all you need." Indeed.

"*Money for old rope*", you could say!

To qualify for a contributory State Pension at age 66 you need to have started making contributions before age 56. To draw the Transition Pension that is payable at age 65, you need to have started contributions before age 55.

The minimum annual contribution for Class "S" of €253 for the year 2010, which over 10 years would work out at €2,530 to receive a Contributory Pension of €230 a week or €12,000 a year on your 66th birthday.

PAYE CONTRIBUTORY PENSION

As a PAYE employee you will pay PRSI if you are aged between 16 and 65.

A PAYE worker on the PRSI "A1" rate pays 4% on the first €127, then 8% on €127.01 to €1,443 and 9% on the balance. His employer pays over double that and when the PAYE worker reaches 66, he gets the same as the farmer's partner: €230 a week.

And bless him or her if they have not paid "*260 full-rate employment contributions and a yearly average of at least 48 paid or credited full-rate contributions from 1979 to the end of the tax year before you reach age 65*" (*State Pension booklet*, SW118).

As for retrospective payments, forget it!

=====

☛ Your personal State Pension (Contributory) or State Pension (Transition) is not affected by any other income, savings or pensions you may have.

(Leaflet SW118).

To page 25

PRSI continued

Following this consultation phase, the Government set out to develop a National Pensions Framework which has yet to be published.

The Green Paper should be read by any Trade Unionist thinking of accepting a reduction in PRSI contributions as a *quid pro quo* for moderate pay increases. While a cut in PRSI rates could be hidden in the short term by using up the existing surplus in the Social Insurance Fund, the money would eventually have to be recovered through higher taxes. The concept of Social Insurance would have been destroyed and workers would effectively have been supplementing their income by dipping into their pension fund.

HANAFIN'S SCAM

"I originally rang the department and said I had been working on the farm since 1970, the two of us had, and everything had been in both our names.

"By May last year, it looked like I was entitled to the contributory pension after I sent in all the forms.

"I sent the stuff to the welfare people and the department said the partnership [scheme] was approved, I was being accepted.

"On request, Ms. Buckley paid the department some €5,500 in order to make up a gap in her PRSI payments so she could be eligible for the scheme.

"I sent them the cheque... weeks later a lot of money was put into my bank account and then a letter followed which said I had been accepted and the payment was dated back to the age of 66."

"She had received a sum of €13,240 in her bank in May [2009], and was immediately eligible for a full pension of €230 a week.

"She has since received more than €6,500 in weekly pension payments." (*Irish Examiner*, 5.2.2010).

However, this little "*social Shangri-La*" came to a sudden end last January when 85 farmers' wives over the age of 66 were asked to pay back state pension payments—some as much as tens of thousands of Euro—after a major Department 'blunder'.

The farming women, many in the 70s and 80s, were last year encouraged by the vivacious Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin to claim the retrospective payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs under a partnership scheme.

Now, the Department wants the money back, saying in many cases the women were not eligible because they had not paid the compulsory one year's full payment of PRSI before the age of 66.

Ms Hanafin has "*apologised for the mistake, blaming it on her department*" (ibid).

What mistake? The department says the "*mistake*" is not a change in policy or law "and stems from the fact that the pension applicants were approved wrongly" (*Irish Examiner*, 5.2.2010).

"SUPERB VALUE FOR MONEY"

"Thousands of women and men who are working with their spouses in a partnership were urged today to check their eligibility for a State pension.

"Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin T.D., (25th June 2008) launched a new information leaflet which clearly sets out how such commercial partnerships are viewed from a Tax and PRSI point of view.

"The new leaflet—*Working with your spouse: how it affects your social welfare contributions and entitlements* (SW 124) was jointly produced by the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Revenue Commissioners. Minister Hanafin was joined at the launch in Government Buildings by members of farming and business organisations as well as women's groups.

Launching the new leaflet, Minister Hanafin said:

"generally, spouses working with their partners do not pay social insurance contributions. However, this leaflet clarifies that spouses who operate in a 'commercial partnership' may be brought into the social insurance system. In this way, both spouses incur a liability to pay self-employed PRSI and build up entitlement towards a contributory State Pension and other Social Welfare benefits".

"...this is hugely important for women who have over many years contributed greatly to the partnership and this will primarily benefit women who are approaching pension age but are not covered for a contributory pension".

The Minister said that if such women can clearly demonstrate that they have been working with their spouse in a partnership for a number of years,

"then we can backdate their PRSI liability and allow them to create a PRSI contribution record. Of course, they will have to pay the Department of Social and Family Affairs any such PRSI liability before an application for a pension can be considered but PRSI contributions, especially for self-employed people, represent superb value for money so it is a very worthwhile investment".

NO NEED FOR DEEDS

"Minister Hanafin said that the new publication recognises that, while their names might not always be on the deeds, wives often make just as much of a contri-

bution to the running of a farm or business as their husbands do. "Over the past number of years we have made great strides in bringing more people, particularly women, into the social insurance system so that their pension entitlements can be secured—this publication is another important milestone in that regard."

"However, Minister Hanafin also sounded a note of caution by urging those who are considering their options to seek professional advice. "This leaflet sets out only the tax and social welfare implications of entering into a business partnership arrangement with one's spouse but there may be legal and other financial implications. The Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Revenue Commissioners are committed to offering as much assistance as we can but I urge couples considering business partnership to study the leaflet carefully before proceeding. It is also crucial that they seek both legal and financial advice before approaching either body. Every family is different and couples need to be sure that business partnership is right for them."

"Minister Hanafin concluded by paying tribute to the input of the farming social partners in producing the leaflet" (*Social and Family Affairs website*).

"*While their names might not always be on the deeds*", states Minister Hanafin—but surely if their names are not on the deeds it cannot be honestly called 'partnership'?"

Surely the wives and partners of those thousands of workers who, for the sake of their families and children, elect to be home-makers have an equal right to the status of partnership and most definitely the great majority of them are joint deed holders!

But alas, they will only ever receive the non-Contributory State Pension.

LEGAL 'PARTNERSHIP'?

Michael Twomey, a solicitor specialising in partnership law, wrote:

"Partnerships are the most common form of business arrangement in Ireland, apart from companies.

"Whenever people carry on any form of business arrangement together without incorporating, they constitute a partnership and are subject to the law of partnership.

"The most common category of partnership is the professional partnership. Accountants, solicitors, doctors, vets, dentists and other professionals are not allowed to form companies, as they must be personally liable to their clients or patients. These types of partnerships form a large part of the multi-billion pound professional services industry in Ireland.

"The second category of partnership is an informal partnership that arises whenever people carry on any form of



Hands Off Our Social Insurance!

In 2008, during the National Agreement talks the Government offered the Trade Unions a cut in PRSI [Pay Related Social Insurance] rates as part of a package to encourage the acceptance of moderate pay increases. The cuts would have been structured in such a way that the greater gain would go to those earning less than €50,000 a year while very high earners, on more than about €100,000, would end up paying more.

Minister Lenihan appears to be embarking on a similar course in his desire to streamline the tax system. But workers should be wary of the consequences of such a move, especially for the long-term.

Minister Lenihan proposes to consolidate all current employee Social Insurance payments and levies into a universal social contribution by 2011. This contribution will replace the existing employee PRSI, Health and Income Levy charges. The level at which the contribution will be applied remains to be seen. While the announcement does suggest that it will be applied at a low rate but on a wide base.

From a Government point of view the proposal is attractive because the cost of PRSI cuts could effectively be postponed. Unlike income tax cuts they needn't show up in the budget figures for some years.

That ability to make the cuts appear cost-free is also appealing to those Trade Union leaders who, despite the hard-line rhetoric, would much prefer to have a national agreement than a return to the tough grind of local pay bargaining. Minister Lenihan's proposal has the added advantage of seeming to favour middle and lower income groups at the expense of the fat-cats.

The trouble is that cuts in PRSI rates are not cost-free. They will be financed out of the Social Insurance Fund which faces a deficit of some €4.4 billion by the end of this year, according to official projections. Any cuts in PRSI will have to be made up in some other way.

The proposals aren't new. They were

part of the Fianna Fáil pre-election manifesto, confirmed in the programme for Government that was agreed with the Greens in 2007. So they are already on the agenda of budgetary measures to be introduced as the finances allow.

The promise is to cut the current 4% rate of PRSI to 2% and to abolish the ceiling which is set at €75,036 this year. Private sector workers actually pay 6% of their income up to that ceiling level. But that includes a 2% Health Levy. The PRSI element is actually 4%.

There is also a promise to cut the self-employed rate of PRSI—already charged on all income—from 3% to 2%.

It's obviously not a self-financing change.

ABOLITION OF SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND

PRSI is more of an insurance premium than a tax. While collected by the Revenue Commissioners, it is paid into the Social Insurance Fund and used to finance Social Insurance benefits. It used to need an annual top-up from general tax revenue but for many years it had been running a surplus up until the recent global financial collapse.

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Back in 2002, when the Government's financial position tightened a little, the then Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevy, couldn't resist the temptation to raid the Social Insurance fund, taking €635 million to help balance his general budget. Mr McCreevy would never have countenanced any tax hikes—just like his successor Mr. Lenihan to-day.

It was a once-off raid on the fund justified by a short-term need. The current proposals, however, represents a first, and seemingly irrevocable move, towards the abolition of Social Insurance as we have known it for decades. And it's completely at odds with the constant exhortation to workers to save more for their retirement.

The Social Insurance Fund contains the savings of workers and most of it is earmarked to pay Social Welfare Pensions. Any reduction in PRSI contributions obviously reduces the amount of money available to pay benefits and now we are told that the fund faces a deficit of €4.4 billion by the end of this year.

A core projection is that contributions need to be 78% higher over the next 50 years to adequately fund benefits. The actual shortfall is lower in the early years but it rises with time.

In October 2007 the Government published the Green Paper on Pensions. The Green Paper outlined the challenges facing the Irish pensions system in the years ahead, including the sustainability of the system over the longer-term in light of demographic change and the adequacy of contribution levels and benefits.

Specific issues in relation to State pensions were also set out, as well as considerations in relation to key aspects of the system, including tax treatment, security of pension provision, the regulatory regime, public service pensions and work flexibility in retirement. It also set out key questions to be addressed in formulating the Government's response to these challenges.