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## Like A Virgin!

*Witnesses To Mass Murder In The Icy Bann* is the headline to an *Irish Times* article advertising the opening of a Trinity College exhibition of documents written by Protestants who suffered a setback in the English/Scottish ethnic cleansing of Ulster in 1641.

If the word "murder" is to be used about events in a conflict of civilisations over three and a half centuries ago, then so must some other words that are not pleasant.

There was a time—we recall it well: it was not very long ago—when superior people deplored the fact that there were bigots with long memories who carried on about things that happened in the 17th century as if those events had something to do with us. As we understood their position, it was that there was a time in the past beyond which moral standards and moral judgments did not apply. That view seemed sensible to us and we were happy to go along with it. But, if the superior people now want to publish sensationalist headlines about "murder" in the mid-16th century, and relate that "murder" to politics in the present day, then we must also discuss ethnic cleansing, colonial displacement, cultural genocide, and perhaps even actual genocide.

The subject is a Pandora's Box, best left unopened. But the superior people have opened it—their columnist John Waters has assured us that they are the superior people. So be it!

A correspondent to the *Irish Times* (22 Oct.) wrote:

"It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the publication of the 1641 Depositions in Trinity College Library, hidden from view (in the best Trinity manner) for well over three centuries. They provide detailed accounts of the massacre of Protestant settlers at the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion, and future study of them will surely alter our perception of the nature of religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland.

"Who knows? Perhaps we may even have to revise our historical judgement of that devil incarnate, Oliver Cromwell (an Englishman as well as a Protestant).

"We may certainly be encouraged by the publication of such documents to challenge wherever we find them (and from whatever direction) expressions of sectarian hatred. Neither side in this terrible conflict has a monopoly of truth and justice.

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## Lisbon looms again!

The EU has had to come up with an *ad hoc* response to the Greek sovereign debt issue. It sought to do so by pledging a large amount of money to bail out Greece called the European Financial Stabilization Facility (EFSF). However, this was clearly a stop-gap solution and something more permanent had to be done and there has been much talk of more 'economic governance' to ensure more stability and co-ordination among Euro states. President van Rompuy was given the task of coming up with a real solution.

### POLITICAL CRUX

When the Euro was established, budgetary and other economic issues were left to the national states. Fiscal rules were agreed and then ignored by Member States for their own political reasons. And this caused the current economic problems.

The debt crisis is clearly a problem that cannot be solved by throwing huge amounts of money at it. In fact that will make it worse as the Greeks and others will interpret it as being let off the hook and the money markets will see a large

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## Taming Tigers?

Selecting suitable people for jobs is a large part of the art of government. The Minister for Finance set up a Central Bank Commission to advise him, and to carry weight with international banking for being independent.

One member of this Commission has suggested selling off the two main Irish Banks. Another has suggested leaving the EU and becoming the 51st State of the USA.

*Sunday Independent* headline, October 24th: *Soden: Let's Quite EU And Join US*. Soden is Mark Soden, a former international banker who was Chief Executive of the Bank of Ireland, which pushed him out in 2004 for accessing adult internet sites on his work computer.

The name Bank of Ireland carries a comfortable national feeling. It is not widely understood that the Bank of Ireland was the British Bank in Ireland, established in the days of the Protestant Ascendancy, and that after independence it remained

one of the golden chains that Connolly warned about in vain.

When Soden was dropped by the Bank, he wrote a book suggesting that Ireland should break the European ties on it and look West. On his appointment to the Central Bank Commission on October 1st, he advised the Government about the contents of his book, which was about to be published, and was appointed anyway. At least there can be no doubt about his independence. He is entirely free of the Irish orientation in the world of the last

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

Not On Our Knees Yet, James!

(back page)

"Express my warmest congratulations to the department of history and to Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer and also to their colleagues in Aberdeen and Cambridge.

"Yours etc, Gerald Morgan,  
The Chaucer Hub, Trinity College."

So Professor Morgan of the Chaucer Hub is shocked by the revelation from the opening of hidden documents of alleged massacre in Ulster.

Hidden documents! There have been long stretches of time when published histories of Ireland seemed to deal with little but the allegations in these "hidden" documents.

Do the superior people have an amnesia switch that enables them to forget about the Trinity Depositions so that they can experience the excitement of encountering them and being penetrated by them again? *Like A Virgin!*

The ethnic cleansing of Ulster accomplished under James Ist was followed by the establishment of a functional system of government under Charles 1st. An Irish Parliament representing the main social bodies in the country, including

Catholic and Protestant, settler and Gael, met during the 1630s when the English did not meet as it had shown itself subversive of government. The Stuart monarchy was acceptable to the Irish on traditional grounds, despite what it had done to them. However, it was not acceptable to an English faction, and when the English Parliament was called in 1640-41, it went into rebellion. The King's Minister in Ireland was called to London and killed by the rebellious Parliament. His crime was that he had governed Ireland as a Kingdom of the Three Crowns, instead of as an English adjunct.

The governing of Ireland was disrupted by political instability in England, not for the first time or the last. The Henry the Eighthist-Elizabethan state religion was thrown off by a wild, anarchic kind of Protestantism, lacking the coherence of the evolved forms that developed on the Continent.

If we are to talk emotionally about *murder* with relation to 1641, it should be about the murder of the King's Irish Minister by the unstable, fanatical religious

fundamentalists who had usurped the power of state by means of Parliament, broken the stable Government in Ireland, and threatened mayhem in Ireland against Catholics and those loyal to the Crown.

The dispossession of the Irish in Ulster by the Crown, and the displacement of the natives by colonists—selected on sectarian grounds to minimise the danger of fellow-feeling arising between the new possessors and the dispossessed—had happened a generation before the governing system based on the Plantation was undermined by the English Parliament. It had happened well within living memory. The State—the regime—on whose authority it was done, was undermined. The dispossessed acted to resume possession. They set about uprooting the Plantation.

As far as one can tell at this distance, the regime of the Crown in the Irish Parliament was functional. When the regime was overthrown, the consequences were much like the consequences of the overthrow of the functional Baathist regime by USUK, with Irish assistance.

Is there an eternal morality that applies to these things, and that is applicable, regardless of circumstances and elapsed time?

We are told that the overthrow of the Iraqi regime was virtuous because it brought down a "tyrant", and did not lose its virtue because of what it led to, even though the consequences were foreseeable. We gave the people of Iraq their freedom and that was a meritorious act, regardless of what they did when freed from the regime.

But there was a social stratum in Iraq that felt free under the tyranny, and because of the tyranny, under which there was a degree of order, a kind of citizenship, and reliable infrastructure of public amenities that enabled them to live like us. And the Irish had reason to know that, having had a considerable degree of intercourse with the Tyranny.

The Iraqi middle class was destroyed by the freedom we helped to bring the country—either by being broken internally by the Reign of Terror that freedom brought, or managing to get out and find countries where their skills were valued.

Tariq Aziz, the representative Christian Prime Minister in the Tyranny, has just been sentenced to death by the Shia Government for religious persecution. Shia freedom was certainly curbed by the Tyranny, and large numbers of Shias were drawn into administering the system of the Tyranny. If we are to take it that

religious persecution is a crime meriting death—and as supporters of the liberation of Iraq how can we do otherwise?—then a lot of re-writing of Irish history needs to be done. The English tried for hundreds of years to civilise us by religious persecution.

And let us recall that, when the persecuting regime in Iraq was overthrown, the persecuted were urged to seek out the persecutors and kill them.

We supported the overthrow of the regime in our little way, and Minister Mansergh, adviser to Taoiseachs, explained why it was the right thing to do. And, to the best of our knowledge, we still think it was a good thing to wreck the Tyranny (the State), but carry on as if that act was separable from its consequences. We are in denial about the mayhem we helped to bring about seven years ago. And yet we seem to be on the verge of pleading guilty for the revolt of the survivors of the Ulster Plantation against the Plantation over a third of a millennium ago, when the authority responsible for the Plantation was being overthrown.

About fifteen years after 1641, the English Rebellion, having conquered Ireland in the usual way, was conducting persecutions in Ireland of people who had not remained true to their allegiance in 1641 after the structure of that allegiance had been broken by the English Parliament, and had done killings not authorised by the lawful authority—the lawful authority being the one overthrown by those English rebels.

And we are now being persuaded to have second thoughts about Cromwell, and perhaps apologise for having called him a bad man. And the reasons we are given for re-considering are the merest quibbles.

What Cromwell should be judged by is not his military behaviour in Drogheda, or whether the religious freedom he announced was genuine—even though it criminalised the Mass. He was a bad man because he was a mere rebel—an incompetent revolutionary perhaps, but therefore a mere rebel.

Rebellion is becoming popular in southern Ireland. The Mercier Press—one of the few Irish book publishers left—has approvingly reduced the Constitutional Revolution enacted in 1918-21 to a mere Rebellion. Rebellion may be a good thing in some circumstances—e.g. when life is made intolerable by a state and there is no practical possibility of improving it, and one becomes a Whiteboy or an *Intefadist*—but there is no excuse for it when a rebel acquires state power but remains a rebel.

Cromwell gained immense power and

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## Augsburg And Westphalia

My Junior History memories came flooding back as I read about the Kanturk launch of John Minahane's translation of Conor O'Mahony's book on the rights of the kingdom of Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century. It was Pat Muldowney's reference to the Peace of Westphalia that set me going. *Cuius Regio, Eius Religio*: whose is the kingdom, his (or hers) is the religion. As a guiding principle by which to pacify Europe this actually predates Westphalia by nearly a century.

By 1555 the Emperor Charles V was worn out and at his wits' end. The Lutheran heresy was well established in the northern parts of his dominions, and the Calvinist heresy was spreading like a rash all over his dominions, and in Poland and Hungary to the east and France to the west. The Hapsburgs and the Catholic Church needed time to regroup. So in the imperial city of Augsburg the famous formula was worked out.

It applied only within the Empire, and only to Catholics and Lutherans. There was meant to be no place for Calvinists in the Empire, and as for the Anabaptists, well, they weren't supposed to have any future at all, and many of them didn't, but others survived, and by the late 17th century they were beginning to emigrate to North America. In 1555 the Catholic princes still controlled the lion's share of the Empire. From then until 1618 the Hapsburgs continued to try to throttle the Reformation. I used to think that the Thirty Years' War was started by a combination of a reckless Prince, Frederick the Elector Palatine, and a bunch of Bohemian Protestant hotheads. But that was far from the case. Or if they were mad they had been driven mad. The alternative to revolt was slow strangulation.

Westphalia represented a small advance. Subjects within a given realm, even Calvinists, might be allowed to exercise a contrary faith to that of the ruler, but only judiciously in private. Even that concession wasn't to apply in the Hapsburg lands, as the Hapsburgs wanted time to complete their work of stamping out any Protestant variants within Bohemia and Upper Austria. Treatment of the Calvinist Palatines, whose territory I think was handed over to the Wittelsbachs of Bavaria, was so bad that many of them had to flee, some to County Limerick. I recall from *Luke Delmege* (Canon Sheehan) that Luke was something like a fourth generation Palatine. Maybe that was why he found it so hard to enter into the mindset of local clergy and laity: he was at heart a systematizing German.

Stephen Richards

## Rose-Tinted View Of Fianna Fail?

I wish to renew my postal subscription to your excellent publication. Overall your publication's political analysis is excellent even if you seem to believe Fianna Fáil are the same revolutionary, republican left of centre mass movement of the 1930s. Dev is a long time in his grave and the present Fianna Fáil leadership and general financial backers, although more progressive on the national question than the partitionist mindset people in Fine Gael, are nowadays very much part of the Irish establishment, and respectable Irish society, and have been for a long time now. Keep up the good work Political Review but don't ignore Fianna Fáil's shortcomings.

Kells, Co. Meath reader

## Private Hospitals

It seems obvious to me that having a vibrant and functioning public health system is diametrically opposed to the 'needs' of private health care. Who would bother with private care if the public system really worked? For those enslaved by 'free-for-all market' ideology the only purpose of a government 'health' department would be to run down the public health system in order to absolve the state of any responsibility for its citizens' health (other than forbidding them from sparking up in pubs and stopping them from taking recreational drugs) and drive them into the arms of private health care—if they can afford it. And if they can't.... well they can die on waiting lists. That would explain the otherwise odd behaviour of boards like the HSE, for example.

And so, with the Hippocratic Oath delegated to the bottom of the drawer, we can get on with the real business of making money for our shareholders. What really sticks in my throat though is when private companies get a foot in the door of hospitals that were built with public money. If they want hospitals to make private profit for their shareholders, let them \*\*\*\* off and build their own hospitals at least, or buy (at the best price for the people who built them—i.e. the public) the existing hospital. One of the ironies of the time is the attention drawn to the lack of hospital beds, when I think of all the hospitals built in the 50s and 60s and sold off in the 80s & 90s for a pittance to hotel consortiums etc..

Nick Folley

dictatorial authority but didn't know what to do with it. He was a religious fanatic whose fanaticism ran out and left him in the doldrums. God stopped telling him what to do, so he didn't know what to do. He died and left a shambles behind him. His disciples were lost sheep. The King that Cromwell failed to capture and kill was brought home to restore the Monarchy—and he killed a raft of rebels while the country gave a sigh of relief.

Why should we bother our heads about this troublemaker—this bungling rebel? Clarendon—who left the incompetent Parliament to serve the King, and who returned to office with the King, said he was a "*great bad man*". Maybe so. Not many rebels achieve supreme power in a state. But, of those who did so, we know of none who just did not know what to do with it.

If, as the *Irish Times* says, the Ulster dispossessed who tried to get their property back, when the authority of the State was undermined, were *murderers*, then Cromwell was a murderer. He did not have lawful authority. It was acknowledged by all in 1660 that lawful authority remained with the Crown. There was no English Republican Government In Exile. It was the Republicans, whose Republic had collapsed in their own heads, who brought back the King and made submission to him. And it was as an element in Monarchical Government that the English Parliament gained a role in the conduct of the state that was not disruptive of the state.

## Lisbon Looms

continued

crook of EU gold that can be siphoned off by them, via the bailing out of the 'problem' countries, as and when they are deemed to have become a problem by the Credit Rating Agencies.

But if money cannot solve it what can? This is the dilemma facing Mr. van Rompuy, the current President of the European Council. His report is due out at the end of October (past this magazine's deadline). A draft was promised at the end of September but did not materialise.

But the President's plans were ambushed by the understanding reached between Merkel and Sarkozy at Deauville on 19th October. This proposes sanctions as being necessary to ensure strict fiscal compliance by Euro members. One of the proposed sanctions is to deprive States of voting powers in EU councils for misbehaviour.

As such a far-reaching change cannot be imposed under the present EU constitu-

tion, effectively Merkel and Sarkozy have laid down that a new Treaty change was needed. Van Rompuy was on course to propose something more timid.

It is hard to see how the new demands for tough sanctions on Euro states who go over budget can be resisted. After all, it is these states which depend on Germany and others to guarantee their borrowings. Such states are hardly in a position to resist any safeguards which are demanded in return for economic help.

Once such changes go through, over-budget Euro Member States could lose *political* powers for what would be judged *economic* misdemeanours. This is turning the EU's priorities upside down. The emphasis on economic governance assumes that the problem the EU faces is an economic problem. But it is not. Establishing the Euro was a straight political decision by the Member States, just as the whole EU project was. The Euro aimed at monetary union to cement the creation of a single market, and to ensure Germany was more locked into Europe after reunification.

Moreover, just as setting up the Euro had a political inspiration, the attack on the Euro by the Anglosphere has a political purpose.

### CONSTITUTION?

The politics of the EU itself during this period was consumed by the perceived need for a Constitution. The attempt to adopt such a Constitution democratically failed. Eventually, in order to sell the project, the EU strategists salvaged what they could out of the proposed constitution and called it a Treaty. They had to concede that this agreement would be the final act in the political development of the EU. Lisbon was the endgame: it was to be sacrosanct, and the final political structure and aim. The EU imposed a political limit on itself. It boxed itself into a political hole—to mix metaphors.

But, as Parnell said about Ireland, 'nobody has the right to set a limit to the march of a nation', and similarly the nations of the EU cannot halt their political development for good or ill—even if they wanted to!

They will march on and they did march on and the EU was hoisted on its own petard called Lisbon.

The endgame was over within months when Greece was bailed out and now the pro-Lisbon people, who in Ireland promised that the referendum would be the last for years, will have to eat their words and start again. But this time around

the lobby in Ireland will have to argue, not just for reduced voting power as before, but for depriving themselves of a vote at all in some circumstances. It will be turkeys voting for Xmas. Vote yes to deprive yourself of a vote could be a slogan for the opposition!

### It's POLITICS, STUPID

The issue this inevitably poses is: what is the EU now for? Is it an entity worth losing such political power for?

The underlying assumption for the proposed change is that the EU is, and was created to be, an economic solution to the member States' problems. If this is so, it is built on sand.

The original EU project was never an economic project. It was set up to liberate Europe from Britain and its entire works which had destroyed Europe twice in the 20th century. It was to offer Europe and the world a new polity that ensured a social market; an end to the colonial era; a non-dictating relationship of equals, including past colonial nations; and an independence of the USA and the USSR. The political tool for this was Christian Democracy which had imbibed the dreadful experiences of modern Europe. All else was subordinate to these aims. Ireland could fit into this like a glove.

But every single positive element that created the EU project has been killed off or reversed. All the member countries agree on now is the very opposite of the founding ethos of the project. This cannot bring political unity or governance—economic or otherwise. Now the nations of Europe behave like cats in a sack. And they lack the political and moral authority to put economic factors in their right perspective. The result is political contortions of the most intricate kind.

France was always central to the EU Project. I can't think how anybody could now believe that Mr. Sarkozy gives a damn about Europe any more—if he ever did. Apparently he now wants, among other things, the UK Foreign Office reject and torture-sanctioner, David Miliband, to be the next EU Foreign Affairs Czar!

Britain under Edward Heath did care about Europe and had some vision that coincided with that of other Member States but, since Thatcherism took over, Britain does not give a damn about Europe either. And France and Britain together will always browbeat Germany into whatever they want and the others then fall into line.

To have more economic governance there has to be more political governance but what will be the basis for this? Any new political structure in the world, and

the EU is a very new structure both in time and in organisational terms, has to have a very new, distinctive and attractive message for itself and the world in order to win real popular support and trust—the only keys to solving economic and other problems. Unfortunately, what existed of this is disappearing fast.

Mr. van Rompuy has a difficult task. Look at his own country, Belgium. That had a fair amount of economic and political governance, was quite well off, and had millions poured into its economy every year by the EU bureaucracy. Yet now it has less common governance by every passing day. Belgian may be the future model for the EU!

### QUO VADIS?

In the Oval Office, apparently, there are no clocks that give the time in any European capital. Europe is just like a fifth wheel to US Foreign policy and, like Sarkozy's experience, the more the EU becomes an abject follower, the more irrelevant it becomes to the US and the less it is necessary to consult it.

The EU is becoming more despised by the day. The EU has lost its way and that is why it has an ongoing economic crisis. There is no centre, there are only synthetic objectives, and there is no confidence in itself. It follows NATO militarily and the IMF in economics.

There is a great irony in the fact that, though Marxism is dead and gone, a perverted remnant of Marxism remains in the subliminally accepted basic fact about society in Western Europe, i.e., that economics determines human behaviour. The thinking is that, if you get the economic levers right with the Euro, economic governance etc., then the political co-ordination and integration will follow as surely as a car will go when switched on and put in gear.

From the left to the right it is accepted that, if you follow the money trail, you will find the source and the reason for people's behaviour. And, without that guide, where would our media and investigative journalists be? They would have nothing to say and nothing to investigate!

And, if the political establishment accepts that economics is the driver of behaviour, then it is inevitable that it is automatically beholden to its sharpest and best-organized practitioners in the financial markets—who can dictate their terms to the politicians. Once they were called the 'gnomes of Zurich'; now they are the all-powerful 'bondholders', with an aura of power that can make or break a country.

The aura when accepted becomes a

reality and anyone given that power cannot resist using it.

### POLITICS IN COMMAND

The history of modern Europe and the history of the only successful Marxists in the world outside Europe provide conclusive proof that it is politics which is primary, and economics very much a poor second. If economics ruled the roost, there would be no world wars and no Russian, Chinese or other revolutions. And Vietnam would hardly have resisted the USA on the basis of economics! No more than Afghanistan resisted the USSR and is now resisting the US on the basis of its economics. Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence that people are fundamentally motivated by other human attributes, economic determinism rules the roost and nowhere more so than in think-tanks of the EU. It simply means that they cannot cope.

When President van Rompuy produces his report, I doubt if he will refer to these issues and we will get instead a report that will have to be decoded before it can be understood. And then it will be only taken notice of in the political interplay of the Member States and all else will be for the birds—and the media.

In fact Rompuy's scheme has already been superseded by Merkel and Sarkozy—which proves that nobody who matters takes any notice of this European President, or of any of the other three that prance around the corridor of the EU. Like Lisbon, they are all already pass their sell-by date.

**Jack Lane**

### Taming Tigers?

continued

third of a century, which all parties other than Sinn Fein have supported.

Another Commissioner, Patrick Honohan—a former Trinity College Professor of International Financial Economics who was recently made the new broom Governor of the Central Bank in 2009—made a speech on the fringes of an IMF/World Bank Conference in America, suggesting that the Irish Banks might be sold off. So he too is free of any concern for the Irish national economy.

But will it reassure the international bankers that Ireland is a going economic concern, when two of the independent advisers chosen by the Finance Minister say that it is a write-off?

When Brian Lenihan first announced the emergency Bank Guarantee, to stave

off a collapse in the banking system, he gave an inspirational speech, saying that he was an Irish nationalist and believed Ireland was capable of supporting an independent banking system. And Ireland without a native banking system would certainly not be independent—as various countries in Eastern Europe have found to their cost. They allowed their banks to be bought by external forces, with the result that—when the financial crisis hit—they found they lacked a vital lever for taking remedial action.

There is a talent for choosing experts to give independent advice about a problem within the terms of the problem, and it differs to giving free rein to eccentrics whose centre of gravity lies elsewhere. There is a difference between giving a willing horse his head and giving a horse freedom to kick over the traces.

The great surprise of recent times has been Garret FitzGerald, the Commonwealth-man and doctrinaire Free Trader. In the past we have thought he was wrong on just about everything, from the North to the world. But in recent months he has gone completely against the Fine Gael stream and supported the Government efforts to preserve the national economy. And his stand was probably an influence in obliging Fine Gael—and Labour too—to take up the Government offer of a look at the books in the Department of Finance.

That look at the books has, of course, partly disabled the Opposition.

It is also likely that Eamonn Gilmore, the Sticke leader of the Labour Party, was getting vertigo. The Opinion Polls were showing him as being in danger of being the next Taoiseach, and it was an event that could happen at any moment.

On the eve of the crisis he made the Labour Party into a middle class business party. When the crisis struck, his policy—or his rhetoric—suggested that the market should be let rip. This was seasoned with some socialist rhetoric about not honouring debts to wicked bankers. What would he do if he came to office on a wave of that rhetoric? Or was his concern that, if he persisted with that rhetoric, the voters would, in the moment of truth at the ballot box, defect from the opinion that they gave to the pollsters?

After the look at the books, and the consequent admission of the reality of the problem as stated by the Government, Gilmore has committed himself to the basics of the Government policy for four years. That may make him more safely electable. But it might also raise the question for possible voters of why to go

for a change of Government, when the Opposition has come to support the approach which it condemned the Government for adopting.

Martin Mansergh, junior Minister at the Finance Department, made a speech in London that was reported in the *Sunday Independent* under the headline, *Government Errors And Greed Caused Crisis—Mansergh*.

It does not appear from the report that Mansergh was suggesting that the greed was the Government's, only the errors. And it is also not clear what the errors were. He is reported as saying there was anger in Ireland at the Government "*for allowing a critical situation, in which deep cuts would be needed, to occur*". But, unless he specifies particular Government errors which brought about this situation, the statement is pretty meaningless.

He deplores the statement of former Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevy, "*when we have it we spend it*", but comments: "*fortunately he did not entirely act on it*". And he says that public pay should have been held down.

It is not indicated how public pay could have been held down in a situation when the whole economy was booming in a Partnership society. The fact is that Fianna Fail under Bertie Ahern spread prosperity around, both to public servants and the lower reaches of society. Social welfare in Ireland became one of the most generous regimes in Europe—far superior to what is available in the North and in Britain. And, if there are now to be cuts, they will be from a higher level. In Britain the Tories are about to cut welfare from rates that are far lower than Irish levels.

"*Many now claim to have foretold the crisis*", Mansergh said, "*but the record does not bear them out*". But, if the crisis resulted from particular mistakes, and it would not have happened if those mistakes had not been made, it would be surprising if nobody had seen those mistakes, and surprising that Mansergh has not clearly identified them in retrospect.

A remark by McCreevy that he did not fully act on, and public salaries a bit too high, hardly amount to an adequate cause of the crisis.

And then there was greed. (Is it sensible to condemn greed when talking of the market?!?) Mansergh told London's economists: "*I think there is an argument for saying that Irish society, or certainly the upper echelons—whether in the public or private sector—did become somewhat greedy*".

Ireland had its glorious twenty years of capitalism. (Maybe that was the "*error*" that Mansergh had in mind? Maybe the Government's Red-baiter was a closet Socialist all the time?)

Vigorous, exuberant capitalism is what Ireland had. That was the Celtic Tiger.

Exuberant capitalism without greed—that is the most mindless of all Utopias.

If this free-wheeling capitalism was the error, then somebody did see it—Garret FitzGerald, the Free Trader. About ten years ago he said he thought there had been enough economic development, and the time had come to stabilise. But that is the great secret of the world that nobody has found out—how to stabilise capitalism, how to say, *This is enough, let us settle down where we are!*

And the pressure that was coming from leaders of the capitalist world was all the other way: there should be deregulation of controls on capital and on business. The sacred dogma coming from Britain and America was that *the market knew best* and a country interfered with it at its own peril.

It went against all that FitzGerald had been preaching to say Ireland had enough capitalist development and should have no more. There was some merit in saying that during the boom. But he no more idea than anyone else of how to halt the wild development of a boom without bringing on the inevitable bust sooner than necessary.

The capitalist market must expand or die. Every year a surplus profit is produced for which an avenue of investment must be found which will lead to an even greater surplus. Marx worked that out a century and a half ago, and capitalism has obeyed his theory of it ever since.

An element of market activity, heavily constrained by political forces superior to the market, is a possibility. But where are such forces to be found in Ireland?

Market development under the influence of a strongly conservative and traditional ruling class, which transmits its values to the mass of society as democracy encroaches, might result in a restrained capitalism in which the market is not given its head. But the Irish ruling class, when it had one, was alien. It could oppress and plunder, but could not guide—and, in any case, it was neither traditional nor conservative, but was the spider that spun the web of Globalism. And, when the Irish obliged it to leave, it continued to plunder by means of the golden chains. And, when Haughey snapped some of the golden chains—getting little thanks for it—leaving the country free and ambitious

as it had never been before, what were the Irish but a raw democracy loose in a free market, which had acquired its own globalist dimension, in which greed was the supreme economic virtue?

The only constraining institution that was in some degree native, the Catholic Church, was rejected in the course of becoming globalist operators. And the Irish had never really assimilated the economics of Christian Democracy anyway.

Mansergh makes passing mention of "*international factors*": "*the crisis where domestic and international factors compounded each other*". He does not specify the international factors, but when Ireland went globalist, they were by far the more important. And, in the critical period, the most damaging of them was the EU.

Germany had a capitalism in which the market was bound up with constraining factors. Connolly discovered this and supported Germany on Socialist ground—but enough of that: we must not think of Connolly and Germany, it would spoil *Our War*.

When Prussia beat off the French invasion of 1870 and Bismarck constructed the German State after 1871, a kind of feudalism was built into the structure of things. The working class was given status without being reduced to an inchoate mass by individualisation in the first place and then having to engage in class war for any rights at all. This was the basis of the strong Social Democracy of Germany before 1914.

In 1919 Germany was punished with an ultra democracy in which free capitalism was let rip. This led to the chronic crisis that ended only with the introduction of corporatist capitalism after 1933. After 1945 Germany was taken in hand by Adenauer's Christian Democracy with inbuilt corporatist structures which curbed the free impulses of capitalism while facilitating economic growth. (There was a real continuity between Hitler's Germany and Adenauer's Germany in many respects, which is why there was an easy transition to democracy. The German authorities naturally did not proclaim that continuity, while the Western conquerors denied it, attributing post-1945 German development to their "*denazification*". But the "*de-Nazification*" was barely skin deep. It was called off very quickly in order to enlist Germany in the new Cold War against the force that had actually defeated Germany, Soviet Russia. (In 2003 the British and Americans, having fooled

themselves that they had transformed Germany through in-depth de-Nazification, set about de-Baathifying Iraq with disastrous consequences.)

Lenin described the German economic form developed during the Great War as Finance Capitalism—an interconnection of capitalism and industry under Government supervision. And that is what there was in post-1945 Germany. There were State Banks (banks under the *Länder*) investing in local industries they were familiar with.

In Britain and America there was the opposite development. Small banks, in which Bank Managers knew something of local industry became old-fashioned. Finance became a thing in itself, subject to the normal course of expansion in response to competition. The financing of industrial expansion out of industrial profits, or with a loan from a bank manager who knew your business better than you did and was probably better placed to estimate risks than you were—all that became a thing of

the past. A free financial sector, operating autonomously and globally, became the medium in which industry functioned.

This new medium of finance held that the German system was counter-competitive. It took the matter to the EU Court, which ruled in its favour and that German finance-capitalism was to be broken up. This threw the German banks onto the international banking system, making it even wilder.

That is what the EU was doing in things that mattered while Ireland was being distracted by Pat Cox's anti-Commission 'corruption' campaign—hinging on a favour done by a French Commissioner to her hairdresser—and by agonising over whether it dared repeat its first vote against Maastricht and Lisbon a second time round.

If there is any possibility of having a reasonably stable system of capitalism, it is only on the lines of the German system—which Ireland has helped to destroy and which the EU has declared illegal.

## Political Snapshot

The changing mood in Ireland toward a constructive approach to dealing with the crisis—see *Fianna Fail Renaissance?* in October's *Labour Comment*—was further reflected in RTE's *Frontline* (Pat Kenny, 18th October). It was the most positive of these programmes yet, and a step away from the "bear pit" described last month, where Kenny has to date unleashed self indulgent mobs against politicians.

Archbishop Martin, and even Niall Crowley, attacked the pervasive negativism (to thunderous applause) and, contrary to Kenny's urgings, did not support notions of "civil society" setting itself up in opposition to "politics". Both of them appealed to young people to get involved in existing political parties and to renew them. What was most surprising was the receptiveness of the audience to what they were saying.

Meanwhile in the "Ireland's Greatest" show (based on the BBC's "Greatest Briton" which won by a landslide by Churchill), there is no doubt that, if voting was to be on the basis of the best case made, Mary Robinson, championed by David McWilliams, would win hands down. Joe Duffy gave an awful presentation on "poor aul' James Connolly, he lived in penury", which seemed to project Joe as the new Connolly. McDowell's presentation on behalf of Collins was equally awful, though it was enjoyable watching him justifying taking British spies off trams and executing them—"had to be done" quipped Michael. Otherwise McDowell's portrait was a rehash of the Tim Pat Coogan book. The other two making the short list of five were Bono and John Hume. And, in the event, Hume won.

**Philip O'Connor**

## Obama's "new beginning" at an end in the Arab world?

An opinion poll conducted in 6 Arab countries in July 2010 showed a precipitous drop in the approval rating of President Obama and his administration, and a dramatic rise in approval for Iran acquiring nuclear weapons compared with a year earlier.

It looks like Obama's ambition "to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world", as set out in his Cairo speech in May 2009 {1}, is at an end in the Arab world.

The poll is conducted annually for the Brookings Institute by Zogby International and Shibley Telhami at the University of Maryland {2}. The countries covered—Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—are among the least radical in the Middle East and, apart from Lebanon, have an almost exclusively Sunni Arab population.

### OBAMA PLUMMETS

Respondents with a positive view of President Obama dropped from 45% to 20% between 2009 and 2010, while those with a negative view rose from 23% to 62%. Similarly, whereas in 2009 51% of those polled described themselves as "hopeful" about the Obama administration's Middle East policy, a year later this figure had plummeted to 16%. In line with this, those "discouraged" by US policy rose from a mere 15% to a massive 63%.

According to the poll, Obama's policy on Israel/Palestine is the main reason for his decline in popularity. That is hardly a surprise. In the first few months of his presidency, he raised expectations that he was going to force Israel to accept the creation of a Palestinian state in the territories it has occupied by force since 1967. Those expectations were dashed when, faced with opposition from Prime Minister Netanyahu, he gave up trying to force Israel to halt settlement-building in those territories. Understandably, the Arab world has concluded that, if he wasn't prepared to force Israel to cease planting Jewish settlers on the territory where a Palestinian state is supposed to be established, then there is very little chance of his forcing Israel to withdraw from that territory altogether to enable such a state to be established.

In his speech in Cairo on 4th June 2009, Obama declared:

"The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop."

However, by September, in the face of opposition from Netanyahu, he accepted that this construction could continue, despite the fact that it "violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace".

It is difficult to believe that he would be as forgiving of Palestinian action that "violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace". Significantly, in the same Cairo speech, he insisted that "to play a role in fulfilling Palestinian aspirations" Hamas had to "recognize past agreements". He has yet to lift that requirement upon Hamas.

### IRAN RISES

The Brookings poll also revealed a significant shift over the past year in Arab attitudes towards Iran and Iran's nuclear activities. A fundamental part of the Middle East strategy followed by the Obama administration (and its predecessor) has been to attempt to build an alliance with Sunni Arab states against Shia (non-Arab) Iran. The US would have us believe that Sunni Arabs view Iran as a great threat to the stability of the region,



just like the US says it does.

This poll shows conclusively that popular Arab opinion certainly does not regard Iran as a threat to any great extent. Asked to name the two countries that pose the biggest threat in the world, Israel was a choice of 88% of respondents, followed closely by the US itself with 77%. Iran was a long way behind on 10%.

On Iran's nuclear activities, a majority (57% to 35%) believe that these activities were for military purposes. While those figures haven't changed significantly in the past year, the approval for Iran's activities has increased dramatically. Thus, 77% (up from 53% last year) said that Iran has a right to its nuclear programme and only 20% (down from 40%) support the US policy of pressurising Iran to stop its nuclear programme.

Furthermore, 57% (up from 29% last year) thought that, if Iran acquired nuclear weapons, the likely outcome for the Middle East region would be "more positive", compared with 21% (down from 46%) who thought the likely outcome would be "more negative".

It seems that popular Arab opinion doesn't regard Iran, even a nuclear-armed Iran, as a threat. Israel wins that race by a mile, closely followed by the US.

#### OSAMA OUTPOLLS OBAMA

To add insult to injury, President Obama doesn't figure at all in the list of most admired world leaders chosen in the poll. Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein do—they are the choice of 6% and 2% respectively. The list is headed by Recep Erdogan (20% up from 4% in 2009), followed by Hugo Chavez (13% down from 24%), Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (12% up from 6%) and Hassan Nasrallah (9% up from 6%). (Respondents were not allowed to choose a leader from their own country.)

There is little doubt that the sharp rise in Erdogan's popularity rise is as a result of Turkey becoming a vociferous defender of Palestinian rights and moving away from its former close relationship with Israel. Chavez, who headed the list in 2009, has lost out to the more local hero, Erdogan. This won't bring any comfort in Washington.

Nor will the continuing popularity of its archenemies in the Middle East, Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, both Shia leaders admired by a significant proportion of Sunni Arabs.

**David Morrison**  
September 2010

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## Harris doing as Harris does

Eoghan Harris's efforts to keep re-inventing himself continue apace. His recent piece in the family's house newspaper, the *Sunday Independent*, is almost beyond belief. He says: "We did forget but now we must put old ghosts to rest" (15th October 2010). In reviewing a book by Neil Richardson on the First World War, *A Coward if I Return, A Hero if I Fall*, (O'Brien Press) he quotes the author:

"Men died in their thousands, men were blown apart in their thousands and, in Ireland, men were forgotten in their thousands."

Then Harris comments:

"The question hangs there: how could a civilized country forget the sufferings of tens of thousands of fathers, brothers, friends and neighbours? The traditional answer is that 1916 changed everything. But this cannot account for the anger aimed at these hapless survivors. After all, if they had been duped, they deserved sympathy. As Richardson asks: 'Why the bitterness? Why the hatred?' My answer comes from my memories of growing up in Cork in the Fifties, when First World War veterans still crossed Cork city on crutches and restless Republicans still roamed the streets on Remembrance day, tearing poppies from the coats of middle-aged men, and it is a simple answer: Sinn Fein deliberately demonised the survivors and drove them from collective memory."

The civilised country they fought for, Britain should indeed remember them and honour them, but it does not. It remembers, *ad nauseam*, its own soldiers but it knows in its bones that the Irish-born soldiers are an embarrassment as they were so blatantly betrayed. So it draws a veil over them. The heroic British story cannot be spoiled by acknowledgement of facts like that.

That said, Harris is not even right about the hostility. I grew up in another part of Cork in the '50s. I never saw expression of bitterness towards WWI veterans. Some of their songs were as popular as rebel songs. My father remembered good-natured singing competitions and banter between them and old IRA men at fairs and patterns. They were all old soldiers, after all. And their war was long gone as was our War of Independence. We had won and we were getting on with other things. *The Foggy Dew* summed up perfectly the sorrow and sympathy for those who had died so wastefully "at *Sulva and Sud el Bar*". These were, and are, the appropriate sentiments.

De Valera's expressed the common

view at the height of the Great War, in May 1918:

"Little Belgium' had a champion in many a generous Irish youth. Their bones today lie buried beneath the soil of Flanders, or beneath the waves of Sulva Bay, or bleaching on the slopes of Gallipoli, or on the sand of Egypt or Arabia, in Mesopotamia, or wherever the battle line extends from Dunkirk to the Persian Gulf. Mons, Ypres, will be monuments to their unselfish heroism—but the land they loved dearest on earth, the land to which they owed their first duty and their first devotion, the land they fondly hoped their sacrifices might assist to freedom still lies unredeemed at the feet of the age-long enemy—and that she would thus lie were every youth within her borders to immolate themselves in this war is the fixed conviction of all Irishmen who permit themselves to see things as they are."

No bitterness or hatred there but sadness and regret for brave but betrayed people.

Harris and I were briefly contemporaries at University College, Cork. I was starting as he was finishing and it was there, and *from him*, that I first encountered the bitterness he talks about. Does he have any sense of irony? At the Philosoph on Saturday nights he would glory in recounting and praising those who had persecuted the poppy wearers, who had done what he describes above. He was fighting the War of Independence all over again and, in his FCA attire, he clearly imagined himself to be a sort of reincarnated Tom Barry figure. I was taken aback at this doyen of UCC who was clearly living in a time-warp. Initially I gave him the benefit of the doubt that this was all an act but it turned out not to be. He had all the hand-me-down politics of another era—supporting the long and deservedly forgotten Poblacht Criostúil Party, denouncing and demonizing the Language Freedom Movement, virulently against the proposed EEC entry, etc etc.

In fairness to Cork City Republicans of the day most of them were doing quite different things and had other priorities. One of the most spectacular events of that time was their occupation of the City Hall Chamber in protest at housing conditions. They campaigned against the Vietnam War, and helped the Trade Unions in strike situations. One member, Martin O'Leary, was killed in the process of doing so. US ships and the US Ambassador got



quite a shock when they faced protests in this part of the 'old sod'. The Ambassador went pale when his visit was picketed and his talk in UCC was heckled and laughed at.

But Harris had nothing whatever to do with any of these activities.

All political parties in the college were banned at the time. Harris went through UCC and did not a thing to get it removed..

He went on to another planet called the Wolfe Tone Society, which was like a self selecting confraternity of priests at a retreat, preaching, explaining and updating their political gospel to reassure themselves it was still relevant. One had to be vetted to ensure one was a believer before you could be considered worthy to enter their sanctum. Harris gloried in this kind of atmosphere. There were also visits from High Priests like Anthony Coughlan from time to time. They considered themselves the wave of the future but their wave crashed on the rock of the Northern Ireland crisis shortly afterwards, as their gospel had no credible answers for that.

Harris goes on:

"The fact is that the 200,000 Irishmen who went to fight did so for 200,000 reasons—but mostly because they wanted to. The chief witness here is the commander of the West Cork Flying Column, Tom Barry himself: 'I went to the war for no other reason than that I wanted to see what war was like, to get a gun, to see new countries and to feel a grown man.'"

This is most bizarre. Barry felt obliged to explain this, precisely because he knew that his was an exceptional reason for joining and that, though there were some others like him, the main reason that thousands joined was the political conviction they had that they were 'fighting for the freedom of small nations', with Ireland top of the list. The dogs in the street know this, but it is not mentioned or acknowledged by Harris from among the 200,000 reasons that apparently exist for going to war! Soldiering is the least individualistic activity on earth and there can be only one overwhelming reason for going to war. Any more could cause confusion in the ranks.

And of course Barry's love of adventure does not explain why he changed sides after the War. If he remained just an adventurer, he could have found better opportunities in Palestine, Mesopotamia, India, Africa and elsewhere. He began as an adventurer but he did not end as one. So Harris has to present a truncated Barry to

try to make his case.

He goes on:

"Growing up I recall three successive positions on these old soldiers. First: my grandfather's grim IRA generation told us the survivors were dupes at best, traitors and spies at worst. But at some level they did not believe their own rhetoric. After all, they too had grown up in British Cork and knew that they too might easily have ended up in France."

So they might or they might not have gone to join the War—a sort of toss of the coin affair. It might have depended on what side of the bed one had got out of that morning. For Harris, the difference between what has been and what might have been is of little significance. However, the little difference in this case was the making of modern Ireland—or not. Harris being a wordmonger cannot see much of a difference. Apart from being an insult to history this is a contemptuous insult to *all*—those who joined up and those who opposed it.

He continues:

"Second, my father's generation, which was replacing the Old IRA in the Fifties was actually more primitive in its politics. As teenage tearaways they had roamed the streets in the lawless days of Civil War and lacked their father's fairly benign memories of the complexities of Redmondite Cork. As adults they were political louts, like Hitler's Brownshirts, who would stupidly shout 'West Brits' at working class veterans who lived in the lanes off Shandon Street. "

So his father's generation who fought the Blueshirts were just like the Brownshirts. Apparently, it was fascists fighting fascists in Cork in the 1930s! What a weird place. It is truly a case of not knowing what is going to happen yesterday. Does Harris read what he writes? Indeed, is there any point in anyone reading what he writes?

He has been engaging in frantic attempts to escape from himself for years and with his history and personality that is perfectly understandable. That is his own business but he cannot get away with distorting basic historical facts in the process.

Eamon Gilmore is, apparently, having some 'senior moments' about his past just now. However, I would be very surprised if he goes on to turn his own and his family's history upside down and inside out to justify his current political position. One Harris is more than enough and another would be more than flesh could bear.

Jack Lane

## First Ballymurphy, Then Bloody Sunday

The Ballymurphy Massacre Families have issued the following statement:

"Representatives of the Ballymurphy Massacre families met Nuala O'Loan in October. She was Police Ombudsman 1999–2007 and now sits in the House of Lords as Baroness O'Loan of Kirkinriola in the County of Antrim.

"After a disappointing meeting with Owen Paterson, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on Thursday, we got on with our campaign the very next day. We told Nuala of how our loved ones were murdered in August 1971. It was a good meeting where Nuala listened very intently. She was familiar with our campaign and search for truth. We shared with her evidence of the brutality and bloodshed and similarities with Bloody Sunday where the same Parachute Regiment murdered 14 innocent civilians."

### THE BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE

(Assassination Of The Innocent)

Francis Quinn (19)	sniped by 1st Para
Hugh Mullan (38)	a Catholic priest
Joan Connolly (50)	also deceased
Daniel Taggart (44)	same horror
Noel Phillips (20)	the sky is lead
Joseph Murphy (41)	goodbye sun
Edward Doherty (28)	hope, none
John Lavery (20)	life in the red
Joseph Corr (43)	reluctant grave
John McKerr (49)	Whitehall askew
Paddy McCarthy (44)	crime waved
Operation Demetrius	death queues
August 9, 1971	death craves
August 11	death does not subdue

Wilson John Haire  
10th October, 2010

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## THE STATE BROADCASTER

The Long Fellow wonders why the State subsidizes RTE. In other countries the State broadcasting service acts in the interests of the State. This, of course, does not preclude criticism of the Government. But RTE appears to see its role as denigrating the State at every opportunity.

On 28th September RTE's *Morning Ireland* recycled a 10-day-old story from the discredited ratings agency *Standard & Poor*, which suggested that Anglo Irish Bank was going to cost at least 35 billion euro. This went all around the world as if it was new news. RTE practically boasted about its malign influence. Here is what it said on its website:

"The S&P analyst's comments, made in a Prime Time interview, part of which was broadcast on Morning Ireland, sent the cost of insuring Irish sovereign debt against default to a record high this morning" (28.9.10).

There is no objective economic reason for an Irish sovereign default. As indicated last month, the National Debt crisis is far less serious than in the 1980s. However, negative reporting is pushing up the cost of borrowing making it more difficult for the State to obtain cheap finance.

It is not a question of suppressing the truth. There is an obligation to weigh and consider.

On the following day *Morning Ireland* was at it again. It invited head of SIPTU Jack O'Connor to express an opinion on whether Anglo Irish Bank should default on its Senior Bonds. But O'Connor was having none of it. He replied that he did not think it appropriate to comment on this, as such speculation could push up the costs of borrowing. It's a pity there are not more responsible people like O'Connor in public life.

## ANGLO IRISH BANK COST

The Central Bank, in conjunction with the NTMA [National Treasury Management Agency], conducted an analysis of the potential cost of Anglo Irish Bank. Its best estimate of the final cost is 29.3 billion. Under a very pessimistic scenario there could be an extra 5 billion needed, giving a total cost of 34.3 billion euro. Needless to say the media focussed on the 34.3 billion figure and tried to suggest that *Standard & Poor* was

right all along. The facts are that S&P was suggesting a *minimum* of 35 billion, while the Central Bank's best estimate is 29.3 billion. This figure does not include loss-sharing on subordinate bonds. Recent estimates indicate that the bank may make a profit of nearly 2 billion on buying back this debt.

The Long Fellow thinks that the Central Bank estimate of 29.3 billion is conservative and prudent. In the first two tranches of Anglo Irish Bank loans transferred to NAMA there was a "haircut", or discount, of 58% (i.e. loans were valued at 42% of book value). These loans were to the largest property developers. Initial indications are that the loans to some of the smaller developers are even more risky. Accordingly, the Central Bank has assumed a massive haircut of 67% on the remaining loans to be transferred to NAMA. The report suggests that there is a core of good quality non-NAMA loans in Anglo Irish Bank. However, for any loans where there is a doubt, it is assuming haircuts ranging from 43% to 70%. All of this appears very prudent. It is unlikely that the costs will exceed the 29.3 billion.

## ANGLO IRISH BANK LOSS SHARING

Anglo Irish Bank—in effect the State—has offered 335 million in settlement of 2.2 billion in subordinated debt. This will give a profit of 1.865 billion and, as mentioned above, was not taken into account when the cost of 29.3 billion for Anglo Irish Bank was calculated. The offer by the State is accompanied by a threat of bank resolution legislation which would enable loss-sharing among the various stake-holders. In such a case the subordinated bond holders may not receive anything. On the other hand, the State does not particularly want to pull that trigger.

The situation is like the famous scene in the *Dirty Harry* film. At the end of the shoot out the Clint Eastwood character points his gun at the villain who is lying wounded on the ground with his own weapon a few feet away. Eastwood explains the dilemma:

"I know what you're thinking. 'Did he fire six shots or only five?' Well, to tell you the truth, in all this excitement I kind of lost track myself. But being as this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, and would blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya, punk?"

The Long Fellow thinks that the subordinated bond holders won't take the risk.

## BRIAN LUCEY AND DAVID MCWILLIAMS

There is no quick, cheap fix for the Irish banking system, but that does not prevent

the likes of Brian Lucey and David McWilliams from pretending that there is. On 5th October *The Irish Times* published another Brian Lucey rant. The assumption of these commentators is that the Government is incompetent and it is being manipulated by sinister and devious forces. Here is Lucey's grovelling opinion of Roman Abramovitch.

"A further problem with the bond markets has revealed itself with the realisation that while the Minister 'expects' the subordinated bondholders to carry some pain, they are not playing nice. People like Roman Abramovitch do not get to own 300ft yachts and Premiership football teams by giving money away unnecessarily. It now appears that, in some cases, the subordinated bonds cannot be subject to a 'haircut' unless the senior bonds are in default. And the Minister has stated, in cataclysmic and apocalyptic terms, that this will not happen."

But of course *The Irish Times* has long ceased to be a serious newspaper on financial matters. *The Financial Times* (4.10.10), on the other hand, reproduced extracts from a statement from Abramovitch's investment company *Millhouse*, which holds subordinated debt in *Irish Nationwide*. The statement is a rambling and incoherent begging letter which concludes as follows:

"We urge Irish authorities to reconsider their position on INBS subordinated bonds and come out with a detailed plan on what is going to happen to this institution. In the meantime, we are fully prepared to vigorously defend our position using all possible legal avenues."

Abramovitch can whinge all he likes, but there is no legal basis for treating subordinate bondholders in the same way as senior bondholders, no matter how many or how big the subordinated holders' yachts are!

Lucey's article continued in the same vein of contempt for Government policy:

"It is instructive to examine the case of AIB. AIB has an asset value on the market now of just about 600 million euro. The taxpayer will have to inject some billions in additional capital, taking our stake towards 90 per cent. We will be purchasing, however, the carcass of AIB. Its valuable assets, in Poland, the UK and the US, which would over the next number of years have provided valuable cash flow, have been or will be sold. The State will in effect pay billions for an asset worth millions, an asset that will moreover not likely recover in value for decades."

This implies that the State paid billions for 90% of AIB when it could have paid just 600 million for 100% of the company. What a load of rubbish! The State could have put 600 million into the shareholders' pockets for 100% of the company, but that

would not have solved the problem of AIB's under-capitalisation. It would *still* have had to put in "*billions*" to keep AIB afloat.

David McWilliams has been repeating some of the same ideas as Lucey, but the former is cute enough not to put them down in print. On *Saturday View* (2.10.10) on RTE 1 Radio he suggested that there was no problem in liquidating Anglo Irish Bank and paying off the deposit-holders. All the State has to do is look for insurance on the international market. This is like a pyromaniac looking for fire insurance. No commercial insurance company would agree to underwrite the bank's depositor liabilities when the stated intention is to torch them.

Another idea McWilliams has is that we should access 10% of the 750 billion euros of profits that are trapped in the IFSC and which US companies are holding to avoid taxes in the USA. He thinks that the companies involved would be only too happy to invest in Irish companies which might give a return in 10 years time. Leaving aside the accuracy of the amount (more than 5 times Irish GNP) the question arises why would such US companies want to do this when there are numerous other countries and numerous other banks throughout the world which would be happy to find a home for such funds.

Another illusion that McWilliams likes to peddle is that the banks can torch the bondholders with impunity. In making this assertion he quite often does not distinguish between senior bondholders, which rank *pari passu* with depositors; and subordinate bondholders which do not. In the *Saturday View* programme he gave the example of a Danish Bank which on going into liquidation did not pay "*bondholders*". But, as the conversation developed, it was clear that he was talking about subordinated bondholders in this case.

#### GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

The Long Fellow is of the opinion that the Government has handled the economic and financial crisis in a competent manner since September 2008. One could quibble about the details of this or that policy. Patrick Honohan criticised the extent of the Bank Guarantee while supporting the general policy of a guarantee. But the question must be asked: how would the Government have behaved differently if the Guarantee had not been so extensive? What option was closed off that would have been availed of if the Guarantee had not been so extensive? The Long Fellow's opinion is that the extent of the Guarantee had no material effect on Government policy and therefore the criticism is largely academic.

#### COULD AND SHOULD

However the Government, or at least Fianna Fáil, can be criticised for not controlling the property market.

With the benefit of hindsight the Long Fellow knows what *should* have been done. But whether it *could* have been done and by "whom" are other questions entirely.

What *should* have been done is that banks *should* have been prevented from lending to property developers. But how *could* the Financial Regulator have done this. A Financial Regulator does not run the banking system. He can only intervene if he suspects that a bank is insolvent. The accounts of Anglo-Irish Bank at September 2008 did not indicate this.

You could say that the Anglo accounts were a pack of lies. Well that's not what the auditors thought. You would have been asking the Financial Regulator/politicians to second-guess the auditors. You *could* then say the auditors were corrupt. But the auditors can only assess loans at current market conditions. It cannot base the accounts on future projections. So it can be reasonably claimed that the accounts were perfectly valid on the basis of conditions that existed at that time.

You could say that international investors had a bad feeling about Irish banks and were selling its shares. You could then say: well, if international investors knew (or thought they knew) that something was wrong, well then surely the Financial Regulator/political authority should have known. Well you can't run a banking system on the basis of what international fund managers think. Also, a collapse in the share price has no effect on capital ratios. So this alone would have been of no concern to the Regulator.

Of course, the politicians should have known that the property market was not sustainable. They *should* have told the bankers that the latter's assessment of risk was flawed and that they (the politicians) knew more about the status of the loans than the bankers.

The politicians *should* have done this. And we would have all been better off if they had. But was it realistic to have expected them to do it? First they would have had to have had a proper understanding of the economic situation (economists differed on this), and secondly they would have had to have the courage of their convictions to overcome the inevitable resistance to such credit restrictions—and not just from the banks, does anyone remember the *Sunday Independent* campaigns to keep the property market buoyant.

#### LUCEY ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

One of the current Government's sternest critics would not have been much help at the height of the property market. Below is a newspaper report of Brian Lucey's views in 2006:

"In a new study on the housing market,

Dr Brian Lucey, a finance lecturer at Trinity College Dublin (TCD), said further strong growth in the Irish housing market was underpinned by four key factors: demand, demographics, culture and sociopolitical issues.

"Lucey claimed that demand would continue to be supported by rising earnings, a low interest rate regime and limited supply.

"The demographic profile of the country, with population growth in younger age groups and migration from abroad, was a key factor in underpinning future demand.

"The academic also examined the attachment to homes in Ireland and the large number of properties abroad owned by Irish people.

"He said Irish people continued to display a preference for property investment because of a 'disaffection' for the stock market" (*Sun. Bus. Post*, 12.2.06).

#### BRIAN LENIHAN ON BANKING CRISIS

It was good to see Brian Lenihan in combative form in interviews with Miriam Callaghan and Vincent Browne (30.9.10). Some of O'Callaghan's questions were along the lines of "*when did you stop beating your wife*". She has a habit of starting by making a very dubious assertion and then asking a question on the basis that her assertion is a fact. Lenihan was forced to interrupt the questions on numerous occasions in order to dispute her assertions.

It was also good to see Lenihan criticise RTE in the course of the interview. Politicians are accountable to the people, but the media appears to be accountable to nobody. It is only constrained by the laws of libel, which it campaigns to mitigate if not entirely eliminate.

The other constraining factor in the case of privately-owned media organisations is the market.

#### THE IRISH TIMES

*The Irish Times* has been experiencing the chill winds of the market: its latest set of accounts (2009) are bleak. Sales are down by 25.9%. Most of this decline is accounted for by a fall in advertising revenue. The decline in circulation was marginal.

Its loss after exceptional items and tax was 27.8 million. The loss before exceptional items was 4.6 million. However, the outside observer might wonder about the "*exceptional items*". If the "*exceptional*" happens every year when does it cease to be exceptional and become normal?

*The Irish Times* financial position is perilous but it would be an exaggeration to say that it is in immediate danger. Unlike the *Independent Group*, it is cash rich. Since it is owned by a company with no shareholders, it could not pay out dividends in the good times. This has

stood to it in the bad times. However, its cash balance declined from 38.8 million to 13.5 million. A few more bad years and it could indeed be in trouble. The current Chief Executive thinks that it will continue to make losses in 2010, but claims that its cash position will not deteriorate any further since most of the losses will be accounted for by depreciation.

In the Celtic Tiger years the newspaper made some incredibly bad decisions which have been well documented in this magazine and elsewhere (e.g. Myhome.ie, Metro, the Gloss etc. etc). The prognosis for the newspaper is not particularly bright. Competition from the internet, which *The Irish Times* itself facilitated, has undermined its circulation which is declining at a faster rate than that of its main rival, the *Irish Independent*. The Long Fellow suspects its readership profile is becoming older each year.

Nevertheless, the old Lady of Tara Street still has a pulse and will probably struggle on for at least a few more years...

#### THE VILLAGE (IDIOT)

*The Irish Times* may have its problems, but its Editor hasn't quite the same challenges as the former Editor of the *Village* magazine. All of this was revealed in, of all places, *The Irish Times* property supplement.

In the Celtic Tiger era *The Irish Times* property supplement (or the *Queen of Property Porn* as David McWilliams dubbed it) used to describe not only the trophy houses it wished to sell but also liked to titillate its readers with details of the wealthy owners such as Jim Sheridan, Polly Devlin and Edna O'Brien. The prospective buyer was not only buying a property but a glamorous way of life.

But it's difficult to know what the thinking is behind revealing Vincent Browne's circumstances. Perhaps the seller is hoping buyers will take pity on him. Maybe the newspaper hopes readers will obtain a sadistic or voyeuristic thrill? Browne is hoping to sell his home for 3.25 million euro because he needs:

"...the money, although we could wait another few years. The money's needed to pay debts from Village magazine, to buy another house and to supply some kind of pension because I don't have one."

"Browne, a broadcaster and *Irish Times* columnist, was the founding editor of Village magazine in 2004. It ceased publishing in 2008 but was later revived with a new editor.

"Vincent Browne's debts are understood to be €1.5 million. He has not, he says, been put under pressure to sell by his bank. 'There is no immediate pressure and although we do need the money we've got a bit of time. I gambled money on Village magazine and it didn't pay off. If we got a decent price now we'd take it'..." (*The Irish Times*, 9.9.10).

Oh dear! ...way too much information!

#### Book Review: *Ship Of Fools* by Fintan O'Toole

### Moral Denunciation From O'Toole

The subtitle of this book is: "*How stupidity and corruption sank the Celtic Tiger*". It is not so much an economic or political analysis as a morality tale.

The author begins by describing the lavish wedding reception of the property developer Sean Dunne and the *Sunday Independent* journalist Gayle Killilea. The happy couple had hired a yacht formerly owned by Aristotle Onassis. O'Toole then contrasts this with a seemingly unrelated event: the sinking of the *Asgard II*, a boat owned by the State, named after the vessel used by Erskine Childers to import German arms in 1914. The reader is invited to reflect on the symbolism: a salutary tale on the dangers of excess leading to the death of the Republic.

There then follows a litany of what the author considers to be corruption. Most of the examples he gives are of tax evasion, such as the Ansbacher Accounts and the Non-Resident accounts leading to the DIRT enquiry, rather than the bribing of public officials. Among the examples of alleged corruption—in the normally accepted meaning of that term—are the following:

- Haughey changed tax laws to benefit Ben Dunne
- a £30,000 to £40,000 bribe by the Bailey brothers to Ray Burke
- a £40,000 bribe by Seamus Ross to Liam Lawlor to change the postal address in one of his developments
- Frank Dunlop's smaller bribes
- Bribing of George Redmond

The claim that Haughey changed the tax laws to benefit Ben Dunne is simply not true. O'Toole has covered the Tribunals quite extensively, so it is very difficult to believe that this is an innocent mistake. All the other allegations might be true. However, O'Toole does not say that doubt has been cast about the allegations made by James Gogarty against the Bailey Brothers. The Supreme Court Judge Adrian Hardiman awarded Tribunal costs in favour of the Bailey Brothers and reprimanded the Tribunal for suppressing evidence that would have cast doubt on the credibility of Gogarty. There is a thin dividing line between political contributions and bribes. It will be recalled that Pat Rabbitte accepted a political donation from a developer, but returned it some time later on the advice of his constituency organisation.

At any rate, O'Toole's list is not a great

haul from an extensive trawl of recent decades. The author admits that Ireland is not unique in the level of corruption. However, he claims that the tolerance for corruption in this country is remarkable. His evidence is the election of a local councillor in Sligo who was convicted of fraud and the case of the former Minister Michael Lowry TD who participated with Ben Dunne (the only customer in Lowry's refrigeration business) in a tax evasion scheme.

This reviewer has no knowledge of the minutiae of local Sligo politics. Regarding Michael Lowry it appears that he is an assiduous constituency politician. There might also be a feeling that he was hard done by. An allegation of influencing the competition for the lucrative mobile phone licence has been investigated by a Tribunal for 13 years and no substantial evidence has been produced to substantiate the allegation. O'Toole's claim that these cases indicate a tolerance of corruption is tenuous to say the least.

The difficulty with O'Toole's thesis is that, if the political system was corrupt, how can the Celtic Tiger be explained? His explanations include: "*dumb luck*"; the Celtic Tiger was merely catching up after years of under-performance; and subsidies from a Social Democratic Europe. He also mentions our favourable demographics and sees a paradox:

"Paradoxically, the Ireland of the 1990s reaped enormous benefits both from the repression of women before the 1970s and from their subsequent liberation".

The limiting of access to contraception ensured high birth rates and by the 1990s feminism had led to greater female participation in the workforce (but no mention of Minister McCreevy's Individualisation of the Tax Bands).

Unfortunately, O'Toole couldn't leave the demographics alone and spots an irony:

"With a grim irony, Ireland was also reaping the economic benefits of mass emigration in the 1950s, which meant that many of the elderly people who should have been in Ireland were actually in the UK and elsewhere and being cared for by other societies."

But, of course, the old were not old when they emigrated to Britain in the 1950s. They were for the most part active participants in her labour force. They would have reproduced the next generation to work in Britain. The implication that

Britain was looking after elderly Irish immigrants having received no benefit for herself is ludicrous, particularly in view of the fact that it received a workforce ready-made, with no costs in raising it.

About the only elements the author believes that cannot be explained by "*dumb luck*" are the massive investment in education by the State and Social Partnership. O'Toole grudgingly acknowledges the "*central role*" played by Bertie Ahern in social partnership but, of course, there is no mention of its founder, who was Charles Haughey.

He admits that the Irish Financial Services Centre employed 25,000 people but then quotes extensively from a *Guardian* article describing the number of "*brass plate*" companies employing two or three people—which begs the question where were the 25,000? Could they all have been employed by "brass plate" companies?!

Needless to say there is no mention of minimum wage legislation, increases in social welfare and pension benefits, the elimination of taxes on low-paid work or other positive features of the Celtic Tiger.

O'Toole's carping at times reaches comical proportions. For example he says about the ending of emigration during the Celtic Tiger era:

"The diasporic life was now lived at home—a logical outcome of the economic reversal in which, instead of labour moving towards American capital, American capital moved towards Irish labour."

It might be thought that the "*economic reversal*" represented progress. Emigration was no longer an economic necessity, and the country had reached full employment. But for O'Toole every silver lining must have a cloud and therefore he concludes:

"The sense of estrangement felt by generations of emigrants could now be felt without actually going anywhere."

Since O'Toole's thesis is that Ireland's economic crisis is essentially a moral problem, he exempts himself from giving an economic analysis. It is not until the end of the book that he outlines what happened in Anglo Irish Bank. He mentions the Contracts-for-Difference transactions of Sean Quinn and Cowen's efforts to impose stamp duty on these transactions. O'Toole accuses Cowen of capitulating to the "*money men*". Included in his list of lobbyists was the "*London Investment Banking Association*". But he makes nothing of this even though it puts a dent in his thesis of corrupt Irish crony capitalism.

Indeed O'Toole hardly mentions the

British banks in Ireland at all. There is a brief reference to Ulster Bank, a subsidiary of Royal Bank of Scotland, at the beginning of the book because this bank lent 260 million euro to Sean Dunne. O'Toole claims that the Irish taxpayer underwrote Dunne's lavish lifestyle. Unfortunately, the evidence he produces is the following:

"In August 2009, Ulster Bank, a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Scotland, moved loans it had given Dunne to buy the Jurys and Berkeley Court site into a new 'quarantine' division for dodgy assets a prelude to eventually offloading them to a British or Irish State 'bad bank' for toxic debts that were unlikely ever to be repaid in full".

But none of Ulster Bank's loans were moved to an Irish State 'bad bank'. They were moved to a British bad bank. So unfortunately for O'Toole's thesis, in this instance it was the British tax payer that took the hit.

O'Toole's description of the events surrounding the Bank Guarantee is garbled. He says:

"...all six major Irish financial institutions, including Anglo Irish, would have their deposits, loans and obligation guaranteed 100 per cent by the Irish tax payer. The government had effectively no idea what those obligations were or how many of the loans were likely to be repaid".

Here he is mixing up in the same paragraph the Banks' loans to customers with their borrowings.

The Government knew the value of the liabilities that it was guaranteeing. The problem was that the value of the banks' assets or loans to customers was of dubious value.

O'Toole doubts that Anglo Irish Bank was of systematic importance. Since the book was published, the distinguished academic and current Governor of the Central Bank, Patrick Honohan, has declared that it was systematic.

But, even without the benefit of Honohan's wisdom, it is surprising that the events surrounding the Guarantee did not give O'Toole pause for thought. For example, at the meeting preceding the Guarantee, the Chief Executives and Chairmen of AIB and Bank of Ireland wanted Anglo Irish Bank to be nationalised. Why would the two largest banks want their competitor to be saved? The answer could only be that the failure of Anglo would engender a systematic collapse in the Irish banking system.

Incredibly, O'Toole thinks that the immediate nationalisation of Anglo in September 2008, although "*hugely problematic*", made "*some sense*" because it would have bought:

"...some breathing space in which the government could work with the rest of the EU on a coordinated response to the broader crisis. Yet for some reason—whether an ideological hang up about nationalisation or a residual loyalty to Sean FitzPatrick or a mixture of both—Cowen and Lenihan decided not to take this course".

Nationalisation in September 2008 would have made the State directly responsible for the liabilities of Anglo Irish Bank. If the correct policy was, as O'Toole believes, to let Anglo-Irish go, then nationalisation would have made no "*sense*". But he is much more interested in making debating points than attempting to understand the financial crisis.

He goes on to say that the State eventually nationalised Anglo in the "*worst possible circumstances*". But he doesn't explain why those circumstances were worse in January 2009 than September 2008. For instance, in September 2008 the bank was technically solvent. Its accounts showed that it was profitable. It is likely that its shareholders would have had to be compensated. No such consideration arose in January 2009.

Unless the reader enjoys moral indignation, this is quite a depressing book. There is an epilogue which reads like an apology for the negativity. This part of the book is an afterthought which has very little connection with the rest of the book. O'Toole tries to be positive for a change but it doesn't come easy. It is only in the last half a dozen pages that he makes recommendations.

His first recommendation is that we recognise that the crisis is moral as well as economic. We all need to be good people and stop being bad or as he says himself:

"Unless there is an attitudinal revolution in which honesty, responsibility and a concern for the future become basic social values, nothing else is going to change".

His second recommendation is that we need a proper system of local government. This would facilitate:

"A real functioning parliament that concentrates on the jobs of framing legislation and holding the executive to account may seem like a rather basic demand in an established democracy, but the reality is that Ireland has never had one."

It is not clear how a proper system of local government would have prevented the economic crisis or what this has to do with the rest of the book and O'Toole doesn't explain. Nor does he explain how Ireland, unlike other countries, fails to hold the Executive to account. Ireland, like numerous other countries has a parliamentary system of government. The

legislators are subject to party discipline. However, unlike in Britain, our proportional electoral system, usually results in a narrow majority which means that individual legislators have a greater opportunity to influence the decisions of the executive. Whether this is a good thing or not is a moot point.

About a year ago on the *Late Late Show* O'Toole seemed to favour a system like the US where legislators are not constrained by party discipline. He urged Fianna Fail back benchers to vote against the Government to prove that they were genuine legislators. The disadvantage of this system is that the Executive is less effective in matter requiring legislation. For example, Barack Obama could not rely on members of his own party to support his proposals on health reform.

A third reform or aspiration of O'Toole is the realignment of party politics along left/right lines. But in this reviewer's opinion this would be less likely if our political system becomes more American. How O'Toole thinks realignment can be achieved is a little unclear. It appears that it requires another "*attitudinal revolution*". We must have a "*social vision*". Notwithstanding the title of the book (*Ship Of Fools*) and much of its content, O'Toole concludes that the Irish people have:

"...enough energy, enough talent, enough imagination. The question is whether they have constructive anger to kick away a system that has failed them and make a new one for themselves."

It seems we are forever doomed to disappoint Fintan!

This book is a hastily put together summary of O'Toole's *Irish Times* columns. It is neither a political nor economic analysis but an extended moral denunciation. Readers hoping to gain some insight into the causes and nature of the economic crisis will be disappointed.

## 1939 Greaves-Regan-O'Riordan Conversations

The Athol Books link [http://free-downloads.atholbooks.org/pamphlets/connolly\\_america.pdf](http://free-downloads.atholbooks.org/pamphlets/connolly_america.pdf) to my 1971 thesis *Connolly In America* indicates how long-standing have been my disagreements with his Connolly Association biographer and *Irish Democrat* Editor, C. Desmond Greaves (d.1988). This, however, is an article in appreciation of how authentically and accurately Greaves was to capture the personalities and outlook of both my Cork City father, Micheál O'Riordan (d.2006), and his Ballingearry Gaeltacht mother, Julia Creed (d.1965), in conversations recorded in July 1939 for a journal that was both observant and opinionated. In a covering letter to my father, dated 24th June 1991, Anthony Coughlan, CDG's literary executor, kindly explained:

"You remember that I gave you a photocopy of the section of CDG's journal dealing with his first visit to the South of Ireland in 1939, referring to his visit to Cork and first meeting with yourself {when my father was 21 years of age—MO'R}. I have now done out this on computer disc and enclose a copy of the relevant section, in case you might find it interesting and would care to have it and would find this more legible than CDG's handwriting. Who was the other Riordan he refers to in the text, I wonder, as against yourself, given as 'O'Riordan'?"

These July 1939 journal extracts fill in a blank for the period preceding my father's 1940-43 years as a Republican prisoner in the Curragh Internment Camp (detailed in the series on John Betjeman's wartime espionage in Ireland, published in the March, April, May and September 2010 issues of *Irish Political Review*), but subsequent to a letter from him on history and politics, available at [www.irelandscw.com/ibvol-MoR1939.htm](http://www.irelandscw.com/ibvol-MoR1939.htm) and first published by *Irish Political Review* in July 2007. In that April 1939 letter to a US comrade-in-arms, my father explained how, as a member of the Communist Party of Ireland, its leaders had directed him to remain a dual member of the IRA, adding that it "*can be a great force for Good or Evil, in the sense that it is the major Revolutionary Force in Ireland*".

The authentic character of my grandmother's exchanges with Greaves—not least her insistence on the power of prayer—will be all the better appreciated in the light of what my father himself wrote of her in the July-August 1986 issue of *New Hibernia*:

"Naturally, the 50th anniversary year (of the outbreak of the Spanish Anti-Fascist War) evokes personal memories back to the day I left my native Cork to go to Spain. Politically it was not a problem making the decision, but personally it was not all that easy. My parents were sincere unpretentious Catholics, and I was conscious that they would face all the pro-Franco hysterical propaganda, of which Fr. Paul O'Sullivan was but a typical example. I left a note trying to explain as simply as I could why I was going, not to the war, but to a good job hundreds of miles from the front. Some thirty five years later, when I completed the manuscript of *Connolly Column*—the story of the Irishmen who fought in the International Brigade—I dedicated it 'to the memory of my father who, because of the propaganda against the Spanish Republic in Ireland, did not agree with my going to Spain, but who also disagreed more with our "*coming back and leaving your Commander Frank Ryan behind*". My mother, I know, spent a small fortune getting Masses said for me. I never could get to know whether they were for my safe survival or for my 'conversion'. I suspect it was a sort of an each way bet. It is one of the good memories of my life that—although there was a little tension, a degree of embarrassment, with some perplexity thrown in—when I returned from Spain, the relations between the three of us resumed their normal good parents-son one. I remain ever thankful to both of them for that."

Regarding Greaves's account, I have three brief points of clarification, a fourth more significant one, and one even more significant amendment. Firstly, the unnamed *carillon* to which he referred was obviously the Bells of Shandon. Secondly, the basic two-way split in the River Lee gave that visiting Merseysider the optical illusion that Cork was a city of many rivers and canals. (But his sense of smell was both acute and accurate. Indeed, I myself can still vividly recall from childhood the foul odour that used to emanate from the Lee at low tide, while sitting in my granny's front bedroom on Pope's Quay during successive Summer visits from the mid 1950s to 60s.) Thirdly, Greaves and his cycling companion, John, were attired in shorts. Greaves was to wear shorts yet again on a post-war Summer lecture visit to Cork, much to the embarrassment of his Socialist hosts—being no less orthodox as to dress codes than their fellow Corkonians—who nevertheless failed to persuade Desmond to change into a more conventional pair of trousers.

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Fourthly, with the heading of *Cork Bishop Supports Lord Mayor's Protest*, the *Irish Times* for 27th February 1939 had reported:

"While one hundred men from the German naval cadet training vessel *Schlesien* were at Mass in St. Colman's Cathedral, Cove, yesterday, the Bishop of Cork (Dr. Cohalan) announced his support for the action of the Lord Mayor of Cork (Councillor James Hickey, TD) in refusing to welcome the officers and crew ... The Lord Mayor, in a statement on Friday, said that his refusal was because of *'the insult given to the Catholic world on the death of the Pope (Pius XI), when the responsible German Press termed our Holy Father a political adventurer'*... The Bishop, speaking at Cork Catholic Young Men's Society said: *'I regret the unavoidable absence of the Lord Mayor, because I would have wished in his presence to congratulate and thank him for the stand he has taken up in this German matter. The whole world—Catholic and non-Catholic—expressed appreciation of the great Pope who has passed away. The Head of the German State is a nominal Catholic, but after the death of the Pope the language of the official German Press was outrageous... It is not for such occasion as this to refer to the general persecution of the Church in Germany-Austria, but I take this opportunity of congratulating the Lord Mayor in what he did on his own initiative. I did not ask him to do it, nor do I suppose did anybody else.'*"

Bishop Cohalan was mistaken on that last point. Cork ITGWU leader Jim Hickey was not only a good personal friend of my father's; he, in turn, always regarded Hickey as an honest-to-God hero of Cork Labour. It was my father who had approached Hickey to argue that there was no way, as a Labour Mayor, he should receive the armed forces of a Nazi Germany that had bombed the Basque town of Guernica two years previously, and that had supervised the incarceration of Irish defenders of the Spanish Republic—Bob Doyle, Jim Haughey, Johnny Lemmon, Morry Levitas and Frank Ryan—in Spanish fascist prisons and concentration camps. Hickey readily agreed, but said he would have to find a formula to justify the denial of normal Mayoral courtesies to the visiting Nazi warship that would have the maximum popular appeal. My father regarded Hickey's *"Irish solution"* as a stroke of political genius, ensuring world-wide press coverage, but he obviously left Greaves in the dark as to his own role.

Finally, the name of my father's fellow CPI/IRA dual member (and, in 1938, his International Brigade comrade-in-arms in

Spain's battle of the Ebro) was not 'Riordan'—as Greaves misheard and erroneously recorded—but Jim Regan. I have amended Anthony Coughlan's transcript accordingly. Nor could Greaves have accurately recalled Regan's account of the British Army's burning of Cork city in 1920 (I've corrected CDG's "1922"), as Jim would never have attributed it to a Hollywood-style landing of the marines! In a 1995 article in *Saothar 20*, journal of the Irish Labour History Society, Anthony Coughlan related how, after the War, Greaves was to befriend Regan with prison visits. Following Jim's release, CDG also visited him in Cork on many occasions.

I myself knew Jim Regan (d. 1978) over a twenty year period from my early childhood, as both a friend and political associate of my family, our last meeting occurring in West Cork in 1975 at the Clonakilty funeral of my maternal aunt and godmother, Máire Keohane Sheehan. There is, indeed, a particularly sad irony attached to CDG's account of that July 1939 first meeting, when we realised that, despite being opposed to Seán Russell's IRA bombing campaign, Jim Regan's own sense of IRA loyalty would finally impel him to volunteer for active service in England. Betrayed by an informer, and arrested and charged with conspiracy and possession of explosives, he was tried—under his full name of James F. O'Regan—at London's Central Criminal Court in October 1939. Sentenced to 20 years penal servitude, Jim would serve as many as 9 years, in often brutalising conditions. When my father married my mother Kay Keohane in November 1946, their honeymoon took the form of a journey to Parkhurst Prison, on the Isle of Wight, to visit Jim Regan and his fellow Irish Republican prisoners, including Joe Collins of Dunmanway, who had been convicted under his *nom de guerre* of "Conor Mac Nessa". In a mid-1960s conversation, Joe told me that, apart from the physical abuse for which the prison authorities were responsible, the most brutally racist anti-Irish verbal abuse of the prisoners came, on a visit to Parkhurst, from the mouth of Britain's wartime Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison—London Labour Party boss and grandfather of Peter Mandelson.

In the peacetime of early 1947, playwright Seán O'Casey came to the fore in a two-year campaign for the release of those IRA prisoners. On 24th September 1947, O'Casey provided the chief campaign organiser, Eoin O'Mahony, with a letter for public use, in which he said:

"The Labour Government, if not the Labour Party, will have to be jeopardised

if they go the way they are going... Whether the Irish Government is willing, or not, to take back these imprisoned IRA men is not the point—it is that a Socialist Government should not keep these political prisoners a single second longer in jail. They were moved by idealistic principles, had nothing to gain and all to lose. It is a shocking thing that they should have been treated as criminals. I think their policy was a mistaken one; I thought so all along; but there was nothing of self-interest in it anyway. If the Labour Government have any sense, they would go with bands and banners to the prisons where these men are, open the gates for them, and ask them to join in the fight for human political and economic freedom... Why don't the Bishops—who are forever talking mercy and forgiveness—speak a word for them? Or the 'Republican' Government of de Valera? Oh what are some of those on the Government benches here, on the Government benches there, and on the benches where the Bishops sit?"

When the *Irish Times* published a version of this letter on 13th October, it very carefully excised the two sentences that made any reference to the Bishops. The letter was, however, published in full in the British Labour Left's *Tribune* on 5th December, preceded by O'Casey's listing of all thirty prisoners, including *"Joseph Collins Mac Nessa, Dunmanway, 20 years"* and *"James F. O'Regan, Sunday's Well, Cork, 20 years"*, and completed by his exhortation: *"Christmas cards, letters, books, weekly papers, and periodicals may be sent to the prisoners, addressed to Parkhurst Prison, Isle of Wight"*. Nonetheless, a dispute broke out, described as follows by David Krause, the Editor of O'Casey's correspondence:

"The 26 December 1947 issue of *Tribune* printed a poem by Neil MacIntyre, with an introductory comment explaining that the author had been inspired by O'Casey's appeal... Apparently O'Casey felt the poem was a bit of misplaced doggerel, too flippant in its comic approach to a serious problem."

In the 9th January 1948 issue of *Tribune* O'Casey wrote:

"Neil MacIntyre, in his 'Odd Man Out' poem, has a laugh at me (which doesn't matter), and another laugh at the Irish prisoners who have already done nine years in jail, which matters a lot to humane minds. In the first place, these prisoners are not 'Odd Men', for they have but fought for the principles avowed by de Valera and his followers a day or so ago; and which have been avowed by the Labour Party since it was born; a principle which they have been putting into practice in the restoration of independence to India and to Burma; and which they hold, presumably, regarding the nationalities nearer to their own particular home... Sir



Oswald) Mosley (leader of the British Union of Fascists) and his followers were reckoned to be a danger during the war years; but they had an easy time of it in quod, with daintily-cooked food and a suite of rooms, with many privileges, and quick release when the war ended. Our lads have been closely confined within all the rigours of prison life for nine long years. Doesn't Mr. MacIntyre think it time to call enough? Does he think that vengeance should go on having its own sour way till the life of these lads is swallowed up forever in the waste of lonely and useless time? Apparently he does, for all he can think of is a laugh at the fate of men who had the courage to face danger for what they believed to be true. Well, let him have his laugh, though, for me, I'd rather be one of the jailed than have a laugh like that."

Under the heading of "OPEN THE PRISON GATES!" the *Daily Worker* of 22 December 1947 had also published the following from O'Casey:

"There are 30 Irishmen in Parkhurst Prison ... young men whose one fault was that they loved Ireland not wisely but too well... and since they have languished long enough, further imprisonment will simply be just cold and bitter vindictiveness on the part of authority calling itself democratic, broad-minded and fair... These lads got a good deal of their inspiration from WB Yeats... Like the poet, these young men had '*hidden in their hearts the flame out of the eyes of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan*'... And not from Yeats alone. Reviewing a book of mine, George Orwell got very angry because he thought there was too much Irish nationalism in the work; and he selected passages to prove this, quoting the following verse:

*'Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death for their native land.'*

"But it wasn't Finn McCool, or even Thomas Davis, who wrote it. It wasn't even an Irishman. It was an Englishman, well-known and famous: it was Tennyson, but the learned George Orwell didn't know... It is time that the workers of England called for the release of these fine lads ... that they may take their place in your ranks, to march with banner and bugle and fife, in the great cause of Labour." {Indeed, on 9th November 1945, O'Casey had observed: "Yes; I remembered that Orwell was with the *Tribune* and drew my own conclusions."}

On 18th April 1948, Greaves's *Irish Democrat*, while stating its "*disapproval of the terrorist methods the prisoners had used in the past*", organised a prisoner release rally in London's Holborn Hall, which received a message of solidarity from O'Casey that ended: "*May the curse of every Irish saint fall heavy on every*

*Irish head that refuses to lift itself and say a word for these fine men wasting away in jail.*" And he meant every word of it. In two separate letters to *Irish Writing* Editor David Marcus, the Anglo-Irish writer and Gate Theatre dramatist Denis Johnston would be cursed not once, but twice, by O'Casey:

"I am not eager to appear cheek by jowl with Mr. Johnston, who refused to sign a petition for the release of the Irish prisoners who were rotting alive... I have very little respect for the bourgeois caution that prevents a man from taking the part of men, brave men too, however we may disagree with what they might have done, and honest, as well, who were less fortunate than himself" (25 October 1950).

"The article by Johnston on me is amusing and, I fear, very ignorant... But, of course, there has always been this pretence at knowing among the upper middle classes of Ireland. As for (O'Casey) losing 'compassion' for the people, it comes ill from one who refused to sign a petition for the release of the Irish political prisoners from the horror of Dartmoor" (21 December).

On 4th November 1947 Jim Regan had sent a telegram to O'Casey to thank him for his support, and O'Casey replied on 12th November. Jim penned a letter in similar vein in December, and on 30th December O'Casey sought to cheer him up for the approaching New Year:

"My dear James, I am very glad, very glad indeed, to hear you all like me saying a word or two on your behalf. I will go on doing so, wherever and whenever I can. You do well to write all your letters to your mother. She must be always anxious to hear from you, and be delighted when she does. So don't reply to this one from me; but go on writing home... I have had a vigorous and a busy life, and that is what I should like you lads to have, and not be hanging the latch in prison. Especially lads that followed an ideal: followed it too well, and landed in jail, while the cuter ones landed themselves in cushy jobs... And now all the best to you all. I somehow believe it won't be so long now till you see the gates opening. My love to you, Seán O'Casey" (first published in *Saothar* by A. Coughlan in 1995).

O'Casey's efforts on behalf of the Republican prisoners finally bore fruit. Jim Regan was released in September 1948, while Joe Collins was among the last to be released in December. Sharing in that prisoner release campaign had been O'Casey's fellow Dublin Protestant Republican, the Abbey Theatre musician and composer Freddie May. On 29th September 1948, having learned of Regan's release, O'Casey wrote to May:

"I am so glad that J.R. is out of jail at

last; and I feel sure the rest will be out before long... If you can, please tell J.R. how pleased I am. The last magazines I sent were returned from the prison, *per* the Governor, with a note that J.R. had already '*received his entitlement*'. Concern for him, and his companions, prevented me from telling this bostune what I thought of him in good O'Casey language. It was very hard on me to have had to keep silence when there was a chance to fight fools; fools in power lording it over better souls than their own. However, I expect they will all be out before the year ends."

So, now to CDG's account of his first, July 1939, visit to both the County and City of Cork, and his meetings with International Brigaders Micheál O'Riordan and Jim Regan, some months before the former's four years of internment without trial and the latter's nine years of penal servitude.

**Manus O'Riordan**

### **1939 OBSERVATIONS AND CONVERSATIONS IN CORK**

#### **Killarney (Kerry)—July 22, Sat.**

... Then we returned to Killarney. There was a town dance on, which kept us awake late, as periodically there would be terrific rhythmic stampings and cries of "Ooh!" as the old folk-jigs and polkas were danced. And the sound of the fiddles scraping away gave a great air of festivity to the evening. After that, everybody paraded the streets one way and another, and it was readily discernible that nine-tenths of the population were almost blind drunk.

#### **Killarney, Kenmare, Glengarriff, Macroom, CORK—July 23, Sun.**

On what turned out to be the first fine and hot day, with a bright sun which put the finishing touches to our already tanned skin, and stimulated the irritation of the insect bites, we cycled to Cork, through Windy Gap, along the fjord coast of West Cork, and through the hills to the east. This ride was the star-turn of our holiday, including wonderful mountain scenery in Kerry, and coast scenery at Glengarriff, which was further rendered interesting by the profusion of semitropical vegetation. Our old friend the fuchsia reappeared in the region immediately surrounding Glengarriff. Of course the roads are frightful, loose slate and only half made up. As we were riding all day there were no incidents. It was interesting seeing the people going to Mass in their best clothes. We saw cart-loads of them on wagons bearing prominently the title "No passengers", and children wearing the white satin frocks and white stockings of fifty years ago... But this part of the country is clearly more prosperous. There is much greater variation in the size of the farms, and in the

main a tendency towards middle peasant holdings.

We found a suitable place in Cork, where there was a garrulous old Scotchman (sic) staying. We were followed there by a few small children attracted by our unusual appearance. And our hosts asked if we felt cold—and were silenced by the talking Scotchman who said we were travelling the only sensible way. We had left Killarney in company with a young cyclist from Liverpool who spent a few weeks in between spells of casual or semi-casual employment in travelling about the land of his ancestors. Again in Cork we met Liverpool over and over again. Everybody we met in Cork this evening had been there at one time or another...

### **CORK—July 24, Mon.**

In the morning we went to look up a party member, Michael O'Riordan, at 37 Pope's Quay. Cork, like Dublin, has its quays. When we went for a walk around it in the afternoon, we noticed, however, first, that instead of one river Cork has many, that the whole town is divided and intersected by small canals; and second, that the water is a filthy green and smells abominably. Apart from that, Cork is the finest city in Ireland, without a doubt.

We saw O'Riordan's mother. He wasn't in. *"Might you be connected with this International Brigade?"* *"We are."* She became hostile. *"Well, I'm sorry. I don't believe in it. I think no good will come of it. I don't believe in politics, and I'm sorry Michael ever had anything to do with it."* *"I'm sorry we don't agree."* *"Don't agree! But wasn't it to be a terrible thing, all the young boys dying in Spain"*—she was quite a nice old lady after all—*"and Michael going off like that, and we wondering what had become of him!"* *"There are two sides to it, of course"*, we agreed. *"Ah, it's nearly killed his father, him an old man with his hair white. It's too much worry we had over it."* *"But he came back."* *"He did. But what is after bringing him back? Prayers, it is! It's only that! He'll be in at three o'clock and I'll tell him you've called and hold him back for you. What is your name?"* *"Desmond Greaves."* The name Desmond worked wonders. She smiled her approval—and, her nationalist feelings getting the better of her, she chatted merrily for a good ten minutes, wanting to hear all the details of the exile's return, as she thought it must be.

However, we decided to go to Cobh, but to get back by three. We were stopped half way, however, by violent rainstorms. Our devil's luck had deserted us, and we had to shelter under a yew tree until we were invited into a cottage. The young man who chatted with us was against the IRA men who *"didn't know how to conduct themselves"*, but was loud in his praises of the IRA who had *"fought for the independence of their country"*. Everybody

again asked if it would be war. *"I hope it won't be a war"*, they said, *"for the sake of the boys"*. They wanted to be assured that there really was conscription in England, and on hearing that John was a militiaman, brought in the neighbours to have a chat with him.

However, we got back to Cork in time to see O'Riordan, a very fine comrade who was several times mentioned in despatches in the Spanish war. His first question, after the usual formalities of how we liked Ireland and saying there were a lot of Irish in Liverpool, was about the attitude of the CPGB (Communist Party of Great Britain) to the IRA bombings. I told him what we had said, and he agreed with it. I was not then aware of what had, since my departure, been published in the *Daily Worker*, and neither was he. Dublin were slack in sending him material and he got all his literature—*CI (Communist International)*, *Inprecor*s, and so on—from the United States. He had contacts in New York and Frisco, in which two centres the American party is mainly concentrated. He had to get back to work, but he arranged to meet us on Patrick's Bridge in the evening.

It was then we explored Cork, going to see the Cathedral, and following the various canals and quays. There is a very remarkable *carillon* above the place where we stayed, and of course we were advised to go and see it. But the children were able to prevent us. Not content with sniggering and calling *"hikers"* at us, they must crowd around us shouting the way to the church with the bells, adding in the same breath *"and now give us a copper"*. At other times they would come pattering up to us asking for money without even the pretence of giving information. At last I decided to use a stratagem, and said, *"Be off, or I'll bring a policeman!"* This worked like a charm—they went scampering off in all directions, and goodness knows how it got around, we were never again pestered in Cork, despite looks of surprise on the faces of some of the locals. Now, by English standards, our appearance was highly respectable! ...

Later we met (Jim) Regan, a friend of O'Riordan, also of the IB (International Brigade) and a party member, who told us that O'Riordan would not be about for a while. We went into a pub, and I had a whiskey... Regan does not drink. He explained that everybody he had known to begin, had ended by taking too much, and that he therefore neither drank nor smoked. This was startlingly borne out later on, as at tap-stop the pubs disgorged dozens upon dozens of drunken men who, whatever their age, sang and jostled their way along the broad pavements of Patrick Street, three sheets to the wind. I remarked upon the fine buildings. *"Well, to be sure, we've got the British Government to thank for them."* *"Oh! How?"* *"Well, in 1920*

*they landed their marines here and sacked the town, set fire to the whole south side of Patrick Street, besides shelling the other side. So when the trouble (sic) was over they had to pay compensation, and build it up all over again. Many people say it's a pity they didn't burn down both sides, and then we'd have the finest street in Ireland."*... But I liked Cork. It has a truly metropolitan atmosphere; and again, as J and I remarked, there is the strange similarity to Liverpool. Only now that we have seen Dublin, Limerick and Cork (I saw Belfast years ago) is it possible to trace the origins of those characteristic elements of the vastly more complex port of Liverpool. Cardiff + Cork + Belfast = Liverpool. Liverpool is one of the Western circuit—not an English city.

We also discussed the Irish attitude to Fascism. A few years ago {it had, in fact, been only five months previously—MOR} the Mayor of Cork had refused to attend a civic reception for a German naval unit. But this was on the grounds of the disrespect shown by the Nazis on the death of the Pope, not for political reasons. There is some ambivalence in the Irish attitude, made up of sympathy with German grievances with rough treatment at the hands of Britain, a certain sympathy with German propaganda regarding British misrule in Palestine, and a certain persistence of the idea that England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity. For example, Hitler's entry into the Rhineland was compared to a possible Irish occupation of Ulster. But two factors tended to change the Irish attitude; first the annexation of Czechoslovakia, which is felt to be a country similar to Ireland, and second the intensified persecution of Catholics. In addition, the close collaboration between Germany and Japan, whose robber war in China is so strongly resented in Ireland, has tended since Munich to alienate sympathy from Germany, which no longer can pose as champion of small nations. Also Hitler is regarded as the man who is liable to cause world war.

The Mayor of Cork is the first Labour Mayor of the city. There are 5 Labour councillors, out of 15, the rest being either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. Proportional representation results in a much fairer disposition of seats among the parties. The workers of Ireland are 75% organised and the Trade Union movement is relatively stronger than in Britain. Wages are better. There is no official connection between Labour and the TUs except that the same persons run both... We have thus a social-democratic Labour party, without TU or Co-op finance. There is a general apathy among workers. Éire is separated by Britain from European struggles, and even the natural alertness of the people tends to be lulled if they stand in the shadow of such a great power. Also, nobody feels that Ireland is capable of

playing a part in world affairs, and nobody in the country wants her to try, as the penalties would certainly outweigh the advantages.

O'Riordan proposed we should go and have a drink. We pointed out that it was 11 o'clock, an hour after closing time, and that though we were *bona fide* travellers, they were certainly not. But he took us to the side-door of a pub, knocked three times, and waited until the door was cautiously opened and we were let in. There, in the darkened bar, in the dim reflected light from a distant street-lamp, relieved only by an occasional reddening of a pipe or a cigarette, we discovered about twenty customers, drinking in dead silence, steadily and continuously, or stopping to talk in whispers and undertones. It was a strange sight, and it was there, and under the influence of the stout, that O'Riordan explained to me that he and Regan were still members of the IRA, and that as such they were liable to arrest. They would have to keep silence and refuse to plead, under the rules of the IRA. But, of course, they would adopt the communist method of defending themselves and making a platform.

But O'Riordan felt most bitterly, he said, the tragedy of his young comrades of the IRA (many of whom would have fought with him in Spain), under their bad leadership, with all sincerity, going over to England to cause unnecessary friction with a potentially friendly people, and losing ten, fifteen, or twenty of their best years, in the service of a mistaken cause. It was true, of course, that partition must be remedied before the Irish movement could ever turn towards the questions of social revolution. Republican traditions would remain in their primitive anarchistic condition until Ulster was returned to Éire. But when de Valera was already making such good progress, these attempts would only harden things. He remarked that the Catholic Church had come out against the bombings, but just as he, as a Catholic from birth—who felt it was hard even now not to be a Catholic—had gone to Spain despite O'Duffy's reactionary alliance with the Church, so these young men braved excommunication as well as jail. They were splendid types. There was in Ireland a great deal of anticlericalism which would be expressed round the peat fires by the farm labourers, but which everybody would keep silent on in the street. It would not do, for example, even in 'the rebel Cork' {sic}, for them to profess anything but complete agreement with Catholicism. Their fellow-workers would otherwise have no faith in them.

He finally explained how the apathy of the people was contributed to by de Valera. First Cosgrave had disappointed them. He came into power at the end of the trouble {sic} because he was against pursuing the national struggle any further than would

give them political autonomy. They wanted peace. He gave it to them. Then they realised it was peace on the terms of the Anglo-Irish big bourgeoisie. They voted in then the petty-bourgeois de Valera who carried the revolution a little further. But he was failing them; the labour movement was sunk in economism—communism unknown—and but for the short time when de Valera appealed to the masses over the Trade War with Britain, there had been a gradually increasing disillusionment with all politicians. This also is the basis for IRA activities—the helplessness and defeatism of republicanism under de Valera's government. Finally, after promising to send O'Riordan *Daily Workers*, and

listening to the Scotchman, we went to bed.

**Cork, Fermoy, Mitchelstown ...**

**July 25, Tues.**

In the morning we set off. Our devil's luck as regards the weather reasserted itself. It rained to right, to left of us, before and behind us—but, with the exception of a shower at Mitchelstown, not on us. The journey was through interesting country, mainly in the valleys between mountain ranges. The country seemed fairly prosperous, with a deal of dairying going on; the bogs were absent; there were numerous co-operative creameries... We went on to Kilkenny...

**C. Desmond Greaves, July 1939**

## De Valera on Zionism and Palestine Republican Ireland and Zionism

PART ONE

De Valera's election to President of the League of Nations Assembly in September 1932 was an international sensation. In his inaugural address he expressed scepticism of the League's intentions or ability to halt aggression by big powers. But he also championed the notion of international law in the interests of small nations, and active measures of "collective security" in defence of the "Charter" of the League. An editorial in the *Journal de Geneve* (25th September 1932), widely syndicated in the world press, caught the flavour of his impact:

"... Eamon de Valera, the outlaw and hero, is now at the head of all the nations of the world... {His Presidency} may become a sort of guiding light, a star in the heavens for all those oppressed peoples struggling for their independence—de Valera presiding over the sessions of the Council at which the Japanese will have to explain their attitude to China. Here is an astonishing occurrence, of which Ghandi and millions of Indians, Arabs, of yellow people and, perhaps, of black, will at once grasp the full import."

### DE VALERA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN 1930s

But de Valera's role on the world stage was not that of a revolutionary demagogue. The manner of Ireland's achievement of independence was seen internationally as a model. Close relations with India developed on this basis, with the Indian revolutionary Subhas Chandra Bose—leader of the 'militant' wing of the Indian Congress and *persona non-grata* in Britain—twice meeting with de Valera in the 1930s. In 1938 the Egyptian Foreign Minister Sharara Pasha—Egypt at the time having a status in the British Empire not dissimilar to that of the Irish Free State—proposed to one of de Valera's closest aides, Joseph

Walshe, that a group of former colonies should work together to "change the Commonwealth's character and give us an opportunity of sliding quietly out of the King's orbit" (*Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, Vol. 5, p309).

Following the Cumann na nGaedheal Governments of the 1920s which, if anything, had become overzealous in implementing the letter of the Treaty and had focussed on Ireland's 'Dominion Status' in the Commonwealth/Empire, De Valera's foreign policy represented a return to the position advocated by Collins of hollowing out the Treaty and establishing an independent existence in the world. As part of this, immediately following his election to power, he wound down the State's engagement with the Empire and expanded its role at the League of Nations instead.

Article 29 ("International Relations") of the 1937 Constitution incorporated the foreign policy principles of the 1921 Declaration of Independence, committing the State to "international justice", the "peaceful settlement of international disputes", and the overriding role of the "recognised principles of international law" in relations between states. The State could join or become associated with "any group or league of nations... for the purpose of international co-operation in matters of common concern". Article 28 stated that "War shall not be declared and the State shall not participate in any war save with the assent of Dáil Éireann", i.e. the automatic commitment to support Britain's wars inherent in the 1921 Treaty were annulled at a stroke.

In September 1938, at the height of the European crisis over Czechoslovakia and its discontented minority German, Slovak,

Hungarian and other populations, de Valera, addressing the League, called for "a general European peace conference or at least a peace conference between the greater Powers" to bring about "a lasting peace in Europe as a preliminary to the establishment of a League of Nations effective over the whole world... If nations be called to make certain sacrifices at such a conference, these will be far less than the sacrifices they will have to make in the event of war." He supported the efforts of the British Chamberlain Government at this stage for a general settlement between the Powers to resolve the outstanding conflicts from Versailles. In a reference to Danzig and other questions he continued:

"If, therefore, a solution is found now to the Sudeten problem it will be madness to sit by and see another crisis develop in regard to other questions which everyone knows must ultimately be settled before the foundations of anything like a permanent peace in Europe can be laid. To adopt the ostrich policy towards these questions will not remove them out of the way. Nor will the advice to let sleeping dogs lie keep dogs indefinitely asleep..." ('Only hope of lasting Peace', *Irish Press*, 27.08.1938)

In this speech—which inexplicably is not included in the Cambridge/Royal Irish Academy *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*—De Valera let it be known that he was no well meaning pacifist and that Ireland would support a just war against international aggression. But he also stressed that the current problems in Europe could not be understood in these terms, but rather in terms of conflicts which had just grievances at their source:

"The war of sheer aggression, the war of the bully who covets what does not belong to him and means to possess himself of it by force, is not the war that we need to fear most. The most dangerous war is that which has its origin in just claims denied, or in a clash of opposing rights and not merely opposing interests, when each side can see no reason in justice why it should yield its claim to the other. If, by conceding the claims of justice, or by reasonable compromise in a spirit of fair play, we take steps to avoid the latter kind of war, we can face the possibility of the other kind with relative equanimity."

De Valera also opposed the division of Europe into "fascist" and "anti-fascist", or "Bolshevik" and "anti-Bolshevik", camps. He denounced as "gratuitously criminal" attempts to—

"array Europe in hostile camps according to State ideology. The people of each nation or state can be depended on to evolve that form of State organisation

best suited to their needs—that is their affair—and it should be made clear at once that differences in this regard are not and will not be a cause of war among the peoples."

In the spirit of this sentiment de Valera had been instrumental in securing the acceptance of the Soviet Union into League membership, and down to September 1939 continued to advocate the peaceful settlement of the remaining issues arising from Versailles.

This was all during what we are now told by historians Tom Garvin, Brian Girvin and others was Ireland's "isolationist, inward-looking" period.

#### REPUBLICAN IRELAND, FASCISM & THE JEWS

Many members of the 3,000 strong southern Irish Jewish community supported the Sinn Féin movement that developed after 1916, while the Jewish community in Belfast tended towards Unionism. This mirrored the traditions of Western European Judaism at that time. That Jews in southern Ireland were attracted to Republicanism rather than Redmondism was also not surprising, given the pluralism of Sinn Féin compared to the increasingly clericalist substance of the Irish Parliamentary Party since it had absorbed the Ancient Order of Hibernians as a mass Catholic base in 1906 and enjoyed the undivided support of the Catholic Hierarchy.

As the controversy over the anti-Jewish disturbances in 1904 in Limerick had shown, anti-Jewish tendencies were also more pronounced in its ranks than among the 'advanced nationalists'. Several Jews actively participated in the War of Independence on the side of the Republic. Robert Briscoe, from a Dublin Jewish merchant family with international connections, became an officer in Collins' Intelligence service, organised arms supplies from Germany, was later an officer in the anti-Treaty IRA, and went on to serve nearly forty years as a Fianna Fáil TD. Others active in Sinn Féin included the Dublin solicitor, Michael Noyk, a close aide of Griffith during the War, Griffith himself having abandoned his earlier imperialist views on the 'Jewish Question'. Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Herzog became a close friend of Éamon de Valera, providing a safe house for him when he was on the run, and remaining a confident of his throughout his life.

The Republican ascendancy over Redmondism from 1918 never succeeded in securing the endorsement of the Hierarchy. In June 1921, at the height of the War of Independence and during the negotiations towards establishing the Truce, de Valera sought their support to

strengthen the hand of the Republic in dealing with Lloyd George:

"On that day {June 21st} the Irish Hierarchy were meeting in convention at Maynooth. President de Valera, believing that support from the Church would immeasurably reinforce the national position, went to Maynooth and urged them to issue a statement recognising the Irish Government as the legitimate Government of Ireland. The Bishops did not take the action required..." (Dorothy McArdle, *The Irish Republic*, Dublin, 1951, p465).

Instead, the Bishops remained stubbornly on the ground of the Home Rule position, demanding merely that the British facilitate the election of a representative government. They never endorsed the Republic. This enabled the British to proceed with their strategy, regardless of the Irish position, of forcing the establishment of a Dominion Home Rule arrangement on the basis of the *1920 Government of Ireland Act* that had been rejected by Republican Ireland. The "Provisional Government", subsequently established under the Treaty, was understood by Britain as resting on the basis of that Act. The defeat of Republicanism in 1922-3 and the establishment of the 'Free State' substantially on the grounds of the old Home Rule concept reinvigorated the Catholic Hierarchy and gave it, and Catholic lay organisations in the tradition of the AOH, a far more influential role in relation to the new State in the 1920s than they had enjoyed with the Republican State of 1919-21.

The catastrophic conditions in continental Europe resulting from the 'Great War' and the Versailles Treaty of 1919—particularly the destruction and balkanising of the multi-national Habsburg State, the emasculation of the Italian and German States and the pauperisation of the German and Austrian populations—provided the impulse for the rise of modern fascism. It gained some followers in Ireland, with an intellectual anti-Jewish tendency developing in right-wing clerical-corporatist circles associated with the "Blueshirt" movement. A popular pamphlet, *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World* (1936), issued with the *imprimatur* of the Archbishop of Dublin, warned of the threat of "Jewish finance" and "Jewish Bolshevism" to European Christendom. But fascism as a political force never gained substantial currency in Ireland, and was irrelevant in the context of the vibrant republican ideology that remained the dominant strand in all political parties.

The views of the Fianna Fáil Government in the 1930s were given very direct

expression in the *Irish Press*. Fine Gael TD James Dillon, who, as Elizabeth Bowen reported to British Intelligence, was one of the few figures in the Irish political establishment with genuine fascist sympathies, later accurately described it as "*de Valera's Pravda*", read "*in every chancellery in the world ... to find out what was behind his pious affirmations in public*" (*The Irish Times*, 29.11.1957).

Contrary to the current fashion of portraying Irish opinions of the 1930s as isolated from and ignorant of the world, the front page of the *Irish Press* was usually dominated by world news and a singularly independent view of them. It reported negatively on the suppression of democracy and the persecution of the Jews and the Christian Churches in Nazi Germany, much to the chagrin of Charles Bewley, the pro-Nazi Free State Ambassador in Berlin. It also covered de Valera's public opposition to racial persecution in Europe and its coverage of the Spanish Civil War betrayed some republican sympathies much in contrast to the militantly Catholic *Irish Independent*. At the same time, the *Irish Press* gave extensive and respectful coverage to the appointment of Dr. Eduard Hempel as German Ambassador to Ireland and as late as July 1939 hailed the conclusion of a Trade and Technology Agreement with Germany as a major step towards undoing Irish economic dependence on Britain. While the Government accepted whatever form of State other peoples chose, it was unequivocal on the values of the Irish republican state. This reflected de Valera's position as he had outlined it at Geneva.

The new 1937 Constitution (*Bunreacht na hÉireann*) recognised the Catholic Church as having a "*special position*" in the State, but it also—to the chagrin of the Hierarchy—recognised the main Protestant denominations as well as Judaism as official religions of the State. As Professor Joe Lee put it, this was "*a gesture not without dignity in the Europe of 1937*" (*Ireland 1922-1985. Politics and Society*, p203). A leading Zionist official, Rabbi M.L. Perlzweig, on a visit to Dublin during a break in negotiations in London over British plans for Palestine—

"paid a high tribute to Ireland's treatment of the Jews, which, he said, had created among Jews all over the world a feeling of help and encouragement, and a knowledge that there still were powerful forces in the world working for liberty and justice... It was a matter of interest to Jewry all over the world, he said, that Ireland in the magnanimity of her spirit chose to speak specifically in her Constitution of the Jewish community as an integral element in the Commonwealth,

and as a body of persons entitled by law to their place in the country's life" (*The Irish Times*, 24th March 1938)

#### BRITISH ZIONIST PROJECT

The small international Zionist movement of the 1930s, which was strongest in the US and was a marginal presence among anti-assimilationist Jews in Europe, had been fiercely pro-British since the *Balfour Declaration* of November 1917. The Zionist project of colonising Palestine could only be carried out under the wing of a protective world power, and that power, as persistently stated by leaders of the Zionist movement, was the British Empire. The Balfour Declaration promised the establishment of a "*Jewish homeland*" in Palestine under British protection—despite the very small Jewish population in the area at the time. Its purpose was to bring the US into the war on the side of Britain. It acted as a powerful stimulant to European anti-Semitism, as Zionism sought to align European Jewry with British interests and against those of the States where the largest Jewish populations actually lived.

During the 'Great War' Britain had also promised the Arabs the creation of an Arab State which included the same territory. The populated, fertile area of the region stretched no more than a few dozen miles inland from the Mediterranean before running up against a large desert east of Damascus and Amman. In 1922 Britain had the League of Nations adopt Palestine as a "*Mandate Territory*", with Britain holding the mandate to implement the Balfour Declaration.

In the late 1930s, when the chaotic conditions which colonial settlement in Palestine was causing dictated that Britain's interests change towards a policy of creating a joint Jewish-Arab entity, a propaganda pamphlet by Oxford Professor James Parkes (*Palestine*, Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, 1940), issued to provide the case for this, pointed out some of the demographic realities. In 1914 there were no more than about 20,000 native Jews and 10,000 Zionist settlers in Palestine, and at the time of the Balfour Declaration 93% of the population (664,000) was still Arab. But under the 'British Mandate', Jewish settlement was aided and assisted, being met with Arab resistance at every stage. Between 1918 and 1922, 20,000 Zionist settlers arrived, followed by 7,400 in 1923, 12,800 in 1924 and 33,800 in 1925. The Jewish population settled at 150,000 in 1929, and appeared to have reached its limit, with just 5,000 arriving per year in the three years up to 1932, when it again rose to 10,000. Events

in Europe—economic collapse and the rise of anti-Jewish sentiment—led to a surge in the years thereafter, with 30,000 arriving in 1933, 42,000 in 1934 and 62,000 in 1935. By 1939, from a base of about 40,000 in 1917, the Jewish population had reached nearly half a million. The Arab world for its part, which had joined Britain's war of 1914-18 for the destruction of the Turkish Empire on the basis of the promise of an Arab State, was balkanised and colonised by Britain and France in their carve-up of the Ottoman Empire.

In British ruling circles there was a convergence between anti-Semitism and Zionism. Its *Aliens Act* of 1905 had been directed mainly against Jewish immigration and had been enacted in a public atmosphere of spy fever and anti-Semitic fervour. The demagoguery surrounding its introduction provided the intellectual climate of the 1904 disturbances in Limerick. Britain's Imperial intervention forces, sent to overthrow the Soviet Government in 1919, stood by while their White Army allies indulged in widespread anti-Semitic massacres. As Minister for War, Churchill defended these massacres as understandable in the context of the role of the Jews in destroying Tsarism. The following year, Churchill set out the full British Zionist case. Describing the Jews as "*the most formidable and the most remarkable race*", he differentiated between "*Good and Bad Jews*":

"The conflict between good and evil which proceeds unceasingly in the breast of man nowhere reaches such an intensity as in the Jewish race... It may well be that this same astounding race may at the present time be in the actual process of producing another system of morals and philosophy, as malevolent as Christianity was benevolent, which, if not arrested, would shatter irretrievably all that Christianity has rendered possible..."

This malevolent Jewish philosophy was Bolshevism, "*a worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization*". He differentiated between "*National Jews*" and "*International Jewry*". The latter was a disruptive force in the world, while only Zionism offered the prospect of the Jews being grounded in a nationalism of their own, "*the Jew*" becoming a nationality rather than a disruptive internationalist, while also fulfilling an imperial function by creating a white British colony beside the Suez Canal defending the land bridge to India:

"But, if, as may well happen, there should be created in our lifetime by the banks of the Jordan, a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise three or four million of Jews, an event ... in the history of the

world which would, from every point of view, be beneficial, and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire." ("Zionism versus Bolshevism. Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish people", *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 18th February 1920)

The Governor of Palestine in the 1920s, Sir Andrew Storrs, summarised the British concept thus: a colony gradually built up in Palestine would evolve for Britain into "a loyal little Jewish Ulster in a sea of hostile Arabism" (Storr, *Orientalism*, 1937, p358).

#### IRISH VIEWS OF THE ZIONIST PROJECT

The creation of the Jewish colony in Palestine by Britain under the League of Nations mandate was regarded in Ireland as essentially a British Imperial project. Despite his friendship with the leaders of the Jewish community in Ireland, de Valera distrusted British designs in Palestine. In the 1930s Britain was engaged in a fierce terrorist war against Arab opposition to the Jewish immigration to Palestine being carried out under its tutelage. In 1937 it ignored the League and declared its intention of partitioning Palestine into Jewish and Arab sub-colonies. Arab opinion vociferously rejected this, as was reported sympathetically in Ireland. The *Irish Independent* drew comparisons between the British suppression of the Arab resistance and the situation in Ireland in 1919-22, and also expressed Catholic concerns for the fate of the Christian sacred sites in the area. An *Irish Press* editorial on 10th July 1937 stated that the disastrous conditions of conflict in Palestine were a direct result of the duplicity of British policy since the Balfour Declaration, which, with its aim of maintaining a strategic stronghold in the Middle East under the guise of a League of Nations mandate, was now threatening the Arab population with being ruled by an immigrant Jewish majority. The partition proposals, it elsewhere reported, would see the Arabs "ousted from the coastal areas to the hills", while the proposed Jewish area would be too small to be defensible ('Partition and Palestine: Arabs and Jews opposed to Commission Proposals', *Irish Press*, 9th July 1937).

Liberal opinion in Ireland too was hostile, Owen Sheehy Skeffington writing: "The interesting fact which lurks behind this revolt is that the Arabs are fighting for their liberty against British Imperialism which is using the Zionist movement as a willing instrument" ('A foreign commentary', *Ireland Today*, vol. 1, no. 5, October 1936). The *Catholic Bulletin*, which despite its title promoted a rigorously republican view of world affairs and

was close to the de Valera Government, commented:

"What England has undertaken in the Holy Land may yet prove the destruction of her Eastern power. There seldom was a more flagrant piece of diplomatic hypocrisy than British tactics in Palestine display. During the Great War, the Arab nations were won over to the Allies by British pledges. England promised that, if the Arabs would cooperate in the overthrow of the Turkish Empire, she would establish and recognise a great free Arab State, raised on its ruin. When peace came, the promise was torn to shreds, the Arab world was split into a number of isolated kingdoms and protectorates, and a plantation of a quarter of a million Jews was made in Palestine... The promise {of an Arab State} was understood to include Palestine, but the English, seven years later, shuffled out of yielding Palestine ... In the interval the pledge to the Jews, which flatly contravened the pledge to the Arabs, had

been fulfilled by the Jewish plantation, although the Jews, too, got a double deal, since their 'National Home' was declared to mean no more than a settlement..." ('How Britain betrayed the Arabs', *Catholic Bulletin*, February 1938).

De Valera's friendship with the Irish Jewish community was the very antithesis of the Zionist project. He regarded the Jews and other religious minorities as integral elements of the nation and sought their cooperation in building the Republic. As the next part of this article will show, de Valera, while mobilising the very limited resources of the State in attempts to save threatened Jewish communities in Europe, took a resolute stance at international level against the colonial project in Palestine, and later came to be regarded as the main barrier to acceptance by Ireland of the Israeli State established by the United Nations.

Philip O'Connor

## In Reply to Jeff Dudgeon on Peter Hart

Peter Hart's argument in *The IRA And Its Enemies* (1998) provoked a sharp debate on the conduct of academic historiography in Ireland and a perceived inter-relationship with the requirements of public policy on the conflict in the North of Ireland. Irish Historians divided in Hart's wake, into pro, con, or (more often) wary of venturing above the parapet. When critics originally emerged, they concluded that Hart's methodology was quite often slipshod, unreliable, and, in places, unbelievable.

This criticism, particularly the latter point, was characterised within the academy as inappropriate. As Fearghal McGarry of Queen's University Belfast put it, "Some of the resulting controversies fell within the realm of legitimate debate, but a lot didn't" (*Irish News*, 28 Aug 2010), but without informing us what, in his view, either did or did not. This was said after Peter Hart's recent sudden unfortunate death. Roy Foster summed up Hart's critics, as (unnamed) "local historians and pietists", while University College Dublin's Diarmaid Ferriter endorsed Hart's view that critics practised "faith-based or creationist history" (*Irish Times*, 31 July 2010).

By accusing Hart's critics of engaging inappropriately, his historian supporters (who dismiss the notion that they support anything other than, disinterestedly, their craft) had a reason for refusing to engage. One particular criticism, however, was dismissed as unimportant. Fearghal McGarry reported, "The inordinate focus on who did what at Kilmichael detracted from appreciation of the significance of {Hart's} body of work as a whole" (*Irish News*, 28 Aug 2010). Criticism might be

right, in other words, but it would be wrong to discuss it.

In 1998 Hart wrote of this event, that was central to his analysis overall, "my primary sources were interviews with participants and statements made by them, conducted and collected by myself and others". These "primary sources" were anonymous and gradually attracted more attention than 'who did what'. Hart's use of anonymous informants reinforced a sense that he was exposing truths that could not otherwise be uttered.

The alternative view of 'evidence' not subject to verification was ignored. Hart floated above his critics who, in peppering his academic flank with detailed criticism, could not knock him down to earth to deal with it. Doubtless, this was frustrating. By all accounts the late historian was a personable individual, far from having a sense of his own importance and was generous with his time, expertise and advice. It may be wondered, therefore, why he did not acknowledge mistakes or address criticisms in a reasoned manner.

It may be that Hart did not have academically-acceptable explanations. It may be also, that the academy had invested too much unquestioning belief in Hart to require him to explain his methods. Criticism was destined to be ignored and, where possible, suppressed.

The context in which Peter Hart's *The IRA And Its Enemies* was publicised in 1998 affected its reception. While historians McGarry and Foster criticise negative reactions to Hart's work, they do not address the polemical manner in which it



was promoted and defended, a promotion Hart appeared to encourage. For instance, in the *Sunday Times* (19 April 1998) wrote about Tom Barry, the IRA commander of the successful 28 November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush, "*Barry is still considered to be an idealistic figure, unlike the great majority of his comrades he was little more than a serial killer and thought of the revolution largely in terms of shooting people. His politics were very primitive*".

The promotional efforts of journalists Kevin Myers and Eoghan Harris stimulated a low-level culture war in which the evidential basis of Hart's views was challenged. Far from pietism and historical creationism, skeptics addressed evidence on all occasions. In return, they received a rather low-level response. Roy Foster cited Hart as a basis for dismissing Ken Loach's portrayal of the IRA in his film, *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* (2006). Hart "raised hell" among (unnamed) "local historians", noted the Waterford-born professor.

Pursuing the theme, Foster also supported allegations of IRA sectarianism towards two farmers shot in June 1921 at Coolacree, Co Offaly. This was depicted in a contentious RTE documentary on the subject involving Eoghan Harris, a programme that itself relied on Hart's research to establish the notion of widespread anti-Protestantism. What was this if not a "*faith based*" response to criticism?

The critical summary of Hart's legacy in September's *Irish Political Review* criticised those who adopted Hart's "*millenarian... spirit*" and who "*responded to it as believers*". Jeff Dudgeon, a Roger Casement scholar, questioned this view of Hart's analysis. He also, unusually, engaged with some detail, but challenged petty-minded "*fact-checking*". Dudgeon asked his readers to acknowledge the inevitability of error and mentioned some of his own *Irish Political Review*, (October).

Those who saw weaknesses in Hart's presentation of evidence regarded them as more than trivial, however. Attention focused initially on Hart's second chapter, *The Kilmichael Ambush*, and his penultimate *Taking It Out On The Protestants* chapter, because they established his view that the War of Independence was an exercise in ethnic and sectarian revenge.

Hart regarded the Kilmichael Ambush commander, Tom Barry, as "*vain, angry and ruthless*" (p32), a liar (p36) and as a "*serial killer*" (p100), who engineered a "*massacre*" of surrendered British soldiers (p37). Hart observed: "*the culmination of a long process of social definition... produced both the heroes of Kilmichael and the victims of the April massacre*". As he put it, "*one is as important as the other in understanding of the Cork IRA*" (p292).

He went on to suggest in his final chapter, *Spies And Informers*, that the

IRA shot imagined enemies at random, mainly Protestants, and those they saw as "*deviants*".

Hart was challenged in detail on all of these points. Take one of the first examples of criticism to emerge. Brian Murphy reviewed *The IRA And Its Enemies in The Month* (Sept-Oct 1998). Murphy, English-born, Oxford-educated, is a historian with impeccable credentials. His words to the effect that Hart's book was "*important*" appeared afterwards on its dust jacket. In the course of his review, Murphy considered Hart's discussion of the 27-29 April 1922 republican killing of 13 Protestant civilians in West Cork.

The unprecedented event climaxed Hart's analysis. It occurred during the increasingly chaotic *interregnum* between the signing of the Anglo Irish Treaty in December 1921, the republican split in January and the onset of Civil War in June 1922. Hart cited a sentence from an archived British Intelligence analysis that was, he wrote, "*by common consent the most trustworthy source we have*". It stated that, generally, Southern Irish Protestants were not guilty of informing because "*except by chance, they had not got {information} to give*". In other words, Protestants were not active in support of British forces. Hart could then state with confidence that those shot in April 1922 were killed more or less at random "*because they were Protestants*". The point was central to his argument. However, Murphy pointed out that Hart left out a sentence following the one he quoted, stating, "*an exception to this rule was in the Bandon area*", where these loyalists were killed, and that those involved suffered greatly.

The evidence available to him in his "*most trustworthy source*" contradicted Hart's conclusion and he omitted it.

This example of misrepresentation of an archival source was not the first to emerge. It was difficult to elicit explanations of these and other anomalies.

Take another example. In 2003 Meda Ryan published her critique of Hart, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*. Its title provided Hart with sufficient excuse to ignore her contention that Hart appeared to have interviewed an anonymous Kilmichael Ambush veteran after the last participant died. It also permitted him to observe that Ryan's analysis was not "rational". It was at this point, after a *History Ireland* interview with Hart (March-April 2005)—in which Ryan was deemed irrational and in which Hart claimed that Murphy's criticism was unpublished—that discussion became heated.

A newcomer and neutral in the debate, Andreas Boldt of Maynooth, in surveying the fall-out in later editions of *History Ireland* (to Sept-Oct 2005), suggested to Hart that he should engage with the argument objectively:

"I take issue with the argumentative manner in which Peter Hart approaches his response... His language is emotional and aggressive.... I don't believe that Hart is able to convince his 'enemies' by denouncing them; he has to argue with them, based on historical evidence and understanding of that time."

Hart did not take the advice. As late as 2009 in *History Ireland*, the historian and former doctoral student colleague of Hart, Joost Augusteijn, recommended that Hart respond. The things those sympathetic to Hart's position accuse his critics of doing, have been done by Hart himself and his supporters.

If Roy Foster, Diarmaid Ferriter or Fearghal McGarry (or others) wish to address specific issues, they are in an essay on [spinwatch.org](http://spinwatch.org), *The Stubborn Facts Of Kilmichael*, in which I examine:

- (a) the political context within which Peter Hart's research was promoted and the reaction from within the academy to the emergence of a critique;
- (b) the basis of Hart's interpretive framework;
- (c) how evidence was shaped to fit that framework.

I take the detailed discussion further here by pinpointing the actual source of Hart's anonymous information. I link this to a fundamental flaw in Hart's reasoning that undermined his narrative. I examine the Kilmichael chapter, not to demonstrate that there is a definitive account of the Ambush (that is probably impossible), but in order to prove that Hart's conclusion shaped his evidence.

The evidence unavoidably affects consideration of what McGarry termed "the significance of the body of {Hart's} work overall", in particular the rest of his book. It is absurd to assert otherwise.

I address in detail two points raised by Jeff Dudgeon in his letter to *Irish Political Review*, the "scout" status of one of Peter Hart's Kilmichael interviewees, and the southern Protestant experience of the War of Independence. I show that in each of these areas Peter Hart's errors go far beyond the kind of trivial errors that Jeff Dudgeon intimates were involved. I invite Jeff Dudgeon to respond to the detail.

Failure on the part of the broad academic community to discuss revelations about Hart's methodology and to address the criticism will mean that it has failed in its primary intellectual duty to advance knowledge by means of discussion, evaluation and debate. The ball is in their court.

**Niall Meehan**

See, *The stubborn facts of Kilmichael* at [www.spinwatch.org](http://www.spinwatch.org):<http://www.spinwatch.org/articles-by-category-mainmenu-8/52-northern-ireland/5394-distorting-irishhistory-the-stubborn-facts-of-the-kilmichael-incident>



**THE COSH OF THE CROZIER**

When Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross Paul Colton took umbrage at the Fine Gael politicians of Cork County Vocational Education Committee (VEC) who at their annual meeting took a democratic vote and elected fellow Fine Gael former councillor Tom Sheehan onto the Committee, as was their right, all hell broke loose. Canon George Salter lost his seat as a result of the vote but Bishop Colton was furious and accused the poor Fine Gaelers of behaving badly towards the minority Church. He also accused "the councillors of pursuing a political agenda". Immediately the Fine Gaelers issued a statement saying that they would give Canon Salter "a role as an observer on the committee". The Bishop was not for turning and denounced "vested political interests", and even went so far as to add that "the entire system of appointing VEC members should be overhauled". The media was behind the Bishop and of course Fine Fail, seeing their chance, took the high moral ground and accused the Fine Gaelers of "adopting a 'grab all' mentality and snubbing a minority religion". That is how Tim Brosnan, Cork City VEC Fine Fail member, put it to the *Evening Echo* on 1st October 2010.

The good natured former County Mayor Tom Sheehan was now well and truly in the dog-house. After first appealing to the general public by stating:

"My motivations are sincere and genuine. I've served on boards of management at primary and secondary schools .... I have spent a lot more doing voluntary work. We have been looking for a new school in Buttevant for years and that is my main motivation."

But for Tom—the game was up. Within two weeks he had resigned and Canon Salter took up the suddenly vacated seat. The *Irish Times*, which with Fintan O' Toole has been backing a systematic attack on schools under the patronage of the Catholic Church, did *not* contradict the Bishop at any stage, nor did any other media or politician. Certain members of Fine Fail played a dirty game but then who would blame them for not seizing a once-in-a-lifetime shot at the moralisers that are Fine Gael. Bishop Paul Colton showed by this episode that he is not afraid of taking on the secularists and their "political agenda". He, being born in Derry, shows he is a power player of no mean ability and is quite at ease with the public/media knowing that. Not only is he Bishop but he is also Chairman of the Board of Governors

of Midleton College which is a mixed-sex boarding/day college where his twin teenage sons attend. His involvement in the Hard Gospel movement is evidence of where his sympathies lie.

In the *Phoenix*, Vol. 28, No.21, October 22-November 4th 2010, there is an intriguing mention of Bishop Colton and his friend Dr. Rev. Robert McCarthy at an extraordinary ceremony at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. *The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem* held "an elaborate" cathedral ceremony—

"against the chants from St. Patrick's choir and readings from Ezekiel and Mark, all under the watchful eyes of the international Grand Master, Don Carlos Gerada de Borbon, Marquis de Almazan and the Irish Prior Chev Bernard Barton, SC, the 'Inquisitor' Elena Keany-O'Brien who asked the 'postulants' on whom the Order of Lazarus was about to bestow membership to stand."

Among those who stood was none other than Bishop Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. There followed a *Who's Who* of the elite of Ireland. Some of the names would be nationally familiar. There were the 'Commanders', Dr. Attracta Halpin, NUI Registrar, and her husband, Emmanuel Kehoe, TV critic. These were followed by the 'Knights of Justice' author, James 'Turtle' Bunbury of Lisnavagh Estate in Co. Carlow, Patrick Guinness 'of Moyne', son of Desmond, and father of Jasmine; David O'Morchoe—The O' Morchoe—CB, MBE, retired British Army man and chief of the Murphys of Leinster. (He was the elderly gentleman who, as the *Irish Political Review* pointed out, had to be helped by our President MacAleese in a Poppy Day ceremony in Dublin and who had a bar for all his medals!) Last but not least, Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski of Knockdrin', recently retired president of Dublin City University and keen blogger.

The Grand Prior of the Order of Lazarus of Ireland, barrister Bernard Barton SC, then asked the postulants to promise solemnly to obey the statutes of the order, to uphold its "high ideals of Christian devotion, service and charity" etc.

In a previous private ceremony, as *Phoenix* revealed, former President Mary Robinson had been made a 'Dame' and had also been in receipt of a Grand Cross of Merit (GCMLJ). Dean Robert McCarthy was made an Ecclesial Commander.

Despite the presence of two RC priests, (a give-away term as it is not used by Catholics) according to *Phoenix*, at the ceremony, "the Catholic Church has pointedly refused to recognise the Order of Lazarus as a genuine ancient chivalric order, as it does, for example, the Order of Malta". But I am not surprised that the Catholic Church is not involved as in 2008, according to my own research,

something happened. Under the title of the 'Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem' there is this description:

"This is the only legitimate presentation of the reunited order, successor of the two former Obediences Malta and Paris reunited and legitimated under one Grandmastership since 2008".

The rules were changed to allow "Obedience only to our Grand Master and Constitution", with no mention of Papal involvement. I would love to know who the RC clerics were and wonder if they are from a certain abbey which has been in the news lately.

**IRELAND AND THE IMF**

As the Government tried-for consensus across party for the economic bind we are all in—not surprisingly it didn't fly. The Opposition parties—with the exception of Sinn Fein which wouldn't even attend—came out of the meeting, having looked at the national books in the Department of Finance, with purple faces and purple prose as well. The combative Shadow Finance Fine Gael spokesman, Michael Noonan TD, warned that tax hikes would be "significantly higher" than even the darkest predictions up to now. The country quaked anew as Noonan spelled it out: "The figure of adjustment that was published in the Government plans was €7.5 billion, with lower rates being projected, the figure is going to be significantly higher than that". He said the scale of the planned "structural correction" could be as much as €12 billion, given the International Monetary Fund had already estimated that "Ireland would need to find €10.7 billion over the four years".

Labour Deputy Leader Joan Burton told us that: "our creditworthiness had been called into question and our global credibility shattered". Figures that were "very challenging" meant the country's very sovereignty was "in peril" as politicians tried to avoid "the cold embrace of the IMF". All of this was predictably splashed across the media and provoked widespread anger and fear.

Unlike the French, the nation took to the airwaves and letters' pages of our national dailies to bemoan fate. Some thought that the only saviour was the IMF, which was pretty tragic if it were not so funny to see the people's faith in an institution that is a very different *beast* to their rather pathetic grasp of its nature.

But there was a surprising positive input from Declan Ganley (formerly of Libertas who fought against the Lisbon Treaty ratification). Ganley, a very successful businessman said "bondholder investors in the nationalised bank should be forced to take a loss on their investment". Mr. Ganley's position directly contradicted Finance Minister Brian Lenihan TD, who insisted last week that "full bonds in Anglo

must be honoured despite the  $\approx$ 34, billion cost to the taxpayer of bailing out the failed property lender". The former also dismissed Brian Cowen as a "tragic figure" and much of his Cabinet as "dead wood". Ganley went on to acknowledge that:

"we live in a country with a gangrenous banking system, but rather than amputating it, we've chosen to keep their corpses on life support. We are allowing their poison to transfuse freely into the rest of the economy and it is a serious mistake... The Government has its hand in our pockets, taking from us and giving to people most of us have never met, and who don't care about our country and community."

He also spoke in powerful language about "our country being run into the ground, her children into exile and her future sold to those that should have been forced to eat their investment failure". There is no denying that that precise analysis meets that of many ordinary Irish people. By 5th October 2010, the Irish *Daily Mail* had some of the heavy creditors to whom Anglo owes money to and whom Lenihan has consistently "vowed we must protect by paying this huge financial burden". An internet blogger revealed some of the names of the biggest hitters: Frankfurt Trust, Investment-Gesellschaft mbH, Pioneer Investment Kapitalarliegengesellschaft mbH in Munich, KBC Asset Management NV in Belgium, Barclays Wealth Managers France..... Amongst the big names, the firm that has been accused by some of sparking the credit crunch and subsequent runs on the euro amid the Greek crisis, Goldman Sachs. The Trinity College economist, Dr. Constantin Gurdgiev, who seems to have right-wing views insisted that: "*The Irish State stepped in and nationalised a bank that was basically run by crooks lending to property speculators. The Irish people are taking losses that would rightly have been shouldered by bondholders*". He also expressed grave doubts about some of these same investors giving economic advice to the Department of Finance considering their conflict of interest. But, as the courts go through the fallout, gradually the real picture will emerge as parties take cases to sort out the mess.

I have a huge problem with helping financially, investors who should be declared bankrupts—who lived the high life when they had it and viewed the little people as if they didn't matter—now expecting the old/ the sick/ the young parents etc. to pay for their outrageous building developments when the dog in the street knew that these buildings were *not wanted nor needed*. And the politicians would want to have a better understanding of what is ahead, other than their *canáining* and frightful antics in the Dail. For the poor eejits who ring Joe Duffy to lance their boil of frustration (which he is paid

well to do by us taxpayers) and write their letters to the media, the day may come when alternative practices have to be considered if they remain the sole targets of budgetary cuts.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE IMF ET AL

The IMF, and the World Bank really, came from American muscle, which soon became apparent in the complex negotiations over the future shape of the global monetary system that dragged on from 1943-1945. The question at issue went to the heart of Britain's post-war aspirations. John Maynard Keynes was the chief British negotiator and what he aimed for was a "form of managed global liberalism, embodying the essence of the economic vision that he had preached since the 1920's". But the Americans:

"proposed a new, more flexible version of nineteenth century orthodoxy. They too wanted a managed global system, but one in which strong currencies and strong economies called the tune, as under the gold standard of old days. The final settlement—reached at a historic international conference in Bretton Woods in New Hampshire in the summer of 1944 included a little balm for the British. A 'scarce currency' clause was supposed to ensure that countries in massive and persistent surplus could not impose deflation on the rest of the world."

Nevertheless, in essentials the Bretton Woods agreement:

"embodied the American vision. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) that it established was effectively under American control, while its operating principles were tailored in Washington and New York. It was *less* a powerhouse of global Keynesianism than the guardian of *pax Americana*."

Keynes preferred to take away what he could—which was not much—but like Churchill, another Whig Imperialist, consoled himself that the British would help Americans to become honorary Britons and the latter to become honorary Americans. The only problem was that the Americans had no wish to be anything of the sort, though it took a long time for it to sink into the British mindset—if, indeed it ever did. As Churchill famously said to Charles de Gaulle on the eve of the Normandy invasion, 1944:

"This is something you ought to know: each time we have to choose between Europe and the open sea, we shall always choose the open sea. Each time I have to choose between you and Roosevelt, I shall always choose Roosevelt."

Later on, when de Gaulle became President of the Republic of France, he showed he had taken good heedance of the British Premier's sentiments and caused an international incident when he demanded French gold stored in Fort Knox to be

brought back to France. Despite widespread criticism, the General got his gold and wasn't thrown by American and British grandstanding. Looking to today and the recent Summit in Deauville of President Sarkozy of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President Medvedev of the Russian Federation, perhaps there is hope that Europe may turn around to its former objectives and reject those who have made it what it was never supposed to be. There has been little talk of Fort Knox in recent years—I wonder how much gold does it contain now?

#### MANIFEST DESTINY

An American economist, John Perkins, who was profoundly affected by his work for that *Pax Americana* began his account with the starting point of Manifest Destiny, the—

"doctrine, popular with many Americans during the 1840's, that the conquest of North America was divinely ordained; that God, not men, had ordered the destruction of the Indians, forests, and buffalo, the draining of swamps and the channelling of rivers, and the development of an economy that depends on the continuing exploitation of labour and natural resources. The Monroe Doctrine, originally enunciated by President James Monroe in 1823 was used to take Manifest Destiny a step further when, in the 1850's and 1860's, it was used to assert that the right to invade any nation in Central or South America which refused to back US policies. Teddy Roosevelt invoked the Monroe Doctrine to justify US intervention in the Dominican Republic, in Venezuela, and during the 'liberation' of Panama from Colombia. A string of subsequent US presidents—most notably Taft, Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt—relied on it to expand Washington's Pan-American activities through the end of World War 11. Finally, during the latter half of the twentieth century, the United States used the Communist threat to justify expansion of this concept to countries around the globe, including Vietnam and Indonesia."

"But Panama with its Canal Zone had to be brought under American hegemony. Once action was initiated by covert means, next in were the economic 'soldiers' and they came for the assets having worked out a 'master development plan' first. The plan would create a justification for the World Bank, IMF, and USAID investment of billions of dollars in the energy, transportation, and agricultural sectors of this tiny and very crucial country. It was, of course, a subterfuge, a means of making Panama forever indebted and thereby returning it to its puppet status."

As elected Presidents were assassinated by the US if they couldn't be talked around to become their puppets and hand over their countries assets, the US elite and certain corporations became very rich.

Omar Torrijos of Panama went down in a "fiery plane crash", as did so many others. Arbenz, Mossadegh of Iran, Salvador Allende of Chile and on and on it shamefully continues.

But the economist who went public mentioned one especial malevolent politician/business man who really came out on top. His name was Robert Mc Namara. He began his career with Ford Motors and ended up as the first non-family President of the company. He then

became John F. Kennedy's Secretary of Defence and went on to become President of the World Bank. The writer of the economic book being part of this new imperial dispensation himself called those institutions and corporations involved in destroying so much of the world's resources and begging the inhabitants of mineral/oil/diamond rich nations *the corporatocracy*.

*To be continued in the next issue.*

**Julianne Herlihy. ©**

## Hard On Hart?

A puzzling thing about Jeffrey Dudgeon's comment on Peter Hart (*Irish Political Review*, October) is his statement that, without Hart's books, he "would not be aware of the level of violence inflicted on southern Protestants in the 1916-23 period".

Dudgeon was the first person associated with the People's Democracy that I spoke to. That was I think in 1969, before August. After August BICO launched a propaganda assault on the PDs as frivolous middle class revolutionaries playing with revolution in a volatile situation with a *New Left Review* unconcern about facts. We bombarded them with awkward facts, chiefly about Protestants, and said that the factual circumstances would, if they succeeded in unsettling the situation, led to Protestant/Catholic conflict and not to socialist revolution. After the events of August, many who had been associated with the PDs, both Protestants and Catholics, gravitated towards BICO and some became members of it. Dudgeon was one of the first and he hovered closely around Athol Street for about 20 years.

*Athol Street* is a more accurate name than BICO for the centre around which a variety of people of different outlooks congregated in those years. Among those contacting it were a number of young Fine Gael professionals from Dublin. They came along with the idea that there had been a war of genocide against Protestants in the South connected with the War of Independence and the Civil War. The idea was given a hearing. In the Northern Ireland flux caused by the August events, no idea was treated in Athol Street as being unthinkable on dogmatic grounds.

All dogmas had failed. Athol Street was notorious for saying in September 1969 that the Protestant/Catholic division was a national division. Open, and open-ended meetings were held to discuss the history and politics of Ulster and of Ireland. If anybody had a case to make against the "two nations" they could have made it

there. And I, for one, would have been happy to have it refuted, so that I might get on with analysing Soviet political economy, which I thought had gone awry.

The idea that there had been genocide of Protestants in the South was not only entertained for reasonable discussion, but was published as something that seemed to have been the case.

It was not until after the collapse of the Sunningdale power-sharing Government in the face of the Protestant General Strike of May 1974 that I had time to look at the history of the South.

Though we had become doubtful about the viability of the Northern Ireland Constitutional entity, we decided to support the project set in motion by Willie Whitelaw, after he had brought the SDLP back from its dead-end Dungiven Parliament, and to see if a new form of Devolution could be made workable. In March 1974, when the new sub-Government had been in operation for two months, and seemed to be working well, we saw that it was endangered when the chicanery of Conor Cruise O'Brien and Garret at Sunningdale was brought to light and they stood by it.

We then asked for a meeting with the SDLP leaders (now Government Ministers) to discuss what might be done to safeguard Power-Sharing. The request was made in a letter by Michael Dwyer (who died recently) to Paddy Devlin. Devlin replied that his Government was in no danger, and that, if it was, he would not turn for advice to a body that could hold its general meetings in a phone booth.

An *ad hoc* group of Protestant shop stewards announced that, in the light of the Dublin chicanery, they would call a "Constitutional Stoppage" against the Sunningdale arrangement, unless the Council of Ireland section of it was called off, or an election was held which showed that the arrangement still had Protestant support.

The SDLP took no heed. The Strike began in May. Athol Street issued a series of *Strike Bulletins* during it, at first advising the Government how it might ward off catastrophe, and later, after the SDLP had declared that it was facing a Fascist counter-revolution which must be put down, advising the Strikers how to deal with Government provocations and hold to the reasonable demand on which the Strike was called. (I wrote these leaflets, but I am told that the new University at Coleraine has put them on some web site as being written by somebody else, a Protestant.)

The SDLP, living out a delusion, destroyed Sunningdale. Devolution was off the agenda of practical politics: that was obvious. (It took 25 years to restore it, on terms that would have been regarded as impossible in 1974.)

The campaign to bring the Six Counties within the democracy of the British state was immediately launched by Athol Street, in June 1974 I think. The intensity of day-to-day politics in the Belfast flux ended and there was time to think of other things. It began to be clear that the idea of nationalist genocide of the Southern Protestants was not grounded in facts. It was the passionate vision of some bewildered Fine Gaelers and I could not find any facts to sustain it. I do not recall that a formal repudiation of it was ever published. That is why I say I find it puzzling that Dudgeon, who was close to Athol Street all through the 1970s and 1980s, never came across the idea of a campaign of violence against Southern Protestants until he read Hart's book.

When I saw Hart's book publicised with sensationalist headlines in mass circulation newspapers, I was interested to see what he had found that I had failed to find. And I saw that he had found nothing. He did not draw conclusions from evidence. He looked for facts to hang a pre-conceived view on. At best he engaged in wishful extrapolation from groups of facts.

I do not think this was all his own work. He was working to order. It is known from other sources that academics emerging from Trinity were told to find facts that would tie in with the dogmatic position that the War of Independence was a sectarian war masquerading as something else.

As for Jeff Dudgeon's other remarks:

With regard to the false surrender at Kilmichael, I thought the most that could be suggested on the strength of what evidence Hart presented was that there had been a fight to a finish, without inter-

ruption, with no quarter contemplated by either side. When Hart found accounts of the battle that did not mention the 'false surrender', the extrapolation he made was that there had been a genuine surrender which was accepted but not honoured.

With regard to there being too many facts in Hart's book to check them all: the fact in question (an interview with a dead man) was not a run-of-the-mill kind of fact; it was not an incidental fact without bearing on the thesis of the book; and it was not any old book, but a Trinity doctorate of philosophy, published for a world-wide market by Oxford University Press, as part of its *"Re-Writing Irish History"* series.

I know nothing from direct experience about proper academic practice. I have no academic credential, even of the most elementary kind. Dudgeon has an elite education—the best in the North, I was given to understand, with Lord Bew as his school companion. And I was given to understand that a Ph D is not an examination in received knowledge, but is awarded for research into uncharted territory, supervised and judged by experts in the subject. So facts matter. And the fact that the particular 'fact' in question was let pass by the academic experts who made Hart a Ph D is what suggests to me that he was writing to orders of an academic coterie which had become contemptuous of the Irish capacity for thought, and believed they might authorise whatever they fancied without fear of contradiction. And I do not say they did not have grounds for that contempt.

The Dublin Establishment wanted to hear the kind of thing that Hart said. He was acclaimed not only by the mindless History Department of Cork University, but by the national press, and influential figures in the political and semi-political stratum of the State. And, having invested heavily in Hart's sensationalist rubbishing of the War of Independence they were not going to drop him out of pedantic concern for factual truth. I recall that solid upholder of official dogmatism, John Bowman, in his Radio Eireann archive programme, playing some uncontentious statement about the War of Independence in which some fact was uttered that was beyond question, and saying its accuracy was vouched for by scholars like Peter Hart.

The latest approving mention of Hart was by our Finance Minister (who is showing an English competence in dealing with the financial crisis), at Beal na Blath, in his speech to the children and grandchildren of the soldiers Hart described as murderers of the serial kind.

## Nama And Associate Professor Lucey

**The following letter was submitted to the *Irish Times* but not published. It must therefore be asked how serious the *Irish Times* is as a newspaper of reference, especially when it is considered the very silly letters that are published.**

***The Irish Times*, of course, is a propagandist newspaper. But even propagandist newspapers must attempt to keep in touch with the real world if they are to be effective.**

**It is quite interesting the general contempt that the various professionals who contribute to [irisheconomy.ie](http://irisheconomy.ie) hold the newspaper.**

If I might comment on Brian Lucey's piece, 'Taxpayer will have to pay for bondholder payout' (*Irish Times* 5 October). There are (at least) two points of detail on which the associate professor is in error. These are his remark that "there has been a massive change in the operation and scope of NAMA" and second that "in most modern states there is a banking resolution mechanism".

On the first, his point is that the agency is unexpectedly rejecting or sending back to participating institutions significant amounts of eligible assets: he speculates this is to make room for 'Anglo' loans. Even in the first tranche it is clear that NAMA was refusing transfers—as it is by statute enabled, indeed required to, as a reading of the National Asset Management Agency Act 2009 shows. The most pertinent section of the Act in this respect is section 84—*Decision about acquisition of eligible bank assets*. Section 84(1) states *inter alia* "NAMA is not obliged to acquire any particular, or any, eligible bank asset of such an [participating] institution on any grounds". A close reading of Part 6, chapter 1 (of which section 84 is a central provision) provides one with a clear, intelligible insight into the entirety of the asset transfer (and rejection) process and the relationship in this respect between participating institutions and NAMA including duties on both sides as well as the relationship between the institutions and connected debtors, associate debtors, sureties and guarantors. The end-point of the process is the service of the acquisition schedule. The focus by the way of Part 7 of the Act is review and rights of review in relation to acquisition. There is no question of a massive change in the agency's operations as suggested by the associate professor and refusal is an obligation in statute if the circumstances suggest, including as provided for at s.84(1) and 84(4)(a) to (n).

As to bank resolution, three points may be made. First, Ireland does not have such a regime, a serious shortcoming. Second the Minister has this year repeatedly indicated, most recently again on Thursday 30 September that the intention is to introduce necessary legislation (and legislation is necessary). Readers may make what they wish of such statements, I am inclined to take them at face value appreciating the difficulties there are in drafting such an Act. Third, it is not at all the case that "in most modern states there is a banking resolution mechanism". There are no more than a handful of states in the world with a statutory resolution provision. There is no EU state with such a provision apart from the UK, which only introduced resolution in 2008 (provisionally), making it permanent in 2009. Nor does the EU have a community-wide resolution regime and will not on the Commission's own reckoning until at earliest, late 2011. The one country that has the longest-standing resolution regime is the US, which has had resolution since the 1930s—and of course the US is considered by many as the epicentre of the current northern hemisphere banking collapse. Resolution did not work in respect of Wall Street as 'the Street' was excluded from the scope of the regime—or rather was allowed to exclude itself. In the US, as in Canada and Japan, two other countries with resolution, the regime has extended only to lenders covered by deposit insurance (in the US provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., FDIC). With the enactment in June of Dodd-Frank the US now does have comprehensive statutory resolution in Title II—Orderly Liquidation Authority.

**Feargus O Raghallaigh**

But, within the history trade, it was seen that Hart had let the side down, had made it a laughing-stock in the eyes of the natives, and there is no doubt that he was marginalised instead of lionised in his later years by the controllers of patronage, who had directed him onto the wrong track and then punished him for not being more circumspect in the way he took it. Of course the fault was theirs, but they were in command and it is a poor com-

mander who cannot make his subordinates carry the can.

Hart's first book was mindlessly acclaimed by academia. His book on Michael Collins was slighted with equal mindlessness, and with equal disregard of its merits, because he had become damaged goods. I had helped to damage him, and do not regret it, but I saw that he had profited from the experience and become a historian

instead of an industrious hack. But the shine had been rubbed off him, and he infringed on Tim Pat Coogan's territory with his book on Collins, and so it was disparaged.

A big meeting was laid on for him in Belfast by Queen's University. It was chaired by Richard English, who introduced him by dwelling on the sensationalist material of the Cork book. Hart did not respond to the invitation to continue in that line. He was studiously restrained in what he said. I would have said something in support of him, if I had not somehow failed to catch the Chairman's eye when not many others were trying to catch it.

I would say that Hart had the potential to be a good, industrious historian but was ruined by the academic authority that he served. And, when he seemed to realise what had happened, he did not have the resourcefulness to be able to free himself. The interview with the dead man was going to haunt him for ever. I suppose he could not deal with it because that would have blown the whistle on the history racket in Trinity that produced him.

I found that I was mentioned in the Cork book, I suppose for the purpose of ingratiation. I suppose it is second nature in that business to ingratiate oneself, even with minnows. And I suppose he assumed we were committed on his side because of what we had been doing in the North for more than twenty years. Lord Bew had certainly been of that view. The last time I spoke to the latter, about twenty years ago I think, he expressed surprise that I, who might be seen as the first revisionist, was not going along with the revisionist nonsense being churned out in the name of history because of a concern about facts. (The school of strict Althusserian Marxism, in which he lived for many years, subordinated fact to theoretical preconception.)

I got a footnote in Hart's book as saying that Slieve Luacra was Irish-speaking even though, in everything I wrote about it, the point I made was that it was *not* Irish-speaking, and that it had not waited to be eroded as an Irish-speaking community, but had a pre-emptive change of language in the early 19th century and transferred much of its culture to English.

As to Meda Ryan's book on Tom Barry and what Dudgeon describes as the "*supposed Dunmanway Protestant informers*", it is no more comparable with Hart's book than is Dudgeon's own book on Casement. It is not an academic treatise given a PhD Imprimatur by the premier University after scrutiny by the foremost

academic authorities in Ireland and England and circulated with great *eclat* throughout the world.

And, as to the Dunmanway killings, there is not a shred of evidence that they were done by the IRA, even though it might be an unshakeable article of Ulster Protestant faith that they must have been. There was an exchange of letters on the subject in the Belfast *Irish News* earlier this year. If Dudgeon had something to say that would have helped to sustain that belief, he did not say it.

Hart gives the appearance of saying the IRA did it, but doesn't actually say it. That is something that was changed between the PhD and the book. The fact was deleted but the atmosphere remained.

Then there is Hart's "*understandable and antagonistic view of the violence of the emotionally uninvolved non-participant*" (Dudgeon). Did Hart not know what that war was, which he set out to become the historian of? Or was it that he did not know what war was? And did his shock at discovering that it was war, and what war was like, justify his playing fast and loose with facts? If the subject traumatised him, surely he should have left it.

I don't know if he was emotionally uninvolved at the start, but his writing struck me as verging on hysteria.

War was not the only thing that was going on in Ireland during those years. There was intensive political development, leading to an election victory followed by war when Britain resorted to military rule in the face of comprehensive electoral defeat. Hart did not write about that at all. He abstracted the War from its political preconditions and its ongoing political context and presented it on the Irish side as a kind of extreme rowdiness motivated by anything except democratic political development—feuding, faction-fighting, Strawing, etc.

If he disliked the War, he must have disliked the politics more.

I can make no sense of Dudgeon's comparison of Hart's discovery of war in Ireland with the "*Irish nationalism's response*" to the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. What was that response? I have seen Sean Fitzpatrick on television gung-ho for giving it to the gooks—or whatever the current slang is. I don't know if he was an Irish nationalist, but there was certainly much Irish American support for those wars. And the Irish Government supported them. And Senator Harris was Chalabi's adviser on the eve of invasion. On the other hand, there was some spirited agitation against the wars,

but the main weight of the State supported them. Dudgeon seems to have retained an obsolete Ulsterish stereotype of the Irish.

As to Casement: his book on him is certainly littered with mistakes but, as books go these days, it is not bad. It is certainly more like history than the book by his Casement colleague, W.J. Mc Cormack. I think I said in a review of it that there are worse books. But his approach is essentially unhistorical, as is that of his adversaries, on the issue of the Casement Diaries. He is not interested in the actual history of the Diaries, and they could not interest themselves in that history either.

The Diary issue begins with the circulation of documents to important people by the Government and the King in the Summer of 1916 for the purpose of making sure that Casement could be safely hanged for doing the kind of thing that the Government was urging subjects of the Austrian Empire to do and then complaining when the Austrian State hanged them. Those documents, of which there seems to have been a great many, then disappeared without trace. What happened to them? Neither side in the Casement dispute knows or cares. They prefer an argument about handwriting which can never be resolved.

The disappearance of those documents struck me as very remarkable. I doubt that even the Soviet Politburo could have circulated a document so widely and then caused it to disappear without trace.

That is the beginning of the history of the Casement Diaries, and since neither side in the dispute was interested in it, I decided to leave them to their little game.

Over forty years after 1916 a document was put in the Public Record Office as Casement's Diary. There was no way of telling if it was the 1916 document. During that forty years there was chatter of the *dubhairt bean go dubhairt lei*\* kind. Twenty years after 1916 Moloney published a book about the Casement fraud. He was roundly condemned about ten years ago by Dudgeon's colleague, Mc Cormack, for doubting the authenticity of the 1916 documents, which nobody had seen since 1916, and whose existence was not officially admitted, and of which nothing had been heard during that twenty years that was not of the *an old woman told me*' kind. (One person who had been shown something in 1916 was still there in 1959, an Associated Press reporter, Ben Allen. He went to look at what was put in the Public Record Office and said it was not like what he had been shown in 1916. And he said that in 1916 he had asked to

\* A woman told me that a woman told her.

be allowed to take the document and confront Casement with it. He was not allowed.)

It seemed to me that a condemnation of Moloney for not recognising the authenticity of a document that had disappeared, and whose existence was not acknowledged by the State that made use of it in 1916, was profoundly irrational and unhistorical, and a sign that there were ulterior motives at work. I think that Dudgeon, in his book, acknowledged that there was something odd here. But it didn't concern him.

It never concerned me whether Casement was queer or not. When the homosexual movement was getting going in Belfast forty years ago, I suggested the Casement Society as a name for it. It was only a realisation of the Whitehall chicanery in the matter that made me think the Diary was probably a fraud. I have never looked at what came out of the blue in 1959. That's for the manipulable Irish to wrangle over. The 1916 affair is about the British state.

And of course Dudgeon is Protestant and British now. Ulsterish British that is.

For twenty years he took part in an attempt to make Ulster British in a different way—a way Catholics could take part in—the way Welsh coal-miners were British when they voted Communist—a way in which one could say *To Hell with the Queen and Union Jackery* and just take part in the political conflict in the state.

We established that there was in the Catholic community a willingness to be British in that way. The participation of high-profile Catholics in the campaign gave it a bite—a credibility—in Britain that no Protestant campaign could have had. And David Morrison's tactful but determined handling of it carried it to lengths that I did not think possible when I had the idea of starting it. By 1989 it had become a powerful presence at British Party Conferences and the Party leaderships had difficulty finding a counter to it.

Then it was wrecked suddenly from within by a reversion to Unionist communalism on the part of most of the Protestants involved in it. This began with the black-guarding of David Morrison by Boyd Black in the *Irish Times*—a paper which had resolutely refused to give any publicity to the campaign till it saw it could help to wreck it. Then Kate Hoey, an Ulster Protestant who had become a Labour MP in England, joined the campaign, and was made its President, decided to found an even better campaign and siphon the Protestants off into it. She was assisted in

this by Alan Johnson (then a Trade Union leader, now shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer), who, being English and on the make, could naturally see nothing wrong with Union Jackery. And so *Democracy Now* appeared, extravagantly Unionist and lavishly funded. And, we gave the thing up as hopeless. And John Hume did not even try to hide his relief. Ulster affairs were back in proper order again.

Dudgeon was very much part of all that. It might be that he actually believed that David Morrison and Athol Street were holding things back and that, with loads of money and many VIPs, *Democracy Now* would do things much better than Athol Street. I thought he had understood better than most from the Protestant side that Catholic participation was indispensable to what was being attempted. But he participated in *Democracy Now* with a will, helping it towards rapid extinction, its job done.

And then he joined Robert McCartney's fundamentalist Unionism, becoming a paid official of the Robert McCartney United Kingdom Unionist Party (its official title), and he was given time off from the Civil Service for the purpose. And he was joined in the RMCC UKUP by a very big VIP indeed, the world-famous C.C. O'Brien.

Before McCartney reverted to Protestant communalism in substance, if not in veneer, he was President of the Campaign for Equal Citizenship, an all-Party counterpart of the Campaign for Labour

Representation. He said to me that it would be a very good thing if O'Brien could be got for the CEC. I agreed, but said O'Brien would never join a movement based on my ideas. But I did not discourage him from trying to get him.

O'Brien declared around 1970 that I did not exist. I was an unacceptable existence to him. A culchie, never met with in academic or fashionable political circles, and saying the things he said. In the mid-1970s O'Brien underwent a sea-change. Whatever he had been before that, he then became what I saw as a kind of fascist—the Pareto kind. But, if he had been willing to join McCartney in the movement that was kept on the rails by David Morrison, I would have welcomed him. Of course he didn't. His approach by then was that the Croppies needed putting down, which was not our view at all.

O'Brien was later Dudgeon's party colleague in the RMCC UKUP. And there is a remarkable election leaflet of that party in which Dudgeon figures.

I noticed that that that CLR and CEC were missing from Dudgeon's C V in the blurb on his Casement book, but his job with the RMCC UKUP was included..

During the 20 years when Dudgeon was associated with Athol Street, we took some trouble to establish an accurate historical understanding of Protestant Ulster, and we produced a body of the only Ulster Protestant historical literature in print. Unfortunately that kind of approach was not reciprocated.

**Brendan Clifford**

## Naval Warfare

In previous parts of this series British intentions with regard to naval warfare against Germany have been examined. However, it is also interesting to look at how Germany saw things in the period before the Great War—particularly since Redmondite propaganda used supposed German malevolent intent to recruit for the Imperial forces.

After Britain had declared war on Germany, a number of English translations appeared of books written by Germans—including those of Von Bernhardt and Von Treitschke—with the purpose of exposing the evils of 'Prussianism'. These editions appeared with titles that suggested that Germany was, for years, planning a great war against England. However, a reading of these books suggests that the

### Part Four

content did not match the titles. In fact, many of the German titles were themselves changed for the English translation in order to provide a more aggressive intent to the content.

One such example was a book by General Von Bernhardt, a retired Cavalry officer, entitled *Germany And The Next War*. Bernhardt's book was mainly a warning to Germany's growing pacifist movement that England was a deeply militaristic State, that despite being governed by supposedly anti-war Liberals the leopard had not changed its spots. And it advised the disbelieving German anti-militarists of the necessity of preparing for the inevitable war that was coming their way.

Martin McGuinness has recently spoken in an admiring way of Tom Kettle, who helped put many Irishmen in British uniform by telling them that it was their duty to 'fight for civilisation' against the 'German barbarian'.

Professor Kettle's famous article *Europe Against The Barbarians*, written for the *Liberal Daily News*, was typical of the Irish anti-German war propaganda that popularised the Great War in England and Ireland. It contained fervent denunciations of "Prussianism," "German militarism", and the "gospel of hate and force", which Kettle argued, led to a Teutonic desire for universal domination. In the article Kettle mentions Bernhardt, who became, with Nietzsche, one of the twin ogres of British war propagandists. It was argued that von Bernhardt had nurtured in Germany a spirit of aggression that was now having serious consequences for the world.

Before the Home Rule Bill of 1912 Professor Kettle wrote a scholarly introduction to a translation of a French biography of Nietzsche by Elie Halevy. In it he had written "*the duel between Nietzsche and civilisation is long since over*" (p7). And he suggested that Nietzsche was a useful antidote to "*Darwin, Spencer, and the English school in general*" (p18). But in 1914, when the Home Rule Bill had been 'placed on the Statute Book', he changed his opinion, believing Nietzsche to be the greatest threat to civilisation in the world, thus lining up in support of England's Darwinian war on Germany.

Whatever else can be said of Bernhardt he was certainly proved entirely accurate in his assessments.

Anyway, Bernhardt's and other German books were not translated and republished in England to be read with any objective understanding of the German point of view. In fact they were probably not meant to be read at all. The titles were the important thing—produced to present a closed case against the German. And, if the books were read, passages would have had to have been taken out of the context of their general argument in order to gain the understanding that the publishers desired in the audience.

The present writer came to this conclusion upon actually reading some of these books.

With regard to naval warfare a good example of this type of thing was *The German Empire's Hour Of Destiny* By Colonel Hermann Frobenius. It was issued with a Preface by *Sir Valentine Chirol*,

"*Author Of Twixt Greek And Turk, The Far Eastern Question, The Middle Eastern Question, Indian Unrest Etc.*"

As Foreign Editor of *The Times*, from 1899 until 1912, and Foreign Office Diplomat without portfolio, Sir Valentine Chirol played an important part in both England's strategic reorientation (toward France and Russia, and against Germany) and altering the public perception of Imperial policy. He was involved in Leo Maxse's first proposal of alliance with France and Russia, and worked with Edward Grey and the chancelleries of Europe to see it to fruition.

A closer look at Frobenius's book shows that it is not quite as Chirol might have wished it to be. It is well worth reading for its analysis of Britain's position in the world—which had come about through its mastery of the seas and its control of world trade. Below is an interesting passage which describes the process by which Britain built and secured this domination by engineering the maritime global market:

"With wonderful acuteness she has ever been successful in finding and, regardless of others, annexing in all parts of the ocean such spots as control the important routes. By means of Gibraltar the entrance to the Mediterranean is closed, through Malta the connection between its western and eastern basins, and through Cyprus she has assured the entrance to the Suez Canal, which with Egypt is absolutely hers. By that means she controls the shortest waterway to India, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. But she is also in a position to exercise her influence over the longer route round Africa by means of St. Helena and Ascension as well as her African colonies, whilst the outlet from the Red Sea to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb is closed by the Island of Perim. The road to the Pacific proceeds further through the Straits of Malacca, and at this spot a British Naval Harbour was recently built at Singapore.

"It should be possible for the European States by construction of railways to free themselves of England's lordship of the water routes, and Russia succeeded in establishing a connection with the Pacific by means of the Siberian Railway, but the desire, thereby to obtain a constantly open harbour, was frustrated with the help of Japan. Germany commenced the construction of the Anatolian and Bagdad Railway; but soon thereafter England succeeded in wresting from Turkey the important terminus Koweit and so multiplied the obstacles which she was already in a position to impose to the outlet from the Persian Gulf by possession of the Island of Bahrain and the Ras Dschask. Only one sea-route, a recently created one, has been withdrawn from British influence: the Panama Canal which connects the Caribbean Sea or, as

it may be called, the American Mediterranean, direct with the Pacific, and thereby Great Britain's absolute command of the sea has, it must be confessed, suffered a serious blow."

Frobenius also noted that England did not simply seek control the routes geographically but, what was also important, "*was clever enough to be able to frustrate every attempt of the German Empire to acquire points of support or at any rate coaling stations on the coasts of the seas of the world*".

Consequently:

"Germany's mercantile marine and navy are obliged to rely for their coal supplies on the depots of other nations and principally of England. In addition to the fact that our ships have to pay the prices asked for this hospitality and the advantage goes to the foreigner, it becomes a serious question where we are to find anywhere on the globe, friendly nations who will be able to provide our ships with fuel in time of war. The harbours of England and France will assuredly be closed to us, and it is more than doubtful whether the Colonies of small European States would, in face of Great Britain's threats, dare to remain open to us."

And it was also noted that, whilst the other Powers had begun to develop their own undersea communication cables, it was in Britain's power to cut these immediately in the event of war—something which the Royal Navy did in fact do just prior to Britain's declaration of war on Germany.

Frobenius's first chapter, entitled *Great Britain*, was an analysis of a book, *The Day Of The Saxon* by Homer Lea, an Anglophile American, who believed that it was in England's interest to destroy Germany as a commercial competitor. Interestingly, Frobenius disagreed and thought that, whilst it was possibly in Britain's interest to destroy the navy of a commercial rival, it was not in her interest to destroy Germany's army, since this would conflict with the Balance of Power that had been the principal of British policy for over 200 years:

"I should put against Homer Lea's proposition, that Great Britain to maintain her position as a World Power must annihilate Germany that is to say not only rob her of her fleet and cripple her commerce but also destroy her land forces the view that England can have no desire to annihilate our army. That would be contrary to the whole of her policy to date. A strong Power on land on the European Continent is indispensable to her so that she may induce it to go to war on land against any State which might become dangerous to her sea power..."



This is the principle on which she has always played the political game with the Powers on the mainland... Therefore England has no object in annihilating Germany's land forces. On the contrary her object in war can only be the destruction of the latter's Navy, sparing if possible her Army."

As evidence for his view, Frobenius noted that Britain, to facilitate her own global expansion, required conflict to continue on the Continent, and therefore seldom wanted wars to be won there outright. He cites the example of the Seven Years' War (The First World War, 1756-63), when England ditched her Prussian allies once French maritime power had been destroyed and North America and India secured, with the intention of letting her former ally and enemy battle it out whilst England moved on to pastures new.

Attempting to reconcile Britain's record in destroying maritime competitors with her Balance of Power Policy led Frobenius to conclude that England's Great War on Germany would be a limited one, with the same limited objectives of former times:

"If we examine the history of England we must acknowledge that she at times exerted herself to the uttermost by the utilization of individual portions of her armament, navy, and finances, but never has known that demand on the whole of her population by calling out every man capable of bearing arms as Prussia and Germany did in 1813 and France in 1870. She was careful to avoid this by never having in view unlimited aims, which is a brilliant illustration of Clausewitz's precepts. She never, with the exception of her colonial wars, desired to completely annex any country, or completely annihilate any enemy.

"The objects which she desired to attain by her own powers were also limited; with the exception of certain over-sea possessions, the destruction of hostile marine forces or commercial interests. This may have arisen partly from a very clever policy and partly also may have had its reason in the sentiments of the people...

"The English people never had any feeling or sympathy for the exacting military service necessary for wars on land, which presses the rifle into the hands of the masses and tears them from their hearths and homes. She either employed mercenaries for this purpose or knew how to make her allies bleed for her, and as far as the latter were concerned the war easily became an unlimited one...

"This illustrates the whole peculiarity of England's conduct of wars on land. They presume that their continental ally will have to conduct an unlimited war, as the chief burden will be gradually put on to him. It is on the other hand emphasized as typically British that the expeditionary force must, if possible, be kept away

from the latter plan. Its co-operation, therefore, as an organic portion of our enemy's forces is only to be looked for if Great Britain actually has no other means of reaching her special goal."

Frobenius was accurate in what he said—England had taken great care not to get bogged down in unlimited commitments on the continent with large armies. The English aristocracy had waged its wars with mercenaries (a large part of its army being Irish) and through the acquiring of Continental allies. Britain was careful to make sure that, whilst its Balance of Power wars were limited commitments to itself, the conflict would hopefully require unlimited commitments from both its allies and enemies on the Continent and in that way the rest of the world would be Britain's.

One can state here that Frobenius's historical argument was undone by politics. The Liberal Imperialist coterie that planned the war against Germany, with assistance from the Unionist military establishment, may have envisaged a limited Balance of Power war on the traditional model. The commitment of 100,000 men to the French left wing, along with the Royal Navy, was probably what was expected to finish the job on Germany. Objectives, in some quarters, may also have been limited to the destroying of German commercial activity and its naval development. However, the necessary activation of support from the Liberal backbenchers (and Irish Party) necessitated a different character of war—in fact, a new character. This was 'the war for civilization' which represented an unlimited commitment to the destruction of Evil in the world. And this had the effect of both increasing the commitment and the objectives of the British State in relation to Germany and the other enemies it acquired in fighting its Great War.

From his analysis Frobenius goes on to predict the likely tactical approach Britain would take to waging war against Germany. He describes it as necessitating contact with the coast to ensure a quick departure if things went wrong, independence in military activity and objectives, and concentration on the main objective of obliterating Germany's maritime capacity:

"Therefore, all through we see the endeavour to keep up communication with the base, that is to say, for England, with the sea coast, in so far as practicable harbours are available for embarkation, and to avoid every decisive action so long as this is not enforced by the situation; and at the same time to avoid too close a junction with the operations of the allies:

that is what may be called the British or 'maritime method'.

"With these premises we may now endeavour to picture to ourselves the probable procedure of Great Britain in case of a conflict with Germany. She would, of course, most of all desire entirely independent action for her land forces, and if she is assured, through the preparations and available numbers of her allies' forces, that the latter will be able to deal alone with our armies, she will be able to preserve for herself this independence through being able to choose the theatre of her operations. If she cannot be certain of this, and if the independent action of her expeditionary force becomes doubtful, then she will have to take part as an organic unit in the larger operations.

"In that case a landing in Belgium, previously entirely freed from the influence of German troops, would enable the British troops to furnish an extension of the French left wing. Let us assume that the British expeditionary force would by this means, or some other, join the French left wing and take a timely part in the operations; and if we assume that the first great success will have been obtained over our army and that the latter has its hands full with the French forces, then the curtain will draw up on the second act of the operations of the British troops, as they will then be able to free themselves from the undesirable 'unlimited' method and be able to proceed independently, that is to say, they will seek 'a limited area of operation'.

"According to Great Britain's War Game this can only be the German North Sea coast, to the harbours of which the German fleet, as being the weaker, will in our view have retired. The British Navy will be ready lying in wait for the German ships which will be driven out by the artillery of the land forces attacking the fortresses, and will be ready to destroy it, as was done at Port Arthur."

There are undoubtedly some important insights here in relation to Britain's waging of both World Wars on Germany—and the events of 1940 are particularly relevant here when England ditched the French at the first sign of disaster. But, in relation to the first war of the two, if it was the British intention to conduct its military affairs in this way the strategy was derailed by the unexpected extent and quality of German resistance.

Frobenius concluded from his assumptions that Britain's limited objective of destroying the German naval capacity would produce a conflict of objectives within the Grand Alliance against Germany:

"It seemed to be the opinion in France that Great Britain would quite unselfishly devote her forces to the interests of France. This is, of course, quite out of the question,

as this State (England) has never subordinated her own interests to those of other states or nations, but on the contrary has, in many instances, made their forces serve her own ends and interests. Therefore a great diversity of interests, evidenced by their divergent wishes, appears to arise between England and her allies; Great Britain desires to annihilate our navy whilst if possible sparing our army; France and Russia would like to destroy the German Army and preserve the Navy as a counter to be subsequently employed against the increasing predominance of England."

The diverse coalition assembled against Germany led Frobenius to be both optimist and pessimist about future prospects. His concluding paragraphs argue that Germany had no martial intent or desire for war, but rather was wrestling with the dilemma of the necessity of protecting its growing trade by building a functional naval capacity whilst at the same time realizing that this process put the country on a collision course with England:

"To be sure England has at present every reason for not seeking war with Germany without cause. It is said that the relations of the two States are happily developing on the lines of an understanding and rapprochement; it is becoming acknowledged that they can work with and alongside each other on many points and questions, that their interests are identical in many respects. And as you call into a wood so a conciliatory echo replies. But it must not be forgotten that it was England that brought about this menacing coalition, which is at bottom unquestionably unnatural, because it has no common interests, and it was England that exerted herself to estrange us from our few remaining friends. It can hardly be believed that our blood relationship carries the slightest weight with England, and that she would refrain from attack because we have never yet crossed swords with each other.

"Why should England have ever had the idea of fighting us, as long as we had not the audacity to build a fleet in order to shield our coasts and our great and increasing trade? It was that—just that—which completely altered our relations. If, therefore, Great Britain has reasons for not proceeding rashly and is carefully restraining herself, we must nevertheless not conceal from ourselves that she will seize every favourable opportunity of attacking us unawares and delivering her declaration of war with the first shells at our coast resorts. Even if she is in favour of peace her allies will presumably not be inclined to perpetually burden themselves for nothing with an armament which cannot be long supported, especially by France. If she thinks the proper moment has arrived, England will not hang back."

Sir Valentine Chirol introduced Frobenius's book as an illustration of the aggressive intent of Germany. However, if anything, it exposes little aggression on Germany's part and instead reveals the legitimate concerns held in Germany about what was happening in relation to its encirclement by three Great Powers in alliance, intent on waging war upon it for various reasons.

*'What is to be done?'* was the question being asked in Germany about the situation. Unfortunately, no answer could be found.

While Frobenius's book is, in some ways, too clever by half, a much more realistic assessment of Britain's position with regard to Germany was made by an American, Elmer Roberts in his 1913 book, *Monarchical Socialism in Germany*.

This book is a very interesting account of economic and social life in Germany before the Great War. It describes the German State, as Frederic Howe did, as a virtual socialist one, within a monarchical system. It has a wealth of detail about the public ownership of facilities and the large reinvestment of profits from them in a socialized system benefiting the common citizen and at the same time producing starting economic achievement and progress.

Its final chapter deals with the growth of the German Navy in relation to this socialized state. And Roberts contests the view (held by Frobenius) that Germany's naval programme was the primary source of the antipathy of Britain and the preparations for war on Germany:

"If Germany had never built a ship nor sold a yard of cloth abroad, the political genius of British statesmen would have singled her out as the enemy of England because of Germany's immense and growing position on the Continent. The political policies of Great Britain are the ones that drive her into hostility against Germany. Added to these are the trade competition, usually much exaggerated, and the rise of the German navy. Relatively British trade has not expanded so fast as that of Germany, but it is good and profitable, making the financial position of the United Kingdom still the first in Europe.

"The German navy is serious for Great Britain, not because the safety of the British Isles is endangered nor because Germany has any aggressive policy against her, but because the British political position throughout the world will be reduced by reason of the existence of the navy.

"That position has already been greatly changed by the rise of Japan in the Far East, of the United States in the Western hemisphere, of Germany on the continent

of Europe. The British fleets in the East, on both shores of North and South America, and in the Mediterranean have been lessened to strengthen the fleets in home waters, so that Lord Roberts said in October, 1912, that the only sea on which the British fleet was master was the North Sea. The British naval forces will become further concentrated in ratio to the German construction...

"The 'relations' between Great Britain and Germany are in continuous discussion, that rises to a certain intensity when the British naval budget is debated in Parliament or when some European question bubbles. These 'relations' are likely to sharpen in international importance until the German navy reaches its programme development, which will be between 1916 and 1918" (p165-7).

But Elmer Roberts then enters into the world of prophecy:

"I venture into the difficult field of conjecture as to the probable course of events. Ethical considerations will prevent the small war party in Great Britain from provoking war while the German navy is building. When the German navy has reached its programme maximum and nothing happens, because Germany will not throw her inferior navy against Britain, a long peace will probably follow in which suspicions and animosities will diminish. The British people will become accustomed to a certain diminution of their international position, but with an immense place in the world, a place constantly maintained, perhaps constantly increased, through their spiritual and intellectual contributions to mankind" (p167).

It seems that everyone was (and is?) inclined to make the same mistake in relation to the good intentions of the British State with regard to commerce and war.

As Balfour said to Henry White, the American Diplomat, in 1907, in relation to the question of Britain accepting the challenge of fair commercial competition: *"That would mean lowering our standard of living. Perhaps it would be simpler for us to have a war."*

**Pat Walsh**

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## WHEN

1

When the night is perfumed by the woodbine.  
When bats fly low on their sonic signal.  
When the sky is full of ack-ack shrapnel.  
When nerves are fortified by Tony wine.  
When a tractor ploughs a field with cowed lights.  
When a father runs a mile to the phone.  
When a mother in labour starts to moan.  
When a midwife faces the blackest night.  
When German planes drop flares on Carryduff.  
When she climbs into her Austin Seven.  
When four miles of twisting lanes is enough.  
When a still-born birth means Limbo not Heaven.  
When on the back seat a shoe-box to bluff.  
When as rotten fruit it falls from the stem.

2

The two-note drone of the German bombers.  
From the bright lights of the Irish Free State  
to the pitch-black of County Down. Over-ate  
melting planes, ships, humans. Starlings clamour.  
The B' Specials are knocking on doors,  
Catholic doors, for someone saw a lantern  
on a hill and heard a fenian banter.  
The lone gun pounds the sky and causes  
gore:  
jagged metal kills a dairy farmer.  
The empty exhausted, unhealed mother  
dreads  
the loud heartbeats of the alloy hammers.  
Heinkels soar high after the city bled.  
The Belfast dawn—blazing panorama.  
Tune to Lord Haw Haw, laugh at what he  
said.

3

Germany Calling, Germany Calling.  
Reich Station Hamburg and Station  
Bremen,  
Station BXB, that airs the venom.  
Blame your English masters for the  
mauling,  
you Catholics who await liberation.  
That white-haired boy gets his Easter eggs  
soon.  
We shall help bring this tyrant to his  
doom,  
killer of Boers, this aberration,  
pioneer of the concentration camp.  
Sing: 'Praise the Lord: Ye Heavens, Adore  
Him.'  
Deutschland Deutschland Über Alles,  
same vamp.  
Sing lustily at Mass, kick up a din.  
Climb the Black Mountain with a lighted  
lamp,

our planes will not carry bombs but  
pilgrims.

4

When the planes stopped bombing did it  
bring peace,  
when thousands still fled the city every  
night.  
When Rome was more defamed than the  
Third Reich.  
When did a thousand lives lost bring  
release.  
When Stormont called its frightened sub-  
human.  
When class-attitude scorned its own  
people.  
When Churchill decried those Armagh  
steeple.  
When he called on Stalin to be his  
crewman.  
When world war made no difference in  
Belfast.  
When population means mere arithmetic.  
When some went to war with the rest  
aghast.  
When the same flag meant different  
politics.  
When war comes, time to remember the  
past.  
When in World War One they died  
lunatics.

In 1797 Franz Joseph Haydn wrote  
*Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser* (God Save  
Emperor Francis). In 1922 it became the  
German national anthem: '*Das Deutschland-  
lied*' (Land of the Germans). The  
first line reads: "*Deutschland, Deutsch-  
land Über Alles*" (Germany Over All).  
Haydn wrote it as an anthem for the  
birthday of the Austrian Emperor Francis  
11 of the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1841 the German poet August  
Heinrich Hofmann von Fallersleben re-  
wrote the lyrics for Germany. Though  
'Germany Over All' may seem chauvinistic  
to the outside world this song was an  
inspiration for German unification: a  
single Germany, rather than petty States.  
Alongside the new German flag it was one  
of the symbols of the March Revolution  
1848. They were not addressing the outside  
world, and are still not doing so today.

Later both Catholic and Protestant  
religious lyricists attached their own  
words. Long before WW2 it was a hymn  
for the Mass in many Churches in North-  
ern Ireland. (I am using the official name  
Northern Ireland here. In my opinion the  
term Six Counties is wishful thinking and  
only leads to the notion that the term  
Twenty-Six counties doesn't recognise the  
Republic of Ireland, whereas it has in  
place a constitutional democratic  
government.)

During my days in the Young Workers'  
League and the Communist Party of  
Northern Ireland I met fellow Catholics  
from the Falls Road who, when attending  
Mass during WW2, said the roof was

raised on many occasions with the singing  
of this hymn. Political purist might see  
this as some kind of support for Nazism  
but it was really to do with annoying the  
Brits. Large notices, put up by the Stor-  
mont and the British Governments, around  
the periphery of the Falls Road district  
during WW2 warned: 'Out of Bounds to  
British Troops'. So hostile was the  
population.

The British propaganda machine was  
pouring out stuff about bringing demo-  
cracy to Nazi-occupied Europe but didn't  
seem so keen about the Catholics of the  
North.

Much of what William Joyce (Lord  
Haw Haw) said proved he knew about  
modern everyday life in Northern Ireland.  
This was dismissed by the British authori-  
ties as a myth. But there was no doubt he  
was being kept up to date by newspaper  
reports or by someone with a finger on the  
pulse of the North, possibly through the  
German Embassy in Dublin. On one  
occasion he cited the Portadown town  
hall clock as being three minutes slow.  
Seemingly a trivial piece of information  
but accurate. It brought a chill to the  
listeners when they thought German agents  
were everywhere. We were already being  
told to look out for German paratroopers  
in the countryside by the British Minister  
for War.

The war was not popular among the  
Protestant population. A move to introduce  
conscription to Northern Ireland was met  
with strong ripples of social unrest. This  
attempt was withdrawn as it would also be  
difficult to enforce in the Catholic areas.  
WW1 and the enormous casualties of  
only twenty years back was still affecting  
a lot of families and this disenchanted  
most Protestants about yet another war.

My father who was 18 years old in 1918  
told me how in his district off York Road,  
Belfast, whole streets had their blinds  
drawn, signifying each house had someone  
dead. I myself remember the crippled—  
physical and psychological—who seemed  
to be everywhere, in the streets and at  
work. WW2 veterans in comparison were  
invisible.

A British journalist like Robert Fisk  
was still calling the industrial Protestant  
worker cowards in his heavy tome: *In  
Time of War*, subtitled *Ireland, Ulster and  
the Price of Neutrality*. This work was  
published in 1983 by Andre Deutsch,  
Brandon/Ireland.

It seemed to Fisk that they preferred to  
stay at home during WW2 and manufac-  
ture planes, ships and munitions, providing  
the Luftwaffe didn't bomb their places of  
work. In this book he sneers at how they  
ran like hell when a German reconnais-  
sance plane was sighted overhead.

Fisk once wrote about the oppressed of  
the world but, in writing about Ireland,  
North and South, he didn't think his

continued on page 34, column 2

Does

It

Up

Stack

?

#### THE GOVERNMENT

The Irish people are very frustrated and very angry at the way the country is being misruled. One only has to look at the Red Sea Poll in the *Sunday Business Post*, 24th October 2010 to get such a flavour. The scenario unfolding since September 2008 is a reluctance or inability or perhaps even an unwillingness to effectively govern the country. People feel disempowered. Ordinary people who have the ability to do ordinary jobs, like running a panel-beating business or managing the family home, know that they could run the country better than those in Government do it. The respect and mystique with which those in Government were viewed once is now gone and the more common perspective today is that elected representatives are like mediaeval robber-barons who rob the poor citizen at every possible opportunity and who have no conscience about it and no care for the good of the people or for the country. It has become visible that enormous salaries and expense accounts and sheer fiddling, fraud and crookedness are everyday life for those in power without even the slightest regards for the financial state of the country or for where all the money is coming from.

Even judges are involved—asking for €500,000 expenses for three Tribunal judges recently was a 'last straw' for many who had believed in the system.

Likewise Taoiseach Brian Cowen TD's insistence that he did not know of Anglo-Irish Bank's insolvency on the night in September 2008 when the blanket Bank Guarantee was given. Taoiseach Cowen's insistence confirms either his dishonesty (which we'd prefer not to believe) or his incompetence. Because he had earlier attended a meeting at which Anglo's situation was *the item* on the agenda. Not to have known on 29th September 2008 about Anglo's then insolvency shows massive incompetence on Cowen's part. But then that incompetence has emerged since in the remarkable lack of activity over the two years.

Why were all the Directors of Anglo immediately, or even six months later, not arrested by the Gardai for questioning? *Prima facie* there was criminal activity in putting Anglo into the position it was in. Billions of euros just cannot vanish. In effect, Anglo was robbed and plundered and little has been done about it.

Why not? Golden Circle names were involved. That is why not. Some of the names are emerging in the course of civil cases in the High Court but most of the names are hidden from the ordinary people who are being saddled with paying back the debts owed by the Golden Circle to the banks. Getting paid back is what Banks do and they are being paid back because the Banks have the names and addresses of the Golden Circle and the Golden Circle, under pressure to repay, has used its power in Government to make the ordinary people pay instead of themselves. *Via NAMA*. Dr. Peter Bacon is on the verge of getting credit for the idea. But something like it was done before in England by Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell. When Henry was short of money, his Chancellor Thomas Cromwell got the idea of 'blame the monasteries for made-up *mispractices*' and he systematically confiscated, i.e. robbed, all the monastic properties thus throwing tens of thousands out of work, out of house and home, and destroying what was up to then the system of social welfare. The priests, monks and nuns were murdered as were Catholics who did not turn over to the new faith. The ordinary people of England were reduced to abject poverty while the King and his robber-barons/princes/dukes prospered as a direct result of what were basically criminal laws.

In Ireland today, there are daily revelations of the greed, outright fraud and oppression being perpetrated on the people by Government Ministers, TDs, Senators, and County Councillors and by some public servants. They award themselves salaries and "*allowances*" out of proportion: to inflate expense claims, to take unnecessary foreign travel, to take time off when they should be working and then to award public contracts to their friends and acquaintances, etc. etc. The list seems to be endless. Basic ethics is regarded as foolishness e.g. Public servants routinely take sick days off even if they are well. They take hours off to enable them to cash non-existing pay cheques. They take Tuesdays off after National Holidays to compensate themselves for the slowness of non-existing turf-driven trains. Classic cases of "*give them an inch and they'll take a mile*". There are some public servants (don't we call them Civil any more?) who are the guardians of moral rectitude when it comes to ordinary people's rights to a Council House or to an Old Age Pension or to a Medical Card.

They have all lost the respect of ordinary people. It is high time they started to earn respect again. A good start would be for elected public representatives to cut their own salaries and allowances by 50% as

was done by Dev and his Government in 1932 after the awful Depression then. Example has to be given by our leaders if they want to lead and be followed.

#### CROKE PARK AGREEMENT

Also known as the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014, one of the key provisions in the Croke Park Agreement is paragraph 1.3 which states: "*This Agreement will enable Public Service numbers to reduce substantially over the coming years ....*" The Government introduced a moratorium on Public Service recruitment. The aim is to reduce staff numbers from 310,172 to 306,805 by the end of 2012. This level of reduction is ridiculous in view of the fact that, if no one died in service or left for a job outside the public service, the average numbers retiring each year should be one-fortieth i.e. 7,754 which means 15,508 retiring between 2010 and 2012. Where did the Government's figure of 300,367 reduction come from? Is it that once more we have proof that the Department of Finance people cannot count and are unable for simple arithmetic? It does not stack up.

What also doesn't stack up is that many, perhaps all Local Authorities are getting around the moratorium on recruitment by forming limited companies which then proceed to employ staff outside the Public Service and such limited companies are funded by contracting for the local Council or by issuing invoices to the public for services rendered—services which formerly were provided by the Council. Thus the employment embargo is broken and, worse still, the affairs of the limited company are secret and not subject to oversight by any Government Department nor by the Comptroller and Auditor and General nor by the Local Government Auditor. The process is an open invitation to corruption and fraud and needs to be firmly stamped out by the Government before it gets any further.

#### BERTIE AHERN

Bertie Ahern was really pushing his Teflon Taoiseach image recently when he posed crouching in a kitchen cupboard for a British tabloid newspaper. Has he lost it, or what? Does he think this sort of lark will enable him to run for the President of Ireland? Maybe he thinks he can pull the wool over our eyes as he often did before. And maybe he will be right! Maybe the Irish people are so lightweight that they have forgotten that Bertie lost credibility and the office of Taoiseach over the Mahon Tribunal's investigation of a claim that Bertie received €80,000 from developer Owen O'Callaghan in connection with a planning matter. Bertie denies the allegations. He also denied his State driver's allegations that he took a briefcase full of

cash to Manchester and he forgot "sterling" lodgements to Accounts set up in the Drumcondra branch of Irish Life and Permanent. Also, Bertie is still a TD and, even though regulations specify that every TD must supply a Tax Compliance Certificate within weeks of a General Election, Bertie has not done so. Why is he allowed so much latitude? Why is that august body—The Revenue Commissioners not taking action? It doesn't stack up at all.

#### DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

The Department of Finance's perceived lack of numeracy is of vital concern to us with regard to Ireland's contribution to the EU Budget. Unlike the Member States, the EU has a sensible rule that it cannot borrow to balance its budget. However, what it does is to spend and then divide the expenditure among the Member States. Part is taken from the Member States as a percentage of each State's VAT Receipts and another part is taken from each State as a percentage of its Gross National Income. All of the Member States' gross national incomes have to be known before the sums are done so this takes time. It is to be expected that Ireland's contribution for 2009 will be reduced by an overpayment for the last two years, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General. Very big sums of money are involved and it is vital that the Department gets it right. The calculations are based on our VAT Receipts and on our Gross National Income.

A relatively huge part of our National Income comes from the activities of:

- (a) USA companies and other foreign companies trading in Ireland and
- (b) Companies trading out of Shannon and Dublin Financial Services Centre and these companies produce high incomes but relatively low Corporation Tax and, mostly no VAT. So are their activities costing us a lot in terms of our contribution to the EU budget? Not enough information is publicly available to answer these questions.

#### AUTOMATIC PILOT

Shouldn't automatic flight controls be banned by law? Is it right that several hundred passengers' lives are trusted to a computer or even three computers? On Flight 447 out of Rio de Janeiro on 1st June 2009, 228 people were killed when the plane was flying itself by computer. It flew into a large thunderstorm. Investigators believe that a smaller storm in front of the larger weather front confused the plane's radar system and it flew on into the large thunderstorm. Automatically. The crew were nominally there on duty. But the computer was flying the plane. Right into a huge thunderstorm. Messages from the plane's flight computer (that word again!) stated that Flight 447 suffered 24 critical faults in just 4 minutes 16 seconds.

The pilot had probably awakened to the situation by then but it was too late. In the cockpit the system controlling air speed and altitude failed, and the display screens would have gone blank. It is thought that the flight sensors—pitot tubes—failed simultaneously. There had been 36 previous incidents of pitot tubes failing due to freezing temperatures and a refit had not yet been done on Flight 447. We have heard of eastbound flights in daylight across the Atlantic during which the crew routinely spread newspapers over the cockpit windows "to stop the glare" and "why look out—there is nothing to see anyway—the computer is flying the plane". It is time that all countries would make it illegal to use automatic controls without supervision at all times by a qualified pilot or captain on watch in all planes. And also in ships because it is known that ships frequently sail on automatic pilot without anyone being on watch on the bridge.

Michael Stack. ©

## WHEN

concluded

colonial mindset would show because it was all about WW2. You drop the dishes, or whatever you are doing, forget that Britain still had a brutal colonial empire, and rally to the flag, for this is fascism. He must have been aware, as a leading journalist, that Britain helped to create Nazism in Germany through their unnecessary humiliation of that nation after WW1.

When I worked in the Belfast shipyard from 1946 onwards I began to realise that there were a greater number of veterans from WW1 than from WW2. I have never heard a former soldier from WW2 say he joined the army to fight Nazism. (One I knew said so, only after he had joined the CPNI.) Many of the soldiers had joined the British Army around 1936-37 due to economic conditions or with a wish to be taken out of the then bleak Northern Ireland. I worked with one who felt he had been caught out by the outbreak of WW2. One day a teenager asked him his advice about the British Army as a career. It was 1950 and the Korean War was raging. His answer: "Wait until it's all over and then join the Catering Corp".

A couple of former Belfast soldiers who had entered the undamaged parts of Germany in 1945 thought that country had made a good life for its people. I was shocked and thought of them as fascists. But they weren't particularly interested in politics. Anyone who provided a place to live, a steady job, enough food and clothes, schools, and healthcare for them and their family had their support either through voting or non-voting. They left the ideology to those who already had all of this.

Wilson John Haire  
12th September, 2010

## PROTEST continued

money, having no value of its own, generally loses value if it is merely saved. It must be invested to hold its own.

Money that holds its own value is obsolete. Money only holds its value by being invested. Putting it in the bank is investing it—but it is the necessary minimum of speculation.

Jim Power made another point in his article:

"Having printed a lot of new money over the past couple of years, the US central bank is now on the verge of engaging in another bout of money creation, or 'Quantitative Easing Mark 2'. There is no guarantee this will work, because the business sector is still not terribly interested in investment, while the personal sector is more interested in saving than spending (similar to Ireland)" (*Ir. Exam.* 22.10.2010).

And we all thought Robert Mugabe was the only man that printed money!

#### HOME OWNERSHIP

The Irish state has probably the largest percentage of home-ownership in the European Union. Out of a population of 4.45 million, there are 1,800,000 principal private residences. When the state introduced a Property Tax on Second Homes, a return of €40 million was anticipated— it surpassed that figure by €10 million.

They might sing about and vote for James Connolly but you can bet your bottom Euro, they won't be acting like him.

"*The Irish are not philosophers as a rule*", Connolly stated. It would appear that they are doing a lot more thinking in this crisis and, if the Labour movement is to persuade and coax them into direct action, they will have to put across a mighty convincing case, not a lot of slogans and rhetoric about millionaires and the 'Celtic Tiger'.

Middle Ireland will need a few more hair shirts before it is convinced that its gains from the 'Celtic Tiger' are all lost. That is not to say they will forever tolerate arbitrary or unending economic cuts—but by that time the Left and the Trade Union movement will be leading from behind if they don't start doing some serious thinking themselves.

Money may not be the prime motive for the French protests but it would be a brave leader who would appeal to Middle Ireland or Lower Ireland, for that matter, solely on the intrinsic value of Time. Modern Ireland would think that Bishop Lucey had risen from the dead again.

Whatever about the Fianna Fail renaissance—a renaissance of the Labour movement seems light years away!

Pat Maloney

## PROTEST continued

"In Ireland, people can get together, as in the Croke Park agreement for instance. French people are not able to do that', says Ms Avouac-Morrison. 'The Irish people are very flexible. They understand that it's not sustainable. People are not realistic in France. The Irish are stoic; they can reach a consensus'."

Ms Pratschke comes back to this idea of solidarity in France:

"The Irish are a nation of individuals, and perhaps the sense of society is not quite as developed.

"What I would say is that there is a lack of flexibility or willingness to change quickly in France." (*Irish Independent*, 23.10.2010).

The Cork writer does the middle-class a real injustice—for the only substantial and successful protest throughout the crisis was that organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in Dublin on Saturday, February 21st last year. A crowd of 50,000 was anticipated: 100,000 turned up. Out of that protest, the single biggest beneficiary was the middle-class, which succeeded in retaining Medical Cards when they reached 70 years of age, the only embargo being that your income did not exceed €700 per week, and your spouse was permitted the same, coming to €1,400 a week.

The average weekly earnings for the majority of Irish workers at that time wouldn't even reach €700 a week—so this was primarily a concession to public service retirees, who in the main are the bulwark of the Fianna Fail vote, when they have their senses about them.

For the likes of the Cork writer, it will suit him just fine if the workers of Europe will do the protesting and the snug, conceited Irish middle-class will reap whatever benefit accrue, and sure if not—all them Froggies and Manuels are half mad anyhow, so we lose nothing.

We can go back to the comfort and security of our 12.5% Corporation Tax!

### IRELAND: STILL A RICH COUNTRY

But do the advocates of 'direct action' ever analyse this perceived 'apathy' of Irish workers?

The economic situation is bad, but making it sound worse than it is, or trying to express it in popular sound bites, doesn't help. It only serves to dampen the prospect of a renewed confidence that is essential to economic recovery or indeed, the democratic involvement by the mass of the people. It doesn't help people to understand what needs to be done to tackle our current difficulties.

Some experts reckon each Irish child at birth will be saddled with more than €40,000 debt, that figure is a bit exagger-

ated, but even if true, it is meaningless when taken in isolation. It tells us little about the state of the economy and nothing about the prospects of each individual child.

Being born in Ireland confers a host of other benefits that more than offsets that liability. If each child is liable for a share of the national debt, then each child must be credited with a share of the national wealth. That wealth is considerable. We face major economic difficulties but we are still among the richest countries in the world.

Our health and social services may not be ideal but they are far better than those available to most of the world's population. Each child born in Ireland is fortunate by world standards, with an entitlement to practically free health care and free education. State services could, of course, be improved. Waste could be eliminated, management improved and, if our debt servicing costs were lower, we could spend more.

Those are real concerns. But let's not forget what we have.

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**"The Irish are not philosophers as a rule, they proceed too rapidly from thought to action." James Connolly.**  
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### THE THRIFTY IRISH

Figures on household finances reveal that a total of €97 billion is on deposit in current and saving accounts and that the amount owed to the banks in standard consumer loans has fallen by €6 billion in the last year.

The State's 414 Credit Unions, alone, have deposits of €12 billion.

A report on household finances, published by the Central Bank (4.10.2010), said between 2003 and mid-2009 Irish households borrowed much more than they saved. In the last 18 months this trend has been dramatically reversed.

The amount of standard consumer loans owed to the banks has fallen by €6 billion in the last year. However, the total owed on credit cards, student loans and overdrafts rose by €4.9 billion.

All right, not all households have savings. Many families are just one bill away from financial ruin due to unemployment or severe wage cuts and tax hikes.

But in those homes where there is the chance to put even a few Euro aside, some furious saving is going on.

Irish households have, on average, almost €44,000 stashed away.

And they do not want this money locked away into fixed-term accounts, with many

moving their cash to instant access accounts as concerns mount about their future finances.

According to figures from personal finance advisers, Bonkers.ie, Irish people have €64.5 billion in savings accounts, which doesn't include pensions, shares or investment products.

There is even more money on deposit in Irish banks once corporate deposits are added in.

For households alone the average savings work out at €43,851 per household, according to Simon Moynihan of *Bonkers.ie*.

Not only are people saving like mad but there has been a change in their savings habits which mirrors the turbulent economic times.

Between May 2009 and May this year, the amount of money in long-term deposit accounts went from €15.1 billion to €10.2 billion—a drop of €4.9 billion.

However, the amount of money in notice or instant access accounts increased by €4.9 billion to €17.2 billion over the same period.

Not only are people saving whatever they can, but the panicky times we live in means they want immediate access to that money and so are reluctant to tie it up for six months or a year.

The problem is the Government cannot get the business sector interested in investment, while the personal sector is more interested in saving than spending but then this has always been an aspect of the capitalist system.

In his weekly column in the *Irish Examiner*, (22.10.2010) economist Jim Power related a visit he made to an economic conference in the US.

"One idea suggested last weekend in Boston to get consumers spending is to impose a tax on savings. In other words, one would be forced to pay the equivalent of an interest rate to the savings institution for the privilege of saving. The hope is this would discourage saving and get people spending.

"I personally find this a bizarre idea, but the very fact that such a notion is being mooted tells us a lot about the fragility of the US economy. The one message I came away from Boston with is in Ireland, we cannot sit back and hope a strong international recovery will ride to our rescue." (*Ir. Exam.* 22.10.2010).

There is no such thing in modern capitalism as saving in the old-fashioned sense. Saving is only possible through investment. Gold sovereigns might be saved by being put in a stocking under a mattress. Because they were themselves a product—a commodity—they would hold their value with relation to other commodities. Paper

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## Not On Our Knees Yet, James!

The Dublin media and intellectual Ireland are in a desperate quandary!

Half of Europe is in revolt! Millions are on the streets of France, Greece and Spain but in the Republic, which is affected by some of the most dire aspects of the financial collapse, the population is in slumber. The commentators just cannot understand where our fighting spirit has vanished to.

A couple of Sundays ago (17.10.2010), *The Mail on Sunday* dedicated a full page to the 'dilemma': The writer blames the Famine for our servile attitude . . . . The Church has also played a part . . . . Eamon de Valera and his Government colluded in this. And Haughey was no help either. The writer concludes that: "*If we were French, the revolution would have started long ago*". Aye, if the cow had . . . ., she would be a bull!

According to the *Evening Echo* in Cork: "*We're as mad as hell, now we want to get even... but the hard-pressed lower and middle income families...*" are a "*people who have a history of not protesting*".

The writer goes on: "*Unlike pensioners, who avail of free public transport and have the time to march on Dublin, families simply don't have the time or energy to protest*". Yes, this is what the man wrote!

Even RTE has got worked up—they dedicated a segment of *This Week* (17.10.2010) to the issue.

Mick Barry, the Socialist Party Councillor on Cork City Council, is urging the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) to organise a 24-hour General Strike.

### THE FRENCH

In France social life revolves around the family and there is a strict code of social interaction.

The French are proud of this balance

between commercial activity and leisure time. Money, you discover is not the prime motive for them. Time is what they cherish.

It is because they believe President Sarkozy is trying to steal their time (by extending the retirement age from 65 to 67, or from 60 to 62 for those taking early retirement) that so many of them have taken to the streets this week.

But it would be a mistake to view these current disturbances as just another week on the streets . . . .

"It's very complex. It's not just about having fun with placards. I think it's about protecting the kind of world they have created here in France. There is a sense that 'we're all in this together'," says Sheila Pratschke, director of the Irish Cultural Centre in Paris.

"French people are very pleased and proud of the balance they have. They like their time off and their weekends. They are very family-oriented. Many people travel home to their families at the weekend. They want to keep all of that lifestyle. The protests are not just about pensions, but about everything else," she adds. (*Irish Independent*-23.10.2010).

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This view—that the French way of life is under threat as Sarkozy tries to move the country to a more market-driven type of economy—is common among the demonstrators.

The deal goes like this: the people work for relatively low wages and pay high taxes and the Government provides free pre-school care, education, health care, pensions and proper social welfare allowances.

"People pay very high taxes, but there's an awful lot that the ordinary person gets back, and they don't want to see it eroded. They don't want to see the fracturing of society that has happened elsewhere," says Ms Pratschke.

To Sarkozy and the Globalisers that kind of social protection comes at too high a price.

"The social safety net—I'm all for it, but it's too expensive", argues Caroline Feely, a wine grower at Chateau Haut Garrigue in Saussignac in the south-west of France: "The social charge is enormous. I used to give out about PRSI when I lived in Ireland, but it's nothing compared to the social charge in France. If I earned, say, €10,000, €4,700 of that goes on social charges, and that's before you pay any income tax!..."

Genevieve Avouac-Morrison, a French woman living in Dublin: "*There is a lot of anti-Sarkozy feeling. People think he just isn't a very good President. Sarkozy has made it about the rich against the less well off. The number of millionaires in France has exploded under him. In many ways, I see these protests as a kind of class struggle.*"

The scale of protest in France has left many Irish people wondering whether (i) they are over-reacting to relatively minor changes, or (ii) we are under-reacting to the massive cuts that await us.