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## What's Constitutional?

### *Junior Minister Mansergh Speaks*

Fianna Fail Junior Minister Martin Mansergh has been putting himself about. Speaking at the McCluskey Summer School he said that Fianna Fail could not contest elections in the North because it was a party in government in the Republic and to do so would create a conflict of interest and damage the peace process.

Senior Fianna Fail Ministers, Dermot Ahern and Eamon Cuiv, have been encouraging the setting up of Party organisations in the North. The measure is generally supported by Cumainn around the South. The question of contesting elections in the North has not arisen as a practical proposition because party organisation is still in a rudimentary stage. But Mansergh has jumped in to pre-empt it, supported by the new leader of the SDLP, Margaret Ritchie. *The Irish News* wrote:

"Martin Mansergh's comments will come as a blow to party members lobbying for the Republic's senior governing party to contest assembly elections next year. The minister of state and former special adviser to the taoiseach on Northern Ireland also said he had doubts about whether there was any political advantage to being an all-Ireland party.

"Sinn Fein are the only party to contest elections throughout Ireland... "The political advantage of being an all-Ireland party is debatable, given the difference in conditions and roles north and south of the border", he said. "There has often been felt to be space north of the border for an unapologetic constitutional republicanism. While Fianna Fail has acknowledged formally in a number of ways the existence of significant political support for it north of the border, it is difficult for a government co-sponsor of an only recently bedded-down peace process to enter itself into electoral competition without creating a conflict of interest. Opposition parties of course are under no such constraints"."

But, in a democracy, Opposition Parties are Parties which aspire to form the Government. And, in the Republic at present, all three Opposition Parties are in with a good chance of becoming Government Parties within a couple of years. Supposing they organised in the North now, would they have to dis-organise if they won the election? And, if Fianna Fail loses, will Mansergh agree that it is free to organise in the North until it wins an election?

Pre-empting the issues, and imagining problematic situations in advance of actual practical developments which might give rise to them, is the way not to do things in the North. The only sensible way there is to feel your way and see what can be done. Belfast television interviewers did their best over many years to stultify Sinn Fein by binding it into imaginary 'scenarios' about the future. And they did the same with the SDLP before that. (But UTV/BBC interviewers were models of well-informed good sense by comparison with RTE interviewers whose only interview technique for Sinn Fein was a hectoring, condemnatory, tone of voice.)

The future is not a suitable subject for political analysis as a means of throwing light on what should be done in the present. It doesn't exist until it emerges from what is done in the present, and therefore it cannot be a guide to the present. It cannot be grasped by calculus in advance of the event. And, if it could be known in advance, that knowledge operating in the present would probably prevent the known future from happening. Human nature, as Dostoevsky observed, is perverse in that regard. The variability of human conduct is infinite, therefore, as Goethe put it, the grey calculus of human affairs cannot stop the sprouting of "*the green tree of life*". Or, as Kant put it, nothing straight can be made out of the crooked wood of humanity.

The logic of Mansergh's position is that Northern Ireland should be sealed up in its

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## *Béal an Lenihan*

So Brian Lenihan made the journey from Cambridge University to Beal na mBlath. It was a short trip. Now, if he had gone to Kilcrumper!

He hailed his appearance at the place where Michael Collins, master of the Treaty state, was killed in an absurd gesture of bravado, as a "*public act of historical reconciliation*".

This historical reconciliation was made over sixty years ago, when those whom Collins had left in the lurch made a final repudiation of the Treaty by shaking the dust of the British Commonwealth from their feet and contributed a joint account of the War of Independence with those who had refused to subscribe to the Treaty in the first place. (See *The Anglo-Irish War* by Sean MacEoin, Tom Barry, Oscar Traynor etc.)

Lenihan launched Eoin Neeson's book on *Myths From 1916* in Dublin in 2007. The way he blanched when Manus O'Riordan concluded the meeting by singing *The Foggy Dew* spoke volumes. He found the Somme much more congenial.

What Lenihan needs to be reconciled with is historic Fianna Fail, shaped from the heritage of Liam Lynch, who was systematically hunted down by Collins's acolytes after he left them leaderless. What need is there for him to reconcile with Treatyite Fine Gael? (Does it exist? Did any trace of it survive the 1948 repudiation of the British Commonwealth by Fine Gael in alliance with a recently retired Chief of Staff of the IRA?)

The historic accommodation over the Treaty happened long ago. It happened by Fine Gael giving up on the Treaty after Fianna Fail had broken it, and becoming a party in the Anti-Treaty democracy established by Fianna Fail. Between post-1948 Fine Gael and Fianna Fail a

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*Labour Comment*, edited by **Pat Maloney**:  
*Fianna Fail Renaissance?* by *Philip O'Connor*  
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Limbo, and that people should try to be nicer to one another in it. That was also his father's position. He appears to be closely guided by the views of his father, who was a British spy-master in the 2nd World War and a Professor/Administrator after the War in the interface between the British Foreign Office and academia called Chatham House. But the father at least had the grace to compare Northern Ireland to the Sargasso Sea, where snakes bred.

The Peace Process, that Mansergh is concerned about upsetting if Fianna Fail has more than token Party organisation in the North, happened a long time ago. We never saw that Fianna Fail had much to do with "bedding it down", beyond black-guarding Sinn Fein to conciliate Trimble—to *Save Dave* from the Paisleyites so that he might play his part in the Process. It was our judgment from the start that Trimble's object was to sabotage the Process from within. The process did not begin to work until Trimbleism was set aside by Paisleyism. It has now bedded down as an authentic apartheid system detached from the political system of the

state. Its bedding down owes little or nothing to Fianna Fail's "co-sponsorship" of it, and nothing at all to the SDLP's Hibernian carping. It is working because Paisley came back to tell his successors in the DUP leadership to toe the line, and because the Provos are making it as easy as possible for them to toe the line.

Martin McGuinness tactfully declined an invitation to meet the Pope when he was visiting the State—which is still very much the State despite the "co-sponsorship"—because he knew that Peter Robinson could not go for reasons to do with the Day of Judgment.

There are elements in the Provo leadership that would settle for the routine operation of what has been established, as the SDLP did when Mallon, and then Durkan, succeeded Hume. That was the undoing of the SDLP. Northern Ireland was not designed for the routine operation of democracy. If Sinn Fein treats it as such—as Junior Minister Mansergh intends that it should—then it is likely that it too will be eroded, though perhaps more

slowly than the SDLP was. There is already significant discontent with it, despite the calibre of its leaders and the awareness, on the part of some of them at least, of what Northern Ireland is.

The political culture of Sinn Fein lies in the personal understanding of its leaders worked out through experience. There is no sign in Sinn Fein publications of the quality of understanding that enabled it to do what it has done in the North. Its publications are empty.

It was our view in the mid-1970s that the Provos were effective in the North insofar as they were the specific product of 'the Northern Ireland state'. They became part of the traditional Republican movement of the country because that was what was to hand when the 1969 pogrom threw the Catholic community into flux. At a certain point the Northern element separated itself from that general Republicanism and went its own way so successfully that it is now the biggest party in the 6 Counties and unapologetic IRA men are senior Ministers. It is the fact of IRA men in political office that offers the best hope of the 'Peace Process' being sustainable and remaining a process, rather than falling into a routine—as Mansergh desires.

But the Provos lost something as well as gaining something by separating from traditional Republicanism.

Some years ago Mansergh, to our astonishment, published in the form of a review, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, a long condemnation of Rory O'Brady's biography of General Maguire. His object was to stamp on traditional Republicanism as a means of consolidating the Good Friday Agreement. But Republican discontent with the GFA was not going to be snuffed out by condemnation in a London literary magazine by somebody like Mansergh, who never showed any sign of understanding what life the Sargasso Sea of Northern Ireland is like.

Rory O'Brady's view of things was not rendered obsolete by the GFA, or by the spurious "all-Ireland election" held as a propaganda exercise in support of it. And the more Fianna Fail levitates free of its foundation in the 1918 Election, the more relevant O'Brady's view of things becomes.

Traditional Republicanism did not survive over the decades on merely sentimental grounds. It remained current because of the way Britain chose to govern its 6 County region after dividing the country. It deliberately governed the North outside the political system of the State in

a mode that the British statesmen of the time—and they actually were statesmen in those days—could not conceivably have thought was conducive to good government, peace and order. They did not try to draw the Northern minority into the seductive party politics of the State. And, when the minority, with support in the majority community, elected Jack Beattie to Westminster on a policy of becoming party of British party-political life, he was rebuffed at Westminster.

The Catholic community could not take part in Northern Ireland political life because there was none. It was not open to it to take part in British political life. If British politics had been open to it, and it had participated, does anybody think that Republican nostalgia could have started a war and sustained it for a quarter of a century.

Mansergh thinks that, while all-Ireland party organisation is not practical for viable political parties, there is "a space north of the border for an unapologetic constitutional republicanism". Does this mean that he does not consider Sinn Féin to be Republican? Or is it that he does not think it constitutional? Or is it that a party that operates in two different Constitutions, and makes a practical functional adaptation to each of them, is unconstitutional because only a party which is bound into a particular Constitution can be described as constitutional? If that is the case, would he regard the Provos as constitutional Republicans if they dissolved their 26 County region?

Or must they sit in Westminster to be constitutional? But, if there is a 'Northern Ireland state'—and we are told on all sides that there is—why should it be necessary for elected politicians in the North to go and sit in the Parliament of another State in order to be properly Constitutional?

Re 'the Northern Ireland state', the Provos have given it a semblance of reality which it never had in the past, and have even cast an aura of democracy around it. In the past it could never have been mistaken for a democratic state or any other form of state. It was a subordinate regime of communal (or sectarian) dominance set up for its own purposes by the Mother of Parliaments and always subject to the maternal will.

It would be useful if Mansergh spelled out the kind of sub-provincial constitutional Republicanism he would approve of. He is, after all, a Fianna Fail Minister, and a voluble though a junior one. He must be in tune with some strain of thought

## In Defence Of Peter Hart

At the risk of providing an excuse for more abuse on the late Peter Hart, and of being seen to be under-knowledged about events such as the Kilmichael ambush, I feel your latest attacks on him are inappropriate and disappointing (*Victim of Academic Ideology?*, *Irish Political Review* September 2010).

Whatever about the interview with the 'dead' Kilmichael witness, and Hart describes that person as a scout not an armed and fighting participant, his work is substantive, thorough and well written. That source may be anonymous but no more accessible than Meda Ryan's reliance on lists of supposed Dunmanway Protestant informers for which "there is not an exact copy" (Tom Barry p. 448) let alone a reference as to their present location.

Without Peter Hart's books, I would not be aware of the level of the violence inflicted on southern Protestants in the 1916-23 period, for whatever reasons, and the fact, let alone the details, outlined in *The IRA at War* of the killing of thirteen such in the Dunmanway area of Cork after the truce.

Hart's chapter in *The IRA and its Enemies*, entitled 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland' was especially illuminating. Northern Unionists, being seriously unhistorical, have little or no remembrance of this period and southern Protestants don't wish to know.

As to the "determined silence of the academic faculties", tribute to Hart has been paid by a number of his colleagues including Roy Foster and Feargal McGarry, not to mention his media defenders like Eoghan Harris that you note. Hart was not "punished" or marginalised by his mentors and colleagues, even if he was not entirely supported on the tone or angling of his two IRA books. They display the understandable and antagonistic view of violence of the emotionally uninvolved, non-participant, in his case a Canadian's view.

Look at the left and Irish nationalism's response to American military actions in Iraq and NATO's in Afghanistan to see something much more extreme, yet similar.

Expecting full fact-checking before a book's publication is absurd. It would double the costs. Facts in a book per page are numerous, and countless over a whole volume. I know in the case of mine on Roger Casement there are many corrections that need now made (as well as the addition of new details). However none after eight years affect the thrust of the book or the vast majority of the assessments made within it and that would be the case if Hart's 'scout' was mistaken.

I have spotted numerous misspellings and mistaken omissions due both to simple mistakes and errors and the misreading of handwriting. Two new facts that have since come my way were that Edward Carpenter discussed Casement's homosexuality in 1915, before his diaries were discovered, and that Casement's Belfast companion, Millar Gordon signed the Ulster Covenant. A significant misinterpretation was made of what I took wrongly as a dispute between Joseph Conrad and Casement on the question of whether there was an indigenous custom in the Congo of cutting off hands. There wasn't.

**Jeffrey Dudgeon**

within Fianna Fail. It would be useful to know what kind of republicanism Fianna Fail would approve of in the North. A futile, consolatory, nostalgic kind?

The McCluskey Summer School, at which Mansergh ruled all-Ireland politics off the agenda, was launched a couple of years ago to mark the fortieth anniversary of the setting up of a Civil Rights, as distinct from an Anti-Partition, agitation, to concentrate on discrimination against Catholics in housing, jobs, and Local Government voting. The first session was addressed by Brid Rodgers, who described the shock of moving the short distance from Donegal:

"Coming to live in Northern Ireland in 1960 was for me a culture shock. My first experience of democracy Northern Ireland style was when I went to vote. The choice was between abstentionist republican, labour and Ulster Unionist. Seeing abstentionism as a wasted vote I had decided to vote labour. On presenting my voting card I was informed that I had already voted... I was given a pink ballot paper. This would count in the event of a tie, I was told... In a state of frustration, anger and helplessness I voted for the republican!"

That was the dreadful "personation" that one heard so much about at one time. Personation was a reasonable way of conducting "democracy Northern Ireland

*style*". The crucial political organisations were the Catholic and Protestant Electoral Registration Societies, which saw to it Catholics and Protestants went on the electoral register as they came of age, and were then turned out to vote. And personation was an appropriate way of ensuring full voting. The effective choice was between Catholic and Protestant and, so long as cross-community personation was prevented by Catholic and Protestant supervision, there was really nothing to complain about. Party politics as understood in the state had no place in its Northern Ireland system. Brid Rodgers brought irrelevant political assumptions with her from Donegal. The surprise is that Northern Ireland was not understood even in Donegal.

She gave some examples of discrimination and then observed:

"Let me stress that all this was happening at a time when the Unionist party was in full control in Stormont and the British Government continued to shirk its sovereign responsibility for the situation in Northern Ireland, maintaining it could not interfere in the affairs of the Stormont government.

"50 years of republican rhetoric, with intermittent bouts of IRA violence, had changed nothing for the nationalist community in Northern Ireland.

"Again the McCluskys realised that something had to be done. Since Northern Ireland was part of the UK they would seek the ordinary rights of British citizens which were denied them. This of course subsequently became the mantra of the Civil Rights Movement."

That was in the mid 1960s, almost half a century ago. The Civil Rights Movement became the SDLP plus the Alliance Party. Two generations on the Alliance runs the police and is a spent political force. The SDLP has run the natural course of the political life it chose to live. There is intermittent Republican violence on a scale far greater than there was between 1923 and the appearance of the Civil Rights Movement as a mass agitational force in 1968—the bad old days. The possibility of holding it in check lies with the constitutional force of Provo Sinn Fein.

Fianna Fail, having inflamed the situation with an irresponsible speech by Taoiseach Jack Lynch in August 1969, is washing its hands of responsibility for the mess it helped to create—if the views of the Party intellectual and former adviser of Taoiseachs are the views of the present Taoiseach, and there are reasons to suppose that they are.

And the Civil Rights Summer School is discussing the unknowable—how things would have gone if there had not been

violence in 1969-70—but is doing so only as an expression of resentment against the Provos.

Brid Rodgers commented on Stormont's "*policies of apartheid*" in the 1960s. We have not moved away from apartheid. The SDLP sought equality for the Catholic community through equitable apartheid. That is what was provided for by the GFA, and established by the Provos and Paisleyites.

The British Government "*shirked its sovereign responsibility*" fifty years ago, and continues to do so. "*British rights for British citizens*" exist no more now than they did then. They were not pursued by the Civil Rights Movement in a way that made them achievable. They were pursued outside the British political system, which was their condition of existence.

The people of the North have equitable apartheid outside the citizenship of the state. They are not British citizens—the primary business of citizenship being the business of governing the state. And the adviser to Taoiseachs says it is out of the question for them to become citizens of the Irish State.

And, at this year's Summer School, Britain, which Brid Rodgers thought had "*sovereign responsibility*" which it was shirking, is excused of responsibility with a reference to 'the Northern Ireland state'.

If you stir up an agitation on some complaint, you must be under obligation to direct the agitation towards a realistic means of remedying the matter, especially if you make a Pharisaical song and dance about being Constitutional. To do that you must at least know which State you're in. The Oh-so-Constitutional Civil Righters did not know that, and their movement soon went off the rails.

If "*British rights for British citizens*" was the mantra forty years ago, it soon gave way to a mantra that condemned the blaming of Britain as a blinkered, small-minded, sectarian view of the situation. And if, when one stopped to think about it, one had to admit that Britain was to blame, then it was best not to think about it. Not thinking became the Constitutional Nationalist frame of mind. Mindless Constitutionalism became incapable of constituting anything. The word came to mean Pacifist. The actual power of constituting passed to the "*men of violence*", who dealt in realities. What they have constituted is a reasonably equitable system of apartheid. And Mansergh says that is how Northern Ireland must remain.

Is it surprising that there are people

who refuse to settle for that? For a level playing field of structured communal antagonism undergoing a process of demographic change. If Fianna Fail boycotts the North—except for the futile "*co-sponsorship*"—what will happen when the demographics change a bit more?

\*

Mansergh also protested during the month against the Dublin demonstrations against Tony Blair which deterred him from promoting his book generally. Blair "*should be received as a friend*" because he "*did more for peace in Ireland as prime minister than any of his predecessors*" (IT 8 Sept.)

There it is again. The Irish needed Britain to make peace amongst them!

Didn't we have a referendum twelve years ago that made the Six Counties part of the UK State *de jure* as well as *de facto*? If so, was it not in part of his own State that Blair made peace? And why should Ireland be grateful to him for pacifying a turbulent part of Britain?

Michael McDowell, reviewing Blair's book (IT 9th September) says "*at the outset that Ireland owes Tony Blair a huge debt of gratitude for... the settlement of the Troubles*". It is a debt that "*we collectively owe*". How fortunate Britain is to be able to misgovern a section of itself deliberately and have a neighbour willingly take the blame for it, and then feel indebted to it for stopping the trouble caused by its misgovernment!

But MacDowell's gratitude to Blair, unlike Mansergh's, does not blind him to the damage Blair did in other parts of the world. He sees him as having been emotionally unbalanced by the attack on the World Trade Centre, and as a consequence making possible "*the wrong legally and politically*" invasion of Iraq, which Bush could not have undertaken without him. And then his efforts to get something done about Israel were "*belated, weak and wholly inadequate*".

Mansergh's view is:

"The Iraq war may have been a serious mistake, and some of its justifications flawed, though international law in this area is not as clear-cut as is often made out, but it undoubtedly removed Saddam Hussein, who by any standards was a longstanding domestic tyrant and war criminal, and still some danger to the neighbourhood. If any consistent logic were applied by the... protest groups [against Blair], to what class of criminality would they consider such "heroes" as Lenin and Trotsky belong?"

If Iraq was a tyranny, it was a functional tyranny. Sunni, Shia, Kurds and Christians

were all drawn into the running of the state, which was conducted on liberal and secular lines. The "tyranny" was the mode of development that was enabling the various peoples thrown together for Britain's own ulterior motives to gell as a national unit. It was a progressive tyranny, and that was nothing new in the history of Progress. It was only through the evolution of the "tyranny" that liberal, secular, bourgeois Iraq was ever likely to become democratic. In such developments democratisation usually comes last.

The invasion which broke up the tyranny trashed the social development that had been accomplished by it. The different social elements which it had drawn together in a tolerant accommodation of each other were deliberately incited against each other by the propaganda and actions of the invasion force from the moment it crossed the border; and the 'fundamentalism', which had been declining as elements of the various religious communities were drawn into the functioning of the regime, was reinvigorated deliberately. And the resulting chaos was called "freedom", and even "democracy".

And the killing rate, which had been declining steeply under the "tyranny", even by Amnesty International figures, shot up to unprecedented quantities in random destructive activity with no overall purpose.

We cannot recall when it was that Lenin and Trotsky invaded another state and, with wanton destructiveness, trashed it. Maybe Minister of State Mansergh will remind us.

## New Unionist Leader

The election for a successor to Reg Empey as leader of the almost defunct Ulster Unionist Party has hardly set the Province on fire. The front-runner has always been Fermanagh/South Tyrone MLA, Tom Elliott, and the challenger was Lagan Valley MLA, Basil McCrea. Elliott was the favourite of the UUP establishment—old guard. He is a staunch Orangeman—a former Grand Master in his area—and a member of the the now defunct Ulster Defence Regiment. The UDR was particularly notorious in the border areas where, as often as not, it was the UVF or the LVF in British army uniforms. It was involved in the massacre of the Miami Showband and the later bombings of Dublin and Monaghan. (The earlier bombings were carried out directly by the British Army.)

Early in the selection campaign Elliott announced that he would never attend a Gay Pride march or a GAA match—the connection between the two being lost on most people! (McCrea has attended both and is certainly no Orangeman.) Later, under pressure, Elliott said that he might, sometime in the future, attend a GAA match. It is unlikely that the Fermanagh County Board is holding its collective breath.

Last minute efforts were made by the UUP establishment to arrange a fix and avoid an election at the Waterfront Hall but these came to nothing. There were seats at the count reserved for 1,200 delegates—938 attended. A quarter of these were bussed in from Elliott's stronghold in Fermanagh—one of the few areas in the North which still has a strong UUP base. (Officially 2,100 UUP members were entitled to vote, but the Party has nowhere near that membership.)

In the end Tom Elliott won with 643 votes to Basil McCrea's 294 votes (69% to 31%). To say the least, Elliott has a hill to climb. Since David Trimble's time the UUP has lost about 100,000 votes. Now a leading McCrea supporter, Trevor Ringland, the UUP's Westminster candidate in East Belfast and former rugby international, has threatened to leave the Party unless Elliott changes his stance on the GAA. Also threatening to leave is Alan Craig from Portstewart.

Neither of the candidates favoured the recent link-up with the British Conservative Party which probably means that that idea is dead. Elliott says that his first aim is to get the British to go back on the St. Andrews Agreement and so prevent Martin McGuinness becoming the First Minister if Sinn Fein becomes the largest party in Stormont after next May's Assembly election—as seems likely to happen.

**Conor Lynch**

## Editorial Digest

**VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH** Military and civil violence by "dissident" groups seems to have virtually ceased since the Orange marches in mid- to late July. Almost nothing happened during the Black Institution marches in August beyond token peaceful protests. This would appear to be the result of satisfactory discussions between representatives of RIRA and the British Government—possibly brokered by Sinn Fein—which solved the protests by political prisoners in the the jails.

For the record, military attacks so far in 2010 include:—the shooting of Constable Heffron in Randalstown on January 25th; the bombing of Newry Courthouse on February 22nd; Kieran Doherty killed by RIRA on February 24th; the bombing of MI5 HQ at Hollywood on April 12th; the attempted bombing of Newtownhamilton police barracks on April 13th; the shooting up of Crossmaglen police barracks on July 2nd; a bomb explosion near Cullyhanna in South Armagh on July 10th; a bomb attack on Woodburn police barracks, Belfast on July 22nd; the shooting of a drug dealer in Derry on July 24th; a bomb attack on Strand Road barracks in Derry on August 3rd; a bomb attack on a soldier in Bangor on August 4th; a bomb attack on a policeman in Kilkeel on August 8th; and a bomb attack on a policeman in Cookstown on August 10th.

Rioting, which was widespread, ceased in July.

**ELECTRIC** As was mentioned here, and almost everywhere else, some time ago, it was proposed that the South's state-owned electricity generator, the ESB, was to take over Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE). Apart from a few arguments about whether the connectors should be above or below ground, the proposal seemed to be welcomed by everyone. Here is what the relevant Stormont Minister, the DUP's Arlene Foster, had to say about the matter at the time:

"This is the transfer of ownership of the NIE electricity network business from an overseas investment bank to an experienced utility company. That in itself is an important point to highlight. The ESB has a proven track record in both the ownership and management of key electricity infrastructure; it also has a good investment track record, including accessing the eurobond market. I welcome ESB management's commitment to both fund and construct this important infrastructure in Northern Ireland."

There was much more in this vein and it seemed only a matter of getting the almost inevitable go-ahead from the British Office of Fair Trading for the whole matter to be sorted out.

Then in mid-July the TUV's Jim Allister, elected by nobody, started to kick up about the Free State taking over the North's electricity—which doesn't belong to the North at all! Suddenly Peter Robinson and Reg Empey, both of whom have an irrational fear of Allister, jumped on the bandwagon and have started also making noises about the Free State taking over. Even Arlene Foster is beginning to back pedal. Watch this space!

**ORANGE ORDER** The Orange Order in the North is carrying out a County by County series of commemorations to

honour its members killed in the recent war. The total was 335 members. Last year Down and Armagh were toured and the most recent event was at Killyman Orange Hall near Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. Those attending, as well as Orangemen, included representatives from the South's Department of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese Welfare Association, the Equality Commission, the Phoenix Project (a body supporting young people with attention deficit problems), and the Church of Ireland.

The Grand Lodge Director, David Hume, made a most interesting statement: *"At the start of the Troubles, the Orange Order encouraged members to play their part in protecting the wider community by serving in the security services. Unfortunately many paid the ultimate sacrifice."* Sure enough, the commemorative plaque displayed in the Belfast News Letter showed most of the names followed by UDR or RUCR.

**IRIS** Robinson is back in Belfast. Apart from the usual prurient comments the papers still add her *"financial irregularities"* to their stories. This is a never-ending source of mystery. She borrowed money from two friends to help set up a cafe for her boyfriend. One can imagine her husband being hopping mad, though he doesn't seem to have been, but what has it got to do with anyone else? People borrow money, they spend it, and, with luck, they pay it back. Where were the *"irregularities"*?

When Peter Robinson followed the lead of Ian Paisley and decided to make a go of Stormont with Sinn Fein, he became a hate figure among the 'moderates' of the UUP, the SDLP and the UVF. Iris's dallying, and unsubstantiated allegations against Peter, were spread throughout East Belfast by that 'nice' Alliance lady, Naomi Long and her UVF backers, among others. So Peter Robinson lost his Westminster seat to Naomi Long. The Alliance Party got nowhere in other constituencies.

**OMAGH** The British Government has again turned down the demand for a public inquiry into the Omagh Bombing. At a meeting attended by representatives of Sinn Fein, the UUP and the Alliance Party, the spokesman for the relatives, Michael Gallagher, said: *"We feel that the problem with Omagh over the years was that they looked at small individual areas. We need an over arching inquiry which would look at all the issues that need to be addressed."*

The Omagh relatives had been supported by a BBC Panorama investigation and by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Westminster. But they were over-ridden following objections by Intelligence supremo, Sir Peter Gibson. What they really want exposed

are the roles played by the electronic spying organisation, GCHQ, and by RUC and British Intelligence agents both in the Real IRA and in Omagh itself on the day of the bombing. Not something they are likely to achieve.

**CITY OF CULTURE** Derry is now, after much cross-community lobbying, the UK City of Culture. This came as a bit of a surprise to most people who thought that the town was in line, and quite rightly, for the prestigious accolade of European City of Culture, as won by Glasgow, Liverpool and Cork. Unfortunately it was only the makey-upy UK City of Culture. Derry had to beat Birmingham and, to be fair, Norwich.

**CONSULTANTS** and Quangos are seldom employed to provide genuine expertise. Their role is to distance decisions, and any consequent blame, from politicians and civil servants. (And of course to provide jobs for the boys and girls!) In the North the following, and very partial, list may show how bad things have got. (There is also the so-called Voluntary Sector which, far from having anything to do with volunteering or self-help, is dominated by well-paid, and sometimes very well-paid, officials.) So, to the Northern Ireland Consultant Industry:—

DARD red meat strategy	250,000
DoE strategy	1,075,243
DFP IT advice	4,800,000
First Minister design	1,029,000
DFP management	6,400,000
DETI legal	1,013,557
DEL management	1,024,000
DETI broadband	222,329
First Minister legal	220,000
DEL legal	188,000
DSD procurement	189,425
DHSS management	734,000
DHSS organisation	776,000

And so it goes. Cuts, what cuts?

**BRITISH ARMY** All British Army garrisons remaining in the North are now exclusively involved in training for war in Afghanistan and for potential wars in Pakistan or Iran or Africa. So it is interesting to note that the Afghan Resistance has finally forced a British withdrawal from Sangin, the capital of Helmand Province. Mullah Omar's recent prediction that victory can be no more than two of three years off is looking quite accurate.

**THE POPE's** visit to Britain seems to have gone off without a hitch and with full houses at all venues, contrary to the hopes and expectations of his detractors. God's self-professed main enemy, Richard Dawkins, described the Pope on Northern Ireland TV as *"a leering old villain in a frock"*.

Professional counsellor to the masses, Claire Rayner, said: *"I have never felt such animus against any individual as I do against this creature."* The British

Humanist Association said: *"he and the Holy See use their powers to make people's lives worse"*. (As opposed to who—the secular British State?)

In the context of all this the Ulster Humanists called for protests against the Pope which, so far as one can see, didn't happen. Meanwhile its leader, Brian McClinton, continued a letter-writing campaign to link Martin Mc Guinness and a long-dead Catholic priest with the Claudy bombings of forty years ago.

One of the Pope's leading advisors, Cardinal Kasper, refused to accompany him on the visit on the grounds that Britain was *"a third world land"*. It should be so lucky! Though what exactly the Cardinal really meant is difficult to say.

**THE EAMES/BRADLEY** recommendations as to how to come to terms with the past got precisely nowhere. Not least because almost no one was interested in dealing with the pompous and establishment former Archbishop. In his contribution to the quite interesting *News Letter* series *"Unionism 2021"*, Eames had nothing to say that is worth commenting on. He is a master of the pious and meaningless platitude.

Denis Bradley, by contrast, has been attempting to engage in politics. Acknowledging that Sinn Fein and any future Fianna Fail MPs will continue to boycott Westminster, and that the DUP and the Alliance Party have no real interest in the place, while the UUP is virtually unelectable, he has proposed that elected Westminster MPs from the North should be entitled to Dáil seats.

He also proposes that residents in the North should be able to vote for the Irish Presidency. (He points out that a great many Northerners, and not just Catholics, carry Irish passports. And that it would be inconceivable that the holders of say American or German passports should not be allowed to vote in their respective Presidential elections.)

**LEGAL BILLS** A member of the Stormont Health Committee, Sam Gardiner, UUP MLA for Upper Bann, has called for a "no fault" system of arbitration in medical negligence cases. He states that last year five hospital trusts "settled" a total of 14.6m with legal costs adding a further 5m. There is undoubtedly a medical legal industry in the Province and Mr. Gardiner is far from being alone in calling for an end to it. In the case of arbitration failing, people would still have recourse to law.

**NEW TAXES** The *Irish News* has "discovered" a money raising agenda by Stormont to counter cuts by the Westminster government. These include:— 20 pounds to see a GP, 100 for a visit to A&E, water charges for 2013-14, a levy

on rates for local policing (not that there is any local policing in the eyes of many), bringing back prescription charges, ending free home help and subsidised nursing home care, a congestion charge for Belfast, increased parking charges and parking charges for civil servants.

Whether any of this is real is open to speculation. The *Irish News* has become more and more a down market and sensationalist newspaper. One has only got to remember its prurient and almost endless "reporting" of the charges against Liam Adams and its vicious reporting of so-called connections between Martin McGuinness and the the Claudy bombing. Then there is the almost endless stream of articles about priestly sex-abuse which almost seem purposely written to entertain readers who like that sort of thing.

But the proposals, if proposals they are, relating to motoring and car parking should be welcome whatever the economic climate. Belfast is one big traffic jam most of the time. (The rest of the time it is a nightmare of high speeds and sometimes even a disregard for traffic signals.) It is a sight to behold as an endless stream of traffic exits the M1 and the Westlink, knowing that, apart from the North West, the M1 Corridor has an excellent train service, as has most of the commuter area to Belfast (the Portadowne, Larne, and Bangor lines). And these services are about to get better still with lots of new trains on order. Yet one can stand on a platform at Great Victoria Street in the morning and see almost empty trains arriving from Portadown or Bangor.

The problem is that there is every incentive for people to arrive individually in their tin boxes. Car parks have been a major growth industry. They are a license to print money as so many people work in the public sector and most of these have their parking fees paid by their employers.

**THE GAA IN DOWN** The excitement of Down reaching the All-Ireland football final was palpable in the County, and indeed in many other places around Ulster. And it has hardly abated even though Down lost by a point to Cork. Even the cows in the fields were dyed red and black! But there is always one miserable spoilsport on these occasions—in this case it was Jim Wells, DUP MLA for South Down. Mr. Wells decided to take great exception to Ulster Bank employees serving customers in Castlewellan wearing Down football shirts—never mind the the bank was a co-sponsor of the county team.

"The GAA is not a purely sporting organisation", he said, "It has yet to divest itself of the baggage of politics and overt republicanism." He went on to hope that the fever surrounding the

County's Gaelic team "*ends as soon as possible*". Not all unionists were so miserable. John McAllister MLA said: "*I had hoped to get to the match, but I have family commitments. The atmosphere around the county has been very positive ahead of this match, and I am sure there are many like myself who are wishing the team every success on Sunday.*"

**WEE ULSTER** There seems to be an increasing feeling around the North that the place should become a distinct entity, subsuming desires for either a British or an Irish identity. It is still a minority feeling but is being fed by a variety of factors. There is the growing Hibernian trend in the more self-confident Catholic community. There is an almost hostile attitude to England among Protestants, and this was, if anything, increased by Reg Empey's flirtation with the British Conservatives. Then there is a growing belief that Scotland will separate sooner rather than later. But flesh was put on the idea by Anna Lo, Alliance MLA for South Belfast, in the *News Letter's* "Union 2021" series:

"I do not think that Northern Ireland's relationship with Great Britain is as important as fostering a common Northern Irish identity for all our citizens. With people seeing themselves as Northern Irish first and foremost rather than identifying with the tribal and divisive tags of British or Irish, unionist or nationalist. Under this identity we can form a truly shared culture, heritage and future with the potential to recognise, promote and celebrate the differences within it whilst everyone is able to identify with the overarching theme of being 'Northern Irish'"

**SETTLERS AND NATIVES** In the August issue of *Irish Political Review* Stephen Richards protested about an item in a previous Editorial Digest which he took to be a denial of the right of Protestant people to describe themselves as Irish. The complained-of item was an attempt to explain why there is such support in unionist Ulster for the state of Israel, especially at a time when the actions of that state against the Palestinian people are almost universally condemned. The similar origins (or their perception of their origins) of the Ulster Protestants and the Israeli Jews was offered as a possible explanation, along with the instinct among unionists to oppose whatever Republicans support. That was as far as it went.

The *Irish Political Review* and its predecessor journals pioneered the idea that there were two distinct IRISH nations on this island—a view now almost universally accepted in practice, if not in theory. We still stand by that analysis. Problems arose when it was put to unionists that they might like to integrate with Britain and indeed there are also problems with any attempts to

integrate with the Free State. So for the moment we are all left with making the best we can in wee Ulster, in this part of what is definitely Ireland.

In recent times, indeed very recent times, another problem, hopefully not a widespread one, is arising. The 2-nations analysis placed great emphasis on how people perceived themselves. There has been an increasing habit among unionist politicians of referring to nationalists as Irish, and to nationalist aspirations and beliefs as being Irish in a derogatory manner. Which begs the question of how they see themselves. Having said that, there can be little question that most Protestants see themselves as Irish and are seen by nationalists as Irish—not the "wrong sort of Irish", just another sort of Irish. Certainly not English. This Column would put Stephen Richards into that category, the category of the majority. Perhaps the original "note" was stated rather crudely. If so, the Column apologises.

## Béal an Lenihan

continued

"reconciliation" would be altogether out of place. They are rivals in an adversarial democracy, and party conflict is of the essence of what is called democracy these days.

Lenihan's speech at Beal na Blath, if it was not a mere personal eccentricity, was about the Anglicising of Fianna Fail in preparation for a visit from our Queen, in return for the state visit of our Pope to Britain—but really in exchange of Queen for Pope.

The gist of the speech was a repudiation of De Valera. Dev felt challenged by "*the ghost of Collins*"—or, "*it may be that he did*". And he stayed on too long as party leader.

Lenihan's grandfather was Treatyite in 1922. As he told the Dail in 1969:

"Collins called for Volunteers to invade the North. "I remember putting my name to it", he told the House. "It was rather stupid when one thinks of it. These were the things done in those days but 1969 is a different day... I appeal to younger men to keep sane about these things, to catch themselves on"..."

Paddy Lenihan became a Treatyite civil servant and then switched to Fianna Fail,

"attracted in particular by Sean Lemass who shared many of the same qualities he had admired in Michael Collins: the talent for organisation, great energy and a modernising tendency".

The big-time Fianna Fail talent in these things was Haughey. Lemass was small-

time by comparison. Collins got himself killed before he ever had to decide whether to balance a budget or not. But one thing Lemass shared with Collins was mischievous interference in the North. (Haughey knew the North and did not tamper.) Joe Keenan has shown in a series of articles in this publication that Collins' Northern policy was either self-contradictory or deceptive. Lemass's Northern policy was blundering and was a detonator for catastrophe.

Fine Gael's great Anti-Partition drive that accompanied its final repudiation of the Treaty led to the invasion of the North eight years later, in 1956. It took only four years from Lemass's brow-beating of the Nationalist Party into role-playing the part of Loyal Opposition in Captain O'Neill's make-believe democracy for the North to go up in flames.

"Had Collins lived" would he have done this, or would it have been that, Lenihan asked. A futile question. But Lenihan thinks that "the full magnitude of Collins's achievements" has come to be appreciated in recent times. If would he might have done if he had not thrown himself away at a critical moment is excluded from consideration, what are his achievements?

That he made good use of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the remaking of Sinn Fein in 1917-18.

That he played a part in the setting up of Dail Ministries, despite British military rule in 1919-21.

That he overcame the long-standing scruple in nationalist Ireland against a policy of systematic assassination.

And that from December 1921 to August 1922 he did——what?

That he saved the country from a British reconquest by means of unrestrained terror by submitting to the British ultimatum of 5th December 1921 and intimidated his colleagues in London into doing likewise, and by submitting to a series of follow-up ultimatums in 1922, until he found himself making war with British armaments on the Republican Army which had obliged the Empire to concede Dominion status?

If the matter of what Collins did in the last nine months of his life was set out realistically, in its actual historical context, it could be thought about. But a Cambridge graduate is not the man to do that. Britain would find it too offensive.

Lenihan commended the part played in "the healing process on our island... by the work of modern historians... like Peter Hart" by showing that "alongside great

*patriotism and self-sacrifice terrible deeds were done on all sides during the War of Independent and the Civil War". We must confess to terrible things in order to be healed. And Hart must be forgiven the historical fraud in which he engaged because it was a pious fraud designed to help us to feel guilty?*

War might be a terrible thing, but it is also the most common thing in human history. The setting aside of an election, which is what led to Our War, is also a terrible thing—more terrible than war because of when it was done and who did it. It was done by the Mother of Parliaments two months after it had caused ten million people to die in the Great War to establish democracy and the rights of small nations as part of the new order of the world. The world was waiting to see what Britain's *New World Order* would look like. It saw it in Ireland.

Collins is praised for his part in "the work of the revolutionary government".

Lenihan means the Constitutional Government, set up by the democratic election in accordance with the New Order of the world proclaimed by Britain for the raising of cannonfodder, and instantly repudiated by it *de facto* when it won the Great War.

But it is natural for a Cambridge graduate to understand that being Constitutional means doing what Britain wants you to do and that doing what it does not want you to do is revolutionary—no matter how democratic and orderly it might be.

[*Béal an* means 'mouth of'.

Lenihan's speech can be read in full on the Dept. of Finance website.]

**The Anglo-Irish War** by *General Sean MacEoin, Tom Barry, et al.* Extracts from *The Red Path Of Glory, With The IRA In The Fight For Freedom, 1919 to the Truce.*

Introduction, *Brendan Clifford.* 196pp. €12, £9.99

**Myths From Easter 1916,** by *Eoin Neeson.*

€20, £15.

**Review: *The Bankers* by Shane Ross**

## Corrupt Ireland?

This book gives a quick review of recent events in the Irish banking system. While the book is not without interest there is no sense of historical perspective or any attempt to place this country's problems in an international context. Like many journalists he starts from the proposition that this country is irredeemably corrupt and then proceeds to gather the evidence for the prosecution.

He begins his story in the 1970s. The reader gathers that there was wrong doing in the financial system even then. Ross gives the example of Ken Bates—later famous for selling Chelsea Football Club to a Russian oligarch—setting up a bank which later went bust. Then there was the case of Joe Moore and the PMPA; not forgetting Patrick Gallagher. These are very different cases but the author tries to tie them together to advance his theme of Irish corruption and weak regulation.

In the early part of the book he talks about Irish building societies. Irish people put their money into Building Societies because, unlike the banks, they guaranteed confidentiality and were therefore a means of evading tax. This reviewer suspects that this phenomenon is typical of a small country with limited investment opportunities. In the past the surplus value extracted by the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy was invested abroad. There must have been a feeling

among the political establishment that at least the money was remaining in the country. But Shane Ross only sees corruption.

Other examples of 'corruption' were the exorbitant salaries that the likes of the Farrell family extracted from Irish Permanent. This was not untypical of such institutions. Since there was no ownership, and therefore no remuneration through the ownership of shares, the only means by which senior executives could extract money was through high salaries. (Readers, who have read my book on *The Irish Times* will remember that the absence of share ownership in that institution meant that the dominant person—the MI5 operative, Major McDowell—could only extract money through an exorbitant salary and routing personal expenses through the company).

But again Ross sees the wealth of the Farrell family as more evidence of the corruption in Irish Life.

In the 1980s the Government introduced the Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT). This taxed all interest at the standard rate and obliged financial institutions (including the Building Societies) to collect tax on behalf of the Government.

This reduced the competitive advantage of the building societies and some of them



such as Irish Permanent and First Active went public (i.e. floated on the Stock Exchange). Since nobody owned a building society the bonanza in the form of shares went to the deposit holders and borrowers.

The deposits were brought into the tax regime. However, when they were brought within the banking system, the banks thought of a new scam. This was to register them as offshore deposits which exempted them from DIRT. As soon as one door was closed, a window was opened.

But again this scam was exposed and the banks had to pay the tax. One could look at this as progress, but to Ross it is only more grist to his corruption mill.

Ross accuses Fianna Fáil of dragging its feet on withdrawing property reliefs, which is interesting because this reviewer does not remember the *Sunday Independent* being opposed to such reliefs. The author is coy about that newspaper's campaign to abolish Stamp Duty before the 2007 General Election. He was and remains its Business Editor.

In all of this, Brian Cowen is portrayed as the villain of the piece, but Ross admits grudgingly that most of the reliefs were withdrawn by Cowen in 2006, a year before the following year's General Election.

Cowen's predecessor as Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, gets a clean bill of health. There is no mention of the latter's role in prolonging such property reliefs. Ross thinks he was shafted because of his policy of cutting public expenditure. Well that's one way of looking at it. Another is that McCreevy was a Fianna Failer more in tune with the Progressive Democrats and that Fianna Fáil wished to move towards a more social orientation.

Ross indicts Fianna Fáil, the Irish Banks, and Estate Agents before he has gathered the evidence, but in fairness to him he presents enough evidence for the reader to make up his own mind. Very understandably, Anglo Irish Bank comes in for special treatment. But if the reader was expecting a long litany of crimes and misdemeanours he will be disappointed. About the only incidence of "corruption" in Anglo's early period was a former English owner of 20% of the company who was convicted of Insider Trading in the UK. Ross records gleefully the embarrassment this caused but admits that the Anglo management was quick to buy out this person's shareholding and remove his directorship.

Anglo certainly ruffled feathers and upset the two major banks. Surely this was something that Ross could applaud, but the author was never a fan of Fitzpatrick's bank. The bank won market share by targeting medium-sized businesses with capital requirements. Its turnaround time for loans was often within 24 hours while its competitors took weeks. As a consequence it was able to charge its customers higher interest rates, which compensated for the greater risk taken on. It had a lower cost base than its competitors because it did not have a branch network. Another selling point was that it was open for business at lunchtime.

In short, up until the beginning of this century it was a dynamic and reputable bank largely servicing businesses and individuals of high net worth. It certainly was not a "developers' bank". The author mentions that its treasury function represented 25% of its business in 2004.

Ross suggests all this changed following the appointment of David Drumm, who succeeded Sean FitzPatrick as Chief Executive. Of course, if it changed into a disreputable bank with this appointment, what the bank was before must have been less than disreputable.

Ross gives his impressions of what happened. There is not much evidence to support his contentions, but this does not mean that they are wrong. The author thinks that the problem with Drumm was not so much Drumm himself but the effect his appointment had on Senior Management. Most of the candidates, including Drumm were in their late thirties/early forties. When Drumm was appointed his rivals could not see any prospects for promotion in the organisation since the new CEO had over twenty years to go for retirement.

Drumm was a surprise appointment. With the departure of his rivals, the senior management team had been weakened. As a result Drumm, became dependent on his predecessor Sean FitzPatrick, who had retained the position of Chairman. So Fitz Patrick's retirement as CEO increased rather than diminished his influence over the bank. And there was nobody in the bank with the strength of character to resist FitzPatrick's growing penchant for lending to developers.

It is an interesting theory. But one wonders whether the rivals would have made a better fist of the bank. For example, the heir apparent to FitzPatrick, Tiarnan O'Mahony, set up a boutique bank which managed to lose an Irish corporate record in 2007 of 850 million euro before going

bankrupt. The phrase 'fair weather manager' comes to mind. Taking risks during times of prosperity can result in greater profits than one's rivals, but the same strategy during a recession can result in catastrophic losses. Ross's great friend, the soccer pundit Eamon Dunphy, might say that they were "sunshine boys" in contrast to the "great" footballer who knows that there is a time to take risks just as there is time to "put the foot on the ball" and take the sting out of the opposition when the game is going against him.

The conventional wisdom—propagated by Ross among others—is that Anglo was a rogue bank; its recklessness forced its competitors to follow it into the mire, to avoid losing market share. This is certainly true, but in my view is not the full story. There is at least as strong a case for the proposition that it was the entry of the British Banks which drove the banking system in Ireland towards the abyss.

Ross describes the entry of Bank of Scotland into the Irish market. It introduced lower mortgage rates and 100% mortgages. While the established banks could tolerate the likes of Anglo nibbling at their bums, the entry of one of the largest banks in the UK with its deep pockets was a threat that could not be ignored.

Without any sense of self-reflection the author recalls that his newspaper, the *Sunday Independent*, had given this bank the accolade of Business of the Year. Ross mentions in passing that the bankrupt property developer, Liam Carroll, owed the banks 1.2 billion euro. The largest creditor was AIB with a loan of 489 million, followed by Bank of Scotland with a loan of 321 million. The amount owed to Anglo was a trifling 38 million. Elsewhere he says that Bank of Scotland tied up a "1 billion securitisation agreement with Liam Carroll on the Cherrywood site on the south side of Dublin". This appears to mean that, if the debt was not repaid, Bank of Scotland would take ownership of Carroll's business. But, since Carroll, as we have seen, is bankrupt the bulk (if not all) of this loan will probably need to be written off.

The trials and tribulations of Bank of Scotland's operation in Ireland do not end there. Ross says that the "bank funded much of the €288 million Burlington Hotel deal with Bernard McNamara". McNamara, of course, is another developer who is bankrupt.

Bank of Scotland was a new entrant to the market and therefore the bulk of its loans were lent at the height of the market.

Ross also gives this interesting piece of information:

"Bank of Scotland's property lending now {i.e. end of 2007—JM} stood at over 16 billion euro, nearly eleven times its exposure in 2001. More than half of this was lent to developers".

Ross goes on to say that, since it came late to the game, it had lent at the top of the property market. He then says without any comment that it lost 250 million euro. Now it is extremely doubtful that this represents the true figure since many of the loans of the British banks were consolidated in their parent companies' books to take advantage of that country's bail out of the banks.

If it is considered that Bank of Scotland's property loan book of 16 billion was just under a quarter of Anglo's *total* loan book, it would seem reasonable to assume that Bank of Scotland's losses were also at least about one quarter of Anglo's losses—which amounted to 13 billion in 2009 and another 8 billion for the first six months of 2010.

This reviewer reckons that the real extent of Bank of Scotland's losses was closer to 5 billion over the last couple of years.

But how does Ross explain the poor performance of the *Sunday Independent's* business of the year? Apparently, the bank had "*gone native*". Unfortunately, he has to admit that its parent company in the UK was also a reckless property lender. Could it also have "*gone native*" before entering the Irish market?!

In my opinion Ross gives a very superficial treatment of the night the bank guarantee was decided upon in September 2008. It is taken as read that this was an example of politicians capitulating to the interests of bankers. There is no concept of there being a national interest involved: the prevention of a collapse of the banking system in Ireland. Neither does Ross consider any alternative response to the crisis.

He tries to tie in banking and property interests with Fianna Fail, but is less than convincing. Apparently, the banks, if anything were more sympathetic to Fine Gael. None of the banks were big contributors to any of the political parties. Ross then resorts to claiming that they exerted their political influence through IBEC and the Irish Banking Federation.

As regards the property developers, Ross adduces very little evidence of a close relationship with Fianna Fail. Most of them appear to have been "*pro*

*Government*". If there was a change of Government they would have been happy to lobby Fine Gael or Labour.

In conclusion, this book is certainly worth reading, despite coming from a particular political and cultural perspective. The book's merit is that Ross provides enough information to enable the reader to make up his own mind.

***Irish Times: Past And Present***, a record of the journal since 1859,  
by John Martin.

€20, £15.

## Report

### Sean Lester:

#### *Gageby Gagged By Madam*

On 31st July, under the heading of "*The Fighting Irish*", the *Weekend Irish Times* published what in effect was an extensive recruiting feature for the British Army, introduced as follows:

"With little 'excitement' on offer in the Irish Army, young Irishmen are queuing up to join British regiments. Next month, hundreds of them will go to war in Afghanistan. London Editor Mark Hennessy meets the Irish soldiers who have enlisted in the British Army."

Hennessy proceeded to quote one of them as contemptuously pronouncing: "*Guys in the Irish Army are getting bored and fat and lazy*".

On 3rd August a protest from the former Moscow correspondent of that paper read:

"Madam: The provision of a platform for a British squaddie to denigrate the Defence Forces as 'fat' and 'lazy' suggests that a significant part of *The Irish Times's* recent heritage may have been mislaid in the move to Tara Street. To paraphrase Yeats: The ghost of Gageby is beating on the door. **Seamus Martin.**"

Former *Irish Times* editor Douglas Gageby had served in Irish Army Intelligence during World War Two, and Martin was drawing on Yeats's poem on Casement to summon up his ghost. Mary Maher's contribution to *Bright, Brilliant Days*—Andrew Whittaker's book on Gageby—tells us how such a ghost might have responded to Madam's Weekend:

"There was the [senior staff] conference ... at which someone suggested we should expose the inadequacies of the Garda training system, with the comment that all they learned was how to shine their buttons. ... On this particular day, someone piped up to remark that when he was in the RAF, the squaddies had special buttons that didn't need to be shined. Douglas Gageby peered up over his glasses and said in his drawling ironic tone: '*Is that so ... when you were in the RAF you didn't have to shine your buttons. Wasn't it well for you—you fucking traitor.*' Tolerating fools, even momentary fools, was not his strong point, quite apart from the fact that any whiff of West

Britism brought on thundering wrath."

But Madam treats her predecessor editor with contempt in more ways than one. An *Irish Times* profile on 27th August of Gageby's father-in-law, Seán Lester, portrayed him as having had only one role to play in Irish history, that of an anti-Republican Civil War partisan: "*As a 'Free Stater' he was invited to join the Department of External Affairs in 1922.*" I immediately emailed a protest that same day, drawing on Gageby's own portrayal of Lester. It is not so much me, therefore, as Gageby himself whom Madam wishes to silence in denying publication to the following letter:

#### Seán Lester and Irish Independence

Madam: To choose "a Free Stater" as the only political label to attach to the last Secretary-General of the League of Nations, Seán Lester, is to render him a distinct disservice. He was as committed an Irish Republican as he was a professing Protestant. A Sinn Féiner and Irish Volunteer, Lester was also, even more significantly, a sworn member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. He no more viewed the Free State as an end in itself than did his IRB President, Michael Collins, but rather as a 'Stepping Stone' to a fully independent Republic.

"In the *Irish Times* of 8th May 1985, under the heading of 'A Question of Irish Independence', your then editor, Douglas Gageby, published a memo written by Lester, his own father-in-law, on March 16, 1944. Lester gave the following reason why Dev had no other option but to reject the 'American Note' demanding closure of the German and Japanese legations, a rejection that would have been impossible had not Dev previously gone on to break free from the shackles of the Treaty:

"It was not a question of a German Legation but of Irish independence... Her independence had been won by much sacrifice and suffering after a struggle lasting longer than that of Poland... It was only 20 years ago ... that the Black and Tans were let loose to ravage the country... One remembers the shooting or hanging of hostages, the burnings... There were many cases (of which I personally saw some evidence) of torture and flogging. But the 'maquis' in Ireland and the leaders of the 'résistance movement' were blandly described in the British Parliament by the British Prime Minister as 'a murder gang' to justify the measures of repression against an ancient nation struggling for its freedom."

"In your issue of 23rd September 1999, the then former editor gave as one of the main reasons for going on to write a biography of his father-in-law: "*He also wants to stress the political blurring between pro and anti-Treaty sides which is central to Irish politics and is so often overlooked.*" Douglas Gageby, no less than Seán Lester himself, is worthy of profound respect in that regard. **Manus O'Riordan "**

**Manus O'Riordan**

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## THE BOND MARKET

The Long Fellow likes to think that his 'word is his bond'. But whatever about his word, it appears that a bond is not what it used to be.

David McWilliams, Brian Lucey and Fintan O'Toole think that a bond is a very insubstantial thing. Apparently, the type of person who invests in bonds could just as easily have put all his money on a horse at the 3.30 in Leopardstown. As such, if it was explained to him that he was not going to be repaid, he would shrug his shoulders, light up his cigar, take a stiff brandy and 'move on'.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Bond holders are not much different to deposit holders. They are risk averse. The bonds that Anglo Irish Bank and the State issue have a fixed coupon (interest rate), maturity date and principal. It is true that once a bond is issued it is traded in the market place just like shares. This aspect of capitalism is sometimes called "*casino capitalism*". However, no less an economist than John Maynard Keynes believed that investors would not be persuaded to part with their capital unless they had the possibility of redeeming it for cash in the short term.

The Bond market and the Stock Market provide liquidity for long term investments.

The price of bonds moves in inverse proportion to the interest rate. However, another factor that has become significant for both Anglo bonds, and indeed for those of the Irish State, has been the risk of default. Bond holders are demanding a premium or greater interest rate to compensate them for this risk.

The relationship that bond traders have with each other is one thing, but the relationship that they have with the issuer of bonds (e.g. Anglo or the Irish State) is quite another. The bond holder is legally entitled to the principal and interest due on maturity. If the issuer of the bonds cannot pay, that is a very serious matter. In the case of a company like Anglo Irish bank, the bond holder would be entitled to put the company into liquidation. Last month this column explained the consequences of that; the most serious being the immediate crystallization of liabilities. In other words there would have been an immediate requirement to pay customer

and bank deposits amounting to over 56 billion euros, far more than the 25 billion that the State has already committed.

## IRREVOCABLE GUARANTEE

Of course, the fact that Anglo is 100% State owned has implications beyond the bank itself. Any default by Anglo can be interpreted as a sovereign default. Also, since most of the liabilities are covered by an irrevocable Guarantee from the State, such a default would in fact be a sovereign default.

In an article in *The Irish Times* (2.9.10) TCD economist Brian Lucey advocated a default by Anglo of its debts to bond holders. These amount to "only" about 17 billion (2.5 billion subordinate debt and 14.5 billion senior debt). This is a much smaller amount than the deposits (56 billion) but Lucey does not, for reasons known only to himself, advocate reneging on this debt.

The difficulty with Lucey's proposal is that all but about 4.5 billion of the bond holders' debt is covered by an irrevocable Guarantee. Incredibly, Lucey claimed that the Guarantee could be revoked by legislation. In a subsequent discussion on the *irisheconomy.ie* website he admitted that this was not in fact the case. Unfortunately, like his "*deposit selling moment*" in the *Irish Independent* (see August *Irish Political Review*) no correction is likely to appear in *The Irish Times*.

## A SOVEREIGN DEFAULT

A sovereign default would close off borrowing on the international market for years. This would be a sudden dramatic shock to this economy. In the case of Argentina, she only returned to the international bond markets 8 years after her default and then she could only borrow at very high interest rates. However, Argentina's debt situation was far worse than that of this country. Before her default she had actually a small "*primary current budget surplus*" (i.e. the State's current debt before interest payments). Her current debt consisted purely of interest payments which continued to be heaped on her accumulated national debt while impoverishing the economy. In such circumstances a default loosened the noose around the economy's neck and actually provided a stimulus to the economy.

Ireland is very far from this situation. Interest payments as a percentage of GNP are 3.4% of GNP this year. This figure is set to rise to 4.9% by 2014, which is still well below the corresponding figure for 1990 which was 8.4% and 1997 (5.3%).

But perhaps the technical details are

unimportant. As Marx noted in *Das Kapital*, in the final analysis politics precedes economics. The most significant part of Lucey's article was the final paragraph in which he concluded:

"It is time to seek to place ourselves in the hands of people who can run the State effectively—and in the long-term interests of the citizens. Political or indeed national pride should not stand in the way of this."

The real political division in this country is between those who believe that the political system is capable of dealing with our economic crisis in a competent fashion and those who don't.

Professor Lucey's position is basically that the State has failed and is incapable of solving its economic problems. His position is ideological or prior to the facts. Lucey can take a rather cavalier attitude to reneging on the Bank Guarantee—in effect a sovereign default—because he believes that the sovereign or State is worthless in any case.

## ECONOMIC RECOVERY?

The Long Fellow remains confident that the State is capable of resolving the economic crisis. There are signs of economic recovery this year. Manufacturing output has increased by 9.4% in 2010. The current budget deficit is likely to come in on target and the balance of payments looks like it will return to a surplus this year. The unemployment rate at just below 14% is too high but at least it has stabilised. There will be modest growth in GDP (about 1%) this year followed by about 2.5% growth in 2011.

There are even grounds for optimism on the banks. Allied Irish Banks sold its share in its Polish subsidiaries for 3.1 billion. *The Irish Times's* headline on this story was: "*Forced sale of Polish bank boosts AIB cash by 2.5 billion*". This gives the false impression that it was sold for that amount at a fire sale price. Nowhere is it mentioned in this report by Simon Carswell that AIB actually made a profit of 1.7 billion on the transaction.

## IRISHECONOMY.IE AND THE BANKS

It is almost a waste of time reading *Irish Times* business reports, especially since the excellent *irisheconomy.ie* website is available. The Long Fellow is critical of some of the academic contributors to this site, who he considers to be negative. But at least it is a reliable forum which brings together people of varying expertise to correct many of the misconceptions perpetuated in the mainstream media.

Thanks to one commentator on the site, viewers were given an early insight into

the restructuring of Anglo Irish Bank.

The new scheme is a wind down without the disadvantages. The bank will be divided into two entities: an Asset Recovery Bank (ARB) and a Funding Bank (FB). The post-NAMA loans (i.e. the bank's assets or loans remaining after the NAMA transfer) will be kept in the ARB. This structure will enable the bank to realise the loan assets without the necessity of a fire sale (which would be the case if a creditor put the bank in to liquidation). The scheme also avoids another disadvantage of a wind-down: namely the crystallisation of liabilities.

The old bank's liabilities will be split. The customer deposits will go into the FB and all other liabilities will be in the ARB.

It may be significant that the depositors and bond holders are in separate entities. The depositors are covered by NAMA bonds which have a determined value. The bond holders, by contrast, are in an entity which has assets (the post-NAMA loan book) of uncertain value. It looks like the Government intends to pay the depositors in full but the bond holders' position is less secure. Anglo's subordinated debt is trading at a massive discount of more than 70%. The senior debt is trading at a discount of 10%. The Government may buy back this debt in the market place. It already made a profit of 1.6 billion on buy-backs of subordinate debt last year. More buybacks will bring significant savings without the financial consequences of a sovereign default.

In conclusion, the new structure is an ingenious initiative which will minimize losses and hopefully end the uncertainty surrounding Anglo Irish Bank.

#### **BRIAN LENIHAN IN BÉAL NA mBLATH**

The Béal na mBlath Committee to commemorate the death of Michael Collins showed imagination and courage this year by inviting Brian Lenihan to be the keynote speaker.

Lenihan arrived about 20 minutes before the appointed time. At around the same time a bus arrived with the Dublin West branch of the Fianna Fail Party. This was an impressive show of force on a day when there was the considerable distraction of the Cork-Dublin football match in Croke Park.

At about fifty yards from the podium Lenihan posed for photographs with members of the Collins family. He then took his place behind a pipe band and walked slowly to the podium where he was applauded by the audience.

The ceremonies began with decade of the rosary and a laying of a wreath. Dermot Collins (a Fine Gael councillor) made a

strong speech warmly welcoming Lenihan and complimenting the latter for his patriotism in overcoming personal circumstances to continue serving the country.

Lenihan's speech was quite interesting. He compared the challenges that Collins had as Minister for Finance with his own, but suggested that they were completely different in kind. He said that Collins devised an accounting system for the various department of State while on the run from the British. He then said that he was very glad he did and it was a great help to his successors. This brought a chuckle from the audience. He also said that his office had a portrait of all the Ministers for Finance since the beginning of the State. He noted that Collins was not the first Minister for Finance. That honour belonged to Eoin McNeill who served under the first Dail. He added that although Collins might not have been the first he was by some distance the best looking!

Lenihan tried to compare Collins with other Irish historical figures such as O'Connell, Parnell and de Valera, but admitted that this was a difficult task because Collins's life was cut short. At 31 a man's public personality has not been fully formed. Nevertheless Collins made a great contribution to the War of Independence and the building of the State.

He went on to speculate on what contribution Collins would have made. He suggested that a party he might have led could have pre-empted the Fianna Fáil party. He then wondered what his relationship would have been with de Valera. Praising and honouring Collins does not imply denigration of de Valera. Both men had contributed in different ways with their very different personalities. The Civil War divisions were more fluid than many people realised. His grandfather Paddy Lenihan, a Fianna Fail TD, fought on the pro-Treaty side and was prepared to follow Collins with his plans of invasion of the North. His grandfather discouraged the same course of action in 1969. The Long Fellow winced when Brian Lenihan talked about reconciliation and the wrongs that were committed on both sides as described by historians such as Peter Hart and T. Ryle Dwyer.

The middle of the speech talked of current concerns and was a defence of the Government's record; its policy on the banks; and the economy in general. It assured his audience that exports were increasing and the economy was recovering. The Irish people had shown their resilience.

It concluded by praising Collins's patriotism and affirming that he belonged

to all the Irish people.

Helen Collins, a grand niece of Michael Collins, gave a speech warmly welcoming Lenihan. It appears that it was on her initiative that the Minister for Finance was invited.

Lenihan showed no sign of his recent health scare. More than an hour after the ceremony he was still pressing the flesh and posing for photographs. It appeared that he was drawing strength from this public engagement. A woman remarked that a Fine Gael speaker would have left immediately after the speech. She was also impressed by Fianna Fail's ability to muster its troops.

On the evidence of this event it is far too soon to write off Fianna Fail.

#### **Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed Al-Megrahi**

Someone shouts: That's him!  
Someone whispers: Go with them  
or they'll bomb our kith and kin.

Green flags flutter,  
the aircraft warms up,  
one small bag, and a shudder.  
The door shuts.

To that flat country  
that creates  
mountains of justice  
for the victors.

In the embrace of the boa-constrictor.  
Swallowed, out of sight,  
the law a mere burp-bicker.

Freed with the key  
to death's door.  
Three months scot-free.

Someone shouts:  
Die!  
Die, you have no clout.  
Put it in the lock,  
step into the dark,  
you can't cheat the clock.  
Die!  
Is death not your trademark.

But he lives,  
this sacrificial victim,  
lives, despite the discursive.

Someone warns:  
Don't celebrate his living,  
his year overdrawn.

The world against him violent.  
Those who know better,  
silent,  
tightening the fetters.

And what then when he expires.  
Will the great lie also be buried,  
with a stake in its heart as a vampire.

**Wilson John Haire**  
27th August, 2010

## A No-Go Area For Fianna Fail?

What Northern Ireland always needed was normal politics, i.e., the people of the area participating in the government of their lives, being able to vote for and against their Governments via their political parties. That was denied them by the British Government since 1920 and they were left to stew in their own communal juices with one communal group allowed to lord it over the other. It was a recipe for trouble. Now, after the war, the communal conflict has been declared a draw and a political concoction created that equalises them as communal groupings. But the people still don't and can't participate in deciding on their Government. There has been a pathetic opportunist effort by both the British Tory Party and the Ulster Unionist Party to hitch themselves together and thankfully the concoction eliminated itself from Westminster at the last Election. There is no prospect of any UK governing party breaking free of the communal divide and standing in its own right.

As the Government of the Republic is party to the current arrangements in the North, and in effect co-working with the Government there—the British Government—it would seem logical and natural that it would have an interest in promoting normal politics there via its political party, Fianna Fail. It has everything going for it, having large support there, being totally constitutional and doing all in its power, to the point of self-abasement, to make itself congenial to Unionists. Whatever else can be said about FF it is a political party of government for better or worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health till death doth part it from its electorate. It would be an ideal instrument to help bring normal politics to the North. In fact, it's a pity it's not an exportable commodity overseas but it is surely exportable across the border.

How then can one explain Junior Minister Martin Mansergh's statements at the McCluskey Civil Rights Summer School when he said:

"The political advantage of being an all-Ireland party is debatable, given the differences in conditions and roles north and south of the border... There has often been felt to be a space north of the border for an unapologetic constitutional republicanism. While FF has acknowledged formally in a number of ways the existence of political support for it north of the border, it is difficult for a government, co-sponsor of an only recently bedded

down peace process to enter into electoral competition without creating a conflict of interest. Opposition parties are under no such constraints." (Irish News, 30 August 2010).

Maybe I misunderstood all that that has been claimed in recent years but I thought "*the differences in conditions*" were lessening rather than increasing between north and south, and all sorts of reconciliation and peace processes were facilitating this reduction in differences. And Mr Mansergh has often lectured us about the virtues of constitutional politics as opposed to any other. Otherwise, what is the point of the peace process and all that? And, as the constitutional conditions are getting better and more conducive to normality, as we are told, why is the prospect for a new form of constitutional politics getting more problematic? I am baffled.

Mr. Mansergh is the proclaimed expert on the North and one would therefore expect him to relish more engagement there to facilitate more reconciliation, more constitutional politics, harmony etc. In fact he should be the leading advocate of Fianna Fail in the North—if one was to believe all that's said by him and about him.

His argument that there is some conflict of interest is patently absurd as the other "*government co-sponsor*" showed no evidence of seeing such a conflict when engaging as fully as it could in Northern Ireland in the last election. It never occurred to Mr. Cameron that there was such a conflict and Mr. Mansergh should really spell out where it is written that such is the case. His Northern members would be particularly interested in such an explanation.

Mr. Mansergh has one certain guide in politics, to be his Master's Voice, whoever he/she is and he is as attentive to it as the dog in the well known advert. And this is his role as regards the North. Cowen's body language alone speaks volumes on the subject and Mansergh's job is to dream up any old rubbishy argument to steer clear of it and wash their hands of it as much as possible.

He has developed a version of Fukuyama's 'end of history' attitude to Northern Ireland. It's all over and we can now sit back and forget it. But look what happened to Fukuyama. He had to revise his theory within a couple of years of enunciating it,

when wars and conflicts emerged that show no sign whatever of ending. Instead of ending, History got a whole new beginning!

The Northern Ireland set-up is an experiment in containing communal conflict. There are several conflicts now raging in the world that were contained for decades, even generations. Some had very attractive and normal-seeming political arrangements. Yet...

Mr. Mansergh evidently believes the N Ireland bedding down would be harmed by the establishing of one of the oldest and most experienced constitutional political parties in Europe. This would indicate we have a very delicate flower indeed. The communal strife is frozen at the moment but it is still there, like two glaciers grinding away. Will one melt or will one be ground down? Nobody knows but one thing is certain—if there is no political outlet for both into normal politics they will remain frozen but, as with glaciers, they will also keep on moving relentlessly and the direction cannot be predicted for sure. But one thing is certain, Mr Mansergh is helping perpetuate the glaciers without giving them any purposeful direction. That is a callous and irresponsible position despite all the soothing words that emanate regularly from him at regular intervals.

**Jack Lane**

### **Mr. Blair clarifies the issue that defines him—the war in Iraq**

Another smooth talker was interviewed during his book promotion in Ireland.

Tony Blair was asked whether: "*his argument that Saddam posed a threat to the world and to his own people a thin one?*" He responded: "*The only point I make is if we left Saddam there, there would have been consequences, particularly in the light of what we know now*".

The argument continued:

"What consequences?"

"There are two arguments about Saddam.

One argument I would share is that he would have ended up as a renewed threat and a competitor to Iran. The other view is that he would have slipped into obscure old age. I doubt, with his two sons, that that would have happened" (The Irish Times, September 4, 2010).

Blair's secret weapon is that he knows the future. His book will be a best seller with people who like to share such knowledge.

Saddam would have been a threat in the future and a competitor with Iran! They were enemies who fought a protracted war with each other, with Saddam on the side of the West. Were the two countries going to change course completely and go into competition in threatening the West? Saddam never did so and he would have been on the West's side again if Iran threatened. But most likely he and Iran as 'competitors' would have had another war between them and

both would be very much weaker as a result. So where would the threat be then? It is sheer fantasy whatever way one looks at it.

Blair also 'knows' that, despite all this, Saddam's sons would have continued his non-existent policies of threatening the West and they would be allowed to do so by Iranians! It's just as well Saddam had no grandsons or Mr.

Blair would be putting them forward as a future threat that needed dealing with. This fantasy world need never end. By this logic, surely Osama's children and many siblings could be as potential a threat as he is to the West? Why are they not hunted down to make us all sleep safer in our beds?

JL

**Report of Launch of An Argument Defending The Right Of The Kingdom Of Ireland (1645) by Conor O'Mahony in Kanturk, 27 August 2010**

## A Discussion On The 1640s

The 1640s came to life in Kanturk on August 27th last. In the pleasant atmosphere of Féile Dúthalla I introduced my translation of the *Argument Defending The Right Of The Kingdom Of Ireland* (1645) by the Lisbon-based Jesuit Conor O'Mahony, and a lively discussion followed, with some fascinating issues raised. To begin with, I gave reasons why I thought O'Mahony's book should be interesting (apart from the fact that he was *almost* a local man: he came from the adjoining region of Muskerry, probably from one of those parishes a few miles south of Macroom—Moviddy, Kilmichael, Kilmurry).

For a start, this was the first book written in favour of Irish independence. It is true that many poets had called for expulsion of the English (old and new), and at different times serious plans had been made for transferring the sovereignty of Ireland to princes of Scotland or kings of Spain. But this was the first time anyone had published a systematically-reasoned case in favour of Ireland having its own national monarchy on the same basis as England, Scotland, France, Spain and Portugal. For all who are interested in the history of Ireland, the arguments given are bound to be worth looking at.

Secondly, O'Mahony's book gives a focal point in the politics of that period. It is one possible way of access to the 1640s, the most fascinating decade in Irish history. At that time seven or eight armies were active on the island in a dizzyingly complex political situation that was argued about in three languages (until eventually the Cromwellians managed to impose their simplification).

I then outlined the structure of O'Mahony's book. First he gives a sketch of Irish history to the coming of the Normans: he claims that the details will not be disputed between the English and Irish (which is fair enough, since he has taken his account from the leading Norman writer on Irish affairs). The important point is that there were about 190 native

kings of Ireland prior to the English conquest.

He then presents the four main arguments used to justify the conquest:

- (1) King Henry II occupied Ireland in a just war.
- (2) Pope Adrian IV donated Ireland to the king of England.
- (3) The Irish lords, clergy and people accepted the conquest.
- (4) The English conquest was a thoroughly-established fact, having existed for many centuries, and must therefore be accepted—this is what is called "*the right of prescription*".

O'Mahony takes these arguments one by one and gives his reasons why they are not valid. He then says that, even if all four of those arguments were valid, the Irish would still be justified in rejecting English sovereignty now that the Kings of England had become heretics and were attempting to promote heresy in Ireland.

The book ends with a *Call to Action*, where the author urges the Catholic Irish to choose one of their own leaders as king. He recommends as examples the Catalans and the Portuguese, who in the course of the last decade had shaken off the rule of the Kings of Spain and restored their own national monarchies.

Finally, I said something about the political context in 1646-7, when O'Mahony's *Argument* appeared in Ireland. Following the rebellion that was launched in Ulster in late 1641, which spread through the whole island during the following months, an all-Ireland Catholic political movement was set up in Kilkenny in May 1642. This was the Kilkenny Confederation, which I thought was an amazing, almost incredible, achievement. All members of the Confederation were committed by oath to fight for three aims:

- (1) freedom of the Catholic religion,
- (2) the legitimate rights of King Charles, and
- (3) the liberties (or immunities) of the Irish nation.

Their unity broke down in 1646, because the Confederation's Supreme Council signed a peace which only took serious account of the second of those aims. This peace was signed with the Marquis of Ormond, King Charles's Viceroy in Ireland and leader of the Irish Protestant Royalists.

So far as Catholic rights were concerned, what this peace amounted to was "live horse, and you *might* get grass!" It was acknowledged that King Charles was not then in a position to decide such matters freely. If in the future, acting freely, the King decided to make concessions to the Catholics, the Marquis of Ormond pledged that he would not obstruct them. *If.....!*

There was a serious case for saying that the people who signed this peace were in breach of the Confederate Oath, as Pádraigín Haicéad maintained in his poem *Músgail do mhisneach, a Bhanbha* ("Rouse up your courage, Ireland!"). And one could hardly say that there was no alternative, since at that time the Confederate Armies were controlling a great part of Ireland and in very shortly before they had scored important military successes, especially Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill's victory at the battle of Benburb.

Papal Nuncio Rinuccini came forward to lead opposition to the peace treaty. I said that, if Rinuccini hadn't been there, I was sure that the movement would have split over this peace anyway, and maybe even more damagingly—the Bishop of Clogher or somebody else would have come forward to lead the opposition; somebody would have had to. At first Rinuccini seemed to have defeated the peace party very conclusively and established himself as the undisputed leader of Catholic Ireland, but it wasn't as simple as that. Rinuccini proved unable to reestablish a political and military momentum. With his failure (and especially his inability to prevent Dublin being ultimately handed over to the Parliamentarians by the Marquis of Ormond), the pro-Ormond Catholic party made a recovery.

It was in this context that Conor O'Mahony's book made its appearance in Ireland, with its drastic proposal to get rid of English sovereignty entirely. The book no doubt found supporters, and people like Pádraigín Haicéad (who was accused of being an agent of Eoghan Ruadh, working to make Eoghan Ruadh the sovereign of Ireland) may have been inspired by it for a time. But mainly we hear about the book from its enemies, from people in the pro-Ormond faction.

They used it as propaganda against Eoghan Ruadh, saying that he was the King of Ireland whom O'Mahony had in mind and the book was his manifesto. And indeed Eoghan Ruadh *was* the King of Ireland whom O'Mahony was thinking of! That's clear enough from the book. But there wasn't any evidence, so far as I knew, that Eoghan Ruadh considered himself seriously in that role. I thought he must have been as well aware as Hugh O'Neill before him that he wouldn't find sufficient acceptance in that role. O'Mahony had hoped to launch a real bid for kingship, so to that extent his book fell a long way short of his ambitions when writing it, although certainly no one could say it was ignored.

In the discussion questions were raised about what right the Pope thought he had to donate the sovereignty of Ireland. I mentioned that the Popes considered themselves the owners of all islands in the Christian part of the world; this claim is stated plainly in Pope Adrian's bull *Laudabiliter*, which O'Mahony quotes in his book. Doubts were expressed by some members of the audience about the authenticity of this bull: apparently there is no copy in the Vatican archives. There were different opinions on the matter. However, it is clear that O'Mahony accepted the bull as authentic without question.

Richard Behal suggested that no one in Ireland had ever expressed a desire to make the Pope the political arbiter of Ireland. But it was pointed out that Geoffrey Keating has a story about Donnchadh O'Brien, Brian Boru's grandson, taking the sovereignty of Ireland to Rome, because there was such hopeless dissension among the Irish nobility. A couple of the annals also have this story, and even in O'Neill territory in the north it is mentioned (by one of the Ó Gnímh poets, who says that Donnchadh O'Brien had no right to do any such thing).

There was some discussion about how important the Papal donation was, when weighed against other factors. As regards the right of prescription, Nora Hickey raised a serious objection which was first stated by Philip O'Sullivan Beare and which O'Mahony reaffirms in his book: there had never been anything like a thoroughgoing conquest of Ireland until the time of King James.

The question was raised: who would have read O'Mahony's book? I said that O'Mahony was addressing himself first and foremost to the Catholic clergy.

However, Latin was the main literary language of Europe at that time, and anyone who had some education would have known some, e.g. the lawyers, many of the merchants and nobles, etc. And it wasn't necessary to read the whole book, because people were making short summaries, putting together selections of key quotations which came just to two or three pages. I'd seen one of those summaries, which is in Latin; no doubt there were translated summaries too.

Pat Muldowney asked whether the formula arrived at for Europe in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, '*Cuius regio, eius religio*' ('whose region, his religion', i.e. the prince's religion will be official in his territory) could have been a formula for Ireland too, i.e. that a Catholic king of Ireland, with its large Catholic majority, might have won general legitimacy. I didn't understand the question very well at the time, but I think this was among the arguments Irish envoys could have used in order to gain official recognition, if an Irish national monarchy had been established. However, actually establishing it was another matter.

There was some discussion of Eoghan Ruadh, whom Brendan Clifford thought was basically a Spaniard pursuing Spanish interests. I thought he was basically an O'Neill, because he had returned to Ireland when he would have been more useful to the Spanish as a General in Europe, and they weren't very happy about him leaving. However, the Spanish certainly had their fingers in the pie in Ireland; they were trying to manipulate the situation to their best advantage; and Eoghan Ruadh was the closest to them of all the Catholic commanders—how much that meant it's hard to say.

The issue was raised of Eoghan Ruadh's political dealings and alliances with the Cromwellians in 1648-9. My view was that to some extent these had been forced on him: he was very isolated and he was coming under attack from the royalist mainstream. Inchiquin, when he joined the royalist coalition under Ormond in the Summer of 1648, put a lot of effort into harassing Eoghan Ruadh. Bits of Eoghan Ruadh's Army were falling away, and he had a serious problem of supplies, so he made an alliance of convenience. But he also tried to make a more long-term political settlement. Around the time that Inchiquin finally took fright at what the Parliament was doing and came over to the King's side, Eoghan Ruadh seems to have concluded that the King's position was

hopeless, he was finished. So he explored the possibility that the monarchy's successors, calculating the balance of advantage as political realists, might be prepared to make a settlement in Ireland, or at least in Ulster, on the basis of general freedom of religion. Maybe he was too impressed by the Treaty of Westphalia, and how Europe was stepping back from fanaticism—maybe he didn't realize how different the mood was in England.

Brendan Clifford suggested that, if all of the Catholics had come in behind Ormond, they could have held Ireland for King Charles: he would have been forced in effect to be King of Ireland, since he was losing out everywhere else, and they could have got their demands in the end. An argument like this is presented by the very able writer John Callaghan in his *Vindication Of The Catholics Of Ireland*, published in Paris in 1650. (Essentially it is a defence of the political actions of Donough MacCarthy, Viscount Muskerry, the key man behind the signing of the 1646 peace and also the architect of the later pro-Ormond alliance which brought in Inchiquin.) However, Callaghan argues that it wasn't enough to hold Ireland, it was necessary to tip the political/military balance in England, or otherwise Puritan-ruled England would attack Catholic Ireland and destroy it. Callaghan thought it would have been possible for strong Irish Catholic auxiliary forces to have tipped the balance at the time of the Siege of Chester (1645). As for the Catholic demands, he said that King Charles had long ago told Muskerry (in Oxford in the Spring of 1644) that he was ready to grant Catholic rights and he wanted to, but in his present political situation in England he couldn't.

Personally I didn't think that such military adventures in England would have come to a good end. It was necessary to try to hold Ireland. And, for holding Ireland, I thought the important thing was to maintain North-South Catholic unity at all costs. This unity was an extraordinary achievement, and everyone involved should have seen it as precious and no one should have taken it for granted. But in fact, Donough MacCarthy and his supporters on the Confederation Supreme Council signed the 1646 peace over the Ulstermen's heads (as Ó Mealláin says in his war diary). They thought they could take Eoghan Ruadh etc. for granted. And they thought Rinuccini too could be presented with a *fait accompli*, and he wouldn't be able to do anything. They miscalculated badly, and it was this which split the Catholic forces

down the middle.

And it wasn't only the Ulstermen who were disaffected. In the South also there were many people who didn't feel that the Catholics should make a settlement like this, with three Catholic Armies (potentially four, because the Confederate Army of Connacht had a kind of half-existence)—with three Catholic Armies controlling such a large part of Ireland, that a settlement should not be made which made no firm concession of Catholic rights, not to mention guarantees of the holdings etc. of most of those involved in the rebellion. Pierce Ferriter put it memorably in one of his poems: he said it was like the mountain that brought forth a mouse after seven years of labour pains.

Richard Behal then suggested that this was an excellent description of the Northern Peace Process and the Good Friday Agreement: *"the mountain that brought forth a mouse"*. Here we were getting very close to the bone! From the point of view of orthodox Irish Republicanism, there's no doubt that the description fits well. However, I thought that the Good Friday Agreement had merits and justification in its context. It correctly identified nationality as the basis of the problem in the north of Ireland. While leaving the present constitutional status unchanged (in line with the will of the current majority) it left open the possibility of change in the future. In the meantime, anything like a re-emergence of the old Stormont was ruled out and the political representatives of each nationality were obliged to work with those of the other nationality, if they were to have any share in whatever power was locally available. Sinn Fein (or whoever represents Irish nationality) ends up with official respect and standing and various opportunities—and this coming out of a very difficult military and political situation a few years ago.

I think the Irish Catholic position in 1646 was very much stronger, and that it's much more difficult to justify the peace which was signed then. But no doubt about it, Pierce Ferriter's verse when applied to the present has an ominous ring! It's the challenge for Sinn Fein, to show that *"the mountain that brought forth a mouse"* is not what it all amounts to in the end.

**John Minahane**

**An Argument Defending The Right Of The Kingdom Of Ireland (1645)** by *Conor O'Mahony*. First translation from Latin. Introduction, *John Minahane*: Conor O'Mahony, the 1641 Rebellion and the Independence of Ireland. €25, £20.

## Famine or Holocaust—how many died?

Report of a talk given by Jack Lane at Féile Duthalla 2010, on 27 August in Kanturk

It may seem perverse and provocative, or even blasphemous and some sort of invention to use the term *holocaust* in relation to the Famine of 1847-9, but the speaker thought it appropriate in this situation. A holocaust was traditionally a sacrifice by destruction of an animal, person, or a large number of people for a purpose, usually divine. The country at the time was full of food but people starved. An American commentator has said that claiming the Irish starved because of lack of food would be like saying the Jews died of lack of oxygen in WWII.

Describing the Great Hunger as a holocaust was nothing new. It was first described as such at the time by the *Cork Examiner*: *"Each day—each hour produces its own victims—Holocausts offered at the shrine of political economy"* (The Cork Examiner, 22.1.1847). This was a perfectly accurate description of what was happening.

Michael Davitt in *The Fall Of Feudalism* said that *"responsibility... for the holocaust of humanity... must be shared between the political and spiritual governors of the Irish people in those years of measureless national shame"*.

And even the doyen of revisionists, Roy Foster, in the first edition of his *Modern Ireland* repeatedly described what happened as a *holocaust*.

Malthusian views were dominant at the time. Economic progress depended on getting rid of surplus populations.

Trevelyan, the Irish Secretary, described the event perfectly as a holocaust when he said it was an act of Providence that was an *"effectual remedy"* for the problems of Ireland.

The issue Jack Lane concentrated on was the actual population before the Holocaust and how many died. This meant first of all trying to estimate the population figure for Ireland in 1846. This had never been established conclusively—or even come under consideration.

The number of victims was usually presented as 2 million: 1 million starved and 1 million emigrated. This was done by simply taking the 1851 Census figure from the 1841 figure. But this assumed the Census figures to be accurate.

But it was not always easy to count populations accurately. In the UK Census-taking was to be abandoned after 2011 because of its unreliability. How reliable was Census-taking in Ireland in the early 19th century? In fact, any Census-taking at any time in situations where there was widespread alienation between the state

authority and large sections of the population was bound to be fraught with problems and thus suspect as to accuracy.

### 1821 CENSUS

This was, officially, the first proper Census. But it could not be accepted as a reliable census by any standard. The enumerators were drawn from the Ascendancy and the lumpen Ascendancy in particular. They were also predominantly tax-collectors. It did not take much imagination to realise that these types were not likely to be very successful in eliciting information from the mass of a population, who rejected the moral basis of the Ascendancy itself and were literally at war with its members over land, political and social rights, taxes, and the most infamous tax of all—the tithes for the Established Church.

In any society at any time tax collectors should not do this type of work—human nature being what it is.

The accuracy of the Census, or rather its inaccuracy, might be gauged from one pertinent fact—the returns of the enumerators accounted for less than a third of the land area.

Yet that geographically incomplete Census recorded nearly 7 million people—26 years before the potato blight.

An annual rate of growth of at least 1.6% per annum was generally accepted by statisticians as applying to the Ireland of that period. If that figure was accepted, that would give a total population of 12 million by 1846. This figure was credible as there were no disasters in those years that would counter that trend.

### 1841 CENSUS

This was the most important Census of the period. It was always quoted as gospel. Everyone knew of the official figure for the 1841 Census of a total population of 8,173,124.

What was not often noted was that this figure was not even credible to the Census Commissioners themselves. They revised it upwards in the official report, submitted to the Lord Lieutenant in 1843. They added on an extra 572,464 people and gave a new population figure of 8,747,588 which was rarely quoted.

When they had put their figures together for the 1841 Census returns, they noted something very, very odd. These figures meant that the population increase during the ten years of the 1830s was 5.25%, but the increase during the previous decade of the 1820s was 14.5%. Why did the rate decrease so dramatically during the 1830s, even though no factors were known that might have brought about the decline? No satisfactory explanation was given.



## WHY THE 1841 CENSUS WAS WRONG

So why was the 1841 census unreliable? In their report on 1841 the Commissioners unwittingly did give a very good reason as to why the rate and the figures looked so odd and so wrong. They were at great pains to explain that their Census was carried out for the first time by "a highly disciplined body of men", i.e., the Royal Irish Constabulary. This body of men was no doubt accepted as the 'perfect machinery' for the task by the Commissioners. As well as the "very efficient exertions of the constabulary", they also claimed the RIC to have the "general goodwill of the people". This was wishful thinking.

The Commissioners believed the involvement of the RIC was a plus, in fact the key to its accuracy. But anyone who knew anything of the real attitude of the vast majority of the population towards the RIC would appreciate that their involvement meant a distinct disadvantage to any such accuracy.

There were of course many other factors that made the figures questionable—apart from the RIC involvement.

Levels of literacy and language differences were crucial, as the return had to be completed by household heads for the first time. The language difference was a glass ceiling and not mentioned at all as an issue, though the majority of heads of households would not be literate in English. No provision was made for translations.

There was also the fact that the Census was held on a Sunday, which was the day for visiting (rambling or *scoraiocht*), travelling and being anywhere but in your own home. This betrayed the severe Protestant view of the Sabbath held by the Commissioners, as opposed to the weekly diversion of a festival for sport and entertainment as it was regarded by Catholics. Form-filling for the RIC would have been a very low priority for them on that day of all days.

There were other assumptions that militated against accuracy. The census was based on the family—but what was a family in the Irish circumstances of the time? Irish family life was very robust and was so because it was flexible and ambiguous as regards definitions. The census forms were based on the nuclear family. But typically the Irish family was more like a mini-clan than a family.

The *Freeman's Journal* carried reports about the large number of people 'taking to the hills' while the Census was being held, for fear of it being used to question or even arrest them. Ordinary people everywhere were frightened by the very idea of a Census. A Dublin middle class lady, Elizabeth Smith recorded in her diary:

"June 7, Busy filling in the Census

papers which are very complete as to information, the use I don't exactly know, the poor people here are all terrified that they were to have been kidnapped or pressed or murdered on the night of the 6th. Half of them were not to go to bed & had barricaded their doors" (*The Irish Journals of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850*, 1980).

## THE POPULATION REALITY IN 1846

When the blight first appeared and relief efforts were made, it soon became apparent to those on the ground that the accepted population figures were totally misleading and were therefore a positive hindrance to providing real help. Cecil Woodham-Smith has noted:

"How many people died in the famine will never precisely be known. It is almost certain that, owing to geographical difficulties and the unwillingness of the people to be registered, the census of 1841 gave a total smaller than the population in fact was. Officers engaged in relief work put the population as much as 25 per cent higher; landlords distributing relief were horrified when providing, as they imagined, for 60 persons, to find more than 400 'start from the ground.'"

This latter phrase rang very true. In the 1840s in West Clare there was a very conscientious Inspecting Officer called Captain. E. Wynne who sent regular and detailed reports to Dublin castle. On the 5th September 1846 he reported as follows to Thomas Lorcan:

"The census of 1841 being pronounced universally to be no fair criterion of the present population and consequent destitution, I tested the matter in the parish of Clondagad, Barony of Islands, where I found the present population more than a third greater than that of 1841. This I believe to be the case in all the districts along the coast" (Irish National Archives, CSORP.1846.1391).

Wynne's estimate therefore, again, gave a figure of up to 12 million in 1846. However, that assumed the 1841 Census figures were correct, as Wynne did, a very big assumption given what was described above.

## HOW MANY MILLION VICTIMS?

The *Times* newspaper took a close interest in the country and being totally confident in its prejudices could deal with the situation quite bluntly. It could never be accused of exaggerating the tragedy of the situation. Editorially it wrote:

"The workhouses are full and only hold 100,000 while 4,000,000 are starving. The workhouses are mere charnel-houses. In one there is an average mortality of a death an hour, day and night" (15 March 1847, p. 4. col.3).

It also put it more euphemistically in its editorial of 3rd January 1848 when it said that 4 million people had been 'battling with death' in 1847.

The figure of 4 million starving remained

a constant figure for the paper during the whole period. It was not contradicted and was used regularly to embarrass the Irish Parliamentary Party into being grateful for the assistance being given and challenging them to deny it and come up with an alternative. They could not as they were also committed to Free-Trade and Liberalism.

This figure of 4 million was logical, as at least 5 million people were directly dependent on the potato and this was not disputed. Obviously some more millions were indirectly dependent on the potato as it was used as animal feed. And of course there was the massive amount of deaths from a variety of diseases that accompanied the starvation caused by the blight.

What happened to those four million who were starving in March 1847? How many lost the battle with death?

Was it not most likely that the majority and probably all of these 4 million died as, in the middle of 1847, the main official "Famine" relief of the outgoing Conservative Government was ended. The new policy was for events to take their course, and the new Liberal Free Trade Government was quite prepared for the consequences. Even workhouses were allowed to go bankrupt when local rates could not support them. This policy was continued, even though the blight returned for at least two more years in various degrees.

With the clear ideological conviction of the new Liberal Government, this was now a golden opportunity to solve the Irish 'problem' once and for all. The starving and dying consequently increased.

## EMIGRATION?

Also, the starving did not necessarily emigrate. This was usually overlooked. The well-known sculpture in Dublin docks was misleading. Only relatively healthy and well-off people, who had the strength and money to get to a port and purchase ship passage, were likely to survive by emigration. That would have been a small percentage. Steerage fare to Liverpool for one person was ten shillings, two week's or a month's wages—equivalent to, say, one month's subsistence for one person. Survival by this means was not to be expected of starving people who hadn't the resources for a day's subsistence. Fares to the US were ten times that amount. In other words—starving people did not emigrate because they could not, financially or physically.

So what happened to those of *The Times'* starving four million, as estimated in March 1847, and to those added after March '47 who could not emigrate as conditions deteriorated further, plus those who died of disease?

Lane thought the answer was obvious. He thought the figure of those who perished in the Holocaust amounted to 4 million at the very least.

**IPR Reporter**

### GATHERING NO MOSS!

The way the journalists on *Rolling Stone Magazine* investigate matters of huge social/political/military concern is something to behold. It was only with their incredible coverage that the extent of the ongoing BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico became apparent; then there was their huge scoop with General Stanley McChrystal, President Obama's top commander in Afghanistan, who hit out at whom he considered "*the real enemy: the wimps in the White House*". For his courageous and outright views he was brought home and pensioned off, giving more leverage to the viewpoint that Obama's Presidency has become as lame as that of his predecessor and that took some doing!

Such was the shocked reaction to Rolling Stone's coverage on the BP oil spill that Tim Dickinson's story, *The Spill, The Scandal And The President*, effectively shifted the national debate away from BP and focused attention on the "*Obama administration's disastrous oversight of the oil industry*". The story sparked discussion on almost every major news outlet from NBC Nightly News to Al Jazeera. On CNN, James Carville told Anderson Cooper; "*Everybody has got to read this!*" Tina Brown hailed it as "*the most definitive piece yet*". The *Huffington Post* called the story "*devastating*" and urged Obama to fire Ken Salazar. And NPR noted that "*anyone who believes that the so-called liberal media is in thrall to the Obama administration should read the Rolling Stone piece*".

And if anyone is really concerned about the environment and what big oil business is *still intent* on doing to it with the complicity of our Governments, then they should read *Rolling Stone's* double Summer Issue 1108-1109 and just look at the awful photo on page 64 titled *Isle of Doom* which shows a pristine Arctic with an awful looking huge "*land-based*" rig belonging to BP in the wilds of Alaska. And again it is Tim Dickinson who titles his article *BP's Next Disaster*, stating that the oil giant plans to start drilling in the Arctic this Fall—and the Obama administration is doing nothing to stop it.

Joining BP is Shell, which has licences to drill "*a total of 11 exploratory wells in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas above Alaska—waters far more hostile and remote than the Gulf*". The region's untapped waters are believed to hold as much as 27 billion barrels of oil—an

amount that would rival some of the largest oil fields in the Middle East. "*BP is a repeat felon subject to record fines for its wilful safety violations*" and Shell,

"the eighth-largest corporation in the world, has a disturbing record when it comes to the environment: Its operations in Nigeria spilled at least 100,000 barrels of crude alone into the formerly beautiful Niger Delta causing massive damage environmentally and the total destruction of the people's living habitat with death and disease everywhere".

Shell has yet to pay a penny for its blackguarding and even still contests that they are even responsible.

### SHELL AND IRELAND

If the Irish media did a fraction of investigation into what is going on in the Corrib Gas Field that they lavished on poor Ivor Callery or Sean Fitzpatrick then we wouldn't be facing a probable Gulf of Mexico type of scenario. (By the way, to see how Sean was treated by the *Irish Times* during his hey-day read the Business Section of that paper on January 23rd 2004 so *unlike the vindictiveness* of these days!)

In the *Irish Times*, 25th August 2010, on page 2, there was a photo of a *huge gas refinery* building site at Ballinaboy in North Co. Mayo. The story by Lorna Siggins was about '*Objections heard at resumed hearing on Corrib gas project*'. But what was much more interesting for me was that at the end of the article there was a boxed appendix called "*Corrib Gas Consent Timeline*" and starting in 1996 up to 31st May 2010 there was an account of the timeline but with one very interesting detail missing—there was no account of who in Government was overseeing the whole thing or even what Government was in power. So I had to trawl the back editions of the papers and finally I got what information I needed, not in the *Irish Times* but in the *Irish Examiner* of 21st November 2003. There was a very good editorial for that date titled '*Exporting of gas reserves a sell-out*' but there was a much more informative article by a Pdraig Campbell who was named as a spokesman for SIPTU's National Offshore Committee. We were informed that in 1987,

"the then Energy Minister Ray Burke did away with royalties; introduced tax write-offs and ended Ireland's automatic right in any oil/gas discovery. In 1992, the then Finance Minister, Bertie Ahern reduced the oil tax to 25% the lowest in the world. Frontier Licences, which the oil companies could sit on for up to 20 years, were also introduced that year. The oil companies snapped up the best prospects on our West, North, South and East coasts. When one considers Ireland's waters are 10 times that of the land area, it is an awful lot of potential to give away.

When the Taoiseach spoke in the Dail on November 19th in terms of Ireland becoming an exporter of gas, perhaps he forgets that we would stand to gain hardly anything as things currently stand, from any such exports.

"The West Coast of Ireland contains the Atlantic Margin; an area that the oil industry feels has massive potential. When the Corrib North was discovered in 1996, Irish rig workers aboard the rig confirmed the find was massive. This, of course, was denied by the oil companies. Wood Mackenzie, the international oil consultants, said in 1998 that Corrib North could have up to seven tcf (trillion cubic feet) of gas. At current prices one tcf is worth around €3billion."

(And that was in 1998 before all the conflicts in oil areas got under way with USUK).

Campbell went on to lament that this State has no independent verification procedures and have to depend on the oil companies to tell us what they have found. Is it still possible that our Government, after the Gulf of Mexico disaster, seeks no assurances other than from the likes of Shell who have been given and continue to be given very generous terms and subsidies?

And just compare Norway with us and see how their wealth from oil/gas extraction was kept for *their* nation and how they got in the experts who did all the extracting under *their* stewardship. If only we had a Government who thought likewise—we would have no problem with our National Debt now and indeed would have the lovely luxury of managing our wealth via our minerals/gas/oil. It still can be done—we can reclaim our heritage because the politicians who *sold us down the drain* are now discredited and labelled corrupt. Instead of all those rubbishy Tribunals we need an inquiry with international experts who would—for a fee—instruct us on how to proceed with safe extraction and ensure that the profits would belong *only* to the Irish people.

Those licences should be legally revoked and proper leases worked out in an Irish Constitutional framework. Campbell stated that the subsidies came in terms of tax breaks, and worse still the building of distribution infrastructure such as the Ballinaboy to Craughwell pipeline and the two interconnectors from Scotland, which the State *was tricked into building* on the basis that "*Kinsale gas was running out*". One of the interconnectors can be reverse flowed, and when the Corrib field is hooked into the Bord Gais ring main at Craughwell in Galway, it is effectively being exported at this point as the Bord Gais ring main becomes part of a European ring main.

Shell has been supported along the way completely by the Government even against their own people. The authorities

have seen to it that the Courts have jailed those local activists who have fought bravely against the odds for their rights. And, by God, the media have insulted them with innuendo and outright lies, thus protecting interests again not our own.

The reason the *Irish Examiner* published such a negative editorial on 21st November 2003 was because of the unnerving "*recent landslide in North Mayo*", where the peat just did what the local people had said it would do. And what further enraged the Editor of that time was the Government's offered allocation of just €300,000 when the year before the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's Dublin constituency was given €13.5 million bail-out, to compensate victims of local flooding.

Having seen the hell BP unleashed on the American southern states, surely we have no option but to act to save ourselves and the great natural beauty of our bountiful seas. This Government has to be held to account and it is up to all of us to see that it is done. In the *Rolling Stone* article about BP, the Mineral Management Service (MMS) was shown to be utterly and irredeemably corrupt and incapable of monitoring big oil. So, when our Department of Environment is "*satisfied*" with Shell, as shown in 28th August 2010 of the *Irish Times* on the word of one "*senior engineer who travelled to meet Shell management following a complaint lodged by the community group Pobal Chill Chomain*", we need to find out more about how a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) came to end up with 80 drill holes and the blessing of said official. It simply makes no sense at all.

#### THE TIMES

Though it is owned by Rupert Murdoch, the *Times* is still something that conveys the British sense of things. On 20th September 2010, there was a picture of Prime Minister David Cameron and Prince William in uniform watching a fly-past with other braided gentlemen during the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Overhead the headline proclaimed "*Still turning heads; the glorious roar of 1940*". Such is the saturation of military anniversaries now in the UK, that it is hard to make any observation as an outsider to the society.

I was very briefly in London last week and had a look at Hatchards—that bookshop of the Establishment which even has a royal warrant from the Queen, her husband Prince Philip and their son Prince Charles of Wales. The number of books on Hitler was just astonishing. Take him out and their History department would be considerably smaller. They also had a whole shelf display about the Mitford Girls. And the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, one of the Mitfords, had several books on various subjects like her

garden, poultry, and then memoirs of her husband and herself. It seems that the aristos are back with a vengeance.

Outdoor stalls with touristy tat are a given for any large city but I have never seen so much of the Union Jack tacked on to virtually everything. Bags, caps, every type of clothes, really in a way that was slightly reminiscent of the USA though the latter does not usually allow any vulgar displays of their flag—or at least not the last time I was in New York. What does it all presage? Is the over-supply a secret indication that the break-up of the British Union has been grasped by the people whose response is to stick their flag on everything by way of consolation? Even the top fashion houses use the Union Jack on their couture clothes. If this was done in Paris, Berlin or Dublin—we would have ructions from the people—it is just unthinkable.

So what gives in Britain? And we have not even hit November yet, which is their orgy of poppyism, although mind you we ourselves as a nation are getting more attuned to that new spirit these days in Dublin and Cork and of course the Aras itself.

#### THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

The *Irish Times*, 9th September 2010 was certainly not going to let the 70th anniversary of the Blitz pass unnoticed. Under their 'World News' column, Mark Hennessy wrote an article that took a very unusual *critical* take on the Blitz itself. While noting that on Tuesday 7th September 2010 the event was marked by 2,500 survivors of that time who gathered in St. Paul's Cathedral for a "*memorial service that ended with the sound most closely associated with the time: the air-raid siren*", Hennessy went on to give a very negative view of the way some Londoners responded to the crises by admitting that:

*"There is, however, another less glorious side to the Blitz: the murder, rape and looting committed under the cover of darkness offered by the blackout, and increasingly sophisticated attempts to exploit war-time bureaucracy to make fraudulent claims".*

Hennessy went on to detail the awful murder of a wife by her husband—one Harry Dobkin who was hung in 1942, one year after the Blitz had ended. He notes looters—

*"using air-raid wardens' armbands as cover to break into houses and often calling on the help of innocent bystanders to load their ill-gotten gains on to trucks. In the first two months nearly 400 cases were reported and many more were not because the victims had died in the raids. In November 1940, 20 people were tried in the Old Bailey, including 10 auxiliary firemen. In all, 4,500 looters were prose-*

*cuted that year alone in London."*

What really grabbed my attention in Hennessy's article was that the data he reproduced was taken almost verbatim from a brilliant book '*Wartime Britain 1939-1945*' by Juliet Gardiner which was published by Headline London in 2004. And he does not credit the author by saying he used her as a source.

By a terrible coincidence the article under the Hennessy piece reads in brilliant bold: "*French novelist rejects claims of plagiarism*". And there is no doubt that, if what is reproduced is accurate, then the author in question, Michel Houellebecq certainly quoted from the website Wikipedia, as slate.fr annotates, on at least three things: "on the town of Beauvais, the housefly and a hunting activist". Houellebecq, a former Dublin *Impact* award winner and a controversialist who has also attracted criticism before for "*racism, misogyny and obscenity*", and for making anti-Islam remarks which seems par for the course for any western intellectual these days.

The *Irish Times* latterly has been racking up a very pronounced trend in anti-Catholic prejudice and bitter dismay at how our country is being *mis*governed, but it should show some caution about making one too many enemies. *Capiche?*

#### 'WARTIME' BRITAIN 1939-45

It is a pity that Juliet Gardiner's book didn't get the kind of sales and publicity that other books of much lesser merit did. Clair Wills' *That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second World War*, published in 2007 by Faber, could have done with the kind of insights that govern Gardiner's scholarship so naturally. On one matter alone there has been much sneering by the academics like Roy Foster, Wills, *et al* and that has been about the way the Irish Government censored reports about the weather. R.M. Smyllie, the pro-British Editor of *The Irish Times* and his staff of then and today, lamented our "*wartime small-mindedness and isolationism*". But in Britain itself the reports about the weather were considered so necessary to war-aims that they were completely censored. And with both planes and ships being essential tools of war, it wouldn't take an eejit to know this.

As Gardiner stated: "*VE Day dawned, and for the first time in almost six years the weather forecast could be published in the newspapers*". And while the *Irish Times/The Bell* lot in Ireland lamented an inward-looking Ireland, with whingers like Sean O'Faolain, Hubert Butler etc, they didn't exactly cover themselves in glory for all their talk.

And so too with the likes of Louis MacNeice, who first tried to get a job in

Dublin and then tried the US, and finally came back to London where he got a fine arm-chair job in the BBC. Gardiner coined a great name for his likes—the *Fitzrovia set*—these were the members of a rather loose society who got cushy numbers in various London War Departments. They usually lived—

"between Soho and Bloomsbury, which was a location and a magnet, and became a way of life... Here such louche and talented literary figures as Julian Maclaren Ross and Reyner Heppenstall (whose medical report described him as 'a social, disgruntled type, of first-class intelligence and ability' who had failed to adjust to the Army) fetched up. They were surrounded by younger hopefuls such as the poet Dylan Thomas who was making films for the Ministry of Information rather than give his 'one and only body' to the war, yet already knew that London was 'his capital punishment' where he drank and grew repetitive and did little work. Young men who had not yet been called up (the 'Slithy Toves' as they were collectively called since they so closely resembled Tenniel's drawings for *Alice in Wonderland*) were regulars, along with the ageing artist Augustus John (whose girlfriend, the beautiful chorus girl and model Caitlin Macnamara, Thomas had stolen, and would marry as soon as he could hang on to sufficient money for the licence). Others who frequented the pubs of Fitzrovia might include George Orwell, Louis MacNeice and Roy Campbell the poet and producer... on a break from the BBC just down the road. And these literati and reprobates would be joined by deserters in search of a drink, a bed (or a floor) for the night, for forged ration books or ID cards, pickpockets anxious to unload their takings, Conscientious Objectors who found it hard to find a job and felt adrift in wartime Britain, and petty criminals who wanted to mingle into anonymity. They all washed up in Fitzrovia, to sit out the war in the pubs and coffee bars, and, in the case of many, to fail to make much sense of the peace."

Perhaps much the same could be said of some of the inhabitants of Dublin's Palace Bar?

#### PRIVATE EYE

This is another investigative magazine that is true to its remit, unlike the ever-weakening Dublin-based *Phoenix*. In the edition of Private Eye, No 1263, 28th May-10th June 2010, there was a wicked little piece on the failures of the great *Guardian* newspaper. Its Guide section recommended a programme called '*Dunkirk: The Forgotten Heroes*' on 22nd May 2010 with these words: "*In June 1940 a third of a million British and American soldiers were rescued at Dunkirk .....*"

"*Forgotten Heroes is about right*" stated the *Eye*,

"especially given that there were tens of thousands of French soldiers present, and that the US didn't enter the war until December 1941 ..."

Julianne Herlihy ©

Review: Pat Murphy: *Social Republican*. 1937-2009. Edited by Philip O'Connor

## Meeting Pat Murphy

There is some inaccuracy in the booklet about Pat Murphy published by the Howth Press and distributed by Athol Books. It was not actually the case that he *joined* "the ICO, the leading voice of which was *Brendan Clifford*". He had more to do with setting up the ICO than I had.

We met in the Working Men's College in Camden Town about 1960. I went to it because I passed it every day in a bus I conducted and the name made me curious. He went to it to get some education. He had missed elementary schooling because of a long treatment for TB as a child, which left him with one leg shorter than the other, and a strong determination not to be disabled either by his leg or his missed education.

He was literate and numerate, and had an original power of observing the world directly. He didn't need education and didn't take much of it as I recall. But he struck up an acquaintance with the English lecturer, Levine, whose first name I forget. And Levine, who was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, trained him about doing an interview for a job, in the civil service as far as I recall. He got the job, and then didn't bother with education any more.

What was interesting about the Working Men's College was what it was, rather than what it did in the way of education; and the incidental amenities it provided.

It was set up by the English Protestant Christian Socialists (Anglicans), after the fright the English upper classes got from the Chartists, with the object of diverting working class militants into 'the Humanities' in an *ersatz* University that opened in the evening. It had a good, cheap canteen (called by some other name), a Common Room, a Library with an open fire run by an Army Major, and many other facilities that it was pleasant enough to pass the time in. But, in order to avail of these amenities, one had to sign up for a course of study and make some pretence of improving oneself.

I signed up for Russian to begin with in order to get the pronunciation. Then I went for Divinity, as a subject in which one ran no danger of being improved. It was conducted by the local Vicar, the Rev. Cordell, whose Vicarage was almost next door to the WMC. At the end of the year I was set to write an essay on *Might and Right*. I wrote that *Might* came first

and established *Right* as a defensive measure of power. Rev. Cordell was quite upset, but he was not able to show me from British history that I had got it wrong. Then I did the piano with the daughter of a famous song-writer. And then Etching with a very aesthetic Fascist who committed suicide when the dullness of England became intolerable to him.

The great drawback to the WMC was the gentry who ran it with a view to improving the lower classes and making them harmless. The Christian Socialists were Church of England gentry, both clerical and lay. Their time had passed but they carried on regardless. The Principal was the grandson of the founder, F.D. Maurice, and the son of General Maurice who cut a bit of a dash in the Great War. At a certain point he had to engage in correspondence with me and his letters were written on the notepaper of The Athenaeum, a club in Pall Mall near Buckingham Palace.

The authentic gentry had been severely thinned out by then. They were supplemented at the WMC by City financiers who were overcome by an urge to find a means of expressing their philanthropic inclinations. And there was a genuine industrial capitalist (Mr. Saklatvala), who was Dean of Studies, and tried to write poetry, and who belonged to the Tata family.

1960 was not long after the 2nd World War. Most of the philanthropists had been officers of one kind or another in the War. And they seemed to have brought their batmen with them to the WMC to be the working class.

It was absurd. But it was useful having been there. It helped me to know England. The rooms were called after Anglican Christian Socialists and Liberal Imperialists of the generation that launched the Great War, and of Liberal Imperialists like Haldane, who helped to mould the Labour Party for office after these Liberals had wrecked their own Party. And the Rev. Charles Kingsley, the "*muscular Christian*" who provoked Newman's *Apologia*, was so actively remembered that one almost felt he was there.

But all good things must come to an end. And the end of the WMC—or at least of its pretensions—came through hubris.

The gentry and bankers decided to move with the times. An elective element was introduced into the College Council, hitherto selected by itself. Pat said we should contest the Election. I wrote election propaganda and he lobbied. Himself and me got elected and a couple of other Camden Town Irish came close.

Pat was put on the Finance Committee and I was put on the Executive Committee. Pat suggested that we should ask for funding for a Student Magazine. The gentry decided to give it in order to bring home to us the fact that we had nothing to say.

We produced the magazine and made its title a Chinese character meaning *Words* and pronounced *Hua*—on the ground that it would have the biggest recognition factor in the world. (I have forgotten how to write the character, and it could not be reproduced if I could remember.) And, after that eccentricity, we produced several issues of a magazine that people wanted to read—unlike the official magazine produced by the bankers. And then we were expelled—Pat and myself and a dozen other Camden Town Irish.

There were trumped-up charges. Pat, as a member of the Finance Committee, had had dealings with the local Council about a subsidy to the College. He made the gentry and bankers reinstate him as a member, or else submit the charges against him to scrutiny by the Council.

Before being expelled I was removed from the Executive Committee at a meeting called half an hour early by Saklatvala without informing me. Then I was told I was expelled from College membership and might not again enter the College premises. I forced my way into the next meeting of the Council and reminded it of its Constitution, and told it that the Executive did not have the authority to determine membership of the Legislature, of which I was an elected member, and suggested that it debate the matter. The Principal, Maurice, suspended the meeting and called the police. I explained the legality of the situation to the police. They said that was all nonsense and that Principal Maurice had absolute authority.

That being made clear, and not being disputed by the members of the Council present, I allowed myself to be removed forcibly but with no more than passive resistance through the pandemonium of a jeering crowd of students in the corridor and lobby.

And that was the end of the Working Men's College, effectively abolished by the grandson of the Founder. (It then become something else under the same name.)

Very shortly before the expulsions Liam Daltun, a Republican who had done something in the 1956 Campaign and had since become a Trotskyist, turned up at the WMC, struck up an acquaintance with Pat, and asked him to go along to a meeting at which doing something in Irish politics would be discussed. And Pat asked me to go along with him. And out of that meeting eventually came the ICO.

But for Pat, I doubt that I would ever have got involved in a political group.

At the WMC I struck up an acquaintance with a Belfast Communist called John Clarke. (It is curious how famous names from history turned up on the English Left. Jack Straw for example. John Clarke was the name of the last dictator of England in retirement, Richard Cromwell.)

Clarke was in dispute with Desmond Greaves of the Connolly Association, which was a front of the Communist Party. Clarke, as a straightforward Party member, was irritated by the spin Greaves put on things for the CA paper, the *Irish Democrat*, and he protested in letters to the *Democrat*. His letters were loosely drafted and this enabled Greaves to publish replies which exploited the looseness. I took to tightening up Clarke's letters so that they were strictly to the point. And then, of course, Greaves stopped publishing them.

My function in the group founded by Liam Daltun and Pat was much the same. I tried to focus the sense in which was wanted to be said. I was never a founder of things—well, hardly ever. Pat was. I was a Scaramouche.

Tony Monks says that Pat told him "*Clifford would react to your mind, which was what I needed*". The last thing Pat said to me was that I listened. That must have been what he meant by relating to his

mind—listening and asking an occasional question.

I listened because he had a very original mind, and he was a Dubliner who knew rural Ireland and could explain Dublin to a countryman. I was strongly prejudiced against cities on the strength of a brief acquaintance with Limerick and Cork before I was in my teens. I barely knew London as a city, having mixed with the free enclaves of West Indians and Irish when I went there. It was from Pat that I got some understanding of the life of Dublin, and indeed of Irish Party politics. I suppose my listening to him caused him to think in a way he would not otherwise have done. And, when you come to think of it, is not listening to somebody reacting to his mind if you ask a question?

**Brendan Clifford**

**PS** The purge of the WMC by the philanthropic gentry did not pre-empt a *coup* against them. There was no *coup* in prospect. The life that blossomed in connection with the Magazine was anarchist in spirit. It could not have been organised for a *coup*. It was unacceptable only because it was life that the philanthropists had not fostered. They were confused by it and drove it out into the world. The College had been waiting almost a century for some energetic lower class life to come along for it to absorb and render harmless. When it came along, all the gentry could do with it was drive it out into the world. I thought it was a very satisfactory and encouraging result—a little victory from which something followed.

**Pat Murphy: Social Republican.  
1937-2009.** A tribute to his life and work.  
Edited by *Philip O'Connor*.  
Howth Free Press. €6, £5.

## Report

### **After The Single Currency, *why not a Euro bond?***

The rate of return that investors are seeking on Irish government bonds keeps getting higher and higher, especially when compared to that sought for German bonds.

0Why can't our Government simply buy the German bonds and sell them on at an 0.5% more return to investors. That way the investor gets the security of the German bond but at a higher return and the Irish Government gets the money it needs at a more reasonable rate. But why do we have German bonds and Irish bonds to begin with? Why is there not simply a European bond? After all, are we not all in the single currency through which we either sink or swim together?

**Dave McNerney**  
*Co Cork*  
*(Irish Examiner,*  
23rd September 2010)

# Jack Jones Vindicated

In a programme entitled *"The 20th Century Remembered"*, which was broadcast by the BBC on 7th January 1984, veteran Labour correspondent Geoffrey Goodman interviewed his good friend and the even more veteran and retired British union leader, Jack Jones, about his life and times—although there was still another quarter of a century of that life yet to run. Jack spoke of how he had left school in 1927, aged 14, and joined the TGWU in 1929, aged 16, and the Labour Party at the same time, becoming Secretary of his local ward organisation. We now know from his answers to a 1938 Spanish Communist Party questionnaire—brought to light by International Brigade historian Richard Baxell—that Jack was recruited into the CPGB by Liverpool communist leader Leo McGree in 1930, but kept his membership secret and became a Labour Party member of Liverpool City Council in 1937.

In his 2009 book *Defence of the Realm*, M15's Professor Christopher Andrew, speaking as His Master's Voice, regurgitates the pronouncement that *"Jones had been an open CPGB member from 1932 to 1941 and the Service believed, did not leave the party until 1949"* (p535). Yet we now know for a fact that Jones joined the CPGB in 1930, but had NEVER been an open member. The question remains, however, how long did he remain such a secret member? Jack's own autobiography, *Union Man* (first edition 1986, second edition 2008), reveals a personality and intellect that formed his own independent judgment throughout his dual party membership of the 1930s:

"Within the union and the local Labour Party I was continually pressing for action against unemployment... When early in 1934 a national 'hunger' march was being organised I offered to join the Liverpool contingent to march to London. My union branch endorsed the idea and I had the sympathy and support of fellow Labour Party members, although the main organisers of the march were members of the Communist Party. The Independent Labour Party (ILP) was also active in getting recruits for the march. In my youthful enthusiasm I could never understand why the different socialist groups could not work together, and here was evidence of that ambition being, in part at least, fulfilled... I felt that some means must be found to provide work for the unemployed of Liverpool. In this I

must have been influenced by the speeches made by Ernie Bevin which put forward a strong case for work or maintenance for the unemployed" (p40).

Jones described what happened when the hunger march reached London and sought to have a deputation received at Westminster:

"Only a few hundred of the two thousand managed to gain admission... I was amongst them, and led a group of the Liverpool men in seeking to make contact with Liverpool Members of Parliament. One of those who met us was David Logan, Labour member for the Scotland division of Liverpool. He wasn't the brightest of men and he offered little by way of action, but he showed his sympathy by handing me a ten shilling note which he asked me to share 'amongst the lads'. The Central Lobby was packed but in the middle of the throng I saw a distinguished looking man, who, I was told, was Dingle Foot, then a Liberal MP. I took my group over and we surrounded him, urging our point of view. He was visibly shaken by the examples we cited of hardship caused by the means test and the poverty represented by the low rates of unemployment benefits... He agreed to do all he could to press our case and to urge the leader of the Liberal Party, Sir Herbert Samuel, to do the same. He created a better impression than some of the Labour MPs, but Clem Attlee, the leader of the Labour Party came up trumps. He led the fight in the House for a deputation to be received by the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, and the Cabinet. I was pleased with Attlee's efforts and the way he had met us. I said to my mates: 'He is a small man and he doesn't look very strong but you must admit he's got guts!' He strengthened my faith in the Labour Party at a time when circumstances were inclining me to move further towards the left" (pp42-3).

"My respect for Ernie Bevin increased each time he denounced Fascism and I began to appreciate the thinking behind the formation of the TGWU ... It was, and is, a great conception, but my experience in the docks underlined for me that any trade union had also to be a living, democratic reality at the place of work" (p47).

As Jones told Goodman in 1984, it could not be "just a union of Bevin—although Bevin was a great man—but a members' union, a live union to challenge employers."

Jack Jones also used his own inde-

pendent judgment in assessing the Liverpool Labour leadership of the Braddocks— noting that both the CP and LP were hostile and suspicious, for their own separate organisational reasons:

"In August 1936 Ernest Bevin praised 'the heroic struggle being carried on by the workers of Spain to save their democratic regime'... In some churches Franco was proclaimed as the defender of Christianity against atheistic materialism, church burning, outrages against nuns and other things too horrible to relate. A few Catholic Labour City Councillors swallowed the propaganda and declared their support for Franco, but they were the exceptions. The Catholic leader of the Party, Luke Hogan, supported the Loyalist Government from the start and encouraged me in my endeavours... While I was in his office he urged me to continue to try to gain a seat on the City Council. 'We need young men from the Unions like you', he said. 'I'm not afraid of a left-wing view, I expect some young men to be on the left'. He was scathing in his criticism of the loyalty of Jack and Bessie Braddock. I queried this attack for I was friendly with the Braddocks and I had a youthful wish for unity in the movement, but a doubt remained with me after that interview. The Braddocks were controversial figures. Together with Bessie's mother, Mrs. Mary Bamber, they had been founders and leaders of the Communist Party in Liverpool but had then left it. Although they continued to advocate left-wing policies, they were attacked as traitors by the communists yet were looked upon with a suspicious eye by all of the Labour Councillors" (pp57-8).

The constant tension between Bevin the Union boss and Jack's drive for greater Union democracy, far from leading to any victimisation of him, only served to enhance Bevin's appreciation of Jack's own leadership qualities. In August 1939 he appointed Jones to the position of Coventry District Organiser, on the eve of World War Two. And Jack's response to that War was Bevinite rather than CP.

The outbreak of War evoked a variety of responses from left-wing anti-Fascists. I remember in 1970 asking Sam Rosen, my Professor of Economics in the US University of New Hampshire, whether or not he and his wife, Mary Berman, had any qualms of conscience, as Jewish Communists, in championing the CP USA's anti-war stance during the 1939-41 period of Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact. Certainly not! Their conviction in its correctness remained as firm as ever in their recall, notwithstanding the fact that Sam had later served in Europe with the US Army during the period when it had

become an actual anti-Fascist War, while in 1978 Mary's sister-in-law, Isabella Leitner, would author one of the most searing autobiographies penned by a survivor of the Auschwitz Holocaust, *Fragments Of Isabella*.

In a *Guardian* obituary for her own father, Leslie, on 18th March 2008, the late Nina Fishman (1946-2009) also recalled that "*Les had joined the CPUSA on news of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*". Similarly, other Jewish anti-Fascists in the USA, most notably those who had actually fought against Fascism in Spain, like Moe Fishman (no relation to Nina), were to the fore in the opposition of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to any US involvement in World War Two prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union.

This was not the position of Jack Jones. But neither was his the somersault record of the CPGB. The Party General Secretary Harry Pollitt had initially supported the War in September 1939. But the Comintern forced his temporary removal and it was R. Palme Dutt and Andrew Rothstein who articulated the revised anti-War line of the CPGB until the invasion of the USSR allowed for Pollitt's return as General Secretary in order to lead the CPGB in its now-pro-war-again stance.

Jack Jones participated in none of this jumping back and forth. If, following his return from Spain in 1938, he had resumed being a secret CPGB member in Liverpool, there is nothing to suggest that he remained one when he moved to Coventry in August 1939, and everything to suggest the contrary. From start to finish, Jack Jones functioned as a left-wing Bevinite throughout the course of the War. Jack Jones described his own position on the War in a manner that was decidedly indifferent to the CPGB's own internal difficulties:

"I was for the war from the very beginning. For me it was a continuation of the war in Spain, the war against Fascism. Support for the war in Coventry was virtually universal and any doubts were removed by the bombing (the November 1940 blitz). The decision by the Communist Party to oppose the war in its early stages had no impact in Coventry" (p99).

This is evidence of a very definite break with any constraints of CPGB discipline. Jones, nonetheless was far from being amenable to any "*There'll always be an England*" all-class patriotism. Like Bevin, Jones had come to believe in a domestically-honed British Road to Socialism. For Jones, the decisive change in the character of the War came, not with the Nazi invasion of the USSR in June 1941, but with Bevin

becoming Minister for Labour in March 1940. It was no accident that Jones entitled a Bevin centenary lecture he delivered on 5th March 1981 as "*Ernest Bevin—Revolutionary by Consent*". And their shared revolutionary perspective ruled out any wartime truce in the class war until the achievement by Bevin of working class executive powers for the rest of that war confirmed that change in character. As Jones argued in his lecture:

"He always had his feet on the ground. It was this quality which carried him through the war years and made him such a great Minister of Labour... Bevin's wartime achievement were centred on two main themes, firstly the maximum mobilisation of manpower, secondly the recasting of social values and the permanent alteration of the status of working people. These two themes fitted together, as being the only way to win the war. As far as Bevin was concerned, it could not be won by totalitarian methods. Britain had to stick to government by consent in order to secure the willingness of people to make sacrifices greater than those that could be obtained from them by compulsion. And this consent was closely tied up with consultation and respect for the dignity of the worker. This philosophy did not exclude coercion, but confined its use to those occasions when the time was right and it was generally acceptable to those at whom it might be directed... But this was not handed to him on a plate. During the early part of the war, the attitude of the Chamberlain Government was thoroughly reactionary towards labour and totally incapable of understanding the mood of working people and their willingness to fight fascism, and the opportunities this presented. Bevin was not willing to lead the trade unions into cooperation with such a government. In October 1939 he stated: *'It must be recognised that in their heart of hearts the powers-that-be are anti-trade union... We represent probably the most vital factor in the state: without our people the war cannot be won, nor can the life of the country be carried on. The assumption that the only brains in the country are in the heads of the Federation of British Industry and big business has yet to be corrected.'*"

"Bevin was not willing to place the support of the unions unconditionally in the hands of the government in the cause of patriotism. Indeed in February 1940 he stated: *'If the Government is going to take the occasion of this war to invade the liberties of my people, I will lead the movement to resist this Government—or any other Government.'*" This stand created a position of strength in that, as Churchill recognised, the strengths of the unions could only be tapped for the war effort if he was prepared to bargain with them and bring them into the Government, as he did in the person of Bevin. Despite Churchill's viciously anti-trade union

past, he at least was capable of making this pragmatic adjustment. Bevin however clearly realised that office alone was no guarantee of his wider aims. After six months in office he defined the problem in the following way: *'They (the trade unions) are tolerated so long as they keep their place and limit their activities to industrial disputes, industrial relations and similar matters, and are willing to bury all their memories and feelings and assist the nation or industry when in difficulties and go back to their place when the war is done. But there will have to be a great recasting of values. The concept that those who produce or manipulate are inferior and must accept a lower status than the speculator, must go.'* His years as Minister of Labour were to see him carry through these objectives to a remarkable extent."

"No, Bevin was not perfect. He was not always right—no one is. Yet few would or could deny that he was an outstanding trade union leader and a truly great Minister of Labour. His contribution to winning the war against fascism was second only to that of Churchill if not equal to it. We should remember the considerable amount of good that he did in his life as we commemorate his birth a hundred years ago. Surveying that momentous period as a trade unionist and as Minister of Labour one can say that he served the cause of labour splendidly."

Jack Jones had the greatest of respect for the CPGB shop-stewards who worked with him in wartime Coventry. But the CPGB had very definitely ceased to be the Party for him. And his memoirs make clear that he felt that Harry Pollitt's talents might have been better deployed:

"In October 1942 the District Committee joined forces with the Coventry Trades Council in organising a mass meeting in the Opera House to discuss the need for a second front. The meeting was packed to overflowing, with Harry Pollitt, the Communist leader, as the main speaker. I spoke for the Confederation and although I got a good reception it was nothing to the enthusiasm which greeted Pollitt. He made an outstandingly brilliant speech and as I listened I thought to myself: 'If only Harry had gone into the Labour Party, what a marvellous impact he would have had on the nation.' I always found Pollitt to be a sincere and able man, a fine trade unionist, and certainly a credit to the Communist Party which he led for so many years" (p117).

Arthur Deakin, the TGWU's second General Secretary, was no Ernie Bevin. Quite the contrary, Jack Jones recalled the 1949 reaction that enveloped the Union:

"Generally what happened in London had little impact on the Coventry district. We had built a substantial membership and day-to-day activates in the plants,

where trade unionism is properly judged, were going well. National events passed most people by. Nevertheless the decision of the union's national conference in 1949 to ban communists holding office in the TGWU caused a commotion in the ranks of the active members. I shared their view that the decision smelled of Mc Carthyism. Since a number of shop stewards in my district were communists I felt that the union could only be harmed by the decision. Some members did, in fact, leave the TGWU and join the ETU. Determined to be no party to victimisation, I managed to protect the shop stewards and they continued to function in my district" (p134).

Jack valued the commitment of his CP GB shop stewards and protected them from Deakin's purges. But he had no desire to share in their Party life. His own concept of a British Road to Socialism saw no advantage for that project in taking any stand, on one side or the other, in the dispute between the USSR and Yugoslavia. He had seen what had happened to Alfred Sherman, a fellow member of the International Brigade's British Battalion. In 1948 Sherman headed up the CPGB branch formed by students at the London School of Economics. He had been due to deliver a paper on politics in Yugoslavia, following his visit to that country, when Moscow announced Stalin's break with Tito. Asked to amend his paper, Sherman refused, and was expelled from the CPGB on charges of "*Titoist deviationism*".

From 1948 to 1953, until after the death of Stalin, the CPGB maintained that, not alone was Tito's Yugoslavia not a Socialist state, it was actually ruled by a Fascist clique. In 1952 Jack Jones had no intention of turning down the opportunity to see for himself:

"There came an opportunity to visit Yugoslavia. The Coventry District Committee of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions had been invited to send a delegate to the Yugoslav Metal Workers' Congress at Zagreb, who would then tour the engineering industry in that country. I was selected to make the trip. In 1952 Yugoslavia was still 'a far-away country' and I was intrigued by the chance to explore this new world... Yugoslavia was very much on its own and industrially backward. It was not unusual to come across a heap of horse manure in the centre of a machine stop or witness some other evidence of the close link between industry and agriculture. Horses and carts were used to transport materials to and from the factories. Former peasants were being trained slowly and painfully to acquire engineering skills. I was impressed by the early attempts at workers' self-management, and from that time onwards

have watched the experiments with keen interest" (p138).

It was in 1964 that Jack visited the Soviet Union for the very first time:

"In November 1964 I led a TGWU delegation to the USSR. I hadn't been to Russia before and was pleased that the opportunity had fallen to me. Those accompanying me were all rank-and-file members of the union's Executive... We were a good team and conscientious in our efforts to find out as much as possible about that most interesting country and its people. We were the guests of the Motor Transport Union, which enabled us to visit many factories in Moscow, Leningrad, Odessa and Kiev. Our practical experience meant that we could appreciate what was good and what was bad. Despite the language barrier we felt a sense of camaraderie; that sort of immediate understanding cannot be disguised. Of course we saw the sights and met many important political and trade union leaders, but our overwhelming impression was of a people struggling against a difficult past, painfully but successfully. From then on I thought it would be a good thing for working people from both countries to get to know each other by two-way exchanges. Barriers could be broken down in a way diplomats were unlikely to achieve" (p172).

It was this visit which led to M15's Professor Andrew regurgitating double agent Gordievsky's claim that the KGB reported on Jones as being a contact from 1964 to 1968. If such reports exist, it was obviously a case of self-promotion on the part of KGB operators, posing under other hats and inflating the significance of normal exchanges of views. But what of the supposed KGB claim that "*Jones accepted, without visible enthusiasm, modest contributions towards holiday expenses*"? (p536).

The distortion of reality is also quite apparent to me in this regard. In 1965, when I was aged 16, and a year after Jack's visit, I myself visited the Soviet Union for the only time in my life, accompanying my father. There was a great desire on the part of the Soviet hosts that their guests would not feel the need to exchange currency and come into contact with the black market, of which they were rather ashamed. "*Modest contributions towards holiday expenses*" were precisely that—some pocket money in roubles that would cover the purchase of souvenirs. They would have paled into insignificance compared with expenses regimes on all fronts in the western world. Yet I can well believe that Jack accepted even these small amounts with reluctance. Having driven Jack around Dublin and Galway as

SIPTU's guest in 2003, I know how reluctant Jack was on every single occasion to accept being treated to meals as befitted our guest.

The other visit to the Soviet Union recorded in Jack's memoirs occurred in 1973 when Jack led a TUC delegation:

"The visit was a short one... The industrial part was covered during a visit to Minsk; we looked over a new heavy vehicles plant and had discussions with management, trade union and party representatives... I was not happy that the working conditions and lay-out of the plant were as good as they might have been, but at least I felt satisfied that a trade union system, not unlike our own, was operating at a plant level. The political influence, however, was to alien to our British traditions, and we began to realise the difference between the political and industrial systems of our two countries... On our return to Moscow we resumed talks with the leaders of the all-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in their substantial headquarters. In the course of our lengthy meetings I raised the question of Jews wishing to emigrate from the Soviet Union, explaining that there was much interest in the subject in Britain. Their president had obviously been fully briefed and provided a lot of information. He said that 97 percent of applications from Jewish people to emigrate had been granted, but there were reservations over people in possession of secret information or with high scientific or academic qualifications. He went to great pains to assure us that they were not anti-Semitic, and that many Jewish people occupied important positions. There was some sharp questioning... There was still a deep division, on this issue, which remained a sharp cause for concern for a long period. The British Ambassador told me that he had been delighted with our visit and felt sure that it would help to improve relations. A number of high-ranking Soviet trade unionists accepted his invitation to attend a party in the Embassy, including a member of the Politburo. The Ambassador was all smiles, because it had not previously been possible to talk informally with such influential people" (pp270-1).

In *Tribune* on 10th December 2009, Geoffrey Goodman recalled:

"Jack Jones a traitor? Don't make me laugh. Allegations that Jack Jones was a Soviet agent taking cash from the KGB are laughable. If the cremated remains of James Larkin Jones have not already turned to dust they may, I suspect, be jumping around with great mirth in their casket. I feel quite certain it is laughter rather than anger that is their response to the extraordinary campaign which has been launched to discredit their owner. Indeed, I vividly recall when, some 35 years ago, I was reporting a TUC



delegation to Moscow led by Jones as chairman of the TUC's international committee he took the lead in attacking Soviet policies in face to face meetings with Soviet leaders. I wonder if that is recorded in the secret archives of the security systems in Moscow or, for that matter, here? Of course he was resented by those on the right who, during his lifetime, spent considerable time, money and powerful influence seeking to undermine him and his trade union activities. Some of his opponents were even from his own side of the political divide—well known members of the Labour Party at that time. None of his critics demurred at supporting dubious elements to combat Jones, especially when he was general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, then the strongest trade union in Britain and, indeed, across the non-communist world. Do I detect similar influences at play today in this campaign to discredit his reputation as one of Britain's greatest trade union leaders and a fighter for social justice? Do I detect this posthumous bid to humiliate his record as the usual coward's way of speaking ill of the dead who cannot answer for themselves? Perhaps. Then let me again remind a younger generation who probably know

little of Jones' record in fighting for what is finest in British democratic tradition that this was a man whose personal modesty never changed as he rose in trade union power and influence; a man for whom financial or any other form of corruption, political bribery, or even the odd expensive lunch was anathema. In short, the anti-Jones clatter is about a man of principle and sheer integrity that was unshakeable by spies or newspaper proprietors."

It has been shown that Jack Jones's relationship with Soviet officialdom was such as to render unbelievable any suggestion that he was a Soviet agent. And yet, over the course of 1969-70, MI5 sought to justify wire-tapping Jones on the basis that his contacts with CPGB Industrial Organiser Bert Ramelson rendered him a Soviet stooge, and now MI5's Cambridge Professor again seeks to justify it all retrospectively. That the actual relationship between Jones and Ramelson was, in the main, one of fundamental strategic conflict, will now be explored.

(to be continued)

**Manus O'Riordan**

Navy prevent her going on with the process? How can it prevent her? Let us consider it from the other point of view. We don't like this process by which Germany is walking off with our trade, so we will fight her and 'extinguish' her, and 'every Englishman in the world' will be richer for the extinction. It sounds glorious. But I want to know what it means..." (*The Great Illusion—Now*, p170).

Angell noted that a peacetime blockade of Germany to destroy her trade would be impossible. And he also maintained that a policy of extermination of the whole German people was also unlikely to be completed successfully.

So what was to be done about it? Angell warned that even war would not arrest the process—but war was tried nonetheless.

But before the war there was a threatened development in German commercial activity that the British Navy could not prevent—the Berlin to Baghdad Railway.

In 1898 an Agreement was reached between the German Kaiser and the Ottoman Sultan for German construction of this Railway. It was begun in 1900 and followed one of the oldest, richest, trade routes in the world from India to Europe. It was due for completion in 1915 and would have linked up the Ottoman Empire with central Europe and provided an alternative land route to India.

What England was concerned about was the fact that this economic development would take place outside of the reach of the Royal Navy. Britain had painstakingly established and controlled the world market and commerce over centuries by its control of the seas. The creation of a powerful land-based market, free from British interference, threatened the British military dominance of commerce (and undermined the effective use of the Balance of Power Policy being applied to continental Europe in future).

That is the way it was seen in Britain, in any case.

Percy Evans Lewin of the Royal Colonial Institute wrote *The German Road To The East* in 1916 and it described how German economic expansion was forced towards the East by Britain's dominating position on the sea to the West. Lewin argued that the whole of Germany's sea commerce came out of a small triangle of which Heligoland formed the centre. From there it passed through the narrow waters between Denmark and Norway, which could be easily blocked by the British fleet. Ninety-five per cent of it went through the English Channel, and the only

## Naval Warfare

### Part Three

In an earlier part of this series the present writer noted that, along with the 'threat' of German naval construction, the other factor that most determined the British State to make war on Germany was the building of the Berlin to Baghdad Railway.

These two factors were linked by the fear in England that she was destined to lose her commercial primacy to Germany. That fear was based on the calculation that, as it had been for England so it was for Germany—England had obtained her supremacy in the world through the destruction of those who had gone before her—Spain and Holland. So it was accepted as natural that Germany would have to do the same. And from this line of reasoning came the belief that something had to be done to prevent this before it happened and from this emerged the notion of a preventative war on Germany waged by the Royal Navy.

Norman Angell was a well-known writer in the first three decades of the last century, although he is largely forgotten now. He wrote a very famous book in 1908 called *The Great Illusion* which warned that war on Germany would neither stop its commercial progress nor be any

good for the British Empire itself. It failed and he republished it in 1938 when the same illusions began to resurface—but to no avail again. But the book is interesting in revealing the climate of opinion that prevailed in England in relation to Germany just before the Great War.

Angell quotes a whole range of British Statesmen, political writers and newspapermen on the perceived German threat and then disputes that British naval warfare could make real any difference to it:

"All these authors... say or imply that Germany is preparing to fight us in order to capture our trade. But for ten years or so now, our Press has been full of the way in which Germans have been capturing our trade over the world... everywhere, relatively, German trade has been growing and ours relatively declining. But note that it is not Germany's Navy that has accomplished this result; and that ours has not been able to prevent it. Germany has no need to conquer us to achieve this result: to the ranchers of the Argentine, to the coffee grower of Brazil, she offers cutlery and machinery which is cheaper or more attractive than ours and gets the order. Why does she need to sink our Navy in order to continue the process? What has our Navy to do with it one way or the other? How does our

alternative route around the Orkneys also took it through an area controlled by the Royal Navy. And, even if German merchant ships successfully managed to negotiate these routes they would run into British sea power again at Gibraltar.

Railways, despite being pioneered in England, threatened to overcome the British Empire's maritime advantages by making land transit speedier and more reliable. The Berlin-Baghdad Railway promised not only to meet the economic needs of Germany but would have also opened a much shorter and safer route for its trade than that through the Baltic and North Sea, through the English Channel, the Straits of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal—all controlled by the guns of the Royal Navy.

In short, what the Berlin to Baghdad Railway threatened to do was to provide Germany with the opportunity to expand its commercial interests and established markets in places that Britain would not be able to limit through military power.

From the point of view of Britain, the Berlin-Baghdad Railway had revolutionary consequences for the commerce of the world and threatened a fundamental realignment in the economic axis in favour of continental Europe and away from maritime England. And it was estimated that it would increase Germany's commercial opportunities ten-fold through the shipping lines that would emanate from its proposed terminus in the Persian Gulf to African, Asian and Australasian ports.

Whether the Baghdad Railway would have had such an effect on the economic life of Eurasia is a matter for conjecture and a question which will never be answered—since the project was destroyed by the Great War on Turkey. So the important issue in relation to it is what the British State imagined it might potentially become and why it was worth a world war to stop it.

There are many examples of this fear of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway expressed in publications, speeches and lectures by various individuals connected to the British State in the decade before the Great War. But perhaps the most complete illustration of it was produced by an Anglophile American who later served with President Wilson at the peace negotiations at Versailles.

Frederic Howe was an Anglophile American who later became disillusioned with the object of his affection. Readers may be familiar with his *Socialised Germany* book, which Connolly drew attention to in describing Germany as a

virtually socialist state.

In a chapter entitled *Menace to the British Empire* from the 1919 book, *The Only Possible Peace*, Howe put himself in the position of Britain in imagining the threat of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway and why it had to be stopped. It is worth reproducing the following substantial passage because it explains thoroughly why the whole infrastructure of British Imperialism felt itself under threat from the Baghdad railway—from industry and finance to commerce and the banking system:

"Great Britain controls a great part of the carrying trade of the world... Fifty years ago England feared French control of the Suez Canal. That was one reason for its purchase... British shipping interests and the profits of the carrying trade were also menaced by the trade route overland to the East. The Bagdad Railway was to be an integral part of the marvellously organized German railway system from the centre of Europe to the Persian Gulf. It would connect with Hamburg, Berlin, Essen, and the lower Rhine region; it would pass through Austria-Hungary, the Balkan states, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia. It would place western Asia and Persia in direct railway connection with German industry. It would enable German merchants to place their wares in Africa and the Far East in much less time than England could transport them by water. The Bagdad Railway would do to shipping what the trans-Pacific railways did to water transportation around Cape Horn. It would shorten it by many days. It would substitute carriage by rail for carriage by water. Thus the Bagdad Railway threatened billions of British investments in shipping...

"London is the financial centre of the world. England acquired financial supremacy from the Netherland states during the Napoleonic wars. Her financial power was increased by her shipping and overseas trade. And she has guarded this supremacy most zealously. Free trade increased her economic power, for free trade made England the natural clearing-house for the shipping of every country, and the marketplace to which the wealth of every clime could be brought for exchange. In her harbors goods are warehoused or trans-shipped to other countries without the payment of tariffs. The financial supremacy of Great Britain is closely related to and dependent upon the control of commerce and shipping. British exports and imports passing through the Mediterranean in 1916 amounted to \$1,650,000,000. This was carried almost exclusively in British ships. It was cleared through British banks. It was handled almost wholly by British merchants. It was produced almost wholly by British labor.

"Here again the Bagdad Railway

touched the nerve-centre of England. And no other activity is as responsive to economic change as is banking and finance... This, too, was threatened by a land route from Hamburg to the Orient. The dislocation of shipping from water to rail, the bringing of the trade of the Orient to Germany, the possibility of developing Constantinople as a great port, meant that Berlin might become a great financial clearing-house; and Hamburg and Constantinople, working in that close scientific relationship that characterizes German economic operations, might supplant London as a financial centre. If carried far enough, England's financial power might pass to Germany, just as in earlier centuries it passed from northern Italy to south Germany, thence to the Hanseatic cities and the Netherlands... And the bankers and the financiers of Great Britain form part of the ruling classes...

"British industry was also threatened by the Bagdad Railway. A land route to the East was an industrial peril. During the years which preceded the war German foreign trade was advancing by leaps and bounds. In 1914 it had almost reached the total of British trade... 'Made in Germany' had become a British nightmare. It had alarmed the manufacturers just as the increase in German tonnage had disturbed the shipping interests.

"The Bagdad Railway and its advantages to German industry was a further menace to the industrial structure of Great Britain... The Bagdad Railway would bring the products of Germany to the 110,000,000 people about the Mediterranean, as well as the hundreds of other millions of the Far East, in far less time than the output of the mills of Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield could reach them. It was an express service. It would enable German business men with the most skilful agents in the world at their command to place their products in the Far East—in India, China, East Africa, and the Pacific islands much more quickly than they could be brought by sea.

"In addition the British colonial service, which offers opportunities for the younger sons of the aristocracy in Egypt, India, Africa, and elsewhere, was in jeopardy, as were the tens of thousands of young men who annually leave the mother country to enter the Foreign Service. The economic life of the British Empire is involved in the protection of the supremacy which has been built up in shipping, in industry, in overseas trade, in finance, and in the handling of the wealth of the outside world. And... the same interests in Great Britain were menaced or thought they were menaced by the German drive to the East. That is why the Bagdad Railway was so portentous. That is why the control of the Mediterranean forms the keystone of one empire and the imperialistic dream of another" (pp146-153).

After the Great War—in which the British put paid to the threat of the Berlin to Baghdad Railway—Alfred Zimmern, a thoughtful geopolitical thinker in the Round Table/Chatham House group described the War as fundamentally a showdown between the maritime power of England and the developing potential land-power of Continental Europe in which the Royal Navy was the decisive element:

"The economic history of Europe during the century between the close of the Napoleonic wars and the British Declaration of war against Germany in 1914 is a record of continuous advance. Europe became threaded with railways, telegraphs, and telephones... the continent became linked together by all the international contrivances of 19th century commercialism and enterprise... banks and excepting houses... By 1914 Europe as a whole was opened up to the influences of modern industrialism... and had become the most important and central member of an economic system worldwide in its organization and connections. Able to draw on the raw materials of the overseas world for her manufacturers, she was steadily increasing both in prosperity and population...

"Such was the system under which men earned their bread in Europe when the leading sea-power declared war against the leading land-power, and cut the greater part of Europe off from the world. The results, after four and a half years of imprisonment and isolation, was an economic transformation even more drastic and far-reaching than the political changes by which it was accompanied. If the strategic history of the war is ever written under its true name it will be entitled 'The Siege of Europe.' The blockade was indeed the decisive instrument of allied power, and it has altered the economic life of Europe beyond recognition..." (*Europe In Convalescence*, pp. 13-15.)

Zimmern expressed in print the view that the War was fundamentally a British drive to head off the development of a European trading market that was going to grow under the hegemony of Germany—a Customs Union or kind of early European Community. And he felt that that possibility had probably been seen off forever by the triumph of British arms. Zimmern, however, was a thoughtful observer of the situation and he wondered whether the destruction of this system, which he saw as having many favourable aspects, was really for the good of Europe. And he wondered whether what might emerge out of the destruction might be much worse. And his book, *Europe In Convalescence*, written around 1919 is a

kind of wrestling with the situation Britain's "*Siege of Europe*" had created and a plea to those in power to understand and deal with it.

During the War itself other writers expressed similar understandings of the conflict. John Leyland, who wrote many books about naval matters, wrote the following passage in his 1917 book, *The Achievement Of The British Navy In The World War*:

"German professors have sometimes said that the land would sooner or later beat the sea—that 'Moltke' would become the victor over 'Mahan.' That is the convinced opinion of the Pan-Germans, who say that the railway will yet prove the more rapid and the more secure means of transport than the steamship. The lines from Antwerp by Cologne to Vienna, and from Hamburg to Berlin, and thence through the very heart of Europe to Vienna, and on by Belgrade and Sofia to Constantinople, and from the opposite shore of the Bosphorus to Baghdad and down to the Gulf, and by a branch through Persia to the confines of India, were to give commercial and, perchance, military command of two continents. Enterprise by the branch railway through Aleppo and Damascus against Egypt, with a view to further developments in Africa, was related to this conception of land-power. The measures adopted by the Allies for the reconstitution of Serbia, the expeditions to the Dardanelles and Salonika, the strong action taken in Greece, the naval movements on the coast of Syria, the operations in the Sinai peninsula and Palestine, and the expedition from the Persian Gulf to Baghdad were the answer to these gigantesque projects of the enemy" (pp32-3).

The references to Moltke and Mahon relate respectively to the German Field Marshall and the American naval geopolitical writer who became immensely popular in England prior to the war. Leyland's point seems to be that the great strategist of sea power had been shown to triumph over the strategist of land battles.

But perhaps Leyland should have referred to Mackinder and Mahon, since that was the geopolitical debate that dominated Imperial affairs—between the land power and sea power—before the War.

This passage demonstrates the catastrophic effect of British strategic thinking in relation to the fighting of the Great War and the way it was expanded across the world. It maintains that the British interest in supporting Serbian terrorism, in assaulting the Ottoman Empire, in overthrowing Greek neutrality and invad-

ing and conquering Palestine and Mesopotamia were much to do with preventing the functioning of the Berlin to Baghdad Railway by throwing a buffer zone across it. And as Leyland states in his *Achievement Of The British Navy In The World War*, naval warfare was very much employed in the same object as the advance into the Middle East and its conquest: "*We cannot separate the advance in Mesopotamia from the Mediterranean operations because the same object inspired both—viz., that of arresting the threatened development of German commercial and military power, through Asiatic Turkey to the Persian Gulf, and through Persia to the borders of India*" (p36).

British Naval operations in the Great War had a much wider geopolitical purpose than simply defeating the German Navy and starving the German populace into submission. This strategic objective was to disrupt the emerging continental economy to ensure that the British maritime economy of globalized world trade remains predominant and pre-eminence in the world.

And it was the Royal Navy that largely made the Great War possible, since practically all the expansions of the War from Europe occurred through the ability of the British State to bring naval power to bear on neutrals and designated enemies alike—something which the Germans, Austrians and Turks were not able to do.

**Pat Walsh**

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## REMEMBRANCE DAY

Blood boiling, a memory of wars past,  
media runs septic with propaganda,  
the post-mortem poppy their agenda,  
at losses by Afghan I.E.D. aghast  
but no mention of those whom they have  
killed,  
millions murdered and not sub-judice,  
little England's permanent odyssey,  
remembering their dead, two minutes  
stilled.  
Heard the other day that computer games  
are violent and murderous in the home,  
with joystick you soon become Al Capone.  
Still have legs and arms, with no guilt or  
shame.  
Will you find the army a bigger thrill  
when imperial wars wills you to kill.

**Wilson John Haire**  
11th November, 2009

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**Does  
It  
Up**

**Stack  
?**

#### COILLTE TEORANTA

Coillte Teo, the State owned forestry company, is planning to get into the Homes for the Elderly business. The ownership and management of nursing homes is a business almost as recession-proof as the funeral business. However, it does not stack up for Coillte to be using its woods and forests to get into competition with companies which are already in the nursing home business or which are at present building nursing homes.

Coillte has over one million acres under forestry management and much of this forest is planted on mountainsides and on other types of marginal land which Coillte acquired at low average prices and using tax-payers' money. Coillte should stick to its own business and not be entering into a business which requires a totally different set of management skills.

Ireland is very far yet from self-sufficiency in timber. The volume of imported timber is enormous in all sorts of wood from softwoods right across the range to hardwoods. Ireland is very short on long-growing deciduous trees. Coillte would have us believe that the market is deciding what amount and types of tree are grown and what is imported but, to get out of the present deep depression, Ireland has no option but to import less and export more in goods and services. It really is as basically simple at that. So Coillte has a huge function in growing more trees and increasing manufacturing and processing using wood as a raw material. Coillte are experts at this and let them stick to it.

In any event let Coillte be kept well away from the nursing home business because housing of any sort does not go well with forestry. Coillte are saying that "*developing nursing homes on Coillte properties could allow designs with larger buildings, maximising light and space inside, all with pleasant natural surroundings of forest environment*" and "*Coillte could realise value from receiving planning (permission) for a nursing home development on some of its properties*". Apart from the corrupting possibilities of using Coillte muscle to get planning permission on land it may then sell on to companies involving spouses or other family members of the Directors and Managers of Coillte, there is also the awful vista of nursing homes scattered

around the countryside miles from anywhere and right next to major fire-hazards, which forests are as we see every Summer when fires 'break out'. Such homes should be a big 'No No' to County Council planning officers, but has that stopped anyone in the past few years? When we do have to go into a 'Golden Meadows' nursing facility, let it be situated near social amenities like shops and pubs and within walking distance for visitors—who within the next decade may not have fuel for cars or that matter may not even own cars.

#### OIL INDUSTRY

The oil industry is now 'scraping the bottom of the barrel' for oil. They are going deeper and farther for it. As the BP affair has shown, the technology is not able to keep up and countries such as the USA simply will not offend the gas-guzzling voters by restricting oil use to the more essential uses of it. There is a very good case to be made for each state to nationalise the oil reserves on each of their own territories and to restrict the extraction of the oil by charging a sort of "gold price" for each litre extracted. Oil is priceless, they are not making any more of it (for the next few million years anyway) and at present we are wasting it and it is running out.

Oil production may start declining as soon as 2015 some experts say. The major oil companies are in agreement that production will peak, but will not publicly say when. BP's reports say 40 years but can we believe BP? And anyway even 40 years is very soon. We know now that, just as the Banking Industry corrupted the political regulators and rating agencies into believing in 'securitised derivatives' which has ruined millions of people's lives, the Oil Industry also corrupted its own regulators. We cannot believe what they say and any firm ground is very difficult to find. When oil starts to run out it will hit the oil-dependent nations very badly—like a famine. Not only will we be quite suddenly short of oil but our Governments will be short of the enormous tax revenues which Governments generate from oil consumption through taxation on consumers. That will be a double whammy and it will be a triple whammy because Governments will be in the middle of taxing us to fund the Banking Crises and the recession. So it does not stack up to ignore the coming oil crises. It is coming down the tracks at us whether we like it or not. Let us be prepared.

#### EDUCATION

The Irish Business & Employer's

Confederation (IBEC) recently stated that "*graduates are failing to make the grade*". This is not a recent problem but perhaps the recession's more rigorous demands for cost-effectiveness is showing up defects which the Celtic Tiger roller-coaster allowed to be covered up.

For many years, secondary school teachers had had a problem with students who come all through the primary school and still had not learned to write and spell properly. Some of these students managed somehow, rather miraculously, to pass their Leaving Certificate and get into third-level education. When I was an examiner, I asked a university professor how did he deal with the problem of effectively illiterate students—who may have been geniuses otherwise but could not show it on an exam paper—and he said in his department, illiterate papers were awarded eleven marks which was code for 'unreadable' and this was quite a bit ago when the problem wasn't that big a problem. Today's pupils are very much worse and somehow they have been badly let down by a system that is simply not working for them.

In my opinion, the biggest problem with graduates, particularly university graduates, is their arrogance—they think they know it all. The system seems to weed out and fail those who can think for themselves. The banking world is bulging with MBAs but did they foresee the recession? Did they what? They actually caused it! They just seem not to have any commonsense. I have had considerable experience of Bachelors of Commerce. They were all unemployable unless they had several years' practical experience in the private sector. On one occasion, I had a problem with a twelve-volt car battery. I was in the company of two newly graduated Bachelors of Electrical Engineering so I was happy—with the right man and woman in the right place, or so I thought. No so! They refused to help and said they knew nothing about 12 volt systems! If I had their professor there I felt I might strangle him! And then there was Peter Hart, RIP, who was awarded a doctoral degree in History under the aegis of Professor David Fitzpatrick of TCD for a thesis of which a cornerstone was Hart's interviews with persons who were dead at the time he interviewed them!

What an awful waste of tax-payers' money some of those professors are! Recently, the Auditor General has caught the Universities awarding themselves increases in salaries and pensions of 50% over what they should be (which was already excessive for the lack of value

delivered). All of which shows the universities are dishonest as well as incompetent. Then their well-paid Presidents have the nerve to complain about their lack of funding! Well here's the deal, those universities which perform consistently well should be publicly congratulated by the Government and they soon would get students flocking to their campuses and quietly let the others fail and close down. We have way too many universities for our size of population. Berlin has a population of roughly the size of our whole island—4 million and education-wise we are not at the races with them so to speak!

#### **THE REVENUE COMMISSIONERS**

Arrogance also is a feature of the Revenue Commissioners. Several years ago they ceased to publish a paper copy of their Annual Report. So it is not available to the huge number of tax-payers who have no computer or no computer skills, and there is still a huge number of such people out there. No archive copies either for back-references in the future.

Also the Revenue has closed their counters where, for the past few hundred years, taxpayers could attend in person and meet a person to pay stamp duty on deeds, contracts etc. There is no longer a face to face interaction possible. It is all e-stamping now. There are many situations which are not straightforward and when consultation and advice was necessary, it was very helpful. Now that's all gone. Well, they do have a person available on the telephone, but how do you show a document over the telephone? No everyone needing to stamp a document has access to a computer. Not everyone has a credit card to pay electronically. This conduct by the Revenue is just more taking of freedom away from the citizens.

The latest effort is the Revenue will no longer issue Forms P60 to employers. They say employers must use their own stationary to issue a P60. This seems to be asking for trouble. The P60 has always, since the system was introduced in 1959, been a basic official document. Now anybody could forge a P60 without much trouble under the new system. To add insult to injury, so to speak, the Revenue Commissioners have issued a statement by surface mail to all employers to tell them that a template of Form P60 is available on the Revenue website. It is not. Try following their printed instructions and see if you manage to get hold of their forms. When we consider that the vast majority of employers in Ireland have each less than five employees, this P60 stuff is petty and an insult to all those

employers who give already of their own time to work as unpaid tax collectors for the State. How low can they get? Their conduct towards their 'customers' does not stack up.

Minister Brian Lenihan, TD—just a further note. In talking last year about his 2009 Budget, Minister Lenihan told us all "*... we have turned the corner ...*" So this years Budget will be easier? We suppose?

#### **NAMA**

NAMA is doing what it was set up to do. It is in the course of being forgotten by the taxpayers. Burials of debts are taking place nice and quietly somewhere off-stage. Members of the Golden Circle—developers, investors in developments such as politicians, some journalists, individual bankers who borrowed illegitimately from their banks, senior public servants, senior planning officers who personally borrowed millions—all are letting off sighs of relief. It's working. Instead of each of them being hauled into court by the banks from whom they borrowed the millions of euros, the taxpayer has been compelled to "*rescue the banks*" by having billions of taxpayers money shovelled into the Banks through NAMA and Anglo-Irish Bank and in other ways.

The Golden Circle is alive and well, keeping their heads down but clinging together to see through the biggest fraud since the South Sea Bubble. And it is a much, much bigger fraud than any ever before. The Great Property Bubble. The people who go bankrupt and broke are the small people and some bigger people, those people who are not part of the Golden Circle. We know it doesn't stack up. It is intended that it won't stack up! Recently, according to the papers, we were agog to hear that one of the top property developers, Cork's Michael O'Flynn, claimed that the naysayers had got it all wrong. He built Ireland's tallest building "The Elysian" and he hit out at those who have said (with the evidence of their own eyes) that it is a 'ghost building'. As he was one of the first tier of developers to be taken into NAMA according to the papers, he now informs us that by the end of next year the whole building will be full. All seventeen stories of it! Could it be the local water—do you think?

#### **NORWAY AND ITS OIL**

In the international edition of The New York Times, *Le Monde*, 23rd May, 2009, Landon Thomas Jr. had an article about how Norway successfully navigated the global meltdown.

"When capitalism seemed on the verge of collapse last fall, Kristin Halvorsen, Norway's Socialist finance minister and a long-time free market sceptic, did more than celebrate. As investors the world over sold in a panic, she authorised Norway's \$300billion sovereign wealth fund to increase its stock buying programme by \$60billion—or about 23% of Norway's economic output. "The timing was not that bad", she said, smiling with satisfaction over the broad worldwide market rally that began in early March."

But Norway too had not been immune to the global financial crises that brought low the economies of just about every country in the world (though if you read the *Irish Times* or listened to RTE you would not get that broader prospect as they only concentrate on Dublin matters!). Norway like all others fell into recession for the first time since early 1993. But here is the rub. While the rest of the world splurged, Norway with its own oil revenues "saved its money" and sought again unlike other countries not "to limit the role of government and strengthened its welfare state". Its ledger therefore is entirely free of debt. Norway has a population the size of Ireland—4.6 million and because it kept its oil it is a major oil exporter.

Norway also passed legislation "ensuring the oil revenue went straight into its sovereign wealth fund, used to make investments around the world. Now, at \$300billion, the fund is close to being the largest in the world".

Contrast that with Britain which spent much of its North Sea oil revenue during the boom years. The British Government spending rose to 47% of gross domestic product, from 42% in 2003. While in Norway public spending fell to 40% from 48% of gross domestic product. Unlike in Ireland and elsewhere, there is "very tight public oversight of the lending practices of the banks which has kept them from taking on the risk that brought down other countries banks and Norway's banking economists and politicians have made sure that their banks represent just 2% of the economy".

Amazingly, Anders Aslund, an expert on Scandinavia at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, used **moral terminology** when describing the USUK, countries which, he said, "have no sense of guilt" but "in Norway there is instead a sense of virtue". The virtue was the kind that Eamon de Valera knew about before he went out of fashion at the **behest** of Irish academia, Government, and our social commentators in the media.

Michael Stack ©

## FIANNA FAIL concluded

A country of net emigration in the 1980s had seen its population grow by one million in twenty years—representing a level of growth—nearly 25%—unparalleled in Europe. Immigration—unknown in recent Irish history—contributed a third of the growth, with the largest single group by far coming from Poland. Unemployment among non-national communities is twice as high as among Irish nationals, reflecting both the collapse of the construction industry and also the losses being suffered in retail and other vulnerable employment areas. There has been some evidence of migrant workers returning to their countries of origin, although this accounts for no more than 10% of the recently immigrant population.

At a recent ICTU public debate, Garrett FitzGerald, speaking from the floor, said that public commentary in Ireland was presenting a travesty of the country's current difficulties. When we joined the EU in 1973, average income in Ireland was around 65% of the EU average, while at the height of the boom it reached 125% of the average of the core EU 15 member States. He also pointed out that the cost of servicing the national debt was still far below that in the mid-1980s. What would happen in the current "adjustment" would be that average income would come down to about 100% of the EU average.

FitzGerald is of course right. Despite the catastrophist reports in the press which, it is slowly being recognised, form a major factor in the cost of Irish borrowing, a recent report puts some perspective on matters:

"While Ireland's unemployment rate was the sixth highest in the European Union last year, its population remains the second richest of the 27 member states, according to a new report. The *Measuring Ireland's Progress 2009* report, published by the Central Statistics Office on 21st September, says the productivity of Irish workers is about one third higher than the EU average, measured by Gross Domestic Product per person employed... Government debt increased to nearly two-thirds of GDP, having been only a quarter two years before, according to the report. Despite this, Ireland still had the second highest GDP per capita in the 27 member countries of the EU at 31 per cent above the EU average.

"The report also reveals Ireland's population increased at the fastest rate in the EU between 2000 and 2009. It rose by 17.7 per cent to 4.46 million in the period 2000 to 2009, the highest rate of increase in the EU. The rate of natural increase

was 10.5 per 1,000 in 2008 compared with an EU 27 average of only 1.2. Life expectancy at birth in Ireland is 76.8 years for men and 81.6 years for women, figures described as "reasonably close to the EU average". The State also had the highest proportion of young people in the EU and the lowest proportion of old people.

"Ireland has the lowest divorce rate and the highest fertility rate in the EU. An average of €3,299 per person was spent on non-capital public expenditure on healthcare in Ireland in 2008, an increase of nearly 62 per cent on the 1999 level" (*Ireland "Second Richest In EU"*, The Irish Times, 16th September 2010).

### WELFARE STATE

One of the main successes of the Celtic Tiger years was the creation, under the supervision and monitoring of Social Partnership, of a substantial welfare state. Spending on public health doubled in less than ten years. A range of additional benefits were established for pensioners and, at a base rate of €209, the state non-contributory pension—increased by over 100% in less than ten years—has meant a 65% decrease in the number of old people living in poverty. Similar reductions in child poverty were also measured over the period.

Although the abolition of pay-related benefit in the early period of unemployment is a major instigator of poverty, this is offset by the highest redundancy payments in Europe. In addition, the rates of Unemployment Benefit and Unemployment Assistance (€196 per week) are among the highest in Europe. During the Tiger years, massive investment also occurred in social infrastructure—schools, community facilities, local services centres combining welfare, employment and other services, etc. Despite various various registration and other charges, education at all levels is still substantially free.

Housing Benefit means that those on welfare have their rent covered and those on mortgages who become unemployed have the interest element of their mortgage—by far the largest element of the payment—covered in full. After a year of high unemployment, there are already stories of people returning from the US—where they had headed for work—appalled at the low wages and living conditions on offer. We are 'trapped' in a welfare island with few parallels elsewhere—which explains why there has been such an *animus* against those Fianna Fail leaders held responsible for encouraging such unreasonable expectations.

Philip O'Connor

## FIANNA FAIL continued

the people spreading this defeatism are charlatan elements. These are quoted as authorities in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Financial Times*, contributing to a rise in interest rates the country must pay for its sovereign debt. The spoofers include David McWilliams, whose policy amounts to an effective return to the Sterling hinterland, along with *Irish Times* luminaries Brian 'deposit moment' Lucey and Quentin 'radio notes' Fottrell. Yet it has emerged that Lucey does not know the difference between Bank liabilities and assets (see *Irish Political Review* August 2010), while Fottrell is known only for his review of radio gossip in the *Irish Times*. Commentators have felt the need to defend the Old Lady against the charge that the paper is contributing to the problem.

But, while knocking Fianna Fail as much as it dares, a certain reality prevails in *Irish Times* circles. After all, certain journalists did well out of the Celtic Tiger and have their own investments to consider. And the paper too looks for better times to solve its own severe financial crisis (mainly caused by stupid investment decisions by its Executives). Thus the prevailing view in the *Irish Times* is that Fianna Fail must stay in office until the worst of the crisis has been weathered, only then will it be safe to have an election and let the Opposition into power. Within that scenario, its preference was for a Lenihan-led Fianna Fail. Now that it has been made clear that this is not an option, it can be expected to end its vendetta against Cowen.

Fianna Fail TDs too have taken heart. Though many expect to lose their seats at the election, they are sanguine about this, and are already thinking about their subsequent comeback strategy.

### RABBLE-ROUSING

A good indicator of the mood change was on Kenny's bear-pit programme, Frontline, on RTE television on 20th September. Junior Minister Conor Lenihan, who at the weekend had made noises that there was a problem with the leadership, rebounded with solid party discipline and stated there would be no change of Taoiseach this side of an election and the only reason Cowen would not lead them into the next election would be if he himself so chose.

The selected participants organised as an "audience of the unemployed" were incoherent and inchoate in the rants in which Kenny encouraged them. The tactic was to use impossibilist opposition to undermine the rearguard action of the Government in defence of the social gains so far achieved. In addition, economist and showman David McWilliams was allowed ample scope to set out his 'theories' of effective Bond default by the State. Conor Lenihan shut him up by stating the fact that the whole edifice of McWilliams' position was based on a fundamental premise that Ireland should leave the Euro and default on its sovereign debts.

When Kenny asked Fine Gael frontman Leo Varadkar what Fine Gael would do differently, he effectively responded that they would implement the McCarthy 'cuts' Report in full and also sell off semi-state companies. Great—was Labour leader Eamon Gilmore listening? The McCarthy Report presented a savage programme of cutting every feature of state spending directed at maintaining the distinctive identity of Ireland. Is this what the vaunted alternative to Fianna Fail is going to amount to? And is Labour going to accept it?

Two business heads, who were brought on to present employment strategies allegedly ignored by the Government, made fools of themselves. One idea they came up with was for a "skills database" so employers could find the right skill sets they allegedly couldn't source. The promoter of this idea was a top Executive of a large recruitment agency! From the audience a son of Neal Blaney demolished him by saying all employers had to do to get the skill sets they needed was advertise in the newspaper!

Labour is also coming under increased attack in the media for its refusal to say anything it would do differently.

Whatever you think of it, there is no doubt that the Government is back in business, not least due to the decisive patriotic intervention by Green leader John Gormley.

### PARTNERSHIP TO BLAME?

There is a crescendo of voices blaming the Trade Unions and Partnership for being part of the crisis and part of the root cause of the collapse. This is paralysing the responses of the Unions in the present crisis. There is a distinct defensiveness by ICTU and other people at seminars where

the issue is raised, as if they accept the basic argument. Most recently several blog responses to the piece in the *Irish Times* by ICTU leader David Beggs on job sharing alarmingly reflected this trend.

A problem has been responses to the crisis by the Unions themselves. They have joined in the chorus of national masochism about how awful Irish "crony capitalism" had been—as though it was different in kind from capitalism elsewhere or some 'ideal' capitalism! It was good therefore to see SIPTU's Jack O'Connor recently tentatively suggesting the need for a new Partnership Agreement. But this proposal will have no chance as long as the corrosive argument blaming the Trade Unions and Social Partnership for the crisis are not decisively countered.

This must be done by a robust argument which avoids holier than though relativist arguments which suggest that Social Partnership was good but dealing with a rotten system. The Celtic Tiger must be defended from a Trade Union perspective if the Unions are to be able to capture high ground again.

### TWO STEPS FORWARD?

The mood of panic in media commentary on the economic crisis has unfortunately limited the range of more measured and objective responses. While leading media commentators have been publishing best-selling books with titles such as *The Island of Fools* and *Where's the Money?*, economists from the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) have been pointing to the fact that the Irish boom was not a reckless adventure ending in disaster. Between 1992 and 2007 Irish GDP grew by over 130% and, while the fall of the last two years has been hard, it still leaves the economy in substantial positive growth over the decade. In addition, the economic growth of the 1990s was "real economy" growth, with the property bubble only a feature of its last four years (2003-07).

While the rise in unemployment is correctly seen as a crisis, it is occurring against a growth in employment of over 100% over the previous decade. The workforce in 1990 was a little over 900,000, and this had grown to a peak of 2.3m by 2008. The crisis—which has increased unemployment from 200,000 to 450,000—has reduced this to just 1.9m, i.e. still 200% of the employment figure of 1990.

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**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## Fianna Fail Renaissance?

### CAMPAIGN AGAINST COWEN

A recent Opinion Poll found that the qualities most prized in politicians are honesty, integrity and transparency and it has to be said that these personal traits predominate in the present Cabinet—even to the satisfaction of Garret FitzGerald! However, that has not prevented a media vendetta against the Taoiseach, which has seized on any and every opportunity to denigrate the man. But, even though the negative coverage has been persistent, it has been difficult to pin-point the actual point of complaint. In mid-September the big issue seemed to be Brian Cowen's hoarseness in a radio interview. And it appeared as though a bloodless *coup* was about to be effected, with Cowen to be replaced by Finance Minister Brian Lenihan.

While nothing has been spelt out too openly, there has been reason enough for this insidious campaign. Brian Cowen was chosen as his successor by Bertie Ahern, the same man who promoted Social Partnership to the utmost. Cowen, working closely with Eamon O Cuiv and Batt O'Keeffe, has maintained Fianna Fail's social agenda as far as possible in the present economic climate. It is not fashionable to say so, but welfare recipients in Ireland, even now, are far better off than those in the UK, and many social services—including provision for the elderly—are much superior. The Celtic Tiger lashed out the cash when it had it—and not all to developers!

When the big cuts were being negotiated with the Unions last year, Cowen went as far as he could in making concessions in the hope of negotiating a deal with the Social Partners. He wanted the working class to accept a drop in living standards, an unheard of thing in modern times where these things have been done indirectly by

the play of market forces of various kinds. And, in an attempt to save the Social Partnership model, he went further than the international capitalist world would have tolerated. Given the open nature of the Irish economy, and the exposure of the Irish economy to outside creditors, international monetary confidence had to be sustained. For the Irish financial system to survive, the financiers had to be satisfied—and what they wanted was to see Trade Union blood on the floor. Finance Minister Brian Lenihan appreciated this and asserted the realities in Cabinet. In the circumstances, Social Partnership went into abeyance. And Lenihan became something of a media darling.

Shortly before the last Cabinet reshuffle, media pundits forecast that O Cuiv was to be dropped. Instead he was promoted. The complaint then was that Cowen had not been imaginative enough. And the drip drip of negative publicity against him continued, until it was brought to a sudden halt on Monday, 20th September.

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### THE MOOD HAS CHANGED

A joint press conference of 20th September was held by the two Brians, Lenihan and Cowen, and it has halted the Government/Fianna Fail meltdown. The Fianna Fail party has rallied to the Government and its internal opposition has been sidelined. When Tom Kitt (backed by Michael Kennedy of Fingal) emerged as the voice of the pro-heave element, that was a sign that all was over. Kitt was a poor Junior Minister representing leafy south Dublin. He had been dropped from the sub-cabinet by Cowen two years ago, so he has a chip on his shoulder, and is not taken seriously by Fianna Fail.

A critical intervention in stabilising the Government was, surprisingly, by the Green leader, John Gormley. He came out in public at the weekend to say that a change of Taoiseach would not be acceptable to the Greens and they would see it as a deal-breaking moment. This was wonderful, and very mysterious! The Greens have combined achieving aspects of their own programme with a resolute patriotism as regards defending the State and seeing through some kind of recovery programme, whatever the political cost to themselves. Despite the sniping from the strange elements in Tara St. and elsewhere, they have stood firm.

There is a new perceptible mood in Ireland that the Government has stabilised, is fighting back, and will survive to the election.

### PRICE OF EMPTY TALK

It is dawning on many people that the spreading internationally of catastrophist "theories" about Ireland by a hostile media is contributing to Ireland's problems, especially and immediately its cost of borrowing. There is now a growing suspicion—see e.g. [irisheconomy.ie](http://irisheconomy.ie)—that

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