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## Must Labour Wait?

The outcome of the Election of 25th February, in terms of the traditional parties, is that it gives the Labour Party the opportunity to end 'Civil War politics'. It has been said often enough over the years that this is what it wants to do, because it is held back by the overlay of Civil War politics which obscures class issues. Well, the Election has given it the opportunity to attempt this under very favourable conditions.

The Labour slogan at the start of the Election campaign was *Gilmore For Taoiseach!*. It seemed for a moment that the old order was in melt-down under the impact of the second major crisis of capitalism that the State has had to face. But it soon became clear that the old order would not crumble so easily, and that Fine Gael was benefitting from the collapse of morale in Fianna Fail.

The appeal to the electorate was then to prevent the return of a single-party Fine Gael Government by ensuring that it would once more have to form a Coalition with Labour as its minor partner. As minor partner in a Coalition, Labour would calm down the wilder capitalist impulses of Fine Gael.

The election result has given Labour a much better opportunity of shackling Fine Gael than by becoming yet again the junior partner in a Coalition. Gilmore cannot be Taoiseach, but the position of Leader of the Opposition is his for the taking.

By taking up this position, he would not only make Fine Gael continuously dependent on Dail votes in the conduct of government, but would transform Labour from a *niche* party to a national party.

It would, of course, risk its *niche* position by doing this. But one does not get to govern a State without taking risks. And it is not possible to be *niche* and national simultaneously.

If Labour does not assert itself as Leader of the Opposition, and handle Fianna Fail as its junior partner, but prefers to become itself the junior partner in a Fine Gael Coalition yet again, then it gives the position of Leader of the Opposition, with all the prestige that goes with it, to Fianna Fail, and encourages the revival of the Civil War structure.

*continued on page 2*

## Sacrificing the EU to Secure the Euro

*Intergovernmental Rules OK!*

"The picture from last Tuesday's dinner is worth a thousand words. European Commission president José Manuel Barroso is sitting like a schoolboy with his hands clasped in his lap, his glass of pink champagne untouched. His host, Chancellor Angela Merkel, leans over casually, legs crossed luxuriously. At her side stands a cool glass of beer. It's an image that recalls the rule of all happy marriages: the man thinks he's in charge, the woman knows she's in charge."

(Irish Times, Jan. 28, 2011).

That image does indeed sum up the power relations now in Europe. All that was missing was Sarkozy on the other side with his legs crossed, drinking his wine.

The chief Nation States are clearly and indisputably in charge. So what, it might be asked, as that has always been the case? But that was not the plan. We are supposed to be in a Union and there are mountains of formalities and legalities that say so, together with a Parliament and a worldwide Foreign Service and a

*continued on page 6*

## The Fianna Fail Government: Cause Or Scapegoat?

Brian Lenihan, in an interview with BBC's *Panorama* programme, confessed to having made mistakes in the handling of the financial crisis. We don't know what those mistakes were. We suspect that they were the illusory mistakes of hindsight that nothing could have been done about if they had been seen with foresight.

Fianna Fail was not punished by the

electorate for causing the crisis by making mistakes in the handling of the economy. It was punished for being there when the Crash happened. The vote for Fine Gael was not a purposeful vote for a party that, by its conduct in Opposition, had tried to ward off the Crash by urging a slowdown in economic expansion during the years leading up to it. Neither Fine Gael nor Labour did that. They both fuelled the development that led to the Crash.

The voting was vindictive against Fianna Fail for being there, rather than purposeful and hopeful for a Fine Gael party that might control the wild swings of Capitalism.

Fine Gael is the party of capitalism. Labour was reshaping itself systematically into an overtly middle class business party a short time ago, when the sudden onset of a crisis of Capitalism suggested that it should take a step backwards.

*continued on page 2, column 3*

## CONTENTS

<b>Must Labour Wait?</b> Editorial	1
<b>The Trouble With Fianna Fail . . .</b> Editorial	1
<b>Sacrificing The EU To Secure The Euro.</b> <i>Intergovernmental Rule OK!</i> Jack Lane	1
<b>Readers' Letters: Israeli Democracy Akin To Apartheid.</b> David Morrison	3
<b>Digest, Northern Reactions To Irish Elections</b>	3
<b>Editorial Digest.</b> ( <i>Irish News</i> ; McGurk's Bar; The 'Disappeared'; Royal Wedding; Tuition Fees; Victims & Libya; Margaret 'Poppy' Ritchie)	4
<b>The Irish Reaction To The Economic Crisis.</b> Desmond Fennell	5
<b>Revoluting Thoughts.</b> Seán McGouran	7
<b>Shorts from the Long Fellow</b> (Election Disaster; Social Partnership; Credit From The Banks; Economy & Politics; Bank & Sovereign Debt; <i>The Irish Press</i> )	8
<b>Readymade Caricatures From Keane &amp; Sons, Listowel.</b> Jack Lane	9
<b>Replies To Jeff Dudgeon:</b>	
<b>Casement And True Belief.</b> Brendan Clifford	10
<b>The Gay Casement And Evidence From The Archives.</b> Tim O'Sullivan	12
<b>Rubbishing Sinn Fein.</b> Seán McGouran	13
<b>The Dream Of Sir John Davies.</b> John Minahane	14
<b>Strafford And The English Rebellion Of 1640.</b> Editorial response to John Minahane	16
<b>It's A Wild Life In Mesopotamia; Parliament Is Now In Session.</b> Wilson John Haire (Poems)	17
<b>Es Ahora.</b> Julianne Herlihy (31st Dáil Election; Cork; Arabs & Revolution; Irish Seals)	18
<b>De Valera And Zionism:</b>	
<b>Legacy, From Aiken To Haughey.</b> Philip O'Connor	22
<b>Naval Warfare.</b> Pat Walsh (Part 8)	23
<b>Biteback: Fergal Keane's 'Story Of Ireland'.</b> Manus O'Riordan (Unpublished Letter)	24
<b>Civil Rights Story.</b> Fionnbarra Ó Dochartaigh (Report of Review)	26
<b>Does It Stack Up?</b> Michael Stack (Peter Hart & TCD; Atlantic Council & Ian Birrell; Immigration; US & Migration; S. Dakota & Justifiable Homicide; Carbon Tax; Climate Change)	27
<b>Labour Comment, edited by Pat Maloney:</b>	
<u>The New Fianna Fail?</u> (back page); Martin & McGrath (page 28)	

For the first time ever, the fate of Labour is in its own hands! Now we will see what's in its head.

\*

Fianna Fail has wantonly sacrificed its position as *the* national party. The sacrifice has been in preparation for some time, particularly under Bertie Ahern. The suicide thrust was delivered by Micheál Martin in the television debate between the five party leaders, when he turned on Gerry Adams and berated him for "*coming down here*" and finding fault with us. And he followed up this with a press briefing to the effect that Bertie Ahern was of the opinion that Adams had done the Northern Bank Robbery.

Martin seems to be living in a Jack Lynch fantasy in his Cork City bailiwick in which he has sought to replace the activity of the Fianna Fail Cumann with his own personal *entourage*.

The attack on Adams for "*coming down here*" certainly lost Fianna Fail a great many votes in constituencies close to the Border, where the North is not a foreign country. And there are few parts of the

Republic where the Fianna Fail leadership could burn its bridges with its Sinn Fein origins without being punished for it.

Fine Gael (in its first manifestation as Cumann na nGaedheal) cut itself adrift from its origins with a series of actions from 1922 to the early 1930s (the Immaculate Conception Massacre, the Ballyseedy Massacre, the suppression of the Collins inheritance in 1924, that attempt to suppress the democracy by means of the Oath in the mid-1920s, the draconian Emergency legislation of its last period in office (1927-32), and its turn to Fascism after losing to Fianna Fail in 1932 and 1933), but it survived as the junior party of the state. Fianna Fail grew by assimilating what Cumann na nGaedheal discarded, and it has been the dominant party of the democracy from 1932 until the 2011 Election. It now lies a poor third, not far ahead of the party that "*came down here*".

A correspondent for German radio, interviewed about the Election on Radio Eireann, saw the significant thing that

happened in it as being the rise of Sinn Fein. In our last issue we urged a vote for Sinn Fein on the grounds that it was what would be noticed in Europe and spur the EU into a more responsible conduct.

Sinn Fein is the mobile element in the situation, and is likely to remain so if Labour opts to remain junior partner to Fine Gael. Labour is probably destined by its composition to make this choice. It is led by a Stickie element ultimately traceable to the Official IRA, which renders it irrational on the subject of Sinn Fein (the Provisionals). Labour also has a contingent from the Democratic Socialist Party formed by the late Jim Kemmy (Limerick) about twenty years ago, that held a position called "*post-nationalism*", which we could never quite grasp. And there is a residue of Old Labour, which itself consisted of a disabling mixture ranging from the implicit but undeveloped Syndicalism of Connolly's Union to a kind of Blueshirtism, taking in a kind of Conor Cruise O'Brienism along the way.

If Labour baulks at its first real chance, then the opportunity for a radical development of politics goes to Sinn Fein. Micheál Martin will just have to harden himself to more and more of them "*coming down here*" and behaving as if this were their country too.

## Fianna Fail

continued

Capitalism operates through booms and slumps. The greater the boom, the more shocking the slump.

It would have been interesting if Fianna Fail had confronted the electors with what Capitalism is; told them that it was the system in which they had chosen to live, ever more freely, supporting privatisations etc, eagerly rejecting traditions; and said it had done the best it could to bring about a soft landing when the inevitable slump happened, but was not assisted in this by the Opposition parties and was sabotaged by the EU—that only a dictatorship could have controlled the Banks when the boom was turning into slump, and that it was a representative party of the society, without the requisite authoritarian means of effecting control over the quicksilver financial element of the capitalist system.

But such things are not said any more—not in thoroughly modern Democracies. Such an approach was imaginable in olden times, but not in properly up-to-date

Democracy where mass manipulation by 'image' is the thing.

Besides, too much thought about Capitalism must be discouraged.

So the Government is the scapegoat. And the EU must be protected from close scrutiny. (It is said that Pat Cox is to be Enda Kenny's adviser. Cox played a leading part in undermining the EU Commission—the part of the Union dedicated to securing integral development—and making the EU an instrument of a few of its most powerful Governments.)

In the last great crisis of Capitalism, Fine Gael had no policy for dealing with it. Fianna Fail had a policy. It defeated Fine Gael in the 1932 Election and became the dominant party for three generations. Eighty years later Fine Gael still has much the same approach it had then, but Fianna Fail has lost its bearings.

Between those two great crises there lay the era of Fascism, World War, and Cold War—all of which restricted the free operation of capital. Freely operating Capitalism did not return on a world scale until the 1990s. We are now living through the first major crisis of that restored Capitalism.

One capitalist crisis is never like the last. It is an ingenious system, always devising new tricks which work for a while, but always get out of hand and overreach themselves.

The City of London undoubtedly had much to do with putting the skids under Irish banking. And then it sought to use the Irish crisis to bring about an Irish financial default and to damage the Eurozone. There's little point about complaining about that when one has chosen Globalist Capitalism.

The City of London is an instrument of British democracy and pursues British advantage in the service of that democracy. The EU, having admitted Britain against De Gaulle's advice, then allowed it a series of opt-outs while allowing it to remain at the heart of the EU system. These culminated in the opt-out from the Euro, making the EU a system with a currency antagonism within it.

If an avoidable mistake with foreseeable consequences is looked for, that is it.

**Irish Political Review**  
is now available at the  
**Solidarity Bookshop,**  
43 Douglas Street, Cork

The following letter has also appeared in the *Irish Independent*

## Israeli democracy akin to apartheid

Kevin Myers (February 2) describes Israel as "the one and only democracy" in the Middle East.

Is it really? How can Israel be described as a democracy when it has ruled over millions of Palestinians in the territories it has occupied by force since 1967, without according them any democratic rights?

That demonstrates a 40-year record of contempt for democracy, rather than a commitment to it.

Jews who live in the illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank can vote in elections to the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), but Palestinians living in the West Bank can't. That's akin to the voting system that operated in apartheid South Africa.

Isn't it time for one person, one vote in the Knesset for everybody who lives between the Jordan and the sea and is governed from the Knesset? Then Israel would have a genuine claim to be a democracy.

David Morrison

## Irish Election: Northern Reactions

*Irish News* columnist **Roy Garland** had the following comment: "*Fine Gael was party to Irish withdrawal from the old Commonwealth so it would seem fitting to initiate entry to the new one*". Garland used to be a member of Tara whose central policy was the ethnic cleansing of Catholics. Fat chance of that as the IRA began to get the upper hand in the war. So Garland began to promote the South giving up independence and rejoining the Empire/Commonwealth. To this end he has become an activist (one of the few) in the Reform Movement. The *Irish News* gave him space to advertise their next meeting. For those who may wish to annoy them as Pat Murphy did some time ago, here are the details. They will be marking Commonwealth Day at the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson St., Dublin, on Monday March 14, from 12.30 to 2 pm. Their contact number is 01282 7586.

**Diana Rusk** of the *Irish News* says: "*Sinn Fein's strong election performance has already prompted fears among unionists, who have warned of 'huge implications' for the assembly poll in May... its success over the weekend has fed paranoia among unionists over a republican first minister*". She quotes **Basil McCrea** of the UUP: "*I would worry for democracy that we run the risk of becoming more polarised because of this*".

Rusk claims that the Green Party is an all-Ireland party. Not so. The Greens in the North are a separate party. They have one MLA, Brian Wilson, and he will not be standing again.

**Brian Feeney**, also in the *Irish News*, says: Sinn Fein's heightened profile on a national scale will accentuate the SDLP's increasingly marginal status and

emphasise the *neo-Redmondite* line the party has adopted since *Margaret Ritchie* took over as leader last year."

**Valerie Robinson** of the *Irish News* reports **Micheál Martin's** increasing interest in moving Fianna Fail North of the border. "*We have a lot of people in the north who are sympathetic, who are members of the party but who wants us to advance our presence on the ground in Northern Ireland*." She reports that he emphatically rules out any connection with the SDLP. Sensible man! The *Irish News* has a long editorial on the election which says absolutely nothing.

**Asset Sales?** Rusk Says that "*Stormont finance minister, Sammy Wilson has expressed fears that there could be a 'fire sale' of assets {held by NAMA in the North} in order to release money quickly into the Republic's hard pressed economy*."

UUP leader, **Tom Elliot**, looked forward to discussions with Mr. Kenny about "*a value for money review of the north/south bodies to ensure that we are not wasting much-needed finances from both our governments*".

**The News Letter** Election coverage confines itself to a small piece on the front page, two pages inside, and an editorial which, like that in the *Irish News*, says nothing at all. Having said that, the *News Letter*, for many years unreadable, is now the best of the three Belfast daily papers. Sam McBride, its political correspondent makes a few interesting points:

"Nine weeks from a Stormont assembly election, the results of an Irish general election where it [Sinn Fein] has come close to Fianna Fail's Dail representation will demoralise many within the SDLP. And it will almost certainly be used by Sinn Fein canvassers to convince northern nationalists that only Sinn Fein can secure their interests."

He goes on: "The clearest good news for unionists is that **Fine Gael have always been the most pro-British party in the south** and, with a pro-union Conservative prime minister in Downing Street, unionism may find its residual fear of the two governments somewhat eased.

**Belfast Telegraph:** Liam Clarke (he hasn't gone away!) says on the Election:

"Sinn Fein will be a significant opposition force, well-placed to build support by opposing cuts. However, the downside to being an all-Ireland party is that the government may hit back by pointing to the push for parallel cuts in the north where Sinn Fein is in power—a schizophrenic position that may well cause problems for them on both sides of the border."

The paper's editorial may disappoint some readers as it refrains from ranting against Sinn Fein, and makes the following interesting comment:

"Sinn Fein is clearly achieving part of its long-term strategy as a party of influence North and South with representation in both seats of power. With the exception of **Catriona Ruane**, the Sinn Fein ministers have performed reasonably well at Stormont. Whether or not this election will have given Sinn Fein the impetus to sustain an important bridgehead in all-Ireland politics remains to be seen, but events across the border will be closely monitored in the North. A financially healthy Republic would be in everyone's interests, but even more important in the North and elsewhere is the continuing reality that democracy remains steadfastly more powerful than violence."

The **Derry Journal** has confined its "reports" of the election to accounts from the Press Association which, in turn, are mostly handouts from the Fine Gael organisation. The **Londonderry Sentinel's** coverage was exactly the same and from the same source.

**Jeffrey Dudgeon** from Belfast, gay rights activist, former member of the Campaign for Equal Citizenship—a group that tried and failed to get the British parties to stand for election in the North—and aide to Robert McCartney's UK Unionist Party, is now an activist in the Ulster Unionist Party. He has told the *Belfast News Letter* (March 1st) that he is putting himself forward for the Irish Senate through Trinity College Dublin. Trinity gets to elect three members to the Senate. Mr. Dudgeon, among other things, says:

"...he felt the Queen's first official visit to the Republic this year is a sign of growing political maturity between Ireland and the UK... The next decade is a time of danger with a decade of commemorations of events a century ago... I believe I am well qualified in experience and original and innovative ideas, not to mention independence... They {Sinn Fein's historical interpretations} are an open encouragement to dissidents. It is

my primary purpose to address that question."

Mr. Dudgeon is the author of a book on what the *News Letter* chooses to call the "*Irish republican gun runner Roger Casement*".

**And finally . . .** The UUP leader, **Tom Elliot** congratulated Enda Kenny and said he already knew him. The DUP has said nothing. The websites of the SDLP and Sinn Fein were out of date. So it looks like the South will have a **Blue Shirt—Sticky coalition**, with Sinn Fein as the functioning Opposition.

## Editorial Digest

**The Irish News**, until relatively recently, was quite a decent newspaper. Whatever about its Hibernian politics, it was a place one could go to get a reasonably straight account of what was happening in the world, and especially in the North. (Hibernianism is combination of British Imperialist attitudes and anti-Protestant sectarianism.) But in recent times the *Irish News* seems to have sunk into the mire. It is obsessed with sensationalism. Pages are devoted to a murder trial in Coleraine. Before that it was sexual allegations against the brother of Gerry Adams. Again many pages devoted to this and always accompanied by a photo of Gerry.

The leader of the pack is someone called Diana Rusk. The Southern election was mostly covered by Alison Robinson. But in the last days Rusk went to Dundalk to rubbish Adams and, of course, bring up her favourite subject—Adams' brother. The most trivial matters are now flavoured with this sort of thing and especially with an undisguised hatred for Gerry Adams in particular and Sinn Fein in general. The *Irish News* has little influence South of the border. So its antics are for Northern consumption. Not that it seems to have a lot of success there either. It is difficult not to conclude that its young-ish crop of correspondents really have their eyes on future better paying work with the likes of the *News of the World*.

One of the main things recently was up to six pages a day on Mickey Harte's daughter's murder in Mauritius. Harte is the manager of the Tyrone County Gaelic football team. That went on for weeks. The body returns, the funeral, further arrests, the trial, Mickey's team's first game after his daughter's murder and so on and on and on with no thought for giving the family a minute's peace.

**McGurk's Bar** in Belfast was bombed by the UVF in 1971, killing 15 people. Immediately after the explosion the British and the RUC put it around that the bombing was an "*own goal*" by the IRA. Several investigations since then

have demonstrated that the "authorities" knew very well that this was not the case, but it suited their purposes to persist with the lie. In this they were supported by British and Unionist politicians and by Gerry Fitt of the SDLP. However, the Police Ombudsman, Al Hutchinson has produced two reports in the last year. The latest one, towards the end of February, states, among other things, that there was "*investigative bias by the RUC*".

The PSNI Chief Constable, Matt Baggott, has rejected this report, saying it was only one of several reports. In a way that rejection is understandable. For only last July the very same Al Hutchinson produced a report saying the very opposite to his latest report. (The July report was a slipshod affair, getting the year of the bombing wrong and misspelling many of the victims' names.) Presumably, like most of these reports in the North over the last thirty or so years, Mr. Hutchinson, in both reports, was merely doing what he was being told to do. (Even the Unionist *Belfast Telegraph* made its front page headline: "*Just Say Sorry*".

**The "Disappeared"**, i.e. people who were executed by the IRA as spies or informers, were billed by the media to be set to play a major role in destroying Sinn Fein's chances in the Southern General Election—and especially those of Gerry Adams. They didn't. Adams topped the poll in Louth and Sinn Fein got 13 seats. Jean McConville was one of those killed by the IRA. Mrs. McConville's daughter, Helen McKendry, followed Adams from pillar to post around Co. Louth, and an eager media in turn followed Mrs. McKendry. It became nothing short of a circus. Then Mrs. McKendry sent an e-mail about the matter to RTE, TG4 and Radio na Gaeltachta journalist Eoin Ó Murchú. The man, who is recovering from a serious illness in hospital, clearly had enough and replied: "*please do no send any more of this obnoxious crap to me*". RTE, as they say, is investigating.

**The Royal Wedding** may as well get a mention. All sorts of dubious potentates from the Gulf are invited, if they are still in power! Our own potentate, Peter Robinson, will be going. Some deal was made with Martin McGuinness whereby he wouldn't be invited and therefore wouldn't be put in the position of refusing. Also not on the list are President Obama and President Sarkozy. But definitely travelling are Irish Rugby Captain Brian O'Driscoll and his lady wife. Isn't life grand!

**Tuition Fees** and the proposals to raise them have caused the greatest outcry from all three Belfast daily newspapers. Danny Kennedy, Stormont's Employment and Learning Minister, and senior

Ulster Unionist Party leader, has proposed a freeze in tuition fees, meaning that they would be about a third of the rate being proposed by the Cameron Government. His proposals are being opposed by First Minister, Peter Robinson, who said that the only way to finance Mr. Kennedy's plans would be to take more money from other Departments, such as Education and Health, which were already facing severe cuts. This he said was unacceptable. We note that Mr. Kennedy's prime role is as Employment Minister. We are not in a position to say what, if anything, he is doing in this area.

**Victims and Libya:** Geoffrey Donaldson MP and the ubiquitous Willie Frazer have stated that they will press ahead with their claim for 2 billion pounds from Libya—whoever Government is there. This is because, they say, the

Libyan State armed the IRA. It is unlikely that they will take action against the United States which turned a blind eye to the the large shipments of arms from that country! And, of course, much less against the British for their arming and training of Loyalists. Still, with 2 billion pounds, the ever expanding victim's industry would be on the pig's back. Let's hope that whoever comes to power will tell them to get stuffed.

**Margaret 'Poppy' Ritchie** stuck her oar into the Southern election, calling on people not to vote Sinn Fein. She described them as "*red communists in the South and green Tories in the North*". This hysterical outburst is now typical of the Ritchie style. But it is doubtful if more than a handful of people South of the border have ever heard of her. John Hume she certainly is not.

be remade from scratch: Constitution, voting system, health system, Oireachtas. Editors invited and encouraged articles on '*renewing the Republic*' from the bottom up, and many such articles were published.

But as I indicated above, the Dublin media's language was only the bulldozing and instigating vanguard of the "*infrastructure of dissent*". Equally part of this ultimately successful operation was the media's eliciting and publication of support for their account and diagnosis from the general public. All media laid the ground for such support by stating repeatedly that 'people are angry', that distress was widespread and that forced emigration was rising massively. Television talk shows ensured that people with 'hard-luck stories' to tell would be present in the studio audience and available to be called on to tell their stories. Television and radio reporters visiting towns around the Republic made sure to find such people and to make their voices predominate in the broadcast reports. Letters-to-the-editor that were published, as well as phone calls, text messages and tweets to broadcast programmes that were either, as the case might be, transmitted directly or read aloud, were predominantly supportive of the media's radical dissent. This publication of what appeared to be mass support for the media's message made opposition to Government/Fianna Fáil seem the norm of the nation, thereby doubling its force.

Those future historians will have good ground for identifying the widely-supported Dublin media operation of 2009-10 as a political movement of fundamental dissent—the Irish equivalent of protesters on the streets in Reykjavik or Athens—rather than a case of mass media operating in a normal manner to report and reflect realities. The historians, having also consulted other sources about life in the Republic in 2009-10, will have found these in fundamental disaccord with the Dublin-media version. They will have learned from them that the Republic, far from being a dystopia, was, for example, still one of the world's richest countries and still ranked where it had ranked in 2005 in the United Nations' Human Development Index, namely, in fifth place (Iceland having slipped ten places to 17th.)

In certain respects, they will note, the media got it right because some solid facts were needed give some appearance of justification to their comprehensive dissent. Serious Bank Debt and State Debt did indeed cast a shadow over the future. And, as in any recession following a construction boom, unemployment and taxes

## The Irish Reaction To The Economic Crisis

In his article *Searching For The Source Of Perpetual Passivity* (*Irish Times*, 18th February 2011), Dan O'Brien, Economics Editor, searched for an explanation of "*the very limited political and societal reaction to the country's economic crisis*". Contrasting what he saw as the mild public reaction in Ireland to that which led in Iceland to "*the toppling of a government*" and in Greece to "*violent demonstrations*", he found the explanation for the Irish difference in the Republic's "*weak infrastructure of dissent*".

Leaving aside that the economic crises in Iceland and Greece were considerably more extreme than in Ireland, I believe that future Irish historians—with the benefits of distance and uninvolvement—will take a different view than Mr O'Brien of the reaction in the Republic. They will see and recount that it was strong; that in accordance with Irish culture it took a predominantly verbal form; that its "*infrastructure of dissent*" was provided by a combination of the Dublin mass media with the published feedback from thousands of citizens; and that this combined reaction to economic mismanagement 'toppled', as in Iceland, the incumbent Government.

Delving into the archives of the Dublin newspapers, television and radio stations, these future historians will notice that from early 2009 to a month before the Election, the media pluralism in matters political, proper to a liberal democracy, disappeared. All Dublin media organs, while giving voice to the Government/Fianna Fáil, dissented from it and wished

openly for its demise. All of them, editorially or through their regular contributors, were diligent in blaming Fianna Fáil for the recession and finding fault with the Government's would-be remedies. No media organ favoured or supported the Government/Fianna Fáil.

Sledgehammer words such as 'outrageous', 'scandalous', 'irresponsible', 'catastrophic' resounded repeatedly in the media discourse. The dissent extended to the Republic itself. To the amazement of foreigners among us, the Republic was depicted as a dystopia, a 'country where everything is bad', and the Government as the cause of this. 'A 'mess' and a 'broken system' became cliché descriptions. The publication of reports on clerical child abuse was used to reinforce the language of apocalypse: Church had failed us along with State, Irish Catholicism joined the Republic on the scrap-heap.

Dissent even from Irishness entered sections of the Dublin media, dumbfounding foreigners. Fianna Fáil was represented as embodying the quintessentially native element in Irish politics, hence its alleged vices were typically Irish vices. *Ergo*, the Irish way of conducting public life had corrupted the Republic and must be eradicated by the eradication of Fianna Fáil. Historians with a linguistic bent will note how often in these years in the Dublin media the adjective 'Irish' had a pejorative connotation.

What to do? The logic flowing from the awfulness of what the Government/Fianna Fáil had done was that the Republic must

had increased, and more householders than previously were defaulting on their mortgages. But official statistics showed that 83 per cent of employable persons were in gainful employment, many people were buying new cars, most restaurants remained open and busy, and agriculture and manufacturing were prospering, as exports dramatically increased. A new report of the World Bank on *Doing Business* ranked Ireland ninth out of 183 countries as a good place for doing just that.

In the final analysis, it will be the hysterical myth-making of the Dublin mass media about Ireland as a ruined and broken nation that will guide our future historians to identify this combination of writings and broadcasts by journalists with the written and spoken feedback of ordinary citizens as the Irish equivalent of raucous street demonstrations elsewhere during the recession of 2008-10.

**Desmond Fennell**

## Sacrificing The EU

*continued*

Constitution and a Commission that was supposed to be the dominant element in charge of developing the Union.

The common currency was established to further the development of the Union and has run into an economic crisis caused by the behaviour of financial institutions all round the West. Any political institution justifies its existence by solving problems. But this Euro crisis is being solved by a number of Governments deciding on policies and not by the Union's institutions. The latter have been allocated to be a sideshow, as exemplified by the image described above. The EU institutions have had to be sacrificed to save the Euro. The 'Merkel Plan' for harmonisation will decide on issues that are not within the competence of any EU institution. Such proposals should be a Commission initiative for legal enactment. That is not being done and thereby the Commission is effectively deprived of its central role in the EU framework.

For example, Barroso and van Rompuy were brought in to redraft the original 'Merkel plan', as the *Financial Times* has reported, in order—

"to soothe angry disagreements over a German backed scheme to shore up Europe's faltering economies. The plan... is an attempt to put the pact back on track after the German led effort was widely denounced at a summit of European leaders last month.... But instead of a pact co-ordinated by national capitals, as Germany proposed, implementation of

the new plan would be judged by the European Commission, a concession to smaller states angered by Berlin's strong-arm tactic." (28.2.2011).

This clearly shows that the role of the Commission now is reactive and the dynamic is with Germany, and with France to a lesser extent. The Commission's role is to do what it is told and sell the former's policies to the smaller States with a fig-leaf of adherence of the actual legal rules. This is a demeaning role. It makes the Commission accept a two-tier EU and reduced its remit to being a sort of referee rather than being the manager of the show which was its original purpose.

### SOME GERMAN THOUGHTS

Germany being the strongest economy in the EU is central to the solution of the current crisis and therefore has had to think hardest about the issues involved. Its Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble has been explaining what must be done:

"The finance minister said more inter-governmental decision-making was essential to closer co-ordination of financial, economic and social policy. 'It's the second best solution but the only one to be realised in the near future', he said. 'This may sound disappointing to all those who would like an ultimate correction to presumed mistakes in the European currency union but it marks the genesis of European integration. Europe is and remains complicated and progresses step by step...'. The German finance minister said his government was interested in practical results and not theoretical discussions about European ideals. Any changes would come at inter-governmental level, he said, because European institutional development was unlikely, given huge political, legal and public opposition around the continent. The level of opposition was clear from a representative survey suggesting the euro zone crisis has caused a spike in German unhappiness with the EU" (Irish Times, Jan. 27).

Mr. Schäuble is saying that the EU institutions are redundant. But he cannot have it every way and claim that this "second best" solution is also an example of step-by-step progress. This is playing with words. Political institutions that are redundant will be abandoned like broken-down vehicles on the roadside, even though they may hang around for ages. If such institutions have failed in a crisis, they cannot be resurrected when the problem is solved by other institutions based on a completely different philosophy.

There can be plenty ambiguity and misuse of terminology and double-thinking but the essentials are clear—inter-Governmental relations now rule between States and they are the opposite of a Union relationship. The political

allegiances are to the Nation States and not the Union. This is what we now have. This will heighten national differences and conflicts. A strong Sinn Fein in the Republic is a typical and inevitable result. And those allegiances will determine how the monetary union is managed and in whose interest. As it will also determine how other relationship will be determined in, e.g., foreign relations and military matters.

The Minister went on to say that: "*In future we will not look on as countries encourage structural problems through bad politics and undermine their competitiveness*" (ibid). But, in the absence of EU institutions, who is the "we" that will judge the "bad politics" in an inter-Governmental situation and then insist on remedies? In such a situation the strongest in the singular or plural will, quite rightly, dominate. That will create another form of European unity—but not unity as we know it. Germany is clearly strongest in economic terms, but it is only in economic terms. However, as all life now seems to be based on economics, it inevitably dominates. Politically, Germany is a minnow and it will be other politics that will dominate—and that politics will clearly and obviously be the politics of USUK and we know what they mean for the world.

The current financial crisis extends across Europe. It is a problem which, though initiated in the United States, has taken hold across Europe's banking system. A pan-European solution was never more needed, but instead we will have a solution according to strictly national interests, and the devil take the hindmost. That is inevitably makeshift and inevitably a recipe for further crises unless, in the absence of EU institutions, the strongest State is willing to accept a hegemonic role in Europe. Mr Schäuble should give that some thought.

### GARRET SAW PROBLEM 37 YEARS AGO!

Garret FitzGerald has condemned the new situation:

"Arousing unrealistic expectations of European easement of our financial crisis also carries with it a danger of evoking further domestic hostility towards our EU partners, and towards the European Commission, which could become highly dangerous.

"In this connection it is important that we become aware of an aspect of the German-French proposals for euro zone reform that has received almost no publicity here—namely their idea of employing for this purpose an intergovernmental reform process, outside the EU's normal decision-making structure. {*He should subscribe to the Irish Political Review, JL.*}

"The decision-making system (known as the 'community method') is one that precludes member states, regardless of their size and importance, from pushing their

own interests by proposing new EU laws. Only the independent commission may propose such laws, which, subject to agreed amendments, are then adopted by the Council of Ministers, nowadays jointly with the European Parliament.

"The importance to us of this decision-making structure has never been well understood in Ireland outside of official circles, but its preservation has been Ireland's most vital national interest within the EU.

"For this unique decision-making system has most effectively protected the interests of Europe as a whole, and in particular smaller countries, including Ireland, from possible abuses of power by larger states" (Irish Times, Feb. 12th)

This begs a few questions—what did Ireland do to prevent this clear and obvious threat to its interests? It did not exactly happen overnight. And who is responsible for not making the fundamentals of the EU well understood in Ireland? During nearly 40 years of membership we did not really know what we joined! This is an amazing admission. Surely Garret must know that he, along with his acolytes like Brigid Laffan, is primarily responsible for the ignorance, as their whole *raison d'être* was to promote knowledge and the virtues of the EU? How many million words streamed for them and the other EU-philes during the Lisbon Referendum campaigns and yet we remained ignorant of the fundamentals and ignorant of that fact that these recent developments were going against our interests?

But it gets worse. Garret saw it all coming:

"France was never very happy with this arrangement, and after his election as French president in 1974, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing invited his fellow heads of government to a dinner, where he proposed a radical change in this established community method of taking European-level decisions.

"This change would have involved the heads of government regularly participating in decision-making meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers—these joint meetings were to become known as European Council meetings, and to be prepared by a separate secretariat outside the community structure.

"At these meetings the leaders of the three larger countries hoped to act as a European directory, dominating proceedings.

"Ireland, (then in very good standing in the community), together with the Benelux countries, and backed by the president of the commission, successfully opposed this dangerous move. The big three eventually climbed down and, apparently feeling that their dignity as leaders of important states would be compromised by having to confine their involvement in decision-making to proposals made by the commission, decided to abandon actual decision-making at these European Council meetings. Instead, they would use these occasions to offer 'orientations'." (ibid.)

What excuse can he have for not opposing the resurrection of d'Estaing's idea by none other than d'Estaing himself after the Nice defeats, when he made himself president of the Convention in 2002 that set in motion what led to the Lisbon Treaty and the absolute confirmation that the Commission was now a sideshow and the major states would dominate? With this insight Garret should have led the anti-Lisbon campaign!

If he did nothing, that would have been something useful—but he joined with gusto in this destructive campaign against the interest of the European Community and Ireland in particular. This brings out the hopeless nature of Garret's politics.

He never sees the wood for the trees—until the wood is on fire. Issues are over-analyzed to the point of making them meaningless, usually with a welter of statistics and graphs. Or to mix metaphors he is great at closing doors after horses have bolted.

Ireland made a singular and unique contribution to the regression that Garret correctly describes, in the form of Pat Cox's successful campaign against the authority of the Commission. I do not recollect Garret saying a word against that example of Ireland punching above its weight with ridiculous and spurious accusations against Santer and other Commissioners. No doubt he wrote something that was easily forgettable and went with the flow at the time. And Cox is now an advisor on Europe to the new Government, which indicates that it is as hopeless as Garret on recognising what damage that Cox and his Liberals did to the EU project.

Haughey got Europe right. He saw it as a natural development of Irish nationalism, as totally complimentary to it, a development and a flowering of that nationalism. Europe was home. Because of that approach, he ran the most successful Presidency ever, made a crucial contribution to German reunification and set the scene for the massive funds that materialised later.

On the other hand, Garret always saw Europe as an antidote, a corrective to Irish nationalism, an alternative. Europe was a refuge. This impressed nobody because no other State had that complex about itself. States do not have much time for a State with a bad conscience and which seems to need to be rescued from itself.

Ireland must change its mindset about Europe. In the absence of its authoritative political institutions, Europe becomes an abstraction. What exists are Nation States, along with nothing else but waffle for the naive. We must relate to other Nation States and establish relationships with them. This opens up a very interesting and exciting prospect.

Jack Lane

## Revoltng Thoughts

It is piquant that the Republic's General Election should coincide—not so much with the 'Arab revolt'—as with the British Prime Minister's visit to the Arab lands. David Cameron has been to northern Africa and the Arab 'middle' east. His mission was not one of solidarity with those (allegedly) campaigning for democratic rights. He wants the current Governments of those lands to buy more UK-made weapons. (They include instruments of torture but that remains unspoken on these occasions.)

Mr. Cameron has performed the miracle of pushing his anti-social wares (drug-pushers throughout the Kingdom have the right to feel distinctly morally superior to him) while mouthing support for those who are trying to rid themselves of Mubarak and Gaddafi. The media has decided that the latter has to go the same way as Mubarak. But Gaddafi, an Arab Socialist, has decided to stand and fight in Libya. The media sneered at this at first. They had decided that he—one of the UK's biggest customers for arms—is a monstrous dictator.

Quite what it will say if he wins out in the up-coming civil war it is difficult to tell. But, should it happen, it will probably react as if it had not published or broadcast a word in this vein. The 'reporting' of the events in Libya has been characterised by ignorance of the realities of the place. Starting with its sheer size. For example Tripoli and Benghazi are nearly 1,000 kilometres away from each other. The rebel areas are widely separated. Even assuming the people in them have much the same aims, they are not in a position to help each other. Gaddafi, despite (semi-racist) drivel about 'Black African' mercenaries probably has the military ascendancy.

In most of the States in which there have been anti-Government demonstrations, the demonstrators have been largely the middle class—country people and the urban proletariat probably wouldn't recognise an i-pad if they encountered one. The one place where the regime might change is Bahrain. The grossly wealthy royal family and the aristocracy is Sunni Moslem, the (genuinely oppressed) plebes are Shia.

Obama has been criticised for not instantly supporting the demonstrators all over the Arab lands. Apart from the fact that there are, often radical, differences in the demands made, the USA takes itself seriously as the world's policeman. (And it is 'policeman', and not mentor, a role it could easily have adopted at various times since 1945). It must worry about the fact that the 'Moslem Brotherhood' could quite shortly be the Government of Egypt. And that Iran could acquire a friendly Shia-dominated State just across the Persian Gulf.

The rulers of the US do not have the same capacity as those who run the UK to speak out of both sides of their mouths simultaneously. It is really too glib to describe this facility—of which Tony Blair, a 'public' school product, like 'Dave' Cameron was a superb exponent—as 'double-speak'. (The term 'double speak' was coined by Eric Blair / George Orwell, a product of the public school production line.) Cameron, in mid-sentence, can ask some of the most reactionary rulers on the planet to buy his wares—which he knows damn well will be used to oppress their populations—and encourage those asking for change.

The general election in the 26 Counties is partly (overwhelmingly so far as the media is concerned) about 'corruption'. For it Fianna Fáil embodies corruption—at present—but no Irish politician (not even an FFER) could behave like Cameron. It is simply not bred into them. Compared with the average British backbencher—much less the PM—Irish politicians are positive saints. This is something worth thinking about when Mr. Kenny manages to paint Ireland blue, and engage in Thatcherite vandalism, by selling what's left of the State's heritage to the highest bidders.

Seán McGouran

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## ELECTION DISASTER

The election campaign was a disaster for Republican and Social values. The thesis of Labour and Sinn Fein was that the State was corrupt and incompetent. But what conclusion did they expect the electorate to draw from this thesis? The only rational conclusion is that there should be a diminution of the role of the State. Which party was most likely to benefit from that analysis? It could only be Fine Gael and right wing Independents. In the midst of a severe world economic crisis, in which Ireland was more affected than most countries, the Irish electorate has moved to the right.

The incoherence of the opposition to the Government was shown by Eamonn Dunphy's declaration in favour of Sinn Fein. Dunphy is a supporter and friend of Shane Ross, the pro British, TCD Senator and *Sunday Independent* journalist. The policy of "burning the bondholders" has an attraction for Ross since it takes us out of the Euro zone and back into the Sterling sphere of influence.

## SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

One of the biggest casualties of this election was the policy of Social Partnership. The impression given was that it was one of the causes of the crisis. Nobody was prepared to defend it, least of all the Trade Unions.

*The Irish Times* carried a bizarre article (31.12.10) by Paul Sweeney of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Sweeney's view is that we had a right-wing, neo-liberal model for the last 30 years and that the economic collapse is proof of this failed economic model. But in that period we had dramatic rises in welfare rates as well as public sector pay. We also had Trade Union influence on economic policy.

Sweeney thinks that the Government should have had an "evidence approach" to economic policy, but it is difficult to see how such an approach can be adopted without Social Partnership (although, if Sweeney's contribution is anything to go by, the Trade Unions don't have much to bring to the party). In order for parliament to formulate and implement policies, it must enlist the support of social forces outside parliament.

The article proceeds with the usual clichés about cronyism without giving examples. In January it emerged that the Taoiseach had played a round of golf with

Sean FitzPatrick. The Labour Party thought that this was shocking. But then thought it was even more shocking that he didn't discuss banking policy during the golf game, which sounds like a call for even greater cronyism.

Sweeney favours a stimulus package, even though we already have a stimulus package: an almost 20 billion current budget deficit. If stimulus packages worked, we would have one of the most successful economies in the world. The problem with our economy was never one of domestic demand, it was that we weren't producing enough to sustain it. We have had to re-adjust our standard of living to a more sustainable level. The manner which we have been doing this is extremely impressive. The Government has supported "favoured businesses" in the export sector. Sweeney appears to be against this, but it is difficult to see how else we can trade ourselves out of our economic crisis.

It's interesting that he uses the term "stakeholders" a few times, instead of "social partners". Is he ashamed of social partnership?

In retrospect one of the weaknesses of Social Partnership was that it was laid on for the Trade Unions by Haughey. The Trade Unions didn't fight for it and therefore never understood what they had: what other explanation is there for them rolling over in the face of the *Sunday Independent's* criticism of Fás?

The Trade Unions didn't have the imagination to see Social Partnership as having the potential to improve productivity—both in the private and public sector—and a means for the economy to be run on more "social", lines with a more "dirigist" State in terms of the economy.

## CREDIT FROM THE BANKS

The head of the ISME (Irish Small and Medium Enterprises) Mark Fielding has accused the banks of not lending to business. One of the problems is that the banks don't have the money to lend. Many individuals and businesses have been withdrawing money out of the Irish banking system. Bank credit cannot be created out of thin air. And yet the Long Fellow has not heard any business organisation denouncing the withdrawal of funds from the banking system. It is all the fault of the Government and the Banks. No responsibility rests with ordinary citizens?

In truth the banks have lost the ability— if they ever had it in the first place—to lend to business. They are incapable of evaluating business plans and don't even attempt to. The Long Fellow had no difficulty obtaining finance to replace company cars but, when he wanted to invest in machines, his credit application was rejected. For investments "without wheels" a personal guarantee is required. The banks can easily repossess a car in the

event of default and sell it on, but it is less easy to sell the machines of defaulting debtors.

The car industry (so-called) is booming again. The pent up demand of the last couple of years has been released in early 2011. The enormous number of new cars, which were lying in fields in West Dublin, have been sold. But the Irish economy will not have a sustainable recovery by such a "stimulus package". The limited supply of credit should not be allowed to be used to stimulate consumption spending. Credit should be directed towards production.

## THE ECONOMY AND POLITICS

The *Long Fellow* voted for Fianna Fáil on the basis of its economic policies. That party at least understood that an economic recovery can only be driven by the export sector. All the other parties resorted to populist policies, such as "stimulus" packages which cannot be sustained in an economy of high personal and public debt.

Micheál Martin was quite impressive in defending his party's economic policies, although the *Long Fellow* is sceptical of some of the Fianna Fáil leader's ideas on political reform. Martin really exposed the shallowness of Fine Gael's policies in the English language debate of the 3 party leaders. It was quite pathetic to hear Kenny suggest viewers look at [www.finegaele.ie](http://www.finegaele.ie) when pressed by Martin on the detail of Fine Gael's policies.

Brian Lenihan wasn't bad, but people were not impressed with his view that Europe was "shocked" by calls for debt default. Under the circumstances the Long Fellow felt that there was some benefit in shocking the EU even though he himself is against a unilateral default.

Perhaps "shocked" is too strong a word, but the *Long Fellow* was certainly surprised at the inability of other leading Fianna Fáil politicians to defend Government policy. For example, Mary Hanafin was completely incapable of answering a simple question from Vincent Browne on why the State had recently paid 700 million in unguaranteed senior debt from *Anglo Irish Bank*. Who knows... Mary Hanafin's weak performance and Mary Lou McDonald's strong performance on Vincent Browne's show could have contributed to one Mary losing the final seat in Dun Laoghaire and the other Mary gaining the last seat in Dublin Central.

## BANK AND SOVEREIGN DEBT

It might be unpopular to defend repaying Anglo's 700 million in "private debt", but there is certainly a very strong case for doing so. Firstly, Anglo Irish Bank is a State-owned bank. Therefore Anglo's debt is the State's debt. Not repaying the debt is tantamount to a sovereign default with all the implications that follow for the State's ability to borrow.



But, secondly, even if Anglo was not a nationalised bank, defaulting on such senior debt, which has the same legal status as deposits, would have serious implications for the banking system in this country. No Euro-zone bank has defaulted on senior debt. Recently, a small Danish Bank went bust and the *un-guaranteed* (the Danes followed Ireland with a State Guarantee) senior debt was not paid in full by the State. Even though the bank in question was a fraction of the size of Irish Nationwide, the consequences included a downgrading of the credit rating of the very successful Danske bank (owners of National Irish Bank). Non-payment by Anglo would have made it far more difficult for the other Irish banks to raise finance in the future.

Thirdly, the EU doesn't want us to renege on any senior debt. One could say to the EU to "get stuffed", but Ireland unlike Denmark is dependent on the European Central Bank. The ECB has lent about 150 billion to Irish banks. Also, a unilateral default would mean we could kiss good bye to the 67.5 billion bail out fund (50 billion of which is earmarked for current day to day spending). All of this could be done, but we should be honest in facing up to the consequences. The first consequence would be leaving the Euro, with all that that would mean for our industrial policy. The second would be a rapid and quick readjustment of our current budget deficit. So much for the much vaunted "*stimulus packages*".

In conclusion, the consequences of not paying would be more damaging than the pain of paying.

#### THE IRISH PRESS

The inability of senior Fianna Fáil politicians to defend their policies is, on reflection, not that surprising. The intellectual running on the financial crisis has been made by media personalities hostile to that party. At every stage Fianna Fáil was placed on the back foot. The media's self righteousness was not diminished by the fact that some of its leading personalities have chopped and changed (e.g. David McWilliams on the Guarantee) or that, when it came to walking the walk as well as talking the talk, others were found wanting (e.g. Fintan O'Toole, Eamon Dunphy) The media never criticises itself.

After its ideological collapse following the Arms Conspiracy Trial in 1970, Fianna Fáil's only selling point has been its ability to run the economy. But in this election its only defence of its performance prior to 2007 was that none of the other political parties would have done any differently. If Fianna Fáil is reduced to saying that it was no worse than the other parties as far as running the economy is concerned, the whole basis for its support is undermined.

Fianna Fáil will not recover its position as the leading party of the State unless it

can challenge the media and reassert the values of its founding fathers. In short it is in a similar position to where it was in 1926.

The pro-British *Irish Times* and the *Redmondite Independent* newspaper group will be only too happy to kick the Party when it is down. Unless it can re-establish the *Irish Press* or an equivalent newspaper it will be consigned to the status of a niche party.

It is interesting to note the historical role of *Independent* newspapers in suppressing competition. In the 1920s it took over the *Freeman's Journal* to ensure that it would never be published again. And in the 1990s it made a deal with the *Irish Press Group* to prevent that newspaper

from reviving.

The deal with the *Irish Press Group* should be revisited. In this era of competition law, it is difficult to see how there could be a legal impediment to the newspaper's revival. The Long Fellow suspects that up until now, the real obstacle has been a lack of political will. In the 1920s when the *Independent* took over the *Freeman's journal* it found it necessary to include the *Freeman's Journal* in its masthead. The reason for this was that if it did not continue to publish the name of the newspaper, the ownership of the *Freeman's Journal* name would lapse. The Independent Group never took this precaution with the *Irish Press* name.

## Readymade Caricatures by Keane and Sons Ltd., Listowel.

I have always seen John B Keane's plays and work as caricatures of Irish life. That struck me the first time I ever saw, or rather heard, *Sive*, on radio. I was not surprised it was rejected by the Abbey at the time, even though it was run by a fellow Blueshirt of Keane's, Ernest Blythe. It was one of the few things on which I would have agreed with Blythe. Now Keane's *The Field* is doing the rounds and is loved by the critics as a perfect reflection of the Irish hunger for land.

This hunger is supposed to be in the Irish DNA and explains most of Irish history and personality. The fact is that individual ownership of land was unknown in Gaelic Ireland. Land and its inheritance was a strictly communal affair, with well worked out rules and laws about ownership and inheritance, as was the decision about the choice of ruler. The later fight for the land was a means of fighting to preserve a way of life. I know of no society that could preserve itself without preserving its basic source of sustenance and existence. It was the communal aspect of the society that ensured the victory of the land war. It had to be, as the effort was doomed if the land was to be won just by individual effort and individual greed. For example, boycotting would be meaningless and inconceivable as an individual effort. The land was fought for communally via the Land League and communality was the key weapon. Primogeniture was a latecomer to Ireland.

Real land hunger can be seen in the people who crossed seas and oceans to drive native peoples off their land by any and every means. 'The Bull' of Keane's play has a very limited ambition compared to them—he did not even have ambitions beyond his townland! Kerry and Listowel was festooned with such people for

centuries, but John B was never able to extend his imagination to put some of these people and their greed on the stage—his characters were strictly for the type of Irishman that suits the stage.

For example, the Board of Trinity College Dublin had tens of thousands of fields in Kerry that they had got through grabbing, confiscation and slaughter. John B. could have thousands of stories from among all of them that would make the Bull McCabe look like a pussy cat. He could, for example, have taken the case of just one of their tenants: "*...a thatched cottage without land in the village of Ballylongford. The walls were for years so out of plumb that the little cottage was unsafe to live in.... The widow Carmody receives outdoor relief, has six children, three of whom suffer from bone disease.... She is miserably poor.*" However, the College insisted on getting its full pound of flesh of £11 from her for it, when they sold it to the tenant under the Land Acts. The unfortunate Mrs. Carmody lived to see the cottage destroyed by Crown Forces on 23rd February 1921. What a story that would make!

John B's nephew, Fergal Keane, Esq., OBE, carries on the caricaturing tradition in the new television series on Irish History. This is billed as Ireland's '*hidden history*', the history we were never told. In an item in the *Irish Times* promoting it, Keane begins with Strabo's caricature. Strabo's views on Ireland were and are about as applicable and relevant to Ireland as his map of it is—useless. But it's a negative view naturally enough, coming from a Greco-Roman who viewed the world outside the Roman Empire as barbarian.

Keane seems to take Strabo's views as objective fact for then—and for now! He

begins a piece in the *Irish Times*:

"The Greek geographer Strabo, writing around 24 BC, described the Irish as people 'who deemed it commendable to devour their deceased fathers'. It was a trait that would remain constant, as the public cannibalising of Fianna Fáil in recent months must surely testify."

We are expected to take this as history nowadays. And it is today's type of history. Pick a theme and/or a caricature and then find the evidence to back it up. The number of themes can be limitless and contradictory but what matter—it is great way to claim that you have discovered something new. And you can connect Strabo with Fianna Fail in one sentence. Times, places, context can be played around with and it's all very titillating. Forget narrative and old fashioned notions like establishing cause and effect—how boring that would be.

The Strabo theme goes on. We are told we like to arrange that leaders fall from grace, to devour them as the man said, and Parnell's fall is mentioned. Then, "*After a long period of comparative calm—one might even call it dullness—we returned in the 1990s to an age when political leaders could spectacularly fall from grace*". The hundred years after Parnell was calm and dull! I don't think John Redmond and his generation of Home Rulers would think so, as they were part of the biggest, fastest and most extensive political culling (or devouring) in Irish history. But facts must not ruin a theme. The events of a hundred years that included, *inter alia*, a land war, a political liberation war, the creation of a new state, a world war, an economic war, another world war must be classified as calm and dull to prove a notion.

When it comes to caricatures Keane has stiff competition from Eoghan Harris. In the *Sunday Independent* of 6th February he gave his current world view and the lessons drawn from his life which now guide his view of the world:

"But like most of my Sixties generation, I never wanted to be wealthy. All I wanted was to change the world. So I signed up for socialism. Like all Platonic projects for a perfect society, it ended in tears. Today, I am still wary of those who want to change the world. All the horrors of the past hundred years, two World Wars and the Holocaust, were caused by men who wanted to change the world. Those who just wanted to cultivate their gardens gave little grief. But they still paid the price for the political fantasies of fascists and communists."

There is a chronological problem here that will always arise when narrative is

ignored. A hundred years ago there were no fascists or modern communists in existence. Therefore they cannot be blamed for causing the changes in the world since then, changes that Harris says began 100 years ago. But there were people who were then changing the world and determined to change it even more drastically. They were in the British Government which had already changed the world beyond recognition and had decided on a world war to further extend the British Empire beyond anything ever seen before. They were real revolutionaries. They started WWI and involved about three dozen major countries in it. Nothing could be the same afterwards and nothing was.

Most of the 'advanced' world's political systems were destroyed and their societies reduced to its elements, a political state of nature. From this wreckage elemental politics was an inevitable outcome—hence communism, fascism, racism, nationalisms and fundamentalisms of all sorts came to dominate as desperate alternatives were sought to *restore* some order to the world that was destroyed. Peoples had had more change than they ever wished for. But like Mr. Keane and so many others Harris can only rant on because that

little matter of cause and effect is turned upside down—the role of the biggest elephant in the parlour is made invisible—and history becomes simply a meaningless jumble.

A natural result of this is to hate the very idea of history—who could like nonsense? The *Irish Examiner* had an editorial welcome for Mr. Keane's history as follows:

"In so many ways history, like drink, is the curse of the Irish. Its consequences are, naturally, culturally unavoidable but in too many instances, provoke bitterness, disappointment and for far too long, even violence... This evening RTÉ begins a new series—Story of Ireland at 10.15—that will challenge some beliefs and advance new theories. We have been used by history for too long and if this programme helps us to reverse that relationship it will be another contribution towards a better understanding of ourselves and a better Ireland" (8 February, 2010).

But hating history means hating oneself as the two are inseparable. There is nothing you can do about that and it is a case of getting to grips with it or giving up on it, which is giving up on oneself.

Jack Lane

A Reply To Jeff Dudgeon

## Casement And True Belief

"Brendan Clifford wrote in November, '*The 1916 affair is about the British state*', and he is correct, but the great failing of Irish Republicanism is separation from the truth, a failing well-attested to in the last forty years. Exaggeration, and denial of the obvious, ill becomes a cause of substance, rendering it ultimately ineffectual, where it matters most, in Ireland..."

That's Jeffrey Dudgeon on my review of his *apologia* for Peter Hart.

So I'm an Irish Republican, denying the obvious, and separated from the truth now, because I gave up on my attempt to democratise the political life of the Six Counties within the democratic politics of Britain when most of the Protestants who had taken part in that effort, including Dudgeon, reverted to the Union Jackery of Protestant communal Unionism. Very well. I know the Ulsterish way of these things. Twenty years ago I wrote off twenty years of effort in the face of the Union Jackery. Dudgeon chooses not to comment on the account I gave of that. Very well. That means it stands uncontradicted.

At the outset, in early January 1970 as I recall, I discussed the course of action on which I spent twenty years of my life with somebody who was on the way to becoming a very effective Provo. I was told that I would waste my time because the Unionist mentality had stuck itself in a rut and could never leave it. Twenty years later I had to concede that point. I suppose in a way—certainly in the Ulsterish way—that makes me a Republican. I had acknowledged all along that I saw the Provo project as the coherent alternative to mine.

Since Dudgeon does not take issue with what I said about Hart, or about how he and his colleagues destroyed the Campaign for Labour Representation and Campaign for Equal Citizenship, his charge that I deny the obvious etc. must have to do with my remarks on the Casement Diary carry-on.

I have described those who hold Dudgeon's view as dogmatists because they condemn as "*being in denial*" those who, during the forty years when there was no Casement Diary to be seen, did not accept it as genuine. And that is a more

irrational position than any Papal dogma I can think of. I know that many Protestants find the Immaculate Conception dogma mind-boggling (I suppose because it is the most recent). But it is not an affront to reason in the way that Dudgeon's stance on disbelievers in the diary during those 40 years is. It relates to something outside the world of experience. And I found that some of those who saw the Immaculate Conception as the last word in Catholic idolatry or superstition believed as a matter of course in the Virgin Birth, which does relate to the world of experience and presumes a miraculous over-riding of the course of nature. And I found that there were others who misunderstood the Immaculate Conception as being the Virgin Birth, and were surprised to find that they believed in the Virgin Birth, or at least that their belief-system included it.

Documents were shown to Important People by the Government in 1916 in order to dissuade them from petitioning for a reprieve of Casement. Those documents purported to be from Casement's Diary, and to show him as engaging in homosexual practices. People were silenced by them. Casement was hanged. The Diary disappeared.

As I recall, some of those who showed the Diary around to their friends in order to show Casement as a degenerate did so in good faith and expected that their faith would be justified when the Diary became a public document. But what happened was that a Diary was officially not even admitted to exist for forty years after those 1916 documents had been used for a hanging. It did not seem to me to be unreasonable to suppose that the 1916 documents were probably forgeries. But it is very unreasonable to characterise failure to believe that an unseen document was genuine as "*being in denial*". But that is what Dudgeon, and his colleague W.J. McCormack, did. And it was this irrationality on the part of the vehement assertors of the authenticity of the document eventually put in the Public Record Office that made me sceptical about it.

In his book, *Roger Casement, The Black Diaries, with a study of his background, sexuality, and Irish political life*, he says:

"It would take a long time to revisit all those discussions. And it would be especially tedious as there is, or was thought to be, a dividing line between those, like Dr. William Maloney, who was writing in 1936 with no knowledge of the content of the diaries beyond a few terse descriptions about immorality and perversion, and those who read the 1959 publication" (p520).

*There is, or was thought to be!* All that was known in 1936 was that in 1916 the Government had shown around dirty photos, and had got all of them back again, so that there was nothing to be seen. Maloney is condemned for not believing in what was not there to be seen, and might not be there at all—or might not yet be there. And Dudgeon was not sure there was really any difference between that refusal to accept authenticity, and the refusal when a document was at least presented 23 years later. Blessed are they who believed what could not be seen!

On historical grounds, and on the grounds of provenance, scepticism should be the basis of approach to the 1959 document. Then, if one was somehow persuaded of its authenticity, it should be conceded that there was ample ground for scepticism during the 43 years years of Government refusal to present anything in support of its 1916 actions, or even to admit that it had shown something to a select few in 1916.

But that would not do, because the object was to use the controversy to damage the morale of nationalist Ireland through its presumed homophobia. And it seemed to me at times to involve the exploitation of that presumed homophobia in the interests of Unionism. The blending of homosexualist and Unionist propaganda was unpleasant but futile.

*"Clifford makes display of one fact only"*. Following the historical approach I asked if anyone who had been shown a dirty photo in 1916 was about in 1959 to look at what the Government presented then. I was told there was only one, and he did not think the two were similar. Since Dudgeon does not dispute this, I take it to be the case. But he explains it away with "*seems*" and "*perhaps*". I doubt if the opinion of the only witness to both would have been dismissed so airily if he had said they were similar.

"whether Casement was a Traitor depends entirely on whose side you were on. But to regard it as inappropriate for the diaries to be used against Casement is to think like much of the Liberal establishment in London. In almost any other country it would have been unthinkable NOT to have used them..."

The shred of Liberal principle that still survived after two years of war had to do with the principle of nationalism that Whitehall declared one of its reasons for making war, the other being democracy. Italy was drawn into the War by an appeal to its irredentist expansionism (of which Mussolini was a propagandist). Some

Austrian subjects responded to the irredentist call and were executed as traitors. Austria was condemned by London for not acknowledging the nationalist principle a short time before Casement was sentenced to death because he acted on that principle. Some influential people were uneasy about the blatant duplicity. Hence the dirty photos.

*"Are the British to be blamed for so using them?"* "Blame" is not a word I often use. When Britain starts wars it does whatever helps to win them. The 1914 line was that the destruction of Germany was necessary so that civilisation might survive. A few years earlier Balfour shocked the US Ambassador by remarking that it might be necessary for Britain to make war on Germany to remain top dog (see Pat Walsh, *The Rise And Fall Of Imperial Ireland*, p524). During the War Major Street (later a Dublin Castle propagandist against the Irish) published books asserting the Top Dog view so that the military would not lose themselves in a morass of bogus morality. He later went on to publish semi-official black propaganda against the French who, having borne the main *Entente* cost of the War, were in danger of becoming Top Dog in Europe again. In that situation, dominated by the collaboration of Top-Doggers and Saviours of Civilisation, what space was there for morality? Morale was what counted, and it was better served by lies than the truth.

*A la guerre comme a la guerre!* And no other state ran the "*moral*" aspect of war as well as England. It is only on the decision to wage war that there can be worthwhile discussion of morality. Britain, free of treaty engagements, nurtured Europe towards war, concealing its own intentions, and then entered the war from an assumed position of strength, and set about expanding it in order to acquire possessions in Africa and the Middle East. Casement published a book about that, *The Crime Against Europe*. It was his only book. It does not appear in the Bibliography of Dudgeon's book, or the Index, or the text.

But he finds space for a '*Vindication*' of Casement published in 1998 in an edition of a magazine called *The Barnes Review*, which is, he says, "*an unashamed pro-Nazi, anti-Jewish journal*" (p624).

This is one of a great many indicators that for Dudgeon history is special pleading in some cause—or an unpleasant blending of two causes, homosexualist and Ulster Unionist.

Richard Hayes of the National Library

had some connection with the Diary issue and appears in Dudgeon's narrative:

"That Dr. Hayes had worked as a code breaker in Irish Intelligence, during what was named in Dublin the Emergency, the Second World War, has not escaped the attention of those intent on finding evidence for conspiracy" (p543).

I lived during that War in the depths of Southern Ireland and never heard it called anything but the Second World War. When I asked what it was about my mother said that England seemed to need a big war every twenty years. Much later, seeing it stated that in Ireland the World War could not be named and was referred to only as *The Emergency*—this nonsense even

appeared on BBC's *University Challenge*—I looked up the Dublin and Cork newspapers of the time and could not find a single instance of it being called anything but the World War. But a few years later there actually was a war that was not called *The War* but *The Emergency*. That was Britain's dirty war in Malaya. I saw it explained that, because it was not officially decreed to be a war, it did not come under new laws relating to war that were briefly thought to have been established by the Nuremberg Trials.

I have just seen that Dudgeon intends to contest a Trinity seat for the Senate. This warrants a closer look at his view of "*Irish political life*".

**Brendan Clifford**

## The Gay Casement and Evidence from the Archives

This article is prompted by a letter from Jeffrey Dudgeon to the *Irish Political Review*, which appeared in the January 2011 issue under the heading *Forgery Or Fact*.

This in turn referred to an earlier article of December 2010 from this writer, which expressed reservations about the more or less official British view of the Casement story.

Dudgeon's arguments tended to rely on archival evidence. But should the content of archives be accepted without question? Archives receive the fruits of human activities and humans, as a species, have achieved notoriety for deceit and double dealing. One would be well advised to tread carefully.

Messages to the Foreign Office from Mr. Findlay, the British Minister in Christiania, the then capital of Norway, referring to "*improper and unnatural*" relations between Casement and his Norwegian man-servant Adler Christensen, began on 29th October 1914. The two were travelling *incognito* from the United States to Germany via Norway during the first months of the First World War.

According to *Diaries of Sir Roger Casement—His Mission to Germany and the Findlay Affair* (1922), edited by Dr Charles E. Curry, an American friend and supporter, Casement wrote of (page 41) "*very peculiar incidents that followed my arrival at Christiania on 28-29 October*".

In Casement's view the centrepiece of these incidents was an offer from Findlay to Christensen of £5,000, then a substantial sum, in return for Christensen becoming a British agent. The plan was to have Casement captured or killed with the assistance of the young Norwegian. Christensen pretended to comply and then reported

what happened back to Casement. It was Casement's expressed wish that this happening be made known to the world.

The British archives present a different story whereby Christensen, on his own initiative, presents himself to Findlay and offers to betray Casement. There is an absolute contradiction between the version of events that the archives present and the version which Casement wished to present. Both can not be true.

It could be argued Casement was mistaken and was taken in by Christensen who was a nastier character than he realised.

On the other hand, maybe the reports in the archives of a sexual relationship between the two men are part of an elaborate cover story developed to discredit Christensen and Casement after the plot fell through.

There are two ways to picture the events. One way takes the archival material at face value. The other way discounts it.

Dudgeon also mentioned that Christensen, according to the archives, arrived at the British consulate in Philadelphia in 1916 with an offer to testify against Casement shortly before he was due to go on trial in London. Then Jeffrey tells us "*before his proposal was considered he bolted*".

The question arises as to how credible this piece of information is. There is no corroborating data. Christensen appears and then as suddenly disappears. The report could just as easily have been invented and written down and then mailed to London.

Séamas O Síocháin in *Roger Casement, Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary* (2008) refers to a number of statements made by

Norwegians who could have claimed to have encountered Casement and Christensen in Christiania, which lie in British archives. Unfortunately he does not quote from the statements. One hotel worker claimed to have seen the two men in a hotel room, together on a bed in an obviously sexual position. The door apparently had been left unlocked. When one considers that the two men were meant to be travelling as quietly and secretly as possible during wartime, the scenario takes on the look of a shabbily-written comedy sketch. The testimonies of the Norwegians regarding the alleged sexual antics of the two sound stilted and contrived.

The archives claim the famed Diaries first came into the hands of the authorities on the 25th April 1916, when the landlord of Casement's apartment in Ebury St, London, handed them in. But this, too, is a strange story. As Dr. Christopher Andrew, the MI5 historian, wrote in his monumental history of that organisation, *The Defence of the Realm* (page 53): "*War with Germany raised British spy mania to unprecedented heights*". *The Defence of the Realm Act* (DORA) was brought in to deal with enemy spying and sabotage by giving many new powers to the authorities. Given that these knew of Casement's mission to Germany, it is very odd that they did not use the new powers the Act gave them to search his apartment and belongings and so to discover his diaries. It should be mentioned that Gertrude Banister, his cousin, believed the diaries had been found in 1914.

After Casement arrived in Germany he provoked an anxiety there that he was actually spying for the British. As a result German intelligence agents discretely followed him and observed his movements and behaviour. There is no reference in the German archives to any clandestine homosexual lifestyle. *Prelude to the Easter Rising—Sir Roger Casement in Imperial Germany* (2000) by Reinhard Doerries tells the story.

Apparently it is only in material that has passed through the hands of British intelligence where the gay Casement emerges.

"*That the Bible carries almost all the evidence for Jesus has not made it difficult for historians to accept his existence*", wrote Jeffrey by way of analogy with the Black Diaries being the "*core proof of Casement's (gay) sexual orientation*".

The above statement about the Bible earnest research will reveal to be untrue. The historicity of Jesus is a matter about which there is no consensus among historians of the ancient world.

That the British Establishment would not press a charge of sodomy on "*grounds*

of taste and fairness" is hard to accept. Casement was a traitor in their eyes, after all. Why did they not at least confront Casement with the self-incriminating diaries? Why did they not interview Millar Gordon?

In the case of the man variously known as Bailey or Beverley who travelled with Casement and Monteith on the U-boat, and who gave himself up in County Kerry and who was, it seems, allowed to return to the British Army, his experience may reveal more than the lack of vindictiveness of the authorities. There is a serious suspicion that he was a spy. This explains why he was so ready to give himself up and why he got off so lightly.

It is true as Jeffrey has argued that, if the diaries were forged and Millar was

interviewed and convincingly denied any sexual aspect to his relationship with Casement, the conspiracy could come to grief. But Millar was not interviewed. It could be that this reflects the real intent of powerful figures such as Basil Thomson, head of Special Branch and Reginald Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence. It could be they did not wish to have him interviewed while pretending that they did. By pretending to seek the opposite of their real intentions, professional deceivers can cover up their actual aims and plans.

In summary; the archival material on the gay Casement contains much that appears questionable. In addition, it is not convincingly corroborated by outside sources.

**Tim O'Sullivan**  
(27 Feb. 2011)

## Rubbishing Sinn Fein

The *Guardian*, (13.12.10), in its reprinting of the Wikileaks (a boon for idle scribblers), reproduced some involving Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. He told the US Ambassador that he "knew" the Provisional IRA had robbed the Northern Bank. Ahern did not bring forward any evidence to back his assertion. It was an *ex cathedra* statement—of the sort the mere Bishop of Rome might be a bit bashful about issuing. A number of 'revisionist' journalists took what Bertie Ahern said as 'Bible'.

Liam Clarke, in his *Belfast News Letter* (14.12.10) Column was first out, providing something of a template. He insists that Sinn Féin was subsidised by the IRA-SF, which "was itself funded by the proceeds of outright robbery". Including the "26 million taken by the IRA from the Northern Bank in a single day", and from other "high value heists". Journalists love the word 'heist', possibly because it is essentially meaningless. The other robberies are not enumerated. It is more than conceivable that they (and the Northern Bank 'heist') are figments of the imaginations of the Big Guard who told Bertie Ahern. He was also informed that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were members of the IRA Army Council. The Big Guard was probably given that information by a Big Peeler (an RIC... RUC... PSNI: whatever the set of initials, the police in the North have never been inclined to truth-telling about the Republican movement in any of its forms).

One form republicanism was the 'Official' IRA. It funded the Republican Clubs / 'Official' SF / SF the Workers' Party / the WPI (Workers' Party of Ireland). It was many years before the leaders of the latter Party were asked, in Northern Ireland

at least, how come they had the glossiest and most expensive election material, despite being very small. (See the Linen Hall Library's *Troubled Images* CD for evidence). Liam Clarke (now Political Editor of the *Belfast Telegraph*) started his journalistic career on the WPI's *Northern People* periodical. If the PIRA is funding Sinn Féin, with the lavish takings from various 'heists', it is being quite mean.

Sinn Féin's election, and other published, material, including *An Phoblacht*, is not lavishly produced. The paper is now monthly, not weekly. Its productions are well designed but by no means lavish.

Gerry Adams is accused of lying about this matter. According to Sam Smyth (*Irish Independent* 14.12.10), there was an "amused and knowing giggle" from "political and security sources in Belfast, London and Dublin" about his air of "injured innocence", when asked about this matter. It does not seem to have struck these commentators that Adams is bored by these questions. They are of no relevance to Sinn Féin's political programme.

An RUC spook said on television shortly after the Northern Bank robbery that the IRA was the only organisation capable of doing such a job. Of course, the spooks could well have done the job. Or they could have made it possible for some other 'agencies' to rob this particular building, which was the very large headquarters bank in the centre of Belfast—just beside the busiest bus terminal in the town. Audaciously, the robbers simply parked a big white van beside the side entrance and walked away with over 25 millions. This was in the run-up to Christmas (Dec., 20th) 2004, when the town would have been crowded with shoppers (not to mention police and private security personnel). Presumably the haul was mainly in banknotes. Northern Bank notes are—literally—plastic. This is an Australian fashion. (The Northern Bank is owned

by an Australian company.) And much of the money was in idiosyncratic Northern Bank notes.

(Four Northern Ireland banks—and four more Scottish ones—are allowed to produce their own banknotes. This leads to multi-coloured contents in wallets and purses and to headaches for shop workers. Apart from having to sort through all this—one Scottish bank still produces a one pound note. It looks exactly like an Ulster Bank fiver, and is only a tiny bit smaller. Until Cecil Walker, the UUP MP for Belfast, North, began to ask parliamentary questions about the matter, the Bank of England's supervision of the Ulster banks was a decidedly light hand on the tiller. It hazarded a guess at what their liabilities were—and they printed money *ad lib*. Until comparative recently ATM's in Northern Ireland consistently spat out fresh notes.)

Both Liam Clarke and Sam Smyth mention Ted Cunningham—for Clarke he is "the ageing Cork moneylender", for Smyth he is a "financier". A "garda surveillance team had seen Gerry Adams meet" Cunningham. (This is in line with the picture that adorns Smyth's article. It is captioned 'A young Gerry Adams is pictured wearing a black beret at a funeral in Belfast in 1971'. Clear evidence of the fact that Gerry Adams attended a funeral!

Clarke writes that Cunningham was given money "some... in brown cartons by Sinn Fein members", who aren't named. Neither Clarke nor Smyth mention the fact that a very large quantity of the proceeds of the 'heist' in question turned up in the police recreation club in New Forge Lane, off Belfast's Upper Malone Road. This is despite the fact that it is solid, actual evidence, and not the speculation that involves 'Sinn Féin / IRA'.

Wikileaks led to an outburst of wishful thinking on the part of the journalists who have done well out of the war. Denouncing the IRA and all its works and pomps (which included Sinn Féin) paid well. Gerry Adams is now leading a substantial party in Dáil Éireann. Will the hacks now have to look elsewhere for their dosh!

**Seán McGouran**

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## The Dream Of Sir John Davies

The *Irish Political Review* Editor praises the Earl of Strafford, Viceroy of Ireland from 1633 to 1640 (editorial comment, December 2010), as if the ideal towards which he was striving was the reality of what he did.

The clearest example of this concerns the law. It is said that "*he enforced the law against powerful interests in Ireland and insisted that contracts be adhered to by great as well as small*". But there was one at least one exception to that: Strafford himself. He was a very great man and an extremely powerful interest, and he was above the law.

Violating a pledge given by his predecessor Falkland, who had confirmed the Connacht landowners' property rights, Strafford proposed to confiscate and plant about half of the land of Connacht, which had too many Papists on it all together. The confiscation could not be done Ulster-style, because the owners had not been in rebellion. So juries had to be summoned in the various Counties, their task being to discover that the owners did not in fact have title and their lands belonged to the King.

Juries were duly selected. In most cases they found what they were supposed to find. The Galway jury, however, found that the present owners had title. For picking a rogue jury, Strafford had the sheriff of Galway thrown into prison, where he died; the jurors were given enormous fines and were imprisoned also, and they were told they would not be released till they made an admission that they had perjured themselves when finding against the King's title. Because they refused to do this, they were left in prison for three years.

Connacht escaped its plantation only because the King had a pressing need of ready money. Extortion offered more short-term benefits than confiscation. The landowners paid substantial sums, and they were reprieved. (No doubt they considered their reprieve temporary. On past experience they must have been fools if they didn't.)

I am sure that this story isn't news to the *Irish Political Review* Editor. Is it a case of, you can't make omelettes without breaking eggs, and today we may have to have tyranny if we're going to have the rule of law tomorrow? Strafford, anyhow, is made a special case, not to be judged by the standards of other mortals.

We are told that he was applying the English policy of genocide in a milder manner than others, and the Irish were adapting well to it. Under his direction the English State was reconstructing the Irish population in a new society, under a rule of law which was equally applicable to all. The Editor has much understanding for a man who was taking on such a difficult task. And so Strafford's actual legal proceedings are described in terms of what probably was his ideal, just as it had been the ideal of John Davies a generation earlier.

It is acknowledged that Strafford did not break with pre-existing English policy, either subjectively or objectively. So, if we're to judge him by his ideal, why can't we do the same for Chichester? And especially for John Davies, a great organizer and a fine writer, architect of the Ulster Plantation and the all-Ireland system of English law, and prophet of an Ireland where all would be peaceful and prosperous, loyal and law-abiding, English and happy?

"Strafford did not dissent from the English genocidal policy in Ireland, but his application of it was mild by comparison with what Chichester and Mountjoy and Francis Drake did... He had the normal English understanding that Ireland had to be made like England, but he did not see this being done by systematic killing of the Irish, or by forced conversions."

But Chichester too was mild in 1615, if compared to the Chichester of 1600.

However much Chichester may have enjoyed large-scale killing, he did not practise it when there was no rebellion, nor did Grey or Mountjoy. There was no rebellion in Strafford's time, and there hadn't been for 20-odd years before he came. But, if Strafford had actually been faced with a serious revolt (and it wasn't inconceivable, at least not to him: he made certain provisions to meet one), is it certain he wouldn't have reverted to the policies of organized famine and slaughter?

The policy of forced conversion was pragmatically abandoned in the last years of Chichester's term as Viceroy. It was not abandoned in principle, then or later.

The *Irish Political Review* Editor sweeps all this aside as irrelevant, because the stakes in the coming crisis are seen as being so high. Ireland was going to sink or swim with England, and whatever the Irish might understandably have felt in

earlier times, Irish interests now were completely bound up with the cause of King Charles. If there were other Irish interests, opposed to the King's and Strafford's, the Editor has no patience with them. They could only be petty, partial, particular interests, on much the same level as the Earl of Cork's.

Irish history is reduced to a moment in English history. And the central event in modern Irish history, the 1641 rebellion, is reduced to a mere reaction, a reflex response to a crisis in English politics. The Editor seems to consider "*the 1641 slaughter*" a reasonable description of what happened, while insisting that the slaughterers shouldn't be condemned. After all, they had been removed from Strafford's grand design!—so the blame should be put on those who released them from reconstruction and left them in a state of nature.

Well, I don't believe that the notion of a "*state of nature*" can shed any light on Ireland in 1641. It's a grandiose term of abuse. Ireland had its own civilization which was rooted very deeply in the land, and when people were let out of the iron cage of Straffordite reconstruction they began to function in that civilization again. (This is illustrated even in the *Depositions*, which are valuable historical sources, although not as valuable as the sources in Irish which are universally ignored.)

Ireland did not run amok when "*it was deprived of its government*". In fact, "*its government*" didn't go until given a good hard push, and even then it did not go completely. There were still Lord Chief Justices who managed to frustrate the rebels' attempt to take Dublin Castle, and they afterwards organized a partial defence, directed the Protestant colony, and held onto significant territory, including Dublin.

The earliest phase of rebel activity in Ulster has its horrible side, but distinctions ought to be drawn and what happened should be looked at fair-mindedly. Nicholas Canny made an attempt to do that in an article published some years ago, *What Really Happened In Ireland in 1641?* Using the *Depositions*, i.e. Protestant testimonies, Canny shows that in fact the rebels weren't possessed by a furious lust for blood and slaughter. They were not normally interested in killing the colonists. What they wanted was to take their property and expel them.

There were a few local massacres, the most famous being Portadown. Even those were responses to previous local massacres by the colonists. Such atrocities were not

supported by the rebellion's leaders, and there was frequent evidence of attempts being made to keep the movement under control, particularly by priests. There was not a deliberate campaign of slaughter comparable to that waged by Chichester forty years previously, let alone what was done by Ireton, Hewson, Waller, Coote and Ludlow ten years later.

However, the rebels' practice of stripping people naked and sending them out without food in the wet wintry weather was likely to result, and did result, in a great many deaths. But, once the usurpation (as the Gaels saw it), had been established, there was no way of trying to restore the old order that would not have been horrible.

I cannot do anything like justice here to the rebellion. A number of aims and interests came together within it. First of all, there was the aim of restoring the Gaelic/Norman-Gaelic order. Secondly, there was the aim of putting military and political power in all Ireland in the hands of a unified body of Catholics. And thirdly, there was the aim of ensuring that the effective power in Ireland was not allied with King Charles's Puritan enemies. I think it took great political skill to bind all those interests together, even unifying them institutionally in the Confederation of Kilkenny.

That political skill was at work from the earliest days of the rebellion, which began in Ulster and within a matter of months spread right through the country. Or rather it didn't spread, it was spread! Argument and persuasion was applied. One of the greatest condemnations to be made of Irish academic historians is that they've missed this process of argument and persuasion, because they didn't find it in the English-language sources, though even in the English-language sources it's mentioned fleetingly. (Can we blame the MI5 positivists of UCD? I've no doubt they didn't help.)

Some of the work of agitation was done by priests and friars. But it was also done by a body of men who after all those centuries were still closest to Ireland's heartbeat: the professional poets or *filidh*. I know of six or seven surviving examples of their poems of agitation, though there might be more. Some others which are mentioned in the *Depositions*, e.g. poems to Phelim O'Neill, seem to be lost. These poems are artworks, well composed in demanding metres, and at the same time propaganda. One would think they ought to be noticed.

Nicholas Canny, in the article mention-

ed earlier, was anxious to find some clues in the *Depositions* to the rebels' motivations. I think that's not unreasonable. But I think it's still more reasonable to believe that what the rebels said in their own language to other potential rebels, urging them to join the movement, would be relevant to this issue. In *The Poems of Geoffrey O'Donoghue* I published one of these poems, by Diarmaid Óg Ó Murchadha addressed to Donough MacCarthy, Viscount Muskerry, a very interesting politician indeed.

Donough MacCarthy, like his father before him, had got into the colonists' game of lending other lords money and picking up lands of theirs as securities (which would never be redeemed). He was, as Jane Ohlmeyer approvingly says in the Oxford *DNB* [*Dictionary of National Biography*], definitely solvent, unlike most of his Catholic neighbours in North Cork. In Strafford's Parliaments, 1634 and 1640, he was one of the members for Cork. Richard Boyle, Lord Cork, was his good friend; it was possible that their friendship would soon have been cemented by a Boyle-MacCarthy marriage. Donough was even experimenting with small plantations, bringing in English tenants on some of the rich lands by the Lee.

MacCarthy was the last major Catholic Lord to join the rebellion. His New English friends thought they had reason to believe that he never would. David Dickson quotes from a letter to one of them by Baron Inchiquin (*Old World Colony* p. 15), written just when the rebellion was making its way into North Cork, predicting that MacCarthy's loyalty would hold out against "*the bards and the rhymers*". From this we can gather that poets were known to be putting pressure on him.

The poem by Ó Murchadha, one of the poets whom Muskerry evidently continued to support (another Ó Murchadha or Murphy is described as his Secretary), shows us this pressure actually at work. Though not bloodthirsty, it's the most ferocious of the poems of agitation. But it isn't absurd, incoherent, or for that matter unclear. It gives the other perspective which was temporarily imposed upon a man who was quite an advanced example of Irish-English adaptation.

*"Córa duitse ná d'fhuirinn an Ghalla-Bhéarla/Fódlá dhruidim ó iomar na h-aimiléise*  
Fitter for you than for the English-speaking crew / to heave Ireland out of the trough of misery".

—addressed to a friend and ally of Lord Cork, I suppose that's a sort of comment

on Straffordism. (From the Flight of the Earls to 1641, there are literally dozens of poems which give one to understand just this: that Ireland is in a trough of misery. The poems of agitation without exception confirm this judgment. If we can't trust the literature in Irish, we can pick up some of the horror story from dry English documents in books like Michael MacCarthy-Morrrough's *The Munster Plantation*. A minority of Catholic lords were adapting successfully to the new order, the two best examples being the Viscounts Muskerry and the Earls of Antrim. And the rest were being demoralized, humiliated, disabled, harassed, cheated, and gradually squeezed out.)

There's another 1641 poem by Gofraidh Óg Mac an Bhaire in a National Library manuscript, which as far as I know has never been published, *Deireadh flaithis ag féin Gall* (The English warriors' rule is at an end). I will give a loose translation of the first eight verses.

"The English warriors' rule is at an end; their time has been up a while; they are expelled from their transient good fortune.

If for a period they gained power (unfreely given) in Ireland, time now to disillusion them: it isn't usual that fortune never fails.

According to the authentic knowledge of wise men, they were never promised more than a short space of time over the land of the Irish.

For about thirty years they have held power; and this justifies fury, because nothing was said to them of the sovereignty.

They were promised that a fierce passion of war would boil up between the races of Gael and Gall that no man would be likely to sustain.

After their fighting (alas!) they managed to loosen the hold of all the Gaels, so that no man had a hope of Ireland.

Every prophet of mighty insight promised that the same war would be rekindled in a while all throughout Ireland.

And what the saints of Ireland said is not the same as for the previous time: it is clear that Ireland's warriors will take power over the plains."

The historical, cultural and moral perspective here is drastically different from that which John Davies expressed in his *Discovery Of The True Reasons Why Ireland Was Never Completely Subdued*. I suppose, in English it sounds as bad as John Davies would sound in Irish. And whatever language it's put in, Mac an Bhaire will have much more trouble

connecting with us than Davies does. His belief in prophecy (though it was widespread in the 17th century, even in Protestant England) distances him from us now. And Davies is so bang up to date, he could almost be writing for the *Irish Times*:

"The greatest part of the possessions (as well of the Irish as of the English) in Leinster, Connacht and Munster, are settled and secured since his majesty came to the crown: whereby the hearts of the people are also settled, not only to live in peace, but raised and encouraged to build, to plant, to give better education to their children, and to improve the commodities of their lands; whereby the yearly value thereof is already increased, double of that it was within these few years, and is like daily to raise higher, till it amount to the price of our land in England."

I have no wish to give John Davies less than his due. He's a very gifted writer, he makes a case for his English Ireland, and he should get a hearing. But the fact is, there were too many people in 17th century Ireland who didn't want his English Ireland, they wanted something quite different. They were anxious that England should go off on its great experiment and seek the New Atlantis on its own, and leave Ireland out of it. The *Irish Political Review* Editor seems to want to dismiss them summarily from history—because John Davies's assumptions are accepted, and Strafford is seen as making the dream of Davies come true. But if Gaelic Ireland and those who wished to restore it are left out of account, I think Irish historical facts will never make sense.

**John Minahane**

Government in 1641 and set the scene for the Ulster events.

We said nothing about "*the stakes in the coming crisis*", because we only described the actual crisis.

It is said that by this—

"Irish history is reduced to a moment in English history. And the central event in modern Irish history, the 1641 rebellion, is reduced to a mere reaction, a reflex response to a crisis in English politics"

There was no Irish State. There was only the English State in Ireland. The English State had been constructing itself as an absolute State since the end of the Civil Wars—the Wars of the Roses. Ireland had been taken in hand by this English State and was being reconstructed. An attempt to found an Irish State failed in 1603. Between 1603 and 1641 much Irish blood had been shed by the English State in its efforts of reconstruction. During the 1630s the different social elements in Ireland had been brought into a kind of orderly and purposeful subjection by a Government that was not only strong but competent. It governed by means of Irish Parliaments, as the monarchy had usually governed in England until Parliament got notions beyond its capacities in 1629.

The "*1641 rebellion*", the "*central event in modern Irish history*", happened most of a year after the imprisonment of the Kings Governor of Ireland by the Protestant Millenarian Parliament.

If something like the 1641 events in Ireland had happened in 1639, they should certainly be described as an Irish Rebellion against English Government. But they happened almost a year after the subversion of the English Government by English Rebellion had been launched.

Strict causality in social affairs cannot be shown, but it seems more reasonable to assume that the serious damage to the English Government of Ireland by the English Parliament, when it defamed and assassinated the competent Governor of Ireland—even accusing him of governing Ireland as a conquered country—had something to do with the turn of events in Ireland, than to suppose that it was mere coincidence that these things happened in Ireland after Strafford was assassinated and the Puritan surge took off. (And to talk of the Lord Justices after Strafford is to retreat from substance to form.)

It is difficult to understand the reference to a state of nature as "*a grandiose term of abuse*". In English writings about politics in that general era, the term is used in two major publications. Hobbes deplores it as

### Editorial Response to *The Dream Of Sir John Davies*

## Strafford and the English Rebellion of 1640

Trinity College and the *Irish Times* dragged up a 17th century conflict for their usual purpose. The *Irish Times* headlined the Ulster Catholics as murderers, cultivating a contemporary sentiment that goes far beyond the *Irish Times*, as the conduct of the Fianna Fail leader in the recent election campaign shows. We commented that the "*murderous*" events of 1641 were not set off by an Irish rebellion but by an English rebellion which subverted English Government in Ireland on the ground that it was insufficiently committed to the English Protestant cause as conceived by the Puritan Parliament, and that the regular and peaceful governing of Ireland during the 1630s had contributed to the strengthening of the relatively tolerant regime of Charles 1 that the English Parliament found intolerable.

The Governor of Ireland for the King was imprisoned by Parliament when he went to London and subjected to a Show Trial. When he defended himself too persuasively against the Vyshinsky of the time, John Hampden, he was subjected to a simpler Parliamentary procedure called *Attainder*. A Bill to execute him was passed. He was allowed no defence and there could be no appeal. His execution on Tower Hill was a great public event. Banked accommodation which held thousands of spectators was built for the occasion. The execution was followed by Puritan bonfire celebrations around England. Parliament embarked on its catastrophic 20 year course of Millenarianism.

It is not clear if John Minahane is of the opinion that the English rebellious event that launched the Puritan catastrophe did not have the effect of subverting the effective Government which the executed and defamed Governor had constructed. He does not address that central point of the *Irish Political Review* comment on the Trinity/*Irish Times* sensationalist raking up of a 17th century event for a 21st century purpose. And the points which he does address are not to be found in the editorial.

We said nothing about "*an ideal towards which he was striving*". We only described how Strafford governed the country for six years for the purpose of supporting the monarchy which the English Parliament tried to subvert in the late 1620s, and actually subverted when it was called again in 1640

When we said that he enforced the law against English interests in Ireland, we did not suggest that he subjected himself to law. We said clearly enough that he enforced the law by authority. More than that, we explained that it was his view that law with no authority beyond it was not practically possible, in England any more than in Ireland—and that was the issue on which Strafford gave up the leadership of Parliament in the late 1620s and went into the service of the Government.

We said nothing about Chichester in 1615, or about an infinity of other things, because they had nothing to do with the English rebellion that subverted the Irish



something that any kind of State, however oppressive, is preferable to. But he conceives it unrealistically as a state of complete social atomisation in which every individual is at war with every other individual. Locke said it was nothing to be afraid of and that it was preferable to Government under certain conditions. He did not assume that, in the absence of a Government, there would be a social breakdown into atoms. The elements of society are not individuals but groups of various kinds. He spoke for a grouping of gentry that had learned a lot since 1641, and was confident that it could overthrow a regime which treated them as subjects of a State and take its place as a ruling class with a minimal State subject to it. And, while stirring up the Protestant populace to religious bigotry in order to overthrow the regime in 1688, it ensured that there was no take-off of popular politics as in 1641.

The state of nature, far from being a "grandiose term of abuse", is an idea without which 21st century affairs cannot be understood. "Tyrannies" are being overthrown somewhere every month, urged on by the British, and increasingly the Irish, media, accompanied by a democratic propaganda which implies that the highly artificial structure called *Democracy* is implicit in human nature and will determine the course of things when the 'Tyrant' is knocked down.

The "state of nature" is the condition of things that exists when a system of government is destroyed—when a "regime" is overthrown. The *Irish Political Review* has assumed with regard to these events that systems of government affect the conduct of groups in society, and that, when a regime is destroyed, those groups will not continue in freedom (in a state of nature) as they did within the system of government.

Systems of government curb certain tendencies and encourage others. If one sees what is being curbed one gets some idea of what will flourish when a state of nature is established. Under the Iraqi tyranny, a liberal secular middle class development, with social welfare amenities for the working class, had been growing rapidly. What was being curbed was religious fundamentalism. Elements of the Shia population were being drawn progressively, by curbs and inducements, into the functioning of the regime. There was no liberal secularism waiting to be unleashed by the destruction of the Tyranny. Liberal secularism was being created by the Tyranny. It was on that understanding that we opposed the liberating invasion.

But the International Community—that mesmeric myth from which there is no escape in our time—determined that secular liberalism should be crushed in Iraq and that Islamic fundamentalism should flourish. So be it.

"The Editor seems to consider 'the 1641 slaughter' a reasonable description of what happened, while insisting that the slaughterers shouldn't be condemned. After all, they had been removed from Strafford's grand design!—so the blame should be put on those who released them from reconstruction and left them in a state of nature".

The "1641 slaughter" was our alternative to the "1641 murder campaign" presented by Trinity (one of the colonising forces of the time) and the *Irish Times*.

As far as we know a fair number of colonies were killed. The *Irish Times* said mass murder. We said 'slaughter'. Murder, as we understand it, is killing done in breach of law under an actual system of government—else it is a purely subjectivist term. And this killing, as far as we know, was done by the recently dispossessed against their recent dispossessors after the system of government had been subverted at its source in England.

We said nothing of "Strafford's grand design", only his conduct of government. Sarcastic re-phrasing rarely assists the process of thought.

"Ireland had its own civilisation which was rooted very deeply in the land, and when the people were let out of the iron cage of Straffordite reconstruction they began to function in that civilisation again".

So the execution of Strafford *did have* a causative connection with what happened in Ireland some months later, and the effective government conducted by him did not continue under the Lord Justices? So what is actually being criticised?

The *Irish Political Review* did not suggest that there was not an Irish civilisation, or that Ireland ran amok when effective government ceased.

The country did not "run amok", but neither did it continue to behave as it had done under effective government. Some killing was done on the ground of the Plantation when Strafford's "iron cage" was broken. John Minahane, rejecting the idea of a 'state of nature', seems to moralise about it. We didn't.

What Irish civilisation, or civilisations, did after the "iron cage" was broken goes beyond our rejection of the Trinity/*Irish Times* view of the Ulster events.

It was Millenarian English rebellion

that set off that sequence of events in Ireland, and that bungling Millenarianism gave up the ghost and submitted to Monarchy 19 years later after making a mess of Ireland.

We would have thought that our contemptuous treatment of the Cromwell fiasco in England—affronting another mesmeric myth—was the thing that would have made hackles rise. And maybe it was.

### **IT'S A WILD LIFE IN MESOPOTAMIA**

They export *democracy* and get paid in dead bodies and the mutilated. They talk of freedom while insulated by private armed guards commercially led.

They talk of reconstruction and then build more bases, more prisons, more torture cells.

They see history as a bagatelle, keeping no record of those they have killed.

The Mesopotamia Marshes drained, now partially re-hydrated, bird count by the TV crew, a joy unrestrained.

The violence they caused denied to denounce

the sectarian government that they trained. I.D.s in mind, armoured jeeps they mount.

**Wilson John Haire**  
20<sup>th</sup> January, 2011

### **PARLIAMENT IS NOW IN SESSION**

The hyenas sniff the air, something died. The flies will soon lay their eggs on the carcass.

They move when the land is at its darkest. But the lion sprints to see them defied.

There is a great roaring on the hot plain. The chimpanzees, teeth bared, scream loudly.

The zebra spits, kicks fore and aft, rowdily. They stir in their crude nests, awake, these cranes.

Just keep out, this is my territory, owned it yesterday, must be ours today.

Animals are always transitory. Their alpha leaders will soon be at bay.

Believe me, our aims are arbitrary, not feasting on the downed our *métier*.

**Wilson John Haire**  
22nd February, 2011

## es ahora \*

### THE 31ST DAIL ELECTIONS

When I was asked to do a Fianna Fail party canvass in my area, there was much jocularly among the others about whether Party Headquarters had the money to fit us with Kevlar vests or at least crash helmets. But away we went, in spite of the vicious all-Ireland media backlash against our party, and made it our mission to visit mostly the well-known supporters in our area, which contained a mixture of the old poor as always and the new big-estate post-Tiger poor and also some still quite wealthy areas. Only when we trespassed on the doorsteps of Fine Gael houses were we addressed with hostility and bad language. But as I always say when you put on your canvasser's hat—you have to take all *responses* with as much equanimity as possible. What we were told by the commentariat, like Joe Duffy and his likes, that the anger was going to be savage. Well we got no anger whatsoever and for me this was a first.

I remember being set upon by dogs by an English woman in Sunday's Well and being told by a very snooty lady in Tivoli that we (all students then at University College Cork) were at the wrong door—which was her front one—and we should go to the back of the house where the tradesmen's entrance was. One UCC lecturer told us our "*founder was a gun-runner and our present Taoiseach, Charlie Haughey TD, was one also*". The *craic* was mighty in those days and the snobbery was even worse. But we prevailed. Where it all went wrong, in my opinion, was the *seed* planted by the Fine Gaeler, Jack Lynch who brought with him his Trinity economic guru Martin Donoghue into Finance and after that—the party ethos began to spin out of kilter—and only for the brilliance of Haughey, the party or indeed the country, would not have lasted this long. But Haughey was fighting on too many fronts and a lot of his time was spent putting out too many fires—yet he still managed magnificently the Tallaght Strategy with Dukes and made his Presidency of Europe one of the great success stories—even against some in his own party already corrupted with the *Lynch strain* and of course the media. The backpack were always there like the hyenas they really are.

If one had any doubt about the kind of media operating in Ireland, the fuss about the commentariat's entry into actual politics in this election, which became a huge story in their own-self-obsessed Dublin media, was enough to expose it for what it has dangerously become. The 'fourth

estate' has become something else altogether and from those to whom I spoke; it bodes ill for the old-fashioned democracy that we were used to.

But this time around the stories from the people in our area were about lost jobs, family-break-ups due to emigration, the lonely old, the break-down of the health-system, anti-social behaviour *et al*. I hate to add that "*et al*", as though I could ever file the kind of problems that people experience daily into that kind of unkind and uncaring category. And there is no doubt in any of us that were there, but that the Fianna Fail party had seriously got out of touch with their people—they flaunted their elitism by not acknowledging the breakdown our society was facing because they lived in the bubble of power, looking after sectional interests and indeed hobnobbing with the new elite.

There was a serious breakdown of communication even within the party, where the old stalwarts were put out to grass, and the TDs and Ministers built up formidable "armies of their own private canvassers" with Micheál Martin to the fore in this practice in Cork South Central. The *Evening Echo* (26th February 2011 carried a picture of Martin's tallies in the City Hall and named Ger O'Mahoney as being among his "*kitchen cabinet*". This man is President of Cork Chamber and highly influential in that role.

The big names in Fianna Fail in their Ministerial role have shunned us, the ordinary people of the party. The media snubbed us "*the foot-soldiers or bog-trotters*" but we saw and still see ourselves as members of a great tradition and a great party that is now well placed for a renewal and a return to the old *core values*. I very much doubt that Martin has the capability to do that kind of back-ground revitalisation of the party structures—the *Cumann*—which have well served us for so long. We face a long drawn-out battle to redraw the parameters of *our new future* and secure the party for new generations. Martin may well go into the media or academia which would be more his *metier*—hard slog is not his high profile style at all. Unlike his unmentioned political patron—Charlie Haughey—his wife Mary will probably make those kinds of decisions as she is by far the sharper intellect of the two.

### CORK

This second city of our country belongs to a special place in my heart. From the countryside I have found my home here. I love walking through its streets, thoroughfares and lanes nearly every day. And what the President of Cork Chamber and also our senior Cabinet Minister Martin has obviously missed, I can bear testimony to in spades. Cork is dying. We talk of ghost estates but we have a ghost city here. The so-called pro-business party

somehow let Cork go and every day there is a business gone or on its last legs. Everyone knows this—the evidence is before their eyes. Parking is a huge problem though there are plenty of spaces. Cork Mobile Clamp unit slowly circles round the streets, ever ready to pounce on the unwary or even the visitor. The vehicle is immobilised with a clamp and one has to phone the mobile unit and pay the fine first before one's car is allowed to leave.

Screaming children, loads of sale bags, aged people, a stricken-looking visitor—from them all the price extracted is €125. During the Celtic era, the Cork City Manager allowed certain people to put up car-parks and it seemed that the intention was to create business for these car-park owners by fleecing the citizen who had the temerity to park in restricted areas, which was gradually extended. But now so few people come into the town that they really should be welcomed and not clamped.

All the suburbs were allowed huge shopping malls and more and more people do their shopping there. Indeed, some of Cork's biggest businesses went out to business-parks with plenty of space for car-parking and that in itself has now added to the city's woes. After Christmas, a man I know used his redundancy money and opened a corner-shop with coffee and food-to-go. All the political parties in this election claimed they would get us jobs. Yet so job-unfriendly has the environment become, that instead of giving the man an adjusted time to pay his commercial rent/water rates/rubbish etc. and not be in the door the day he opened (before actually), that his three staff went and then his wife and himself shook my hand and closed their doors the other day, having lost their savings. I know a restaurateur who has to deal with some 24 agencies and that is the price she has to pay to stay in business. We are not business friendly—when will our masters get that message? Recently, like in the old westerns of my youth, a knot of tumbleweed could be seen blowing through the centre of a town: visually this told a tale of abandonment, where danger might still lurk. Has it to come to this?

### ARABS AND REVOLUTION

We look at France 24, a news-station, and see the Arab world finally waking up to the reality that their resources are not used for their needs but only those of their rulers. They chant "*democracy*". They chant "*reform*". It is a very stupid/corrupt politician who does not hear the echoing cry. But Libya is different. Muammar Gaddafi is out in the street of Tripoli with his people. And, in complete contrast to the other revolutions, in some cities we are told that the army has defected. But where are their uniforms? Why are the ordinary people armed to the teeth with

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## It Is Time

surface to air missile launchers, guns and ammunition galore? Who has been arming them? Even more strange, we were taken via TV to an area where there were a number of fine buses and lots of Tunisians (as we were told, though I certainly couldn't tell where they came from?) who were in fine fettle with *bottled water and mobile phones* and who insisted, despite their smiling faces for the camera that they were "*fleeing Gaddafi's retribution*"?

I have a suggestion for the next update propaganda feed: that those involved get some really badly-nourished / poorly-dressed people—like those Palestinians in the refugee camps and show them to us—we'd certainly believe *their* story of dispossession and suppression of *all their rights*—after all we have been there, even if we have to be *muted* and *mature* about those things in these days of impending regal visits.

Poor Libya is now to be the recipient of US/UK intervention I fear—with the arrival in Europe of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In the *London Review of Books*, Vol.33, No.4, 17th February 2011, Adam Shatz who works for that magazine, described Mubarak of Egypt as "*USA's man in Cairo*": "*family*" as Hillary Clinton called him; and indeed Shatz had no qualms about revealing that both "*the Clintons and Mubarak families have been close for years*". So if only Gaddafi had lavished private jets, jewellery, and no doubt torture centres, he wouldn't have to have to be chased down and killed like Saddam Hussein—whose WMD, we now know according to the Iraqi German-based liar who made those stories up, were non-existent. Like Rumsfeld, who even in his memoirs is still incapable of an apology for the catastrophic Iraq war, the known knowns were what was really wanted for our corrupt leaders of the free world.

#### IRISH SEALS

Irish seals are living the life of O'Reilly. They are among the fattest in the world. And, no wonder, as they live off the finest fish in our seas. They have bred like—well—seals. The poor fishermen are demented by them. They have appealed to our (now outgoing) Government to allow a cull in order to restore our fish stocks. But the Greens were not having it. They told the unsuspecting fishermen that they—the seals that is—are protected under EU law. This is the type of stunt the Greens always pull when faced with a decision. Because we can't really know what the gang in Brussels are up to—we simply don't know if the proverbial wool is being pulled over our eyes but heavily suspect it is.

A Dingle fisherman, Tom Sheehy has even pulled on board his fishing boat some half eaten fish and they are so damaged that they can't be sold. Grey seals are everywhere and eat around 10kg

of fish a day and are schelping so much fish that they are undoing the gains made from salmon conservation measures. Somehow the type of English culture that sees all things good in animals/fish etc, is seriously infecting our way of life. There are always letters to the papers these days of outrage by 'animal rights groups' and of course that is why the Greens landed in Government. Now as they have been decimated (like our poor fish perhaps!) as a political party, I hope that that sort of rubbish goes out with them. They are all townies anyway and would faint if they had to gut a fish I suspect.

But they left us with one last tale of unbelievable blackguarding in these economically straitened times. Kinsale is one of the most thriving towns in Ireland. It is known for its sailing and eating. 'Fishy Fishy'—one of their top restaurants—has even been on the telly. This tale begins with the pier wall crumbling. When it was investigated, marine engineers found a huge cavity the size of a family car in the harbour pier where cargo ships tie up. Repairs were begun immediately and indeed are still ongoing and will be for

some considerable time, as it is quite an engineering feat to deal with a cement construction basically in the sea. Then one day to everyone's amazement, a man arrived and said he was dispatched by the Government to care-take the seals—more especially one particular grey seal who stays near the inner harbour where he is fed by all and sundry and is now too lazy to go and fish for himself.

The man is called locally "*the seal man*", but this worker is paid an astonishing €200 a day. His job is to see that the seal does not come too close to the pier being fixed and, if the poor seal becomes "distressed" in any way, work has to stop. How to ascertain this is so—does the seal wave a red flag, for example—no one knows but the "*seal man*" has now become a bit of a draw for the locals and no doubt in time—for the tourists. But I hope with the incoming administration there might be a new job for our man and the fishermen get their wish. It is a disgrace in this island of ours that the biggest ports for incoming fish are the airports of Cork and Dublin.

But all the same isn't Ireland grand?

Julianne Herlihy. ©

#### De Valera and Zionism:

Part 3

## Legacy: From Aiken to Haughey

The foreign policy coherence created by the De Valera Governments of the 1930s underpinned the actions of the State down to the mid-1960s. As was seen in Part 2 of this series (*Irish Political Review*, January 2011), this began to change during the Lemass years as Ireland "*opened to the world*", i.e. aligned itself more closely with Western interests in tune with the new national aim of development through foreign investment and trade. The modern fashion of viewing De Valera's foreign policy as something of an embarrassment began at this stage. The young tigers of the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA), established about twenty years ago by the one time voice of 'Labour Left', Brendan Halligan, can express only bafflement at the principled foreign policy pursued by Ireland until the 1960s:

*"De Valera's Ireland demonstrated a disturbing lack of common sense with the West in general at the UN"*, according to Mervyn O'Driscoll in the 2010 IIEA annual *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, and—

*"failed to identify with the Western powers on high-profile controversies relating to Cyprus, Algeria and Apartheid.... The adoption of such a 'moral' and neutralist or non-aligned foreign policy by Ireland appeared fanciful and*

*ineffective from the point of view of ... hard-headed realism... Lemass 'mainstreamed' Irish foreign policy away from the 'traditional nationalist and insular outlook'..."*

But Dev's Foreign Minister, Frank Aiken, was not gone yet, and when the 1967 war led to a vast increase in the territories occupied by Israel, further large-scale population expulsions and the unilateral seizure by Israel of Jerusalem as its capital, De Valeraite foreign policy had its last outing. The Irish State denounced Israeli actions, raised the right of return or compensation of Palestinian refugees and was one of the most vocal supporters of Resolution 242 at the UN, which called for Israeli evacuation of the territories seized in 1967, and the creation of stable agreed frontiers.

Aiken protested at the UN when Israel extended its jurisdiction over the Old City of Jerusalem. He called for the "*internationalisation*" of the city and for Israel to return to its pre-1967 "*positions*". Stating that while Israel had a right to defend itself, "*it has no right whatsoever to annex the territory of [its] neighbours*" and if UNSC did not insist on a restoration of the borders of 4th June, "*the very basis of the Charter would be destroyed*". In December

1967 Aiken repeated his 1958 demands regarding the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees, and massively increased Ireland's contribution to UNWRA, making it the country's single largest foreign aid expenditure.

The "new realism" of the Lemass era was rapidly becoming the new orthodoxy of the Jack Lynch era, and Aiken's stance at the UN came under considerable attack in the modernist media. On 29th June 1967 *The Irish Times* published an extraordinary editorial attacking Aiken's views as "idealistic" and "unrealistic" (sic.) and stating that Israel had engaged not in a "war of conquest" but one for "survival". The *Irish Independent*, *Evening Herald* and *Cork Examiner* echoed the new respectability, and also opposed Aiken's stance. These papers had also vigorously opposed Aiken's calls for the de-militarisation of Europe through a withdrawal of NATO, and for China to be allowed join the UN. Nevertheless, contrary to the claim by Rory Miller—a Dublin-born professor at the Royal College of London and co-editor of *Israel Affairs*—in his book (*Ireland and the Palestine Question 1948-2004*, 2005, p39), that "all the major national and local newspapers ... with surprising unity" opposed Aiken's stance (a claim repeated in Raymond Deane's review of the book in *History Ireland*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2005), the Government position was vigorously supported by the *Irish Press*, the popular pro-Fianna Fáil newspaper of the time with a far greater readership than *The Irish Times*.

The Irish position was never unconditionally hostile to Israel, and was tempered by concerns not to fall foul of the Western powers. Aiken in press interviews and before the Dáil stated that Israeli withdrawal should be "accompanied by other measures"—in particular, a comprehensive Peace Agreement guaranteed by the UN Security Council that would ensure Israel's security. In private, according to Miller (p72-3), Aiken urged Israel to be pragmatic, telling its Foreign Minister, Ebba Eban, that demanding Arab recognition was "too much to expect of the Arabs", who were "terrified of Israeli expansionism", and that instead Israel should be seeking a treaty, which "would achieve the same result". Aiken stressed to the Israelis that they must retreat as final borders to the 1967 lines. Miller also points out that the Irish position, pioneered at the UN after the 1967 War, is often seen as the start of the 'Land for Peace' approach to a negotiated settlement in the Middle East (*Ireland & the Palestine Question*, p50).

Aiken publicly rejected the argument common in justifying European inactivity at the time that Ireland should support Israel because of the sufferings of Euro-

pean Jews. In a speech on 27th June 1967 he stated:

"it would ... be altogether unacceptable that a restitution for European injustice and barbarous persecution should be at the expense of under-privileged Arab families who have been deprived of their homes and lands, and are living in miserable refugee camps."

In an echo of de Valera's misgivings about the Zionist project in the 1930s, Irish official Con Cremin wrote:

"the Arab grievance ... is not only, nor perhaps mainly, that the State of Israel has been established in Palestine, but that its establishment has involved the expulsion of the native inhabitants who are now refugees" (Miller, *Ireland and the Palestine Question*, p63).

#### IRELAND PROMOTES PALESTINE RIGHTS IN EEC

The European Union—or European Economic Community (EEC) as it was then known—did not initially adopt a common position on the Middle East, and European responses to events there were generally mooted. This began to change during the 1960s, particularly after France sought to rebuild relations with its former Arab colonies after losing its Algerian war. Miller (*Ireland And The Palestine Question*, p75) relates that in 1967, at the instigation of Maurice Schumann, the then 6-member EEC adopted an internal "working paper" proposing support for UNSC Resolution 242, i.e. withdrawal to the positions of 4th June 1967, the internationalisation of Jerusalem, and the right of return of refugees to their former homes or compensation for their losses. But this was never adopted as an official position. After Israel's latest expansionist war in 1973, the EEC issued what it called its "first contribution" to the "search for a comprehensive solution". This advocated negotiations on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338 (of 22.10.73), Israel to "end territorial occupation" of land gained in 1967, and affirming the right of each state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognised borders. A lasting peace would only be achieved if "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" were taken into account, though it did not clarify what it meant by this.

In October 1974 the UN General Assembly voted on a Syrian motion that the PLO participate in the Assembly. Three EEC states—Ireland, France and Italy—voted in favour, leading Israel to condemn the Irish position as lending support "to an organisation of murderers". Ireland had joined the EEC the same year and, in 1975, took over the Presidency of the

Council of Ministers. As part of this development, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition headed by Garret FitzGerald greatly expanded the country's foreign service, including opening diplomatic relations with several Arab states, the USSR, and, in 1975, with Israel, through the Israeli Embassy in London (a resident Israeli embassy was not opened in Dublin until 1993, with the PLO being offered a residential office in Dublin on the same day). Ireland thus became the last EEC member state to open diplomatic relations with Israel.

In 1975, to much protest from the Arab League, the EEC, under an Irish Presidency, signed a far-reaching trade agreement with Israel (forerunner of the current Association Agreement under EUROMED) while stalling on similar arrangements with the Maghreb states of North Africa. As he related in his memoirs, *All In A Life* (1991), FitzGerald undertook a tour of Arab states to allay their anger, and issued a written clarification—condemned by Britain's Roy Hattersley—that it was his conviction that the new Agreement with Israel did not apply to the territories occupied since 1967.

Nevertheless, while FitzGerald aligned the Irish position with the EEC stance, for the first time issuing a statement specifically stating Ireland's official support for "Israel's right to exist in security", at the UN General Assembly, as reported by Miller (p85), he insisted that any resolution of the conflict must take account of the—

"legitimate rights of the Palestinians ... [who] have the right to be established within secure boundaries, and the right to give effective expression in appropriate political form to their sense of their national identity ... this means they should have the right to decide for themselves whether to establish an independent entity on the territory vacated by Israel."

#### THE IRISH "BAHRAIN DECLARATION"

In the late 1970s the Irish position radicalised further. In 1978 the new Fianna Fáil Government contributed a battalion of Irish troops to the UN peace-keeping force in Lebanon, UNIFIL. Charles Haughey, who became Taoiseach in 1979, pursued an active foreign policy, re-affirming De Valeraist principles of sovereignty in a modern era, and, with regard to the Middle East, took a strong stance in support of the Palestinian cause. Haughey, labelled by commentary in *The Irish Times* as an "Arabist", had toured Iraq in 1976 with the head of the Irish Arab Society, Rev. Dr. John Chisolm, and as Minister for Health had arranged for the training of medical students from

several Arab countries in Ireland and negotiated extensive Irish involvement in the provision of healthcare in Iraq. He also oversaw the development of an extensive Irish export trade in beef to the Arab world.

On 20th November 1979 Minister Brian Lenihan—father of the current Minister for Finance—told the Dáil—to a visible stir among diplomats present, according to *The Irish Times*—that the Government "maintained contact with the PLO and other Palestinian organisations in connection with the provision of a permanent homeland for the Palestinian people" and intended to move to recognise the PLO as their "legitimate representative". Until now most EEC states had regarded the Palestinian issue as largely a refugee problem. As reported by *The Irish Times*, Foreign Minister O'Kennedy, as part of the EEC "troika", stated that Ireland, working with France and Italy, had brought the Council of Ministers to recognise the PLO as "one of the parties to the conflict" and finally to support the Palestinian "right of self-determination", adding "though Ireland's commitment goes further".

These statements were building to a major initiative planned by the Government which came on 10th February 1980 when Minister Brian Lenihan issued a statement while on a visit to Bahrain ("*Bahrain Declaration*"), stating explicitly that the Palestinian people "had a right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State in Palestine". He also called for the inclusion of the PLO in any negotiations and stated: "Ireland recognises the role of the PLO in representing the Palestinian people". Ireland's official recognition of the PLO—and of a "state" for the Palestinians—was the first such stance by any European State, and was followed by high level contacts with the PLO (see the full text in the Appendix). When a story in *The Sunday Press* reported that the word "state" had been "quietly inserted by Bahraini officials", Lenihan quickly issued an official response stating that "the word 'State' was in fact put forward as a considered proposal by the Irish side" (*Sunday Press*, 2nd March 1980). The Arab world hailed the Declaration as "Ireland's definitive official commitment to an independent Palestine" (Eurabia, *The Bahrain Declaration*, Dublin, 1980).

In the Dáil some Opposition leaders attacked the Government, Ruairi Quinn and Frank Cluskey of Labour in particular objecting to the recognition of the PLO because of its armed struggle, and a Fine

Gael spokesman questioning the wisdom of supporting statehood. Haughey was accused relentlessly by the Labour Party leaders of being motivated solely by "private commercial interests close to Fianna Fáil" and they denounced the Bahrain Declaration as serving only to "heighten tensions in Lebanon", endangering the lives of Irish soldiers. This had followed quoted comments—which some saw as veiled threats—from Ireland's Chief Rabbi, Dr. David Rosen, that the Declaration would lead to increased shelling of Irish UNIFIL positions by Christian militias, which were supported by Israel. In an interview on RTÉ radio on 27th February, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin upped the ante, declaring the Declaration "a hostile act" by Ireland against Israel and tantamount to acceptance of the PLO's "right to destroy the Jewish state" (*Irish Times*, 28th Feb. 1980).

The threat to Irish soldiers serving with UNIFIL in Lebanon became a self-fulfilling prophecy when on 7th April eight soldiers were kidnapped by the "South Lebanon Army", an Israeli-backed Lebanese "Christian militia", and one of them—Private Stephen Griffen from Galway—was shot and later died of his wounds. A week later, on 17th April, three soldiers were ambushed and two of them—Privates Thomas Barrett and Derek Smallhorne—were executed ("shot at close range"). In response, the Haughey Government summoned an emergency conference of UNIFIL-contributing States and successfully pressed for a Resolution by the European Council condemning Israeli attacks on UNIFIL forces.

Over 40,000 Irish soldiers served with UNIFIL over the years of Irish participation (1978-2000). In his vivid and thorough book on the Lebanon, *Pity the Nation*, Robert Fisk recorded the experiences of Irish soldiers facing the daily arrogance of the Israeli Army, and also their almost instinctive affinity with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. Indeed some of the most outspoken UN critics of Israeli behaviour in recent years, such as Denis Halliday and John Ging, are men whose first experience of the region was as officers serving their country with Irish Battalion, UNIFIL. Of the 47 Irish soldiers killed on service in the Lebanon, the Irish Government officially held Israel directly or indirectly responsible for at least 15.

In an interview in July 1980, Lenihan, responding to questions why the *Bahrain Declaration* did not include a "denunciation of terrorism", nor mention Israel's

"right to exist/", responded:

"Paragraph 5 says the two sides agreed that the Palestinian people had the right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent state in Palestine within the framework of a negotiated peace settlement which would include the principles of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and these resolutions contain the condemnation of terrorism or any violent means, and also emphatically recognise the right of the State of Israel to exist, in peace and security... {Any talks} would have as an essential prerequisite a recognition of the State of Israel, pre-1967... In effect, the purpose of the whole conference should be to bring back Israel to its pre-1967 frontiers and at the same time to guarantee that state its permanence... I am certain that in 10 years' time I will be proved right when Palestine takes her place among the nations at the UN" (*The Irish Times*, 29.07.1980).

The pro-Israeli Irish historian Rory Miller stated:

"In February 1980, Ireland became the first EEC member to call publicly for the inclusion of the PLO in the political process at a time when Yasser Arafat's group not only refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, but was engaged in a relentless campaign of terror against Israeli and Jewish targets across the globe" (*Jerusalem Post*, 9th June 2006).

#### THE EEC "VENICE DECLARATION" 1980

Following from the *Bahrain Declaration*, throughout 1980 the Irish Government lobbied the US Carter Administration (unsuccessfully) to recognise the PLO. At the EEC Council of Ministers, Haughey urged recognition of the PLO and Palestinian statehood, to be negotiated in a deal ensuring Palestinian rights and the integrity of Israel's pre-1967 borders, something which the Israeli state has never accepted.

The *Bahrain Declaration* led to a number of far-reaching statements by EEC member-states, notably France and Austria, supporting the Palestinian right to self-determination. French President Valerie Giscard d'Estaing, in his own "*Kuwait Declaration*" of 3rd March 1980, a month after the Irish statement, expressed France's first official endorsement of Palestinian self-determination and promoting the inclusion of the PLO in negotiations.

In the event, the EEC adopted the *Venice Declaration* on 13th June 1980, which has remained the basis of EU policy to this day. The *Declaration* included the following statements of principle:

"4. ... the time has come to promote the recognition and implementation of the

two principles universally accepted by the international community: the right to existence and to security of all the states in the region, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples, which implies the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

...

6. A just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees. The Palestinian people, which is conscious of existing as such, must be placed in a position, by an appropriate process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully its right to self-determination.

7. ... These principles apply to all the parties concerned, and thus to the Palestinian people, and to the PLO, which will have to be associated with the negotiations.

8. The nine recognize the special importance of the role played by the question of Jerusalem for all the parties concerned. The nine stress that they will not accept any unilateral initiative designed to change the status of Jerusalem and that any agreement on the city's status should guarantee freedom of access for everyone to the holy places.

9. The nine stress the need for Israel to put an end to the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967, as it has done for part of Sinai. They are deeply convinced that the Israeli settlements constitute a serious obstacle to the peace process in the Middle East. The nine consider that these settlements, as well as modifications in population and property in the occupied Arab territories, are illegal under international law."

The full text of this ground breaking position of the EEC is available in the paper *Palestine in Irish Politics* on the website of Sadaka—The Ireland-Palestine Alliance ([www.sadaka.ie](http://www.sadaka.ie)).

The Israeli Government of Menachem Begin reacted with unprecedented ferocity. In a statement on 15th June 1980, his Cabinet accused the EEC of demanding the inclusion in the peace process of that "organization of murderers", "the Arab SS known as 'The Palestine Liberation Organization'" whose constitution sought the liquidation of Israel in words not heard since *Mein Kampf* was written. It continued:

"The initiators of the Venice Document and its authors even tried to interfere with the status of Jerusalem, our eternal capital, which is not to be divided again, and with our right to settle and live in Eretz Israel, a right which is also an inseparable part of our defence system in the face of enemies and attackers."

But despite this invective from the former commander of the *Irgun*, the EEC

position established in 1980 with courageous input by the Irish State has endured as the basis of European policy since. As Garret Fitzgerald told the Dáil in 1987:

"[The] major shift in European foreign policy ... eventually secured the assent of all the member states, although at the start of that period only three countries, France, Italy and Ireland, held the position of seeing the Palestinian problem as one of fundamental importance requiring action to provide the Palestinians with a homeland and a State of their own, while a majority of States saw it still as a refugee problem. From that position these countries have shifted towards the position we then held."

Sixteen years after the *Venice Declaration*, Foreign Minister Dick Spring described it as "a cornerstone of the [European] Union's policy", based on two principles—"the right of all states in the Middle East, including Israel, to exist in peace and security" and "the right of the Palestinian people to exercise fully their right to self-determination" (Department of Foreign Affairs, *Challenges and Opportunities Abroad—White Paper on Foreign Policy*, 1996, p.262). In 2010, on the thirtieth anniversary of the EEC Declaration, the *New York Times* published an opinion editorial by two Israeli academics, Yonatan Touval and Sharon Pardo, stating that the Declaration established the principles that "continue to define the contours of the only plausible agreement possible between Israel and the Palestinians... [T]hree decades later the Venice declaration continues to stand out as the boldest Mideast peace initiative to come out of Europe." ('When Europe Spoke Out on the Mideast', *International Herald Tribune*, 8th June 2010)

The substance of Irish policy on Palestine since De Valera's intervention in the League Mandates Committee in 1938, Frank Aiken's "3-Point Plan" of 1958 and the Haughey Government's "Bahrain Declaration" of 1980 has not changed substantially since, and was maintained substantially even through the years of the Fine Gael-Labour Coalition of 1983-7. Its Foreign Minister, Peter Barry, set it out as follows:

"Ireland's position on the Middle East conflict had been closely coordinated with our EEC partners and was based on the principles of: (1) recognition of the right of all peoples in the area to justice and security, including that of the Palestinian people to self-determination with all that this implied, including, in Ireland's view, their right to a state if that was what they wished; and (2) recognition of the right of all states in the region to a secure and peaceful existence" (*Irish Times*, 18.10.1983).

The phenomenon of Israeli settlement-building in the colonised territories further drew the wrath of the Irish Government, Barry telling the Dáil on 5th July 1983 that while it had the "right [to a] secure and peaceful existence... Israel's rights do not extend to the implantation of settler colonies in the West Bank and Gaza." In an address to UN General Assembly on 3rd October 1983, he further warned that "a process is in train" in the occupied territories—

"which may very soon create a situation that cannot be reversed ... the West Bank and Gaza have not been annexed by Israel—at least not yet. But the infra-structural and demographic alterations being planned and rapidly put into effect there by the Israeli authorities cannot but lead to a de facto absorption by Israel of the territories ... the process is gradual and invidious. It may lack the dramatic impact of an invasion ... but is no less real for that ... [A]cquisition by Israel of the West Bank would make a mockery of the international commitment to the rights of the Palestinian people" (Dept. of Foreign Affairs, *Statements & Speeches*, no. 5, 1983).

In 1988, the leader of the new Fianna Fáil Government, Charles Haughey, reiterated the Irish position to a visiting Saudi delegation that the Palestinians "had been injured, were the victims of a great wrong and had the right to justice". Ireland had been "the first [EC] member state to recognise the right to self-determination of the Palestinians and their right to an independent state... " It was the Irish "conviction that it was for the Palestinian people to decide, within the framework of Security Council resolutions, the way in which they wished to exercise their right to self-determination and whether to do so by means of an independent state" (*The Irish Times*, 18th June 1988)

It remains to be seen whether the traditional stance of the Irish State—which was maintained through the recent Ahern and Cowen Governments—will be maintained by the incoming regime. For the first time there is now an organised Zionist lobby in Ireland—the Oireachtas Friends of Israel—which includes many figures who would be prominent in a Labour-Fine Gael government, if such is to be the outcome of the election. In a last gesture before leaving office, the Cowen Government unilaterally upgraded the status of the Palestinian Delegation in Ireland to that of a Diplomatic Mission headed by an Ambassador. Messrs. Shatter, Quinn etc. will undoubtedly not have been amused!

**Philip O'Connor**

## Naval Warfare

The instincts, aims and methods of British naval warfare remained constant through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The following extract from *The Times* of 8th February 1793, the day before war was declared on the French Republic, conveys the objectives of that war as being commercial and maritime as well as ideological:

"France is the only Power whose maritime force has hitherto been a balance to that of Great Britain and whose commerce has rivalled ours in the two worlds, whose intrigues have fomented and kept alive ruinous wars in India. Could England succeed in destroying the naval strength of her rival, could she turn the tide of that rich commerce which has so often excited her jealousy in favour of her own country, could she connect herself with the French establishments in either India, the degree of commercial prosperity to which these kingdoms would then be elevated would exceed all calculations. It would not be the work of a few years only but would require ages for France to recover to the political balance of Europe that preponderance which she enjoyed previous to the Revolution. Such is the point of view under which Governments ought to consider the commercial interests. The indispensable necessity of extinguishing the wide-spreading fire whose devouring flames will sooner or later extend over all Europe and the well-grounded confidence of disembarassing the commerce of Great Britain from the impediments which have so often clogged its wheels—these reasons, added to the prospect of annihilating the French marine, ought to determine us to immediate war."

From February 1793 Britain began a commercial war against the French Republic through a blockade. The French Republic replied to the English blockade by the exclusion of all English products from France and by raising its tariffs. These protective measures proved very favourable to the industrial development of the country and France applied to the neutral states for help in preventing the smuggling of English goods. In retaliation the Royal Navy seized all French and neutral ships it could get hold of and compelled ships coming from overseas countries to call first to English ports where they were subject to heavy duties.

The British war against France from 1793 until 1815 was briefly interrupted by the Treaty of Amiens, signed in March 1802. Amiens was described at the time as a "*definitive treaty of peace*". However,

ever since, in British history books, it has been seen as merely a truce and an interlude in the war on France.

The British Prime Minister who signed it, Addington, is largely forgotten today. He was replaced early in 1804 by William Pitt for failing to prosecute the war vigorously enough against the French.

Like Chamberlain, Addington could be seen as something of an appeaser—although 'appeasement' might be considered impossible when war is not conducted against absolute evil. Edmund Burke was in favour of conducting war against absolute evil in 1793 and never making a *Regicide Peace*, but Pitt took care not to do so and instead he conducted the British war against the French Republic in the traditional Balance of Power manner.

And therefore Addington could hardly be considered an appeaser.

Pitt's conduct of the war, against Burke's advice, had another important implication in that the naval war waged against France remained within the limited objectives of the traditional Balance of Power wars of the British aristocracy.

The Treaty of Amiens broke down because England realized that, once peace ensued on the Continent, France began to flourish in all aspects of life and particularly in commerce and industry. It was feared that this situation might have a stabilising effect on continental Europe if it settled down in the embrace of the French example. And, therefore, a third coalition began to be assembled against France by Britain and an obscure incident was found to do the necessary and facilitate a re-engagement in war.

Trafalgar in 1805 ensured British control of the seas and, from May 1806, the Royal Navy blockaded not only the French and Spanish coasts but the entire West Coast of Europe from the Elbe to Brest. In the Mediterranean Malta was taken as a naval base. And England began to pour money into the treasuries of foreign allies to wage war on land whilst it concentrated its force on the seas.

The response of Napoleon to the British naval blockade and the third coalition encircling France came on 21st November 1806 when he issued a decree from Berlin, giving the following reasons for a new policy:

"1. That England does not recognize the system of international law universally

observed by all civilized nations.

2. That she regards as an enemy every individual belonging to the enemy's state, and consequently makes prisoners of war not only of the crews of armed ships of war but of the crews of ships of commerce and merchantmen, and even of commercial agents and of merchants travelling on business.

3. That she extends to the vessels and commercial wares, and to the property of individuals, the right of conquest which is applicable only to the possessions of the belligerent power.

4. That she extends to unfortified towns and commercial ports, to harbors and the mouths of rivers, the right of blockade, which, in accordance with reason and the customs of all civilized nations, is applicable only to strong places... That she has declared districts in a state of blockade which all her united forces would be unable to blockade, such as entire coasts and the whole of an empire.

5. That this monstrous abuse of the right of blockade has no other aim than to prevent communication among the nations and to raise the commerce and the industry of England upon the ruins of that of the continent.

6. That it is a natural right to employ such arms against an enemy as he himself makes use of, and to combat in the same way as he combats. Since England has disregarded all ideas of justice and every high sentiment implied by civilization among mankind, we have resolved to apply to her the usages which she has ratified in her maritime legislation.

"The provisions of the present decree shall continue to be looked upon as embodying the fundamental principles of the empire until England shall recognize that the law of war is one and the same on land and on sea, and that the rights of war cannot be extended so as to include private property of any kind or the persons of individuals unconnected with the profession of arms, and that the right of blockade shall be restricted to fortified places actually invested by sufficient forces."

Napoleon's response to Britain's Siege of Europe was the Continental system. The battle of Jena had established French control of the Rivers Weser, Elbe, Trave, Oder, and the entire coastline as far as the Vistula. Napoleon decided that commerce with Britain was to be forbidden and all goods belonging to England or coming from her factories or her colonies was liable to seizure on the continent.

This represented a continental response to Britain's naval siege through a counter-siege. But it was not a counter-blockade in the same spirit as the British blockade. And to understand this we must divest our minds of the understandings we have about England's Great War blockade.

Napoleon insisted on England's

acceptance of the doctrine of 'free ships, free cargoes' as the price of peace in his Berlin Decree in 1806. He declared that the provisions of the Decree would remain a fundamental principle of his Empire until England had recognised that the rights of war were the same on the sea as on the land, and private property could not be seized by a belligerent.

In 1923 Professor Eli F. Heckscher, a well-known Swedish economist, wrote *The Continental System—An Economic Interpretation*. Writing from the recent experience of being put under siege by British naval warfare in the Great War, he contrasted the experience with the blockade of the Napoleonic period. He noted of British objectives a century previously:

"To inflict military injury on the enemy, either directly or indirectly, was not—at least not to any notable extent—the object of the interference with his trade. On the contrary, the primary object was that of waging commercial war against him, i.e., of depriving him of a source of gain, or, in other words, beating him off the field; and, parallel with this, it was aimed to extend a country's own trade—which could be done, and was constantly attempted, at the expense, not only of the enemy country, but also of neutral countries. This brought it about that the establishment of a blockade dealt the latter a much harder blow than is the case at the present time.

"The intention was to prevent them from receiving any profit either from the enemy country or from other countries, and so far as possible to expel them, as well as the enemy, from sources of gain which had previously been open to them. It is perhaps not altogether clear whether considerations of this nature influenced some of the measures of the recent blockade. But however that may be, it is true that such a policy has no connexion whatsoever with the blockade of the enemy as such, but may be pursued, as actually happened a hundred years ago, purely as an end in itself.

"The objection to the proposition that "free ships make free goods" was rooted in this object much more than in the inclination to encourage captures for their own sake {i.e. where naval commanders took a share of the booty themselves. PW}; for as goods belonging to subjects of enemy countries were liable to seizure on neutral vessels, the neutrals were prevented from taking over the traffic which the enemy himself had been able to carry on before he was driven from the sea, as the British historian Lecky has well observed. And this was still more the case with the fourth of the great disputed questions concerning the law of war at sea, namely, that of *commerce nouveau* or, in British terminology, the

## Fergal Keane's 'Story Of Ireland'

The following letter, submitted on February 10th, was denied publication by the *Irish Times*, although a similar letter from the writer was published in the Irish edition of the *Sunday Times* on February 20th, under the heading of "Keane's Catholic myth".

The declared objective of Fergal Keane's RTÉ/BBC "Story of Ireland" is to put the "truth" back into history. It is a pity, then, that the very first episode on February 8th opens with a deplorable untruth. In the 1966 Garden of Remembrance, which marked the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising, Mr. Keane says of the supposed agenda behind its centre-piece sculpture of the legendary Children of Lir redeemed by St. Patrick: "Our leaders stressed our difference to the departed British: the idea of an ancient people of one Faith was central to our identity." Lest we complacently conclude that it would be outlandish to suggest that there was anything inherently Islamophobic or anti-Semitic behind the Garden of Remembrance concept, in his very next sentence Mr. Keane hastens to insist that a shared Christian heritage was not at all behind that work of art: "The real Irish were Gaelic and Catholic." At which point the film shows Archbishop McQuaid descending the steps of the Pro-Cathedral.

To accuse the Garden of Remembrance of having been a sectarian concept, is not only a slur on the memory of the Lemass Government that commissioned it. It is an even more scandalous slander on the reputation of the artist to whom that commission was given: the outstanding Church of Ireland sculptor, Oisín Kelly, whose other work includes the Larkin statue. In its own appreciations of Oisín Kelly on his death in October 1981, his "deeply-rooted Christianity" and his "Shavian beard and Protestant accent" were among the terms unselfconsciously used by the *Irish Times* to describe him. Mr. Keane speaks of the need to take the myth out of Irish history, and yet he constructs his own myth by ascribing a Catholic sectarian agenda to a patriotic Protestant sculptor. Mr. Keane further muses that it is we Irish who might consider apologising to our neighbours. Perhaps he himself might begin by apologising for such a sectarian slur on the memory of Oisín Kelly.

**Manus O'Riordan**

rule of 1756, the wording of which, as elaborated by British jurists, was that "a neutral has no right to deliver a belligerent from the pressure of his enemy's hostilities, by trading with his colonies in time of war in a way that was prohibited in time of peace". This principle prevented the neutrals from pushing their way either into the enemy's coasting trade or—and this was more important—into what might be regarded as a special form of coasting trade, namely, trade with the enemy's colonies.

"In time of peace both of these were jealously guarded preserves of the trade and navigation of the home country; but in time of war the belligerent power that was debarred from the sea willingly turned them over to neutrals with the double object of maintaining the traffic and of preventing it from falling into the hands of the enemy.

"The characteristic difference between the policy of that time and the policy of to-day is that, when the masters of the sea a century ago tried to prevent neutrals from carrying on a certain kind of trade, their object was not to kill that trade altogether, as is the case nowadays, but to seize it for themselves.

"It is therefore indisputable, as the neutrals complained... that British vessels were allowed to trade with France, while

neutral vessels were overhauled and seized. In full accord with this and with mercantilist trade policy, it was sought first and foremost to cut off all kinds of exports from the enemy to the neutrals, especially if they competed with those of the home country. In complete contrast with the efforts of the recent war, the endeavours of that time were aimed, on the one side, at getting rid of the excess of export goods in the home country and, on the other side, at preventing the enemy from selling his products.

"This was in part due to the fact that apprehensions were always felt of low prices on these goods in the home country and also of high prices in the enemy country...

"Finally, therefore, all this implies that no cutting-off of imports to the enemy could come into the line of the policy pursued. It denotes merely an effort to place those imports under the control of the naval power itself, so that the country might thereby give preference, so far as possible, to its own products and those of its colonies, and also so that it might take over trade and navigation with the enemy mainland.

"The latter consideration, however, took a secondary place, as Great

Britain often had need of neutral shipping to supplement her own overworked



mercantile marine; and it is especially noteworthy that the neutrals' supply of the enemy's {e.g., the French} market with the belligerent's (e.g., Britain's) own products was an all but self-evident matter, against which there was really no objection to raise from a British point of view. Manifestly, such a blockade policy diverged fundamentally from that of the recent World War" (pp36-8).

Whilst Britain maintained the legal principle of prohibiting trade with the enemy, at the same time it made full provision for exports to the enemy, which, according to the idea that expanding trade would always be beneficial, was seen to be of vital interest to the country. And that explains the logic of Napoleon's Continental system.

English blockades had the object of damaging the trade of the enemy (whilst curtailing that of the neutral) but they were also aimed at benefiting British trade and shipping. Napoleon's Continental system was designed to be a European defensive system against British blockade by making sure that England did not gain by exporting to the Continent at the same time as blockading it. It was, in effect, the besieged area binding together to deny the besieger the supplies and trade needed to maintain his wealth and increase it whilst simultaneously maintaining the siege. And as such it should be looked on as mainly a defensive measure in spirit or a case of *faute de mieux*.

The success of the Continental system required that not a link in the chain of defence in the besieged area be broken and an impenetrable wall be put up against the besieger's trade.

But Denmark was the first link to be broken after the Royal Navy attack on Copenhagen of 1807 took it out. The British fleet demanded that the city put itself under English 'protection' and when it refused Copenhagen was bombarded from the sea. Three thousand people were killed in the city before its whole fleet was confiscated and sailed away. The strategically placed island of Heligoland was also taken from the Danes and became an English base for smuggling goods to the Continent against the Continental system. And then a further breach was made in the South through Wellington's Peninsular War in Iberia.

England also imposed port duties on foreign ships which meant that they had to pay levies to the British Exchequer to transport goods to the Continent and on their return from the Continent had to come into English ports and pay another duty to escape impoundment. Such were

the profits of naval warfare where Blockade led to the securing of trade.

Prussia, which became England's ally without which Napoleon would never have been beaten, found its linen and wool trade destroyed by the British blockade of the River Elbe. After the fall of Napoleon, Prussia, for its efforts on the battlefield, discovered that its markets had been absorbed by its ally, in its absence.

At the close of the war the only functional trading fleet left was the British, and it charged the highest shipping rates to European manufacturers to carry their goods. As a result, German and other Continental industry stagnated and declined. Naval supremacy and the policy of blockade proved again to be the primary weapon in Britain's capturing of the world market.

After the war and the 'liberation' of Europe from the Continental system, the Continent found itself reintegrated into the British global system and its command of the seas.

Thomas Gibson Bowles, MP, took the following lessons from the history of the conflict nearly a century later in the decade leading up to the Great War:

"There was probably no period affording so gloomy a prospect for England, during the war with Napoleon, or putting so great a stress upon her resources, as that which was covered by the years 1809, 1810, and 1811. In spite of the victory of Trafalgar in October, 1805, which had left England undisputed mistress of the seas, the whole of western and southern Europe had fallen under the power of Napoleon. In 1805 he had acquired Venice and been crowned King of Italy. In 1806 Naples was occupied by his brother Joseph, Holland became the kingdom of his brother Louis, and he himself had won the battle of Jena, occupied Berlin, and conquered Prussia. In 1807 he had beaten Russia at Eylau, and made with her the treaty of Tilsit, which bound the two empires together, while in October of the same year Denmark had joined them in the coalition against England. In May, 1808, Charles IV and his son Ferdinand had abdicated in Napoleon's favour and made him titular King of Spain, of which he already was in actual occupation, while in November, 1808, his troops, which had been in Portugal since October, 1807, had entered Lisbon. In March, 1809, Sweden had joined Russia and France. In 1809 Napoleon took possession of the Austrian sea coasts and of the Papal territories. In short, it is not too much to say that, after the battle of Wagram in July, 1809, the whole western coast of Europe was hostile to England from the North Cape to Gibraltar, as well as the whole Mediter-

anean coast from Gibraltar to the Ionian Islands, and so remained till Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. And, as the sign and the result of his power over the continent, he had by his Berlin decree of November, 1806, and his Milan decree of December, 1807, established his 'Continental system', declared the British Islands in a state of blockade, and forbidden all intercourse with them.

"At this time Napoleon was absolute master of the land of Europe, England as absolute mistress of the seas. And the event showed that sea-power is superior to land-power; that, if it be exercised as it may be and then was exercised, it is potent enough to dissolve the strongest land combinations; that navies can coerce armies; and that the most absolute command of all the land forces of all Europe was inadequate to resist the silent, secret, remorseless Sap that sea-power wrought when directed at Trade.

"Three broad facts stand forth during these three years of greatest stress. (I) One is that France, and all those parts of the continent which had been forced into antagonism with England, suffered severely; (II) that meanwhile England herself, against whom Napoleon had banded the whole continent, nevertheless continued to increase her trade, her shipping, her population, and her prosperity in an unprecedented degree; and (III) that the deprivation of trade effected by the English maritime power, and by the Berlin and Milan decrees whereby Napoleon retaliated, brought all the continental countries allied with France against England into a distress so deep that at length they rather chose to affront the wrath of Napoleon than continue therein, and that they were thus one by one detached from him and turned towards England" (*The Declaration Of Paris Of 1856*, pp103-5).

That was how things looked in England a few years before the strategy was to be used again in a new Balance of Power war and a new siege of Europe.

Professor Heckscher explained the difference between Britain's starvation blockade of Germany between 1915 and 1919 and its commercial blockade of the Continent from 1793 to 1815. In a section entitled *British Measures (1793-1802)*, he outlined how the commercial war against the French Republic never became a war of extermination against the French people:

"The measures adopted at the beginning of the maritime blockade in 1793 exhibit marked resemblances to the corresponding measures adopted during the recent World War, and are therefore of especial interest and importance. As early as February 14, that is to say, a fortnight after the outbreak of the war, Great Britain authorized the capture of all vessels and

goods belonging to France; and in the following month she proceeded to work. On April 4 she proclaimed all her most advanced principles concerning the law of war at sea, and on June 8 she introduced the most famous of her measures, namely, the instructions of 1793, whereby fleet commanders and privateers were authorized 'to stop and detain all vessels loaded wholly or in part with corn, flour, or meal, bound to any port in France or any port occupied by the armies of France', with the understanding that the British government would purchase the cargo with the proper allowances for freight, called 'pre-emption'.

"This measure took the form of a plan to starve out France... Great Britain justified her June instructions in a manner very similar to that which the policy of starving out Germany was justified during the recent war. The notification declared that the war was being conducted in a manner contrary to the principles of international law, that France had no recognized government, and that the corn trade had been taken over by the French authorities themselves, that is to say, had become an act of the enemy's own government; and, finally, the blockade against imports was represented purely as an important means of forcing the enemy to make peace. Lars von Engestrom hit the mark in describing the tendencies of that time—as also those of the World War—when he wrote that the struggle 'had passed into a kind of political war of religion'.

"A genuine blockade of the importation of foodstuffs into France might therefore have been expected, that is, a 'starving-out scheme' similar to that of the World War... As has been already mentioned, however, Pitt's justification for the seizures was not based on this notion, but on Britain's own quite temporary need of foodstuffs—according to Lars von Engestrom's statement; and evidence of how deeply rooted the notion of the inexpediency of preventing imports to the enemy was is furnished by the fact that the ensuing developments did not at all follow along the lines which were indicated in the first measures. Only fourteen months afterwards, on August 18, 1794, the previously cited article in the June instructions of 1793 was repealed, and this meant that the importation of corn into France was again permitted. It is true that in the following April a new attempt was made to put the instructions of 1793 into force, but this was done chiefly with the object of forcing the United States into a ratification of the celebrated Jay Treaty of 1794. That, however, wound up the whole of this episode, so that throughout the entire period of the twenty years that still remained before Europe obtained a lasting peace, not a single attempt at starving out France was made, so far as we know, nor were there any further efforts to stop her imports on the part of the power that had the command of the sea...

"The Peace of Amiens in 1802... became the starting-point of the events that were to take place during the period of the Continental System proper. Here, too, there was a certain amount of wavering on the part of Great Britain, but the general principles were maintained with a consistency wholly different from that shown in the other case" (p45-6).

The blockade of Napoleonic times differed from that of the Great War in that it was a war to maintain commercial supremacy and was not meant to starve continental Europe into surrender or do lasting damage to the racial stock of the enemy. This was, of course, before the advent of Darwin and before the talk of 'war for civilisation' against the barbarian.

**Pat Walsh**

To be continued

**Derry Journal - Review by Michael McMonagle of Fionnbarra Ó Dochartaigh's Ireland: England's Vietnam 1960s to 1990s — Writings of a civil rights veteran**

## Civil Rights Story

The book spans the author's own political involvement through the years, firstly as a co-founder of the N. Ireland Civil Rights Association in 1967, through the splits within republicanism, and the short-lived unity created by the Irish Front, as well as his numerous campaigns for republican prisoners.

It also contains photographs and original documents from various campaigns and political movements.

Patrick Mc Guill, secretary of the influential Dublin-based lobby group, the Irish National Congress, paid tribute to Mr. Ó Dochartaigh's writings in his preface to the book:

"I was both honoured and humbled to be asked to write this preface for the writings of one of the Titans and founding members of Ireland's civil rights campaign.

"The struggle that civil rights campaigners like Fionnbarra Ó Dochartaigh teaches us is that regardless of the odds or the obstacles placed in our way, if you believe in the justice of your cause, endure whatever your opponents throw at you and relentlessly persist in exposing the truth, We Shall Overcome," he said.

The book features articles written by Mr. Ó Dochartaigh throughout the Troubles about a range of topics such as profiles on Sean MacBride, Irish army intelligence officer, Capt. 'Jim' Kelly, Roger Casement, Bishop Edward Daly etc., continuing

discrimination, state collusion in loyalist murders, how MI5 re-armed the Orange death-squads, state bias as part of manipulation of the media, the N. Ireland civil service, and much more besides.

One of the claims the author makes in the book is that British intelligence officers were able to check what parties' people voted for at elections. He claims they then used this information to identify who voted for Sinn Fein, allowing them to target republicans for assassination.

Mr. Ó Dochartaigh writes that revelations from former MI5 agent James Rushbridger support his theories. "The retired senior official in the counter-espionage agency, MI5, permitted his name to be used when he made his leak. James Rusgbridger, who is the cousin of Peter Wright of 'Spy-Catcher' fame, went on to claim that trawling ballot papers was 'quite common practice for MI5 officers after elections in Northern Ireland'".

Another claim which the civil rights founder also highlights centres on a book, The Nemesis File, which states that a secret SAS unit was involved in killing and secretly burying dozens of republicans and nationalists during the conflict.

The author reprints the claims from a former soldier, using the pen-name Paul Bruce, that he was involved in the murders of up to 30 Catholics, kidnapped in the Republic and then were secretly buried this side of the Border. Bruce also provided maps for the locations of the alleged burials, which are re-produced, in this new book.

Commenting on the claims, Mr. Ó Dochartaigh writes:

"One wonders, is Bruce really credible? Are the names of those 'disappeared' recorded anywhere?"

"It seems very strange that 'the authorities', RUC, military and Garda, if they really wanted to totally rubbish these claims, that they did not carry out any official searches of the areas clearly identified.

"Bruce's claims may possibly invite many to have a re-think."

The book, running to around 275 pages, and illustrated throughout, was launched at the Museum of Free Derry, where it is on sale, and is available internationally both as an e-book and in paperback from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).

LATEST: Copies of the book, because of its controversial content, will be sent to the PSNI's HET (Historical Enquiries Team) and the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains ("The Disappeared").

**Derry Journal, December 2010**

Does  
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Stack  
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#### PETER HART AND TCD

The German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg is to lose his doctorate degree because of his plagiarism. He says he will hold onto his office at the Defence Ministry. On the matter of the doctorate, it was either him or the University. The late Peter Hart, who was conferred with a doctorate in history by Trinity College Dublin, got away with their conferral on him of a similar doctorate—even though major 'facts' in it were thoroughly disproved while he was alive. Some of his interviews—as it emerged when his claims were tested—resulted in a fiasco: it turned out he was interviewing dead men. But then the late Mr. Hart's assertions were an assemblage of lies and half-truths about events of the War for Irish Independence. This concoction was useful to British/Irish history propagandists who would like to stir up friction and distrust between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. And Hart's lies and unfounded allegations continue to be fodder for misguided would-be-historians, people like Gerard Murphy whose book *The Year Of Disappearances* garnered the kind of attention from the Dublin media that scholars would kill for. In fact it is a novel-like tissue of anecdotes and pub-talk. Chapter 1 of the book, for example, consists entirely of an account of the suicide of an unfortunate man in Paddington, London. The notes of the subsequent inquest, along with general speculation about spies in Cork, added up to a grim reminder to the reader that, when an Irish aspect is added to the mix, the smell of sulphur is overwhelming and of course this is all intentional. It is the bread and butter of the controversialist and propagandist. The book goes on in the same vein but it has won a wide success from the commentariat and the very vital British element in the society.

Mr. Peter Hart was not the first false historian but it is quite extraordinary, in view of the proven falsity of essential elements of the late man's thesis, that the doctorate awarded by Trinity College has not been yet withdrawn. And his book has not yet been struck from the reading lists of schools and academy.

#### ATLANTIC COUNCIL AND IAN BIRRELL

Ian Birrell is a member of an outfit called *The Atlantic Council*, which seems to be a very right-wing group that is now calling in the most unequivocal terms for the removal by force—if necessary—of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya. He writes for various London papers like *The Daily*

*Telegraph*, *Guardian*, *Observer* etc, and of course *The Irish Times*. In a recent article in the latter which was copied from the *Guardian*, Ian Birrell tells us that "*just a fortnight ago I was in these cities—Benghazi al Bayda, Tripoli—talking to people preparing for their 'day of rage'*". Just who is this guy trying to impress? Did the "*revolutionary leadership*" (his words) small-talk Ian about such an upcoming event? Did the Western hack get such unprecedented access and detail about what was going on, when Al Jazeera was unable to name their sources within any of the countries in revolutionary fervour especially Egypt, where their local man was captured for 7 hours and given a bit of a beating.

In the article unwisely reproduced by *The Irish Times*, Mr. Birrell rants against Gaddafi as "*the despot who has ruined the people of Libya for these 41 years*" and goes on to "*urge that Gaddafi be killed and that airports be bombed*". It is a terrifying article, urging war on the leader of Libya in a very similar way to the build-up to the invasion of Iraq. What has Gaddafi done recently to draw down this sort of hate on his head? The British previously supplied Gaddafi with guns and were very happy (along with the French) to supply banks in London and Paris for Libyan oil money. Of course it was nothing to what they banked for Husni Mubarak and Ben Ali of Tunisia and especially their families.

But I suppose that losing Egypt concentrated all their minds and the possibility of losing control of the Suez Canal and entry into the Persian Gulf which the Americans have conveniently renamed 'The Gulf'. Mubarak's adult children are all in London and Ben Ali's two daughters are in Paris. When one analyst tried to follow the personal money trail of Mubarak, he accounted for some \$70 billion with additional real estate all over the major cities in every country—London, Paris, New York and Dubai.

#### IMMIGRATION

The revolutions and attempted revolutions in the North-African states are causing an increase in the movement of people into Europe. Italy and Spain have big problems on their borders trying to stem the tide of what the media are calling refugees. France has announced that its policy on immigration will be based on "*visas, visas and only visas*". France is very vigilant about its national territory but it is possible to get into a car/train in Italy and cross all the way to Denmark without encountering more than cursory looks at identity papers and the people traffickers seemingly provide identification when they are paid well enough. And for the 4,000 Tunisians who recently turned up in the Italian coast island of Lampedusia—they had no problem finding fees of over €1,500 for the traffickers. The only problem is if one looks Arabic—then they

are subject to strict checks—but these people are inventive if nothing else and they can always steal across.

The EU force 'Frontex', which is based in Warsaw, is tasked with securing the borders of the EU and "*the activities of Frontex are intelligence driven*". They have already received a request from Italy to help them with the refugees and so they have "*finalised arrangements for human and technical resources to be deployed in the first wave of emigrants*". The Italians are all ready suffering from a serious economic downturn and cannot support the immigrants and, from what was shown on TV News-stations, turned back the bigger ships—but the UN and its quangos are already interfering. There is every reason to believe that the sheer scale of the migrations taking place now may easily overwhelm national states. A new solution has to be found. Can the UN/Frontex force a refugee-exporting regime to pay compensation to the refugees from their oil/gas resources and allow them back to their own countries for education and job-creation as *the* solution as these states have already squandered some of the national wealth into their own bank-accounts, and a resolution stopping arms sales to these very states would be a worthwhile consideration? It is not undoable, but EU/US countries that have batted on oil/gas resources of these states must know that pay-back has to be done now and quickly before the whole situation explodes into war and the EU fades into a parody of what it once sought itself to be—in spite of London/Washington misgivings—indeed especially because of them.

#### US AND LAWS GOVERNING MIGRATION

In the USA in approximately twelve or thirteen states, Birthright Bills have been introduced. In Arizona, the new Bill proposes the issue of two forms of birth certificates for newly-born babies. The offspring of existing citizens and legal immigrants will get one form of certificate, declaring the baby to be a *bona fide* US citizen, while every other sort of baby will get a certificate of birth which does not entitle the baby to access public services or to claim *de facto* citizenship. There will be problems, however, because the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees citizenship to all persons born or naturalised in the United States. The Constitution of the USA will have to be changed if the US wants to go down the Arizona road. But something may be done, because it is calculated that there are 11 million presently living illegally in the USA. It is a world-wide problem and will need a world-wide solution.

#### JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE IN SOUTH DAKOTA

On 16th February 2011, the South Dakota House of Representatives debated Bill 1171 which if passed would extend

the definition of "justifiable homicide" to include the killing of an abortion provider in defence of an unborn baby. The state laws already empower prosecutors to charge people with the crimes of manslaughter and murder where their actions result in the death of an unborn baby. They know how to protect their young in South Dakota and certainly the stance of the state is hardening towards the taking of unborn life—itsself perhaps an indication of how widespread the practice became when it was first adopted only to meet emergencies. The loss of untold lives of these particular American generations may have commuted itself to a sort of grief in the national memory.

#### CARBON TAX

Meanwhile in Ireland the Carbon Tax introduced by Minister Brian Lenihan's Finance Act has been causing severe increases in the prices of fuels. Heating oil has gone up by €50 to €60 and coal users face an increase of up to €150 a year. Road fuel diesel and petrol are up by 5% to 10%. The Department of Finance before the budget said the Department has accepted "*the position and logic of the Committee on Taxation on the necessity for a carbon tax*".

The Green Party was behind the drive to introduce the tax. They were demolished in the recent General Election but the damage is done and it is unlikely to be undone now. The Greens said that it can be "*stress tested and political resistance minimised*". The *Irish Times* quoted two professors in support of the new tax. Both ignored logic and available experience. Professor Frank Convery of University College Dublin is a member of the Commission on Taxation. He said the Government should "*get on with it*". Professor John Sweeney is a "*leading authority on climate change*" at Maynooth and he stated "*the importance of the new tax is that it will get people to change their behaviour. To set a low tax is not going to achieve that aim and objective*". "What dishonest academic rubbish. Have the enormous taxes on cigarettes and on alcohol stopped people from smoking or drinking? Have people reduced their purchases of cars and fuel because of the huge tax element in the prices? Do these Professors reduce their purchase of clothing even though there is at least 21% tax (VAT) included in the price of clothes? Why are academics allowed to get away with such incompetence? They are being paid out of our money vast sums to tell us obvious untruths as so-called experts!

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Carbon Tax is a tax, no more. Just another tax. As for the "*authorities on climate change*"—it has been proven that climate change has little or nothing to do with carbon emissions or any other sort of emissions from human activity and so

Professors John Sweeney and Frank Convery do not know what they are talking about if they think, as *The Irish Times* suggests they do, that a "*carbon tax*" will have any effect on climate change.

In a comprehensive paper published in *The Spectator*, 19th February 2011, Nicholas Lewis and Matt Ridley explain the deconstruction and destruction of work by Eric Steig of the University of Washington, which was originally published in *Nature*, the prestigious scientific journal. Nobody in the scientific community came forward to criticise the article for a little while and meantime Steig's article got extensive media coverage worldwide. But a Canadian climate analyst, Steve McIntyre was working on Steig's article and McIntyre began posting his analysis of Steig's article on his blog 'Climate Audit' and he was joined by engineer Jeff Condon whose blog the 'Air Vent' had, along with 'Climate Audit' played a crucial role in the release of the now infamous "Climate-gate" emails from the University of East Anglia in 2009 regarding the suppression of papers with which the emailers did not agree.

Governments want new ways to raise taxes from us and so they want climate change to be linked to carbon emissions. Likewise bankers and the big financial consulting companies want the link with carbon also, so that they can create and trade in Carbon Credits which are an invented and intrinsically worthless nebulous 'asset' being traded for billions of euros under the Kyoto Agreement. Therefore the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change was set up by very strongly vested interests.

In their article in *The Spectator*, Lewis and Ridley explain:

"As the title of Richard Bean's new play—'The Heretic' at the Royal Court Theatre, London, hints young scientists going into climate studies these days are a bit like young theologians in Elizabethan England: they quickly learn that funding and promotion dries up if you express heterodox views or doubt the scripture. (The scripture in this case being the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change...) That is why in the Antarctic case it took a group of amateurs independent from conformist institutions to spot and correct the flaws."

Steig was attempting to show that Antarctica is getting warmer and he based his figures to apparently prove his sought-after conclusion. But his mathematics were skewed and the data on temperature was scarce, patchy and incomplete. An engineer, Ryan O'Donnell, with others, wrote an article demonstrating Steig's errors and biased findings and submitted the article for publication in the *Journal of Climate*. *The Journal of Climate* sent O'Donnell's article for peer review to three anonymous reviewers we will call A, B and C. Reviewers B and C recommended publication

## New FF? concluded

"Central to every point made in this book are the trade unions. Nothing meaningful in this country happens without them. They are an essential pillar of our economy representing a huge number of people who would otherwise not have the means to press their case. The trade unions can stop this country from succeeding, or they can help make it great. But they need to change. Instead of being behind Larkin, they should be in front for Ireland" (p206).

John McGuinness can't be accused of pulling his punches! This is his template for the 'New Fianna Fail' and the 'New Ireland'. He must be one of the few active Irish politicians who has expressed his views so cogently. He has done Fianna Fail a service. It is now up to the party to say where he is wrong!

### You're on your own, McGrath! Micheal must top the poll!

"FF stance clarified—Micheal Martin's supporters in Cork city have been told there is no vote management pact with running mate Michael McGrath. Cllr. Terry Shannon, a member of Micheal Martin's team, said he is appealing to FF voters to give the party leader their number 1 vote. Cllr. Shannon claimed voters had been confused by an appeal from Deputy McGrath for supporters to give him their number one vote" (*Evening Echo*, Cork, Eve of poll, 24.2.2011).

*McGrath got elected but no thanks to his leader.*

subject to minor amendments. Reviewer A wanted major amendments which in effect would change O'Donnell's article. A controversy produced 78 pages of demands for change.

Eventually O'Donnell's article was published, which showed that the peninsula sticking out from Antarctica into the ocean was being warmed by the sea (as it probably always was historically) and the rest of the huge continent was as cold as ever and Antarctic sea ice has shown no signs of retreating: it recorded a maximum in 2007.

It turned out much later that reviewer A of O'Donnell's article was Eric Steig himself. Hardly a disinterested reviewer! Last year a paper in *Nature Geo-sciences* concluded that "*it is at present impossible to accurately determine climate sensitivity to carbon dioxide*". This undermines the foundation of the entire IPCC argument. See [www.spectator.co.uk/events](http://www.spectator.co.uk/events).

Michael Stack. ©

## New FF? continued

departments with all the stakeholders to bring about the cultural and institutional transformation that has long been promised but not delivered. The public service unions, particularly those who represent the top echelons of the service, need to examine their role in a new economic environment. The hangover from the social partnership house party has to be dealt with aggressively but constructively. And now is the time to do it" (p84).

### WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

McGuinness was responsible for negotiating Ireland's case in the marathon deliberation on the Doha round of the World Trade Organisation in 2007-08.

"It seemed to me, and I think the IFA and the Irish Exporters Association shared my view, that officials were not willing to aggressively defend Irish agriculture and were not clear either about our general economic interests, described as the services pillar of the talks.

"The IFA has a reputation for being one of the most effective lobby groups in Brussels. Its permanent representative there is Michael Treacy, a man who is highly regarded for his deep and intimate knowledge of the European Union's agriculture operation and the fine detail of the WTO negotiations. I had developed a good relationship with the IFA locally in Carlow-Kilkenny as well as nationally with its president, Padraig Walsh and the president-elect John Bryan" (p166).

"To a large extent my view reflected the IFA position... I shared with the IFA a determination that the beef industry in Ireland would not go the same route as the sugar beet industry... I believe that we should have been able to retain it—we just didn't stand up for it strongly enough" (p169).

The problem McGuinness found was that Irish officials in Brussels had gone 'native'. *"In Brussels, for example, they can become 'good Europeans'. It is for this reason that some British politicians call the Foreign Office, the 'foreigners' office"* (p167). Remarkable, that in their dealings with Ireland over the centuries, none of the bastards ever went native).

"The EU is undoubtedly a great idea but politically and therefore, economically it is a family of very different personalities... we should remember that Britain's long view has kept it out of the currency, not that I am suggesting it isn't a good idea for Ireland. To paraphrase Cromwell: "Trust in the EU, but keep your country safe".

"That, incidentally, is not an anti-European position. It's just common sense" (p169). A bit like the Tory sceptics, is it not?)

At the heel of the hunt the Doha talks collapsed. This is John McGuinness' conclusion:

"At a time of world economic crisis, there is a need for a dynamic global trade agreement that can contribute to the stability of banks, banking regulation, businesses and transfer of people across the world... Ireland should be the leading country within the EU to demand a conclusion to the Doha round" (p175).

### THINK TESCO, THINK IRELAND!

"Ireland has three great advantages. It has a working population of two million, 20% of whom are employed by the state. Our people are relatively well educated. We are no larger than a large multinational. We should be able to turn on a six-pence, to retool and retrain... We have punched above our weight in the marketplaces of the world for many years. Our businessmen have enormous experience and have proven themselves against the best" (p179).

"For five years I sat on the Public Accounts Committee with my businessman's hat on watching, with certain exceptions like the Revenue Commissioners, a procession of representatives of boards and bodies peering into a series of black holes, completely unable to explain the mystery of it all, but content that no one would lose his job over it" (p182).

"I am tired of committees with big names and small achievements. I'm a businessman so I know about keeping it simple, professional and tight. I don't want to listen to or read ambiguous expensive consultants' reports. The wastepaper baskets of the world are full of them... I am not a fan of big government" (p184).

"Let's get Best Practice Ireland going. I don't like Michael O'Leary going on a rant but he has made a world-class airline. He should be asked to join the board of Best Practice Ireland along with others like Peter Sutherland, Dermot Desmond, Gerry Robinson and Denis O'Brien who have demonstrated to the world what Irish people can do when we put our minds to it. I am willing to bet that they will produce recommendations within a month on less than ten pages" (p186).

"I have not greatly concentrated in this speech on what areas of business development we should focus on. That is simply because I believe if the government concentrate on the foundations the market will do the rest" (p187).

Before the book finished he finally realised: *"We need to do more to acknowledge that Ireland is not just an economy—it is a society too"* (p202). Now that's a relief!

### MARY COUGHLAN

"The night of 21 April 2009, I was told by impeccable sources close to the Government that the Tanaiste had told

Brian Cowen that it was her or me and insisted I should not be asked to serve again and, I had no doubt, she had the full support of senior civil servants and the unions. Cowen, essentially, chose the status quo and loyalty over ability and I was not re-appointed" (p196).

### FIANNA FAIL FUTURE?

"Fianna Fail has been weakened by too many years in coalition, perhaps because no leader has redefined its core value and promoted new ones. It is time to do that because the question of what Fianna Fail now stands for is a legitimate one. But Brian Cowen is only a symbol of where we were, not a driver to where we should go. What is his plan? Does he have a strategy? The problem isn't just communications. You have to have a message or a policy to communicate. I don't think he does" (p201).

"New Fianna Fail would surely start with State organisations, telling them to substantially reduce the red tape and petty rules that are stifling our SMES {small businesses} and business generally, instructing them instead to engage, understand and co-operate, because common sense, confidence and trust go a long way in a State that is seen by all as straight and fair, which is not where we are at the moment" (p215).

"New Fianna Fail would, I think, quickly form a committee with a majority of respected national figures—Colm McCarthy, Nuala O'Loan, Emily O'Reilly, Garret FitzGerald come to mind—some senior business figures and some politicians and civil servants, under the chairmanship of, perhaps Matthew Elderfield, the new banking regulator, who takes no prisoners and doesn't waste time" (p209 Does he shoot them, John?).

"They would give that committee a month to set salary levels for T.D.s and ministers and create a system for claiming expenses that was transparent, vouched and, above all, allowed no room for temptation" (p210).

It is not so long ago that if such a quango were created one of the first members would probably have been Sean Fitzpatrick.

### REAL SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

"The time has come for public sector workers to have the same terms and conditions as their private sector counterparts. I am not suggesting that those already employed should lose benefits already agreed, but no one entering the Civil Service from now on should have a job for life or, indeed, anything other than the pay and conditions that apply in the private sector. Of course, for this to happen unions will have to abandon the unequal system they now support with the help of compliant governments" (p204).

continued on page 28

## New FF? continued

"It was a legacy all right—a legacy of incompetence and huge expense, created by bureaucrats far removed from reality and the people who were not stopped by their Minister" (p66. Noel Dempsey was the Minister, and he is a major target for McGuinness throughout this book, after Brian Cowen).

McGuinness makes no mention for the necessity for electoral reform. The multiple-member seat based on PR-stv must be the daftest system you could apply anywhere. The Irish people seem to embrace as if it was somehow unique to our politics. It is nothing of the sort.

It was imposed by Britain following the "Treaty of Shame", on the pretext that the minority loyalist population would get a fair crack of the electoral whip. It applied to the Six Counties as well, but the Unionist regime got rid of it after one election.

It brings out the worst in politics. It is also a cop-out. You don't have to commit yourself to a single party, you can fling three, or four or five effective votes all around the place, whereas in a Single seat PR-stv you would have to make a definite political choice. The laugh about this is that we do it every time we have a by-election, and nobody says anything.

If it was so good, its incredible that Britain itself did not adopt the system?

### THE CLIENTELIST SYSTEM

"Government in Ireland has recently become centralised to such an extent that it has vastly increased the distance between politicians, the citizens they serve and the officials who rule. This is not a good thing.

"We have to remember that the 'clients' in the clientelist system are citizens like you and me. They are voters and taxpayers and the State, through its arms of Parliament, Government and local administration, is obliged to deliver to them the public services for which they pay in a fair, cost-efficient and competent manner. For the most part, the problems that are brought to me by my constituents arise because the State and its agencies are failing to serve the citizen. The system is failing the people who pay for it and it is the much-maligned clientelist system that has to pick up the pieces. If our public services operated as they should in a modern, citizen-focused, flexible and businesslike fashion, there would be little need for these clinics and T.D.s could spend much more of their time on the affairs of State" (p73).

What McGuinness writes here makes a lot of sense. The media make a big issue of the clientelist issue but that is part of their

contempt for the independent Ireland, though they will never advance a decent alternative. In fact, single member seats would eliminate a lot of this, for the sitting member could afford to be blunt, a lot of these clients spend the week-end going round from deputy to deputy, who are looking over their shoulder! They can't all be like Sean Moylan who would boot you out the door if you were wasting his time. He lost his seat over this in 1957.

### TORY INSPIRATION

"The following is from an article in the *Times* newspaper from 17 July, 2010:

"The Prime Minister, David Cameron, is expected to visit a number of pilot projects where local councils give money to grass-roots organisations, charities and social enterprises to run local services."

"Cameron's Big Society idea reflects much of what I believe in and it will be interesting to watch its progress" (p19).

Bishop Peter Birch, Bishop of Ossory "*profoundly influenced my approach to public life*". Along with Sister Stanislaus Kennedy—

"the group drew on the best modern thinking and techniques for how voluntary community groups can co-operate with national and local government and administration for the benefit of the marginalised" (p27).

"For many years, influenced by the work of Bishop Birch and others in Kilkenny and from my experience as a national politician, I have called for the introduction of new models for the social contract between the State and its citizens. You can call it 'social entrepreneurship' or, as David Cameron's Conservatives in Britain branded it, 'Big Society', but the message is the same" (p211).

"The principle that democracy starts with the people influences my work far more than party politics" (p16).

### NANNY STATE

"I underlined the alienation of the unemployed dependent on social welfare handouts and pointed out that money was no substitute for care" (p51).

"It is a core principle of mine to help people help themselves rather than assist in perpetuating a nanny state and a culture of dependency

"That dependency is frightening. There are swathes of families now who have never worked and their children surely will not work. I have watched these families start their descent from hard-working, honest grandparents to grandchildren and great-grandchildren who now know more about the social welfare system than I do. They now believe they have the right to expect the State to give them houses and support without any understanding of where the money comes from. This is the

consequence of handing out money to people without thought or care as to how we might ensure that they get an education that, at least, teaches them how to stand on their own feet" (p75).

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The demise of Local Government began with Jack Lynch's abolition of Domestic Rates in 1977 and throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The Local Government Act of 2001—

"was the most fundamental reorganisation of local government legislation since the Westminster Parliament's 1898 *Local Government (Ireland) Act*. It included the removal of the dual mandate, whereby T.D.s and Senators as national politicians would no longer be able to serve as members of local authorities."

McGuinness did not agree with this and has a justifiable grievance over "*the removal of Kilkenny's city status by relegation to a Town Council*" (p24).

"The abolition of domestic rates caused great damage to local government and real local democracy. Since 1977, local government has had to be funded principally from central government and with this central funding came a much greater degree of centralised control, moving democracy further and further away from the citizen. A number of initiatives in recent years have attempted to re-introduce elements of domestic rates on a piecemeal basis but they are politically extremely difficult to pursue, particularly in such challenging economic circumstances. Political corrections, such as new water charges, from which local authorities will have to raise revenue to pay for the treatment and distribution of water supplies, are being considered. It's not a popular position, but the reality is that domestic rates payable to local authorities make local politics serious and connect people in a direct way with their politicians—paying rates demanded an accountability and transparency that is lacking today" (p40).

### THE PUBLIC SERVICE

McGuinness is a supporter of radical reform in the Public Service and would agree with Colm McCarthy's recommendations in his Government-commissioned report on Public Service numbers and expenditure which identified saving of €5.3 billion to the Exchequer including the cutting of 17,300 staff.

He writes that "*the public service should use e-government to deliver integrated and citizen-focused services*"; and "*open recruitment to the public service*".

"We badly need a Minister for Public Sector Reform with a seat at the Cabinet table and a remit to work across all  
continued on page 29

## New FF? continued

McGuinness was employed by the Fianna Fail party at headquarters in Dublin in 1976, ahead of the anticipated General Election in 1977. He looked up to Seamus Brennan: "*The party could do with someone like Seamus Brennan today*" (p37).

### THE 1977 ELECTION

"The Fianna Fail manifesto for the 1977 general election was prepared in secret by Martin O'Donoghue and a small number of others. O'Donoghue had been appointed as economics adviser to Jack Lynch at the end of the previous Fianna Fail Government and held that highly influential role while the party was in Opposition. He was a dry and remote character who knew much about the theory of politics but really he had no feel for how it works on the ground" (p38).

When the Manifesto was finally revealed "*no one was prepared for its extraordinary largesse. Among other treats it called for the abolition of car tax and domestic rates, a £1,000 grant for first-time house buyers and it promised to reduce unemployment to below 100,000.*"

Charles Haughey privately expressed serious concerns about the long and short-term costs of these measures. "*Neil Blaney, T.D., who knew more than most about politics on the ground, was also saying they were unnecessary*" (p39).

"Martin O'Donoghue, Seamus Brennan and the conclave that put together that manifesto were working in isolation at an academic remove from what was happening in the country. They had no real feel for it and no feel for how politics works outside Dublin" (p39).

### CHARLIE HAUGHEY

"I was impressed by Charlie Haughey's exceptional political abilities, but there was a part of his personality that overshadowed what he was doing. Ultimately, his desire for power and the trappings of power undermined his effectiveness and perhaps denied the country the greater and more positive impact he could have made... his grip on the party was too great and too tight. Dissent was increasingly prohibited and the moral slippage that frequently accompanies sycophancy crept into the soul of the party" (p42).

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This is 'old' Fianna Fail—

### CONSTITUTION OF FIANNA FAIL

The aims of Fianna Fail shall be:—

1. To secure the Unity and Independence of Ireland as a Republic.

2. To restore the Irish Language as the spoken language of the people and to develop a distinctive national life in accordance with Irish traditions and ideal.
3. To make the resources and wealth of Ireland subservient to the needs and welfare of all the people of Ireland.
4. To make Ireland, as far as possible, economically self-contained and self-sufficing.
5. To establish as many families as practicable on the land.
6. By suitable distribution of power to promote the ruralisation of industries essential to the lives of the people as opposed to their concentration in cities.
7. To carry out the Democratic Programme of the First Dail.

*(The Story of Fianna Fail, First Phase, Dublin, 1960)*

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### THE ARMS TRIAL

The McGuinness family "*had a love-hate relationship with Jim Gibbons, who reigned in the North Kilkenny part of the constituency*". Gibbons "*was not that comfortable with grass-roots politics. His was a sophisticated view*", with his French Gitanes cigarettes and his Peugeot 504. Jim Gibbons found the "*grass-roots work tiresome*" (p43).

This is the McGuinness take on the Arms Trial:

"Gibbon's evidence contradicted that of Charlie Haughey yet, because Haughey was acquitted, it was Jim Gibbons who was considered to have not told the truth. I have no comment to make, because the trial was full of smoke and mirrors. But I will say that the Jim Gibbons I knew was an honest man."

And Haughey was a liar, John?

### LYNCH SPIN!

"The jury in the Arms Trials, Sept./ Oct. 1970 brought in Not Guilty verdicts. The Lynch government refused to accept them, and was supported in this by Fine Gael and Labour. The idea was put about by all the means available to Government and Opposition that the defendants had 'got away with it'. The Tanaiste (Erskine Childers) told the British Ambassador that the jury members had been got at. (No evidence for this has ever come to light: on the contrary, the Chairman of the jury appeared on an RTE programme some thirty years later to say the jury had NOT been tampered with).

"Another suggestion was that no Dublin jury would in any case have convicted, that the jury was in sympathy with the crime the defendants were accused of, became convinced of their guilt and returned Not Guilty verdicts for political reasons, because it was in sympathy with the alleged crime" ("*The Arms Crisis, What it was About*" by Angela Clifford, 2008).

Anyone who has ever read the newspaper accounts of the Trial would see that the Prosecution made a damn poor case. They had nothing to go on.

If John McGuinness is seeking the source of Fianna Fail's turn in political fortune, he would do well to look again at the Arms Trials. The Republican credentials of the party were made to appear a liability by the Lynch/O'Malley wing. And John himself states "*Fianna Fail was a great nationalist movement*" (p35. A successor perhaps to Redmond's Irish Party?

The Arms Trial was a seminal moment in the life of the party—and the party jibbed!

### DES O'MALLEY

On the O'Malley expulsion in 1985:

"I was a member of the National Executive... An open roll-call vote was taken and members voted 73 to 9 to expel O'Malley from the party. I was one of those who voted in favour of his expulsion. I regret it to this day, because O'Malley was right and Haughey and the party were wrong" (p45).

"There is a fundamental question about how one deals with the collective culture that can grow in an organisation like the Fianna Fail party or any institution. It leads to the belief that the protection of the institution at all costs is the paramount objective and the independence of the individual within the institution is often challenged and degraded. Indeed, for the culture to survive, individualism and exceptionality have to be eliminated. We have seen this to our cost as so many of the pillars of Irish society have begun to crumble, undermined by their own reliance on blind and unquestioning loyalty—the Church, State and semi-State bodies and politics itself, with the professions lowering their standards and generally participating in a slide to the bottom" (p46).

"I had always been wary of the narrow party politics that pervaded our discourse and strongly felt that the time had come for a new style of politics. I felt that a co-operative non-partisan approach that included the citizens of Kilkenny was needed to foster a new sense of energy and enthusiasm, inspired to a large extent by my experience working with Bishop Birch" (p48).

### ELECTORAL SYSTEM

"I do not know of what happiness-hoover thought up the idea of electronic voting. Most likely, it was an official who didn't like the messiness and humanity of the count, or the fact that for a few days in the country, politics comes really close to the people. Maybe they thought it would be that object of desire lusted after by some politicians and officials: a legacy.

continued on page 30



**LABOUR**

# Comment

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BOOK REVIEW **THE HOUSE ALWAYS WINS—time to turn the tables!**  
by John McGuinness, Fianna Fail T.D. and Naoise Nunn (Gill & Macmillan 2010)

*"I have been a member of Fianna Fail for 40 years. I know it is a great party, albeit one that has lost its way... It should now say it is sorry for having made mistakes and take up the challenge of putting Ireland back on that road, renewing itself and offering the country passionate politics, radical policies and a new brave leadership" (p xii).*

## The New Fianna Fail?

John McGuinness, Fianna Fail deputy for Carlow/Kilkenny was one of the few outgoing party TDs who accounted for himself in the February 25th General Election. In a five-seat constituency, he was the second member returned. He is spokesman for small business in Micheal Martin's interim Front Bench.

With the party deputies whittled down to 20, he is certain to emerge as a formidable force in the new Fianna Fail Front Bench.

In 2009, following his removal by Taoiseach Cowen as Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, he set out to write an account of his experience and suggest how 'New Fianna Fail' should create the 'New Republic!' He has done the party a signal service. He states that the party *"has lost its way"*. McGuinness has drawn the roadmap for the future. It most certainly is not *"old Fianna Fail"*. That's for sure!

*"This is old FF"*, thundered local TD Johnny Brady in his warm-up speech, when introducing the new leader Micheal Martin in Navan on February 20th, five days before the General Election. *"We are the party that helped Ireland keep the fascism of the 1930s away from achieving any influence in this country"*, said Micheal Martin. John McGuinness would have been horrified at such an introduction.

"High profile party rebel John McGuinness denied he deliberately played down his membership by placing a white Fianna Fail logo against a light grey background" (*Irish Independent*, 21.2.2011).

### REDMONDITES

The McGuinness family were of Redmondite stock. The author's grand-uncle, John Magennis, *"using the Anglicised version"*, was a plasterer by trade. He was elected Mayor of Kilkenny on six occasions. It was he who proposed that John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party receive the freedom of Kilkenny city, a fortnight before the 1916 rising.

In July, 1917, Magennis stood against W.T. Cosgrave of Sinn Fein and was defeated in that by-election. In 1950, Magennis was joined by his nephew, Michael J. McGuinness, a Grocer, now a Fianna Fail councillor and the author's father on Kilkenny Corporation.

"I spent a number of years as a water inspector for Kilkenny Corporation—and, yes, I am sure my father's influence helped but that was obvious to everyone—

before leaving to work full-time for Fianna Fail and in the shop and in a transport and warehousing company that I started... It amuses me to be described as a businessman as if I were a Bill Gates figure. I am not. I am a politician and social democrat." (p13).

### THE ARMS CRISIS

"After 1973, Fianna Fail was a party in turmoil {the natural party of Government were out of office}... The fall-out from the Arms Crisis also continued to cast a long shadow over the organisation... Fianna Fail was a great nationalist movement with exciting charismatic national figures like Brian Lenihan Sr., Charlie Haughey and Dessie O'Malley. At the time, I would have regarded Fine Gael as a party of complacent conservative professionals and one that seemed in that turbulent era to be more sympathetic to Northern Ireland Unionists than the embattled nationalist minority" (p35).

### JACK LYNCH

"Jack Lynch has garnered an unfair reputation as having been a somewhat soft and lightweight leader... The truth is that he was one of the party's toughest leaders. When he played hurling for Cork it was said he was more than capable of digging the handle of his hurl into an opponents ribs to soften him up" (p36).

He must have forgotten his hurl on Bloody Sunday, 1972 when he tackled Ted Heath!

"I liked Lynch. He was cautious and reflective but he had a common touch. He was also able to separate himself from the party and, while he ruled it with a firm hand, I think he was wary of its tribal instincts, being cerebral rather than emotional" (p36).

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continued on page 31