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Fianna Fáil: on the road to nowhere?

Micheál Martin decided to accept the findings of *The Tribunal of Inquiry Into Certain Planning Matters & Payments*—the Mahon Tribunal, established October 1997—within hours of its publication. A report of more than 3,000 pages which took almost 15 years and cost—according to some estimates—300 million euros must be true and exempt from criticism. That is the position that Micheál Martin has taken and therefore he has disabled himself from defending the party he leads.

Martin is entitled to his opinion, but it is a view that is not shared by the Supreme Court. It found that the Tribunal suppressed evidence that would have undermined the credibility of one of the Tribunal's star witnesses, James Gogarty. This only came to light because the person against whom the allegations had been made had the financial resources to challenge the Tribunal. The Supreme Court Judge Adrian Hardiman commented as follows:

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

The final report has not found Bertie Ahern guilty of corruption. But we gather from media reports that Ahern was "*untruthful*" regarding his finances.

When the Tribunal was chaired by Feargus Flood it relied on a witness who had a grudge against his employer (Gogarty) and who claimed to have participated in a corrupt act. When the tax defaulter Alan Mahon succeeded Flood as Chairman, reliance was placed on a corrupt property developer called Tom Gilmartin, who has been granted immunity from prosecution. Mahon failed to substantiate the allegations Gilmartin made against Ahern. It could find no payment to corroborate the allegation that Ahern had received £80,000 from the Cork developer Owen O'Callaghan despite an exhaustive search.

There are other allegations. Gilmartin claims Liam Lawlor introduced him to Charles Haughey, Albert Reynolds, Bertie Ahern, Pádraig Flynn and Mary O'Rourke in Leinster House. After the introductions, Gilmartin was called aside and asked for 5 million pounds by a person that he did not know and who somehow disappeared into the night never to be seen again. Even Fintan O'Toole finds the story "*far fetched*" (*The Irish Times*, 23.3.12). But Mahon believes on the basis of no evidence. And since Mahon believes, therefore Gilmartin must be telling the truth! That is the 'truth' which the Fianna Fáil leader has committed himself to.

Probably the most extraordinary finding was that the 'dig-outs' for Ahern never happened. When they were revealed during the 2007 General Election, the impression given was that this was something disreputable. At the Tribunal the participants swore under oath that the 'dig-outs' happened but their evidence has been rejected. It appears that Ahern received the money from some other mysterious source, which is not known. Mahon has entered the metaphysical world of Donald Rumsfeld's "*known unknowns*" and "*unknown unknowns*".

It is not really conceivable that all those 'dig-outers' could have been mistaken in their evidence and therefore the only conclusion that can be drawn is that there was a conspiracy to mislead—under oath—the Tribunal. And yet the publican Charlie Chawke, one of Ahern's supporters, knows he gave 2,500 pounds to Ahern via Des Richardson and

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Britain and the EU

A Tale Of Two Taoiseachs

John Bruton is probably about the most Anglophile person in Irish politics. The 'happiest day' of his life was when he met Prince Charles in Dublin Castle some years ago. He would at that point have been horrified at any unkind words about Britain and its political motives. He was once nicknamed *John Britain*. But that could all be in the past. All such people get a rude awakening at some point in their lives. His hero, John Redmond, is the great historical monument to that fact. John had his awakening when it dawned on him that it was Britain which is the cause of the current problems over the Referendum on the Fiscal Compact.

"Bruton blames UK over referendum.

British opposition to the EU's original fiscal treaty proposal is partly responsible for forcing a referendum on the issue in the Republic, former taoiseach John Bruton argued yesterday. The Republic has to hold a constitutional referendum to ratify the fiscal treaty, which imposes budgetary rules on EU members limiting the amount of money they can borrow and the deficits they can run. Addressing the Ireland Canada Business Association yesterday, John Bruton, a former taoiseach and EU ambassador to the US, said the British government's refusal to agree to amend existing European treaties to accommodate the new fiscal rules had 'forced everybody else' to go outside existing agreements. "The fact that a member state would do such a thing, to my mind, suggests something not far from malice", he added." (*Irish Times*, 9 March.)

This is all quite true, except that it is not *partially* true that Britain scuppered an EU deal—it is totally true. Also, it is not *malice*—it is the UK's policy and in its interest to disrupt the European project and it has succeeded. Britain does so without even thinking about it: it comes so naturally. Bruton and anyone else need only watch any debate in Westminster to

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Guilds And The Town

Mondragon, Part 6

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Naval Warfare, Pat Walsh (Part 19)

proclaimed this alternative 'truth' on RTE radio. Since Chawke knows that he gave 2,500, he has made the reasonable conclusion that Mahon is calling him a liar.

But it appears that nowhere in the report is Chawke—or for that matter Ahern — called a liar. They are just "untruthful". The word is just left hanging there for others to draw the appropriate conclusion.

Bertie Ahern has made the point that Mahon routinely rejected evidence that supported his version of events, but did not present any evidence to prove the contrary. But that is not good enough for Martin, who has tabled a motion for Ahern's expulsion from Fianna Fáil.

On the evening of the Report's publication Darragh Calleary appeared on RTE's *Prime Time* to proclaim the new line. He was suitably contrite and wondered why Fine Gael had not behaved similarly following the Moriarty Report. It was pointed out to him that Michael Lowry had been expelled from Fine Gael long before. To which Calleary rather pathetic-

ally said: but Enda Kenny was seen standing with Denis O'Brien at the New York Stock Exchange. Pat Rabbitte explained to him in the manner of a parent talking to a distressed child that, given where he was, the Taoiseach would have been very lonely if he could only stand with the virtuous.

Fianna Fáil missed a golden opportunity to defend its legacy when Alan Shatter denounced de Valera's policy of neutrality as "*morally bankrupt*". The Fine Gael Minister then suggested that those who had deserted the Irish Army should be granted a pardon. A defence of de Valera's policy would have had the added bonus of wrong-footing Sinn Féin. But Fianna Fáil spurned that opportunity. So what is left for Martin's Fianna Fáil? It can't defend Ahern, Reynolds (also denounced by Mahon), Haughey, or de Valera. Who is left? Jack Lynch, the worst leader of Fianna Fáil ever?

There was a strange irony in Calleary facing Rabbitte on *Prime Time*. Rabbitte

Europe

continued

realise that *malice* is a pretty mild way of describing the view that now dominates there as regards Europe. The place oozes with hatred and contempt for all things European. The Government has to reflect this, but tries to tame it so that it does not disrupt its more sophisticated policy of engaging with Europe in order to disrupt it.

But the British Government's policy on 9th December last year merged with that of their more strident supporters and now all are happy as they have divided Europe. Curiously enough, the new technique to develop the division is to support the EU! This is code for opposition to the Fiscal Compact—which is the only thing that matters at the moment. It's just like the traditional opposition to the Commission—which was always code for opposition to the whole Europe project. Being simple souls, the British sceptics can't really play this game of support for the EU to ruin the bigger project. But their strident voices are of considerable use to the British Government, the approach of which is more subtle but quite clear.

The British Government has now got another simple soul on board, Enda Kenny, as was made clear during his visit to London:

"Ireland and Britain are to co-operate more closely to push for reforms of the European Union single market to boost growth and jobs, Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Prime Minister David Cameron have agreed. Following talks in London, the two leaders signed off on a declaration to deepen and improve relations between the two countries over the next decade, promising greater prosperity if the gains

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knows all about a political party trying to escape from its past and the disastrous consequences of such a policy.

Since its foundation in 1926 Fianna Fáil has always faced a hostile media. There is no doubt that a job has been done on it in recent years. The attacks on it have been relentless. But in the past the party knew its own mind and could withstand the onslaught. Fianna Fáil has now buckled under the pressure and Martin has decided to submit to the media agenda. He will find the media an insatiable mistress. No apology will be contrite enough and no obeisance will be sufficiently humiliating. If Fianna Fáil cannot begin to defend its legacy, it will be consigned to well-deserved oblivion.

possible are achieved. The detailed reference to the areas of agreement on EU matters between the two countries may be noted in other EU capitals, with both men emphasising the common attitudes taken to the single market and the need for an 'outward-looking' EU. 'I think the common view on EU policy is quite a new departure for the British and Irish governments', said Mr Cameron, following an hour of talks in No 10 with Mr Kenny, who later launched the British Irish Chamber of Commerce" (Irish Times, 13 March).

If the EU Single Market was such an important issue, then Britain should join the single currency and make it a real single market. But all this palaver about the Single Market is for the birds. Promoting the single market in the current context is another code for counterposing it and the EU to the Fiscal Compact. Cameron is quite right to note "*the new departure for the British and Irish governments*". This could indeed be a new departure for Ireland—it could be the beginning of serious opposition to the real European project for the first time.

Of course, this assumes Kenny really knows what he is doing which is doubtful. Ireland could be joining with Britain's anti-Europe agenda and a Fine Gael Taoiseach is doing it just when a former Fine Gael Taoiseach has realised what British policy really is. This says something about the state of the Irish political class.

But there is a silver lining to every cloud—if the scales can fall from John Bruton's eyes and make him change the mental habits of a lifetime about British intentions—when the facts are clearly presented—then there is hope for the blindest of the blind. Perfidious Albion will always assert itself.

Jack Lane

Europe

Keynesianism— cause or cure?

Fintan O'Toole claims that the referendum on the Fiscal Compact is about a "*Treaty (that) seeks to outlaw one side of the debate*". And that the whole thing is nothing short of a crime!

"What it is about, however, is the creation of a thoughtcrime. A certain way of thinking is to be outlawed. It is not Nazism or racism or some other hateful ideology. It is, in fact, a way of thinking that was, for three decades after the Second World War, the dominant economic 'common sense' of much of the developed world: the philosophy of John Maynard Keynes" (Irish Times, 6 March).

James Annett has forwarded the following letter, which appeared in the *Public Platform* section of the *Orange Standard* of March 2012

Federalism The Way Forward For The UK

The Scottish National Party government seems determined to hold a referendum on Scottish independence within the next few years.

If the people of Scotland were to vote in favour of independence then this would change the whole political set up of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

May I suggest another way forward for Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom rather than full independence for Scotland and as a way to counter the 'West Lothian Question'.

I would suggest that England be given its own parliament (let us say based in York for the sake of argument).

The Westminster Parliament would then become the federal parliament of the United Kingdom. Countries with federal governments like Canada, Germany, and the United States of America work well.

I would also suggest that the City of London and the City of Westminster be separated from the rest of London and become known as the Federal District of Jamestown in honour of King James VI and I, who became the first king to consider himself King of Great Britain in 1603 with the Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England.

James Annett

This is typical of the wordmongering we can always expect from O'Toole. The Keynesianism case is argued constantly all over the place but it is no longer convincing as an alternative solution to the current problems. There is no need whatever to outlaw it.

Does it ever occur to Fintan that perhaps something as powerful as this Keynesianism has any connection with causing the problems we have? Surely if Keynesianism was so wonderful and powerful for so long—which it was—how did it allow the current problems to arise in the first place if these problems are the very opposite of Keynesianism? Why did the obvious cure allow the illness to emerge and take over the patient? Could it be a horrible fact that Keynesianism contributed to the current crisis?

This begs the question as to what this Keynesianism actually was/is. Originally it was to encourage Governments to utilise spare capacity, spare money, i.e. savings, to deal with the Depression of the 30s. It was *not* a 'Government creating money' concept. That is what it became in the minds of people like O'Toole. It became a sort of magic wand to determine economic policy in a benign direction. But in the present crisis the money in question was actually created by banks—and thereby hangs a tale.

Two rather obvious political facts made the Keynesianism that O'Toole admires a

success. These were World War II in creating mass demand by mass destruction (a rather extreme form of austerity) and the emergence of the Soviet Union as a real alternative and thereby a threat to the capitalist order. Anything and everything was done to counter this danger and Keynesianism was one tool. It was not its economic theorising that made it a success. It was political necessity. There was do-or-die political competition as to which system was the best and that meant which could be more productive, provide more employment, provide a better society, etc. As a result, we never had it so good. But that was the dreadful Cold War era, was it not!

It is patently obvious that these two factors—these two warring systems—no longer exist and are not likely to return in any shape or form. So we have capitalism in a new form in which Finance Capital dominates because of all the money created by Keynesianism. Capitalism is, after all, a very adaptable system depending and accommodating itself to the political environment of the time. And now, as there is no political alternative to the Anglo-Saxon model apart from variations on what Fintan promotes, it feels very safe to operate in a way more natural to its basic instincts.

There is one other Western alternative to Keynesianism, to any kind of Soviet model and to the Anglo-Saxon version of the free market that has got us where we are. Fintan in his little cocoon of hyperbole may not have noticed it. It has survived the Keynesian experiment, it happens to be the most successful economy in Europe;

it is the economy that first created and has maintained a fine welfare state. It has provided European countries and Ireland with billions, sums that helped create the Celtic Tiger. It now seeks to ensure that the Irish and other Governments in Europe apply a bit of common sense to their economies, behave a bit like their own Government. It will thereby, *inter alia*, ensure that the Euro is secure. I assume Fintan will guess who it is. We are totally free to reject or accept the German

proposals in the forthcoming referendum.

Will Fintan support the Compact? Yes, he will, but you may not hear him say so unless you listen very carefully. But he will not make any case for doing so. He must keep his radical rhetoric intact and up front, though it gets more hollow by the day. Otherwise he loses his *raison d'être* for those members of the chattering class who like the luxury of that sort of thing.

Jack Lane

Scally on Germany

More Translation Needed

It is beginning to be understood that Germany has a social system that is different to the Anglo-Saxon model. "*Ordo-Liberalism*" is a term that has been coined to describe it. However, there is much more to the social market system, constructed by Christian Democracy after the Second World War, than is understood by those who use the term.

Derek Scally, the German correspondent of the *Irish Times*, tells us that Germany is not going to change much from its '*ordo-liberal*' ways (1st March). This is probably right. However, he treats the German way of doing economic business as an abstract model, not as a living society. This leaves a very misleading impression. The operation of the market is the working of a part of the society. The State and the rest of society affect the way in which the market works. Scally treats Germany as if it were an abstract market circumscribed by a few State rules. The reality is that it is a society with distinctive kinds of market relations. This is best brought out by looking at what Scally omits:

He writes:

"The starting point of ordoliberalism is the focus on an economy's supply side as the key to output, growth and employment. Markets always work smoothly but if shocks come, and demand falls below supply, wages and prices will automatically adapt to correct this—unless barriers such as a minimum wage get in the way."

Unfortunately, this leaves out an essential point—social solidarity and responsibility underpinned by State action. When there is a recession in Germany, there are 'barriers' in place to the operation of the market. There is an employment levy on German firms to ensure that, when there is a recession, employees are not sacked and, if they have to go part-time because of cyclical economic events, their wages are topped up to near full time levels. Thus, in 2008-9 Germany avoided large scale layoffs and was able to re-enter the global

market very quickly because it had retained its skilled workforce. So much for the unfettered market and Berlin's "...*deeply held belief that the state should stay out of economies as far as possible*"!

On this latter point, if '*ordo-liberalism*' is as he says it is, how is it that the State, through organisations like the *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* (BIBB, which promotes vocational training) has, in conjunction with the Trade Unions and Employers, a decisive say in the construction, regulation and review of vocational qualifications in Germany and sits at the apex of highly regulated occupational labour markets? How is it that vocational education is largely financed through a levy-grant system? *Ordo-liberalism* is looking curiously and curiously.

What about the Germans imposing ordoliberalism on everyone else? Scally writes:

"Drawing on their own economic tradition, Germans argue that boosting German wages would only harm its own competitiveness. The solution, they argue, lies with those who have the problem: welfare reforms, wage restraint and pay cuts to boost exports while reducing domestic demand, imports and deficits."

But the Germans don't say, and have never said, 'Do this without the involvement of your people'. Germans can act in this way themselves because their workers and Unions have a decisive say in the running of their own industries, both at plant level and, in larger firms, on the Supervisory Board. Workers can see what is required and act accordingly. Angela Merkel has already suggested that other countries adopt *Mitbestimmung* (Co-determination), albeit adapted to their own national conditions. Surely something worth mentioning when people start bleating about the imposition of a German model?

What then about a Teutonic-style

Thatcherite housekeeping economy that we will all be forced to adopt? Scally again:

"Ordoliberals shout back that more debt will only make the problem worse. Balancing the budget will steady the economy: lower deficits require lower taxes to service the loans, something that will unleash economic growth. If everyone adopted ordoliberal ideas and kept their economic house in order, economic disturbances would not be triggered, requiring Keynesian-style interventions."

Yes, but the Germans don't add: '*And leave a manufacturing-free casino capitalism economy that nearly brought you to ruin in place*'. German domestic banking is oriented towards long-term relationships with large and small firms and aims to provide them with investment and to share the rewards with them over the medium to long term. They are not driven by an obsession with short-term shareholder value—and the big ones have banking workers on their boards. In other words, they are saying: '*We would like you to act responsibly if you want us to help you, but it is your responsibility to sort out your banking, your industry and your society so that everyone understands the need for and is involved in economic reform.*'

It is impossible to understand why Germany is successful and why it has had to take responsibility for the Eurozone by focusing on a set of abstract economic doctrines while ignoring the society in which the German economy and market exists. It is not some free market paradise circumscribed by a few rules. It is a different way of looking at society, based on social responsibility and solidarity and with the long-term view constantly in mind. The Germans are too modest to tell everyone that they should be like them. However, it is perverse to think that all that they want from the rest of Europe is some kind of slash and burn of the society along neo-liberal lines.

Most of what Germany does is considered anathema by Anglo liberal economists and is regarded as unwarranted interference in a market which exists largely independently of the society that supports it. For many economists, this is the unpalatable truth that they are reluctant to admit.

Ireland's salvation lies with itself, in looking to its own strengths and weaknesses and taking the necessary steps to address them. The Trade Unions have a crucial role to play in this. Self-pity about what the dreadful Germans are doing and misinterpretation of their motives are self-defeating. It's better to see what they are doing right and to see if there are lessons for Ireland that are worth learning.

Chris Winch

Promissory Note Architecture

In the diagram the European Central Bank (ECB) is represented at the top. There is a dotted line going from the ECB to the Central Bank of Ireland (CBI). This indicates that no money changes hands, but that the ECB has authorised the Central Bank of Ireland to 'print' money called Exceptional Liquidity Assistance (ELA).

This money is now within the boundary of the State to be used by the CBI.

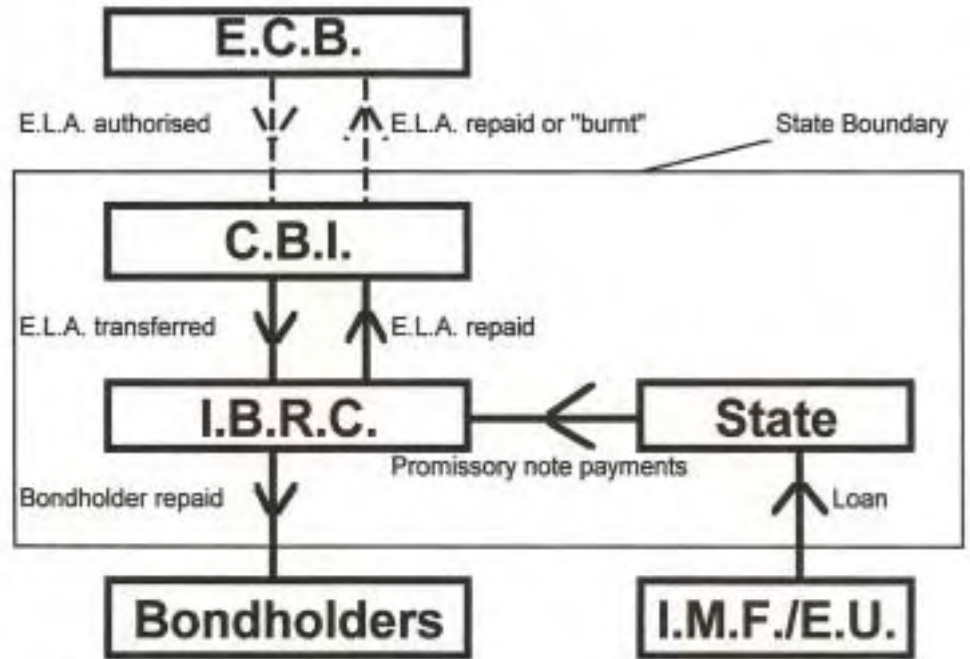
The Central Bank of Ireland lends this money to the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation (IBRC). The IBRC was created to consolidate the remaining assets and liabilities of Anglo-Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide after their toxic loans were taken into NAMA (National Assets Management Agency). The Central Bank lends IBRC money so that it can pay back its Senior Debt (bondholders and depositors).

Effectively the IBRC's liabilities in the form of bondholders have been replaced with cheap Exceptional Liquidity Assistance. But the ELA has to be 'paid back'. It is estimated that the IBRC owes 42 billion in ELA. Of this 42 billion it can repay 11 billion out of its own resources. So, it needs another 31 billion to be paid by the State.

The State doesn't hand over the 31 billion all at once. Under the terms of the Promissory Note, which it issued to the IBRC, it pays 3 billion a year over ten years. In subsequent years the amount tapers off. But the total amount envisaged—including a notional interest rate—is about 47 billion. (It is unlikely to reach this amount).

It appears (judging from media reporting of government statements) that, once the Promissory Note payments have been received by the IBRC, it starts repaying the Exceptional Liquidity Assistance. It can't hold on to these payments.

It is important to understand that the CBI and the IBRC are State institutions (see boundary of the State line in diagram). So the Promissory Note payments to the IBRC are one State institution paying another. The interest costs on the Promissory Notes provide revenue for the IBRC. Also the interest that the IBRC pays the Central Bank of Ireland is a cost to the IBRC and a revenue to the CBI: both State institutions. For transactions between State institutions the effective cost to the State is zero.



The external cost (i.e. payment outside the State) occurs when the Exceptional Liquidity Assistance is 'repaid' to the European Central Bank by the Central Bank of Ireland. There has been very little media attention on this crucial issue. According to UCD economist Karl Whelan in his submission to the Oireachtas Finance Committee, the Central Bank of Ireland is obliged to "burn" it plus an accrued interest of 1%.

If Whelan is right, 1% is the effective financing cost to the State of the borrowing to wind down the IBRC (Anglo-Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide).

When examining the diagram it is important to emphasize that the key payments are those between the State and outside the State boundary. Payments within the State boundary are a case of "one hand washing the other". They do not represent a real cost to the State. However, they may have accounting implications which determine how the national debt is presented.

It could be said that the State has to borrow to repay the Exceptional Liquidity Assistance and it has to pay interest on this borrowing. But all that is happening is that there is a gradual replacement of the very cheap ELA loan with a more expensive IMF/EU loan. But this replacement of the ELA takes place over a period of up to 20 years.

ELA was not designed to be repaid over such a long period. Before the crisis it was paid back within a week.

John Martin

Press Release

'Save The Tele' Rally

On Saturday March 3rd, Unite, the Union organised a rally outside the Belfast premises of the *Belfast Telegraph*. Print workers threatened with redundancy at the *Belfast Telegraph* have started a campaign to save their jobs and keep the print run of the newspaper in the city. This follows the company's announcement that, due to 'economic reasons', the day shift printing of the newspaper was moving to its Newry plant from March and that 24 employees working in the Belfast department would lose their jobs.

Moving production from Belfast to a new purpose-built plant at Newry was facilitated by a grant of £3.5m from the Stormont Executive. *Unite* the Union attacked the company's decision:

"Independent News and Media operations in Northern Ireland is a very profitable company. We understand that the company makes £10m profit a year alone from its Belfast operation. To make the defence that is for economic reasons resulting in the loss of 24 Belfast jobs and the printing of the paper moved to Newry is nonsense. Since 2008 the company ripped up local agreements and our members have had no pay rises since."

Mark Langhammer, a representative from the NIC of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, spoke at the rally. His speech is set out below.

"Colleagues, I'm honoured to be here today, to join your protest.

I'm proud to convey to you the fraternal greetings of the Northern Irish Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade unions

And I'm glad to see such a good turn out today.

The *Belfast Telegraph*, for more than a century, has been one of this city's great institutions. So it's a great regret that International News Media have planned, and consciously chosen, to move production of the *Belfast Telegraph* from Belfast.

It's a disgrace, too, that News Media have acted as asset strippers in relation to property acquired by the *Telegraph* over the course of generations.

And it's with great anger that we see News Media—a highly profitable unit in Belfast—plotting to move jobs from the city, for the sole reason to depress wages and to worsen the conditions of service of its real asset, its workforce.

News Media is not alone, but it's the sort of company which demonstrates the sort of short-term, reckless, "race to the bottom" mentality that has brought our economy to its knees. Its Anglo-American way—the short-term, slash-and-burn, speculative, casino-capitalism—is part and parcel of the system that is pressing down on working people from Ireland to Italy, from Athens to Lisbon.

But today isn't just about News Media. They are what they are, and we can expect no better. Footloose, global corporations like News Media act as if they are beyond control. And Governments, too often, act as if they believe it. But let's be clear—they are not! Not beyond the control of public pressure and Government action.

And our movement needs to impose our will on the public realm and impose our will on the democratic realm to bring reckless companies of this sort to heel.

In truth, the asset stripping of jobs and property at the *Belfast Telegraph* has, in fact, been facilitated by our own local devolved Assembly and Executive.

Our Government awarded a £3.5m grant to News Media to build a plant at Newry which facilitated moving jobs from Belfast.

Our Government facilitated the carnage that you face today.

What were our politicians thinking about?

And—more to the point—what is Arlene Foster going to do about it?

Our taxes, our money, public money should support productive investment. But in return, we must see a return in terms of jobs, in terms of increased employment—and we must see a return in terms of civilised industrial Relations practices.

Public money should not, should never, be used to facilitate asset-stripping.

And colleagues, looking forward, our movement needs to get interested in the radical reform of company law. We need to legislate for a more broadly based, a more civilised, conception of the limited

company in law.

Companies benefit greatly from Limited Liability status—which—let's not forget—is a privilege granted by the state, granted by our democracy.

The privilege of Limited Liability status allows company risks and losses to be socialised. But the privilege of Limited Liability company status shouldn't be a one-way street. It must, in return, bring reciprocal obligations to society.

Traditionally, companies were invented by "companions", who banded together to share risk to perform a vital economic or other function from which they would profit. They would petition the state for a licence to practice and accept reciprocal societal obligations in return. This classic conception of company has been debased by the narrow notion of short-term shareholder return, a notion which will consider quicker routes to shareholder return than investing in people to develop a great organisation. Likewise, merger and acquisition to extend market share, tying senior management to stock market performance through share options, increased managerial opportunism and the use of performance-related pay for middle and junior managers to effect cost-minimisation, all serve to reinforce the short-term view of the company, rather than the need to invest in skills development.

We, as a Union movement, need to develop a narrative around what a broadly defined and progressive company, with environmental and societal obligations, should look like.

The current conception of company legal status has been debased by the News Media style and the narrow dash for profit, the narrow dash for short-term shareholder return.

Colleagues, the "short term company" needs to be within our sights; it's within the democratic sphere; it's within the realms of public pressure.

Asset-stripping companies will always consider quicker routes to profit; they will always cut corners, always take "Route One" direct to shareholder return.

Company law should instead oblige companies to take slower, steadier, long-term routes to growth; to oblige companies to invest in real productivity, invest in people, invest in jobs, invest in developing great 'long-term' organisations.

So let us raise our sights today, and start to bring wreckers like News Media to heel!

I wish your campaign every strength, and every success."

Further information from http://www.unite.theunion.org/regions/ireland/news_from_ireland/save_the_belfast_telegraph-1.aspx

Septic Thoughts

I agree very much with the comments by Fergus O'Rahilly in the *Irish Political Review* last month about an article by Frank McDonald, Environment Editor of the *Irish Times*, who wrote a diatribe against people living in the country on 25th February. Fergus commented:

"At least 450,000 tanks discharging 250 million litres of effluent daily is simply not sustainable", wrote Frank McDonald. This conjures up visions of hundreds of millions of sewage flowing anywhere but into a public waste system: over fields, into back gardens, into rivers and streams. Sewage, sewage everywhere. Actually nothing could be further from the truth and I would hazard that the nightmare imagery is intentionally provoked by the writer."

The article was indeed a diatribe, relying on images of tons of sewage being created in the countryside by septic tanks—despite their existence and purpose being the very opposite. It seems necessary to point out that there is a difference between human and animal excrement, and sewage—which rural communities everywhere have been coping with successfully since time immemorial. They were recycling, composting and going green before these concepts ever entered the language. They were like the man who never realized he had been speaking prose all his life until someone told him.

Excrement of all sorts is the ideal fertilizer and we need a lot more of it, and that is how it was traditionally dealt with in the countryside. We cannot have enough of it! Sewage is a different issue and is essentially an urban issue as there cannot be the same utilization of it in urban areas as there is in the countryside. That is the starting for any rational disunion of the issue.

McDonald should read Smollet's 18th century *Tour of Europe*. One of the things that fascinated him was the trade in excrement, with a tasting of it to test the quality. A bit like a wine-tasting event. He also noted that the excrement from monasteries was highly prized as the producers were so well-fed that in turn it produced better food. It attracted a premium on the market. Would McDonald have survived this experience? Within living memory every farm and cottage in this country had its dung pit with hot steaming excrement—in front of people's doors in many cases. I never recall a problem with that. This has evolved to septic tanks and slurry pits. It is just another development in farming methods. No more and no less.

The issue at the moment is how best to cope with the costs of the consequences of

this human biological activity and how it is to be paid for? If there is one aspect of human life in which we approach uniformity (or equality which it is often equated with—or confused with—these days), it is in the bodily function concerned with this topic. We are all as near equal as we ever are likely to be in this respect. When I was looking for a job decades ago after leaving school, there was no such thing as 'career guidance' or 'human resources' available and I asked around for advice about dealing with interviews. One piece of advice I got that proved valuable was to imagine the interviewing panel sitting on

the loo when asking you questions. I would recommend it. It puts these situations into a nice intimate perspective.

So what should be the principle of revenue-raising to meet the costs? Whatever our circumstances, the amount of activity and the consequences of the activity in question are as near equal as anything can be among humans and it is therefore ideal for the capitation, or poll tax, principle. Obviously it should be named after the relevant body organ, rather than the poll/head. Perhaps readers can suggest a more appropriate title for such a tax?

Jack Lane

Obituary

Gerry Lawless

Gerry Lawless, who died in January, was given an appreciative obituary in the *Irish Times*. And so he should, seeing the formative influence that he exerted, as a revolutionary socialist, in the development of so many of our bourgeois intellectuals. (I suppose our journalists *are* our bourgeois intellectuals. If they aren't, then we haven't any.)

The *Irish Times* obituary was carped at, as being insufficiently appreciative, or even essentially dismissive, by Paddy Prendiville, Editor of the satirical magazine, *Phoenix*, who delivered the funeral oration. The carping was merited to some extent. Lawless actually was a lubricant facilitating the development of many people who went on to become much too important—not to mention self-important—to remember him.

Having listened to Prendiville's marvelous eulogy, I expected that *Phoenix* would publish an obituary detailing the extent of Lawless's influence, and naming the names of those who want their association with Lawless to be lost in oblivion. But *Phoenix* carried no obituary at all.

In the funeral oration Prendiville said that Lawless, who came from an ordinary Dublin working class family, was a revolutionary Socialist Republican—I don't recall if he used the word 'Marxist—who had a practical sense of reality, and was almost uniquely well informed about world affairs. (For example, he put Robert Fisk right about Lebanon.) In a summary of his political history, Prendiville said that he engaged in some action as a dissident Republican in 1956 (though I'm not sure he used the term 'dissident') and was interned. He signed out of Internment (though I'm not sure the actual words "signed out" were used) and brought a

case against the Dublin Government over Internment in the European Court of Human Rights with Sean MacBride (former Chief of Staff of the IRA and former Foreign Minister of the Fine Gaelled Coalition of 1948) acting for him, which he won. He formed the Irish Workers' Group in London, which split when some of its members became Two-Nationists and Loyalists. We were not given any clear idea of what Lawless was after that.

It was surprising, in the light of what had been said, to find that the funeral ceremony ended with the *Soldiers' Song*. I had expected *The Internationale* as well, or at least *The Red Flag*.

Would Gerry have approved? Or Géry. He altered the spelling of his name to indicate his internationalism. It was from him that I first heard the term "*rootless cosmopolitanism*". Apparently there was a campaign against rootless cosmopolitans in Russia around 1950. That was one of his complaints about Stalin. We (that is, Pat Murphy and myself) tried to get to the bottom of this, but we never did. All I can say is that at certain moments he seemed to relish the role of rootless cosmopolitanism, at home everywhere, but nowhere in particular. I took it to be a bit of harmless fantasy. But, then, I have never had a feel for 'identity' problems. I was from Slieve Luacra, and that was that. And Pat was from Dublin City and County Limerick and was at ease with both. And I have no idea whether Gerry actually met Ben Bella during the Algerian Revolution, or whether that was part of a Géry fantasy. He was certainly a bit of a fantasist—but his fantasy life was interesting and not unrealistic.

I knew him well for a couple of years, and while I cannot say that I got much from him beyond Dublin gossip and the

gossip of London Trotskyists, it might be said that this publication, and BICO, would not have existed but for him.

In the early 1960s a large number of Irishmen found their way to the Working Men's College in Camden Town. The WMC was a philanthropic institution, founded and run by City millionaires of a Christian Socialist disposition for the purpose of taming politically-inclined workers by means of Liberal Imperialist culture, and therefore not much frequented by workers for that reason. The ones who were already tame had no need of it, and it did not know how to cope with those who weren't.

Camden Town, which is now one of the trendiest places in London, was then working class and Irish, and had a unique hotel for workers at its core—the Rowton House. It happened that a lot of Irish workers around 1960 went to see what the WMC was like, and they were purged by a mass expulsion in 1963.

I met Pat Murphy there, and in discussion with him I got to know something of what our present-day academics produced in Cambridge call the "*high politics*" of Irish affairs. Pat struck up an acquaintance with Liam Daltun there.

Daltun had done something in 1956. I'm not sure if he had acted jointly with Lawless then, but when I met them they were a pair, with Daltun very much the dominant figure. And he was an impressive figure, both physically and intellectually, and very strong-willed.

Daltun asked Pat to go to a meeting at which an Irish political group was to be set up. Pat asked me to go with him, and though I had little interest in politics I went.

I had been involved to some extent in the long London Transport Strike of 1958, and on the basis of that experience realised that there was no socialist revolution in the offing in England. The obstacle was that England seemed to be too socialist for the workers already. That was evident in London Transport—a nationalised operation which the workforce might have been running if it had the will to run it. I would have found the work much more congenial if the culture had been to keep the bases running to time and completing their journeys. It was far from that. The Trade Union, instead of taking on a syndicalist role, felt obliged to act as if it was operating under a capitalist owner whose object was the extraction of surplus value for private advantage. The rationale of that approach was that the nationalised transport system, though itself without a capitalist owner,

was a service to capitalism. That was the position put by the Communist Party (there were hardly any Trotskyists then), and the Labour Party Left, which was pretty inert, did not dispute it.

So much of the British economy was nationalised then that it seemed to remain capitalist only because of a profound reluctance on the part of the workforce to exert itself beyond the wage relationship.

I had also been involved in a strike in Ireland, in a Creamery in which I was a labourer, and I did not see the makings of a revolution there. But that was in a region where private property owners, co-operatively organised, were as numerous as wage-workers either. But, since I knew nothing of Irish city life, except that I didn't like what I had seen of it, I had to allow that there might be possibilities there.

Anyway, it was in a pretty sceptical frame of mind that I went to the meeting. That meeting led to a further series of meetings, from which the Irish Workers' Group was formed.

Meetings were held at first at the office, in King's Cross, of a Trotskyist organisation which did not admit that it existed—the Militant Tendency. As the size of the group increased, it moved its meetings to the conference room above the Lucas Arms pub in Grays Inn Road, where the Freemasons met on another evening, and kept

their paraphernalia in a trunk in the corner.

Members built up quickly to about 50. Public meetings were held at Hyde Park Corner, attracting large crowds. Daltun was the main speaker at those meetings. He was able to attract a crowd and hold it.

One day I noticed a familiar face on the outskirts of the crowd. It was a very distinctive face. I recognised him though he did not know me. He was Tadhg Feehan of Boherbue village. I knew that he had a job in the diplomatic service. And here he was spying on us for the Embassy.

We picketed the Embassy on some issue. I forget what. Any worthwhile picket causes some bit of disturbance. Liam Daltun was captured and whisked away in a police van. He was up in the Magistrates' Court the following morning, a bit bruised. The officer giving evidence against him was battered. His name, as I recall, was Newman. Anyway he was made Chief Constable ten or fifteen years later. So the IWG was a success.

It lasted about two years. Given the people of such very different descriptions who joined it, that was a very considerable achievement. It was made possibly by an agreement between Pat and myself with Daltun and Lawless about how it should be conducted, and disagreements should be handled. We constituted ourselves a kind of informal Politburo.

On going to England after the 1956 Campaign Daltun had first approached the Communist Party and was directed to its Irish front organisation, the Connolly Association, led by Desmond Greaves. It seems that Greaves took him into his confidence and was preparing him to be his successor. But in the end Daltun found Greaves's ban on criticising the Dublin Government in the hearing of the English unrealistic and they came to a bitter parting of the ways. Daltun then looked at the Trotskyist organisations, before undertaking to set up an independent Irish organisation which would work out its own politics and general orientation, without ideological instruction from anybody else.

One of the first matters to be decided was the kind of publication there should be. Earlier groups had begun with a commercially-printed newspaper—printing being much more difficult and expensive then than it is now—which gave the impression that there was a flourishing organisation behind it. The group would exhaust itself with that effort.

Pat and myself urged that the IWG should not present itself as more than it was, and that it should do its own printing even though it looked amateurish, and that it should commit itself to regular publishing to find out if it had something to say that was worth saying. They saw this as a great novelty but agreed to give it a go.



Le Portrait November 29th 1967

FRONT ROW Rosari Kingston, Kevin O'Byrne, Gus Healy, Gery Lawless, Jack Lane
BACK ROW Oscar Gregan, ?, Aidan Fox.

Regular publishing of original material — not received from any authoritative source — required regular discussion of what should be said. And that, too, was a novelty.

A magazine called *An Solas* (The Light) was established. I wrote an article about the IRA for it. I have not looked at it since, and I doubt that it said much, but Lawless and Daltun felt that it was a very daring thing to do. However they agreed that it should be published. And when there were no dire repercussions ideological independence was established on that side of things as well as on the Marxist side.

Gerry Golden was the first substantial figure who joined the group. He was active in the Electrical Trade Union. He had been a member of the CP and had tried to force the ballot-rigging on the attention of the Party leaders and oblige them to stop it, and was beaten up for his pains. In the mid-sixties he was doing his best to maintain a socialist position in the ETU against the Chappel leadership that had taken over when the ballot-rigging was exposed. He was a thoughtful person, intent on maintaining a Marxist understanding of the world independently of CP or Trotskyist doctrines, and had a solid reassuring presence. He had been in the Free State Army during the War and did a stint guarding internees. For Lawless therefore he was a Concentration Camp guard. And he regarded Lawless as a kind of midge.

Another member was Andy O'Neill who, as far as I recall, had been in the CP and the ETU with Golden, and had left the Party because of its requirement that members should join the Connolly Association and enable Greaves to maintain the Party line against people fresh from Ireland who looked up the CA because it was denounced by priests and who wanted to be socialists.

Joe Quinn (who was from Kerry, I think) was known as the father of Irish Trotskyism. I'm not sure that he was formally a member of the IWG, but he was always around. He had, over many years, mulled over the whole issue of the Russian Revolution and was always interesting to talk to. But he had developed an understanding of things which made him politically inert. I don't recall if he had ever been associated with Tony Cliff (*International Socialism* magazine, which I think became the SWP) but his view of the course of events in Russia had very much in common with Cliff's. It was economic determinist to an extreme degree.

As a Trotskyist he had to be anti-Stalinist and had to see the marginalising of Trotsky on the issue of 'Socialism in One Country' after the death of Lenin as the revolution betrayed, while at the same time holding that economic circumstances in Russia—combined with the survival of capitalism in Europe—made the realisation of Trotsky's programme impossible. What Stalin achieved was what it was possible to achieve, but

nevertheless that achievement was a betrayal of the revolution. I put it to him that, from that viewpoint, what should have been done around 1923 was call off the revolution and relinquish power to capitalist forces as the forces appropriate to the economic condition of isolated Russia. He saw that this was implication of his general view, but it was not a conclusion he was willing to draw. So he existed in a kind of stalemate with himself.

The main Trotskyist organisation at the time was Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League. Healy was hated and feared by Trotskyists of the IS and the Militant Tendency. He did not indulge in idle discussions. He had a body of doctrines and concentrated on forming a tightly-disciplined revolutionary cadre around it. He was a very effective orator for this purpose. There was a considerable turnover of personnel in the SLL from year to year, but a substantial cadre force was accumulated from year to year, and Healy's oratory was always attracting enthusiastic new recruits. If 'The Day' had arrived, Healy would have had a force to act with. The condemnation of him by other Trotskyists seemed to me to be of a kind with Trotsky's condemnation of Lenin until 1917. Joe Quinn saw this, but still did not approve.

Dennis Dennehy was the greatest possible contrast with Joe Quinn. He came to the IWG by way of Christian Anarchism, with a free understanding that enabled him to conduct an outstandingly successful reformist rebellion on the Housing issue in Dublin in 1968-9, in the course of which he became the Communist folk-hero of the Dublin housing estates.

And there was also Tom Skelly from Longford who had led a kind of peasants' revolt against the ranchers in the Midlands a few years after the Second World War.

All of these tendencies pulled together for a couple of years. When the IWG split, it had nothing whatever to do with the Two Nations or Ulster Loyalism, as asserted by Paddy Prendiville. It had to do with Russia.

At the start I had no preconceptions about Russia. I had read Trotsky's dispute with Kautsky and his *Autobiography*, but had not read a word of Lenin and Stalin. Neither had Pat Murphy. But he insisted that the remarkable things achieved in Russia during the Stalin period should be taken account of. All we required was that whatever policy positions we adopted should take account of the gross facts of the matter and should be internally coherent. Lawless and Daltun retained a general Trotskyist orientation. The problem for them was how to reconcile Permanent Revolution and Revolution Betrayed with historical events. Permanent Revolution meant in the first instance that the bourgeois revolution against Tsarism could not consolidate itself and would give way to socialist revolution—which happened. But then it meant that

socialist revolution would become international, or at least European, and was doomed if it didn't. The socialist revolution did not become European, therefore . . . ? The revolution in Russia inevitably degenerated? And what sense was there in describing the inevitable as a betrayal?

We agreed to try to follow developments in Russia in the 1920s step by step, making what sense we could of them without the intrusion of doctrine. The Trotskyist acquaintances of Lawless and Daltun observed this and began taunting them about becoming Stalinists. And then Lawless and Daltun began taunting each other on the issue, driving each other to a break. Meetings became doctrinal disputes.

At the time there was a member who was a deserter from the Royal Navy. (I suppose it would still be prudent not to name him.) He went along with the approach of Pat and myself, as did most members. He was staying with Pat. One evening the Naval Police turned up to arrest him. Pat delayed them while he escaped out the back window. In the circumstances, there could be no doubt that information was given from within the IWG. In my memory of it, that was the end.

I do not recall the "*stages theory*" being an issue, as asserted by Prendiville. The "*stages theory*" had to do with 'Permanent Revolution' theory. It was perhaps applied in an extreme and unrealistic way by Desmond Greaves, but I cannot recall it ever being an antagonistic issue in the IWG.

A couple of years ago *Phoenix* carried an expose of a Stalinist line which BICO tried to impose on a pro-Palestine group in Dublin. The issue there was whether an agitation should be developed which would maximise public opposition to Israeli conduct, particularly in Gaza, or whether the agitation should also attack the PLO as a collaborator with Israel against the elected Hamas Government, and the Egyptian Government for not keeping an open border with Gaza, thus minimising the influence of the agitation on Irish opinion. I suppose that was a kind of 'stages theory' issue, and something like it might have happened in the IWG, but I do not recall it.

The first inklings of the People's Democracy were beginning in the North when the IWG split. I recall that Eamon McCann attended its last meetings. Lawless then played some part as an individual in the PD agitation. After that he became a supplier of pointed paragraphs to many commercial publications. I believe he became a Labour Councillor in East London (Hackney) and was preparing to take over the Parliamentary seat with Trade Unionist Ernie Roberts as MP. But then Diane Abbott came along and, as a black and a woman, swept them aside.

It was a pity that Lawless and Daltun started something ambitious but found themselves unable to see through. Still, they started it. **Brendan Clifford**

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

HAPPY PADDIES

In the 2002 General Election the Labour Party's slogan was: "*but are you happy?*". The economy was racing ahead and the Party felt that the only way of appealing to voters was on quality of life issues. Those were the days!

The 2010 Gallup World Poll attempted to answer the Labour Party's elusive question by comparing happiness among different countries. The survey shows that Ireland is the 10th happiest of 40 countries. In an EU survey in the same year (2010) we came 7th out of the 27 with only the Scandinavian countries, Luxembourg and the Netherlands in a more blissful state (cited by Brendan Walsh, *Irish Times*, 23.12.11).

Our suicide rate has dropped by a third since the late 1990s in the highest risk group (males between 25 to 34). Violent deaths from road accidents and homicides have fallen significantly since the recession, as has serious crime.

Incredibly, we don't appear to need alcohol as much. *Per capita* consumption has fallen by 20% from its peak in 2001.

Admission rates to psychiatric hospital have fallen by more than a half from 1973 to 2005. Walsh in his *Irish Times* article claims there is no evidence that this has increased since the recession as figures for prescription drugs have not increased.

The recession does not seem to have affected birth rates. We continue to have the highest rate in the EU (2.1). This contrasts with other recession-hit countries such as Latvia, Hungary and Portugal whose fertility rates have fallen to historic lows.

Although unemployment has soared, the proportion of the adult population employed is at 60%. This compares with less than 50% in the late 1980s. Real GDP per person has doubled since the 1980s and social welfare rates have kept pace with the general rise in living standards.

RTE

The Long Fellow thinks that our happiness rate would surge ahead of even the Scandinavians if we spent a little less time looking at current affairs programmes on RTE. The recent controversy over RTE's handling of the Presidential Election did not come out of the blue. It is part of a pattern that has been evident for at least ten years.

Perhaps it was never the case that journalists merely reported the facts. *The Irish Times* has been a 'player' going back at least to the Jinks affair of 1927. But other media outlets had a more modest role. *The Irish*

Press was subordinate to a political party and lost its way when it tried to be independent.

RTE never fulfilled the role which Sean Lemass envisaged: that it would be an organ of the State in the same way as the BBC. But in the past it was not actively hostile to the State or social institutions like the Catholic Church.

All of that has changed. Journalists in RTE see themselves as prosecuting counsels whose job is to accumulate evidence for the purpose of a conviction. 'Due process' is not observed. The only constraint is the law of libel. It is not surprising that such power without responsibility breeds arrogance.

There have been some spectacular recent examples of RTE *hubris*. Its *High Society* programme, based on a book on cocaine abuse by Justine Delaney-Wilson, exposed lawyers, accountants, airline pilots—among others—but not apparently media types. The documentary's *piece de résistance* was an allegation that an unnamed Cabinet Minister was a regular user. But doubts about the credibility of the programme emerged when the evidence of the Cabinet Minister's abuse was transformed from being hand-written notes (*per* the book) to a digital recording. But none of this evidence could be produced for public scrutiny.

And then, of course there was the Father Reynolds libel. The Catholic journalist Breda O'Brien has said that Reynolds's good name was only vindicated because the broadcaster had been caught telling a provable lie (he had fathered a child). If the allegations had been confined to sexual abuse, it would have been very difficult for Reynolds to defend himself.

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland found in favour of Seán Gallagher regarding the unattributed tweet on the *Frontline* programme. But rather generously found that there was no intentional bias. This is stretching credulity. Apart from what actually happened the advance publicity advertised the programme as a 'game changer'. There is no doubt that it delivered on its promise.

THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT

It was quite amusing to see the newspaper that reported on the death of Liam Lawlor mount its high horse on the subject of RTE bias. Eoghan Harris's *Sindo* column continued its long-running whinge about being excluded, along with Kevin Myers and Bruce Arnold, from the national airwaves (*Sunday Independent*, 18.3.12). But where is it written that unelected scribblers should have regular access to RTE? Harris has done more than anyone to advance the idea that journalism is about attitude rather than facts. The 'star' of the *Coolcrease* documentary is not concerned about media bias; only that the bias is not to his liking.

TRADE SURPLUS

The Central Statistics Office has recorded that the country achieved a record trade

surplus of 44.7 billion euros last year. This cannot be explained by multi-national transfer pricing since both exports and imports were up (4% and 5% respectively).

This shows that the productive capacity of the economy has not been impaired. The anaemic GDP growth has been caused by a decline in consumption as private debt is being repaid. Once this adjustment process has been completed there is every reason to be optimistic about our prospects.

FISCAL PACT

Ireland joined the EEC along with the UK and for many years our interests were closely aligned with our former colonial masters. However, membership reduced our dependence on the UK market; it enhanced rather than undermined our sovereignty. After membership the first major break with the UK occurred in 1979 when Haughey severed the link with sterling to join the European Monetary System (EMS), the precursor to the Euro.

In the subsequent decade there followed a series of independent foreign policy initiatives, the most significant of which was on German unification during the Irish Presidency. Ireland had become a player and was richly rewarded by our EU partners.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the EU has taken on a free market orientation. The escalation of capital flows across the region has exposed the contradiction of a single currency across independent states. At the beginning of the crisis Greece felt no need to make any fiscal adjustment. The calculation must have been that Germany and the rest of the Euro zone would pick up the tab. This has indeed happened. Although there was a severe haircut on bank loans, the banks were in part compensated by cheap loans from the ECB.

Germany has been trying to ensure that this never happens again. The problem posed by the Euro is the only impetus towards greater political union.

Just as in 1979 (and on numerous other historical occasions) Ireland is being asked to choose between Britain and our gallant allies in Europe. But there is nobody with the vision of Charles Haughey. And Enda Kenny's first instinct is to visit Downing Street to make a joint declaration with David Cameron. Even the most ardent of Irish europhiles don't appear to have the stomach for the fight.

The political establishment is praying for a socialist victory in France so that it might be released from the obligation of supporting the fiscal pact. The passivity is contemptible. But as each day passes the victory of François Hollande appears less certain. And even if he does succeed there is no guarantee that he will make good his promise to renegotiate the pact.

Ireland must rediscover her best political instincts and reposition herself at the heart of European political development. It must not revert to being a political backwater of the UK. ●

Elizabeth Bowen and her Admirers

MARY KENNY AND JAMES DILLON

Little did I know that when researching material for these articles that the whole issue of our war-time neutrality would flare up anew? Fine Gael, as a political party, it now appears, has never lost that which seems certain is the "rooted nature" of their foundation. When Churchill praised Kevin O'Higgins as a "hard-man" of politics, and W.B. Yeats exulted when he saw that same hard quality too, we can see more clearly what it is that became embedded in Fine Gael through all its various manifestations from Cumann na nGaedheal onwards. When Roy Foster was writing his multi-volume biography on Yeats, he revealed a quite interesting story. On first conversing with the now deceased philosopher Sir Stuart Hampshire about Yeats and the "Eugenics Movement in the 1930's", Hampshire told Foster when they met in Oxford of a meeting he had with the great poet:

"I suffered a shock when I met Yeats for a very long evening in All Souls with Edith Shackleton and John Sparrow at the height of his ultra fascist phase writing "On the Boiler". As we talked in a very small room I suddenly saw (as I think) that Yeats has that strange Irish coldness which often lies beneath the magnificence of language and of gesture and which permits great cruelty." (W.B. Yeats. *A Life*. Vol.11, *The Arch Poet*, Oxford Uni. Press. 2003. p.762 Endnotes.)

But Fine Gael had a certain penchant for hard-men because there was General Eoin O'Duffy and also James Dillon—and they were both fascists if we are not to beat about the bush. Robert Fisk is now being used as a source by Mary Kenny in her article on James Dillon in the *Irish Catholic*, 2nd February 2012, and by Mary Leland in her *Irish Examiner*, 1st October 2011, review of Eibhear Walshe's edited book of *Bowen's Selected Writings*. While Maurice Manning in his biography of *James Dillon* played down many of his subject's more serious lapses, Fisk used Elizabeth Bowen's assessments with more accuracy, especially seeing that he was not useful to the British cause because he was just too much of the "fanatic" and above all he had not the people behind him.

Manning counters this with images of Dillon as being "monastic" and "not a people pleaser"—which Bowen saw as his "contempt for society". And, if one is imbued with the latter, it does demonstrate

that democracy itself could be in jeopardy.

Mary Kenny now advocates the notion that religion and not politics animated Dillon's beliefs, calling him "an admirable Irishman", "a man of conscience" and "a thoughtful and committed Catholic". She couldn't be more wrong.

President Eamon de Valera over-ruled Frank Aiken in not censoring the speeches of James Dillon which he had printed in pamphlet form. So let me put this idea forward—would it not be a good thing if these pamphlets were republished by someone and then let the debate begin.

Some people remarked to me about Fine Fáil's silence about Neutrality. Can people still not see that New Fine Fáil is a construct of the all-powerful media and those of us who still meet in *cumanns* do so to reminisce about the old days. It says everything that our Leader, Micheál Martín TD, at our *Ard Fheis*—when the state of the party's misfortunes parallels the state of the country—amid the crisis about the Euro etc—that the two motions that were passed as revealed by the media were that gay "marriage" should be legalised and adoption by the former said unions should also be legalised!

BOOKS IRELAND

The March 2012 issue of *Books Ireland*, No.337, had a review of *Elizabeth Bowen's Selected Irish Writings*, ed. by Eibhear Walshe by Kevin Kiely. I found out that this critic was born in Co. Down and had recently been in the wars over what he wrote in the previous *Books Ireland* about President Higgins's latest book of poems. Professor Kiely had lambasted the President as having written a book of "lame, stale and stilted" poetry that is "bland, imprecise and ultimately incomprehensible" and indeed was so bad that Higgins "can be accused of crimes against literature". I agreed with this and thought everyone did too only we were always too nice to say otherwise. Well the *literati* went after poor Kiely with spleen aplenty. Of course there are those of us who suspect that a lot of the brooha was because of who the author was rather than what he had written.

Unfortunately Professor Kiely seemed to have little idea about Elizabeth Bowen and it really showed. He calls her spying "ww2 reportage" and only sees in it "good social history".

He denounces Bowen for having "respect for de Valera", finding it "mawkish". The idea that Bowen was ever or

could ever be "mawkish" is one so at variance with reality that it just beggars believe. He finds that her grasp of "neutrality is accurate".

He then startlingly states that Bowen didn't fear the natives "because she is one". Yet a few lines down we are told: "In her complex identity, Bowen is Yeatsian", and that the "contribution the Anglo-Irish have made to Ireland is now recognised". Kiely also strangely asserts that "Prejudice may reside upon her as Anglo-Irish" and makes comments such as "democratic Ireland no longer denounces the big house, but seems to marvel at it". I find that last statement to be very true to the point: where there is no house—where it has been demolished—its indent on the field is held sacred. How Bowen would have satirised these same people now fawning with such fervour over emptiness and not an existentialist in sight! Kiely finishes his review by saying: "She subconsciously or otherwise endured financial hardship" along with the demolition of Bowen's Court, an idyllic "place to write in: such it is happily ideal".

"In this respect, Bowen's complexity is Irish, and her dispossession solidifies the matter."

My own sense of what Kiely has written is that he just doesn't know that much about Elizabeth Bowen or else he is still traumatised from being set upon by Dublin's elite.

MARY LELAND AND THE BOOK-LAUNCH

On the 1st October, 2011 launch at Fota House of *Elizabeth Bowen's Selected Irish Writings* (ed. by Eibhear Walshe, Cork Uni. Press. 2011). Leland began by asking us for our sympathy because of some mishap about misplacing her glasses, but she goes on to inform us of the treasure trove of Bowen letters from Ireland and she immediately goes on to quote from one—Letter, 28th October 1937:

"Cork city has been very gay of late. Summer weather persisted, just lightly chilled, and on long gay glassy evenings the Lee estuary looked like the scene set for a regatta. Galway oysters reappeared at the Oyster Tavern, off Patrick Street: this is a long cavern of dusky mirrors with a grill fire (which grills really superbly) glittering at the end. The Opera House on the quayside reopened, and Jimmy O'Dea packed it for two weeks."

And then she goes on to hurling which she said—

"was the fastest game short of ice hockey, that I have ever watched. It is a sort of high-speed overhead hockey, played with sticks with flat wooden blades, and it looks even more dangerous

than it apparently is. Though a game that would melt you in the Antarctic, it is, for some reason, played only in summer. I do not think so much of Gaelic football. But I have only seen this game played in a sea mist, which, milkily shrouding goals and players, added to the effect of aimless mystery: there seemed to be effort but no fun...".

Leland goes on to say that this is the type of delight that is brought out in chapter after chapter of this book.

"It is not terribly scholarly but I will go on about that now. Eibhear has many academic achievements—and indeed goes on to emphasize how many they really are but Eibhear Walshe is particularly good on Elizabeth Bowen because he is able to raise Bowen's work above the academic standards as seen here today testified by his friends. And why readers of this latest book will be able to relax into this particular book is because Eibhear is also a great writer himself".

Leland speaks about Bowen's "*felicity of style*" and accepts that "*she is not a professional scholar about Bowen*", but commends "*the way Eibhear and other writers contained in this book respond to Elizabeth Bowen's own writing and in fact the way she responds to the good writing of others*". Leland states that Eibhear goes on to give a very crisp account of Bowen's love affair with Séan O'Faoláin—an affair which only ended when she met the Canadian diplomat Charles Ritchie in 1942. She adds that the book gives the impression of concentrated thoughtfulness in making the selection and appraising the text and understanding above all the intention—even when he is dealing with other writers than Bowen. She remarked that something else to be read about this book is the way Eibhear has brought a world literary invention and personality. It was almost hurtful to remember that Elizabeth Bowen was a working writer other than a famous and very popular one. She could be described often—and I think that Samuel Johnson used the phrase, and I use—as "*a hireling scribe*".

She wrote for her income and she had to make huge amounts of money. In 1958 (six years after the death of her husband Alan Cameron), she wrote to Charles Ritchie from the GPO in Cork—imagine her leaning on the counter writing a desperate note—saying that she had come into the city with the rather depressing purpose of selling a good deal of silver and a few pieces of good jewellery. She was, she said, in an unspeakably dreary financial crisis and asked him to send her a \$100 which he did—yet what income she had, she enjoyed spending and her

hospitality was splendid and was bred in the bone, and who could blame her. You only at to look at her guest list to realise how the money went. She writes in this essay which is for *Holiday* magazine in that year of 1958 and Leland goes on to quote from it, honing in on the library.

"...It is in the library that I remember Eudora Welty (an American Southern writer) in the first hour of her first visit, turning her head remarking, "I have just realised, I don't think I've ever been so far north before". (We checked on an atlas later: she was right.) Eudora, gracing the drawing-room both in her own way and as a Southerner can, played the plaintive, long-neglected piano..."

"...one June midnight too, she emerged from the kitchen having conjured into existence an onion pie. In the library I recollect Evelyn Waugh, scooping desultorily, a little crossly, at a bat which had shattered the evening for me by flying in—I cannot stay in a room with a bat; I cannot endure them! David Cecil, having retired for the night, was heard by his floor neighbours in a spooky monologue. It transpired next morning" {what must they have talked about at breakfast—Leland asked to a laughing room?} "that a white owl had stood unblinking at the end of his bed; in vain had he reasoned with the intruder. Nor are bats and owls the only nocturnals. Oxford talkers take little count of the clock: David, again, and his colleague Isaiah Berlin are known to have started a conversation at the foot of the stairs, around midnight, and to have finished it close on two hours later, not more than six steps up".

"Cyril Connolly's visit, one sunny April, coincided with that of Virginia Woolf. By mischance nothing was recorded, for Cyril's diary, otherwise ever ready, was of a kind which had a lock: at Bowen's Court locked it had to remain, for no sooner had he arrived than he lost the key... Virginia, serenely standing out on the steps, watched her spaniel racing over the grass in front. Dynamic, speedy and graceful country walker, she out-distanced the rest of us on our pilgrimage across the fields to the Bowen's Court wishing well... What she wished, as she cupped the spring water in her hands, I shall never know... Frank O'Connor chanting in the library, dropping his head back as did Yeats, recalled the magnificence of the Midnight Court, poetry and bawdry of an Ireland before the potato had struck root. New Ireland tore to my doors in the form of my cousin Dudley Colley, a racing ace: his glorious Frazer-Nash enraptured Carson McCullers. In a flash, long-legged Carson was in the driver's seat. "I'm of" she cried. So strong is the visionary force, the stationary car seemed to roar and devour space: Carson's face grew tense with the thought of speed, veritably her hair streamed back from her forehead."

"*Kate O'Brien was never a visitor*",

Leland thinks—

"to Bowen's Court but Eibhear presents a very entertaining account of what I suppose you would call a relationship between women but Eibhear states that Bowen was ever only close to women of her own caste and had particularly no empathy with other Irish women writers of a different class".

Leland then goes on to say she has just been reading the short stories of Mary Lavin, thinking of what Irish women writers were doing in a really intensely important period of the 40s and the 50s .

She tells us that O'Brien certainly respected Bowen and much of her work and said so in several reviews. That the most telling of these are set in the 40s and she even did a review of *Bowen's Court* which, she said, was set in a certain path of inherited prejudices and emotions. Coming from a shared history of a different standpoint, sharing also the geography of their young lives, Kate O'Brien wrote that she responded with a certain ease, not only because they seemed to have certain traditions and customs in common. And she articulated that view by a statement that Leland cited, but which was hard to catch.

Leland went on to state that, because the story of Bowen's life has been written and rewritten, there was no need for Eibhear to go into too much detail. However, the details he did provide are fascinating and the way he wrote them in a narrative of the introductory essay was worthy, not just of Walshe, but of Bowen herself in a more objective mode. It was important to say that this book was not just an accumulation, the material was linked, the essays and review from and about Bowen were revelatory and not just a catalogue. They were listed, dated, attributed and they included her reports to the British Ministry of Information for the Second World War. These were enriched and researched extensively and tried to represent her views and they were of more than controversial significance. They often revealed what it was like to live in Ireland during the years of the Second World War. As Leland described it:

"Neutral Ireland in wartime is far from being the home of comfort and ease. Shortage and insecurity are everywhere and she might have added the kind of paranoia that moved deeper as the war progressed. And what we have also managed to forget about Bowen—actually I don't think anyone has ever emphasised it is her sense of humour. You saw that when she was writing about Cork and Dublin and she talks here again in 1937 about Dublin and the Horse Show and she tells the story about a "party of peacocks that escaped from the Zoo and

in the gloam of a very early evening, filed slowly across the racing track". This is said to have happened twice. But by the crucial Saturday, the surviving peacocks were under lock and key. Ireland becomes safer though never obvious..."

"But this is a serious book packed with material, facts and collections for cross-references—the New Statesmen, Life, American publishers and The Bell which includes her essay which is a fascinating piece of work on James Joyce written in what she calls the state of uneasy politeness caused by his death."

In short:

"the contradictions of Joyce's nature ought not to perplex his own country-people: we have them all in ourselves... A theme of disturbing pleasure should be what one gets from reading Bowen's work and she got it also from reading others. Now I knew little or nothing or cared even less I suspect {says Leland} and I have felt desperate retrospective guilt about this when I interviewed Bowen—with a small "i" in Doneraile in 1970 and I didn't grasp the significance of the fact that this was the very day—we were meeting on the evening of the very day in which she had first returned to the site of Bowen's Court—the house had been totally demolished. And she said to me "it was a nice way to go". With a party of 100 school children we trooped down to the avenue.

"As with any good book, Elizabeth Bowen Selected Irish Writings raises some questions about its subject. In noting her long-standing friendship with Séan O'Faoláin, I wondered if there hadn't been some kind of alchemy in that relationship, something to explain an affinity beyond the physical. I wondered because what seems to me to be the echoes of one another and beyond one another echoing from paragraphs such as this, for example here is Séan O'Faoláin in Bowen's Court in Elizabeth's words:

"Sean O'Faoláin helping me to lock up—a nightly ritual involving heaving an iron bar into place, then fastening the hall door on the inside with massive chains. O'Faoláin remarked 'that here was a Big House ready for a siege'. Complex race memories, conflicts, the raids and burning of the Troubles of his young days and mine simultaneously stirred in us two Irish—I whose first Irish ancestor had come from Wales, he descended from the ancient inhabitants of the land."

"And here is Séan O'Faoláin recalling a visit to Bowen's Court and how he remembered that long before he even saw Bowen's Court he recognised its genealogy was "as old as Spenser"

And really this type of fawning just went on and on and I felt I just had enough. I think all my readers get the picture and decency bids me leave it at that. . . . Leland concluded:

"Thank you all for listening and to

Eibhear for this lovely book and I want to thank the publishers the Cork University Press for understanding the need to produce it and for doing it so very well. Thank you." (Loud clapping).

The publisher then thanked Mary Leland and handed us over to the man of the moment—Eibhear Walshe who said what he had to say very well and to general room applause.

CENSORSHIP

Now I will have to say that the two words that went unsaid for the whole day were "spying" and "Aubane". I have been hearing and writing about people who think it is time to teach us a lesson. Margaret Callaghan, Roy Foster *et al* are not the only ones out for blood. But if academia/media think that we will just fall by the wayside, ah me how terribly wrong will they be proved. Brendan Clifford—in his analysis of why Bowen, Spenser and even Raleigh are now feted so much, the latter for his poems too which could do with a look from Kevin Kiely—states:

"I cannot explain the phenomenal growth of this inferiority complex during the past forty years in Dublin literary circles. {And it goes without saying all over the Irish universities JH} I know little about Dublin. Slieve Luacra and Belfast are what I know. But it became evident to me some years ago that this

inferiority complex was being manipulated for the purpose of suppressing all Irish literature that could not also function as British literature.

"Selections from Elizabeth Bowen were included in the *North Cork Anthology* to humour the inferiority complex. We included it in the Derridian form of deletion, which seemed to meet the circumstances of the case. I did not believe that the Dublin intelligentsia would notice this little local publication. But they did. They are as alert as witchfinders in the English Republic in their search for heresies to stamp on. But, when they found us out, they could not recognise a Derridian device when they saw it." (*Elizabeth Bowen 'Notes on Eire' Espionage Reports to Winston Churchill 1940-2. With a review of Irish Neutrality in World War 2. 4th Edition. Aubane Historical Society. Millstreet, Co. Cork. 2009. PSToAppendix. p.282.*)

And at the launch that day these "inferior attitudes" were really displayed by Professor Patricia Coughlan who, in a very nervous voice, was the 'warm-up' for Mary Leland and after her, Dr. Eibhear Walshe. I now think that I will write about them as well in next month's issue of the *Irish Political Review*, where I will write about Mary Leland and her Farrahay Lecture.

Julianne Herlihy ©

Republicanism— *some thoughts for Stephen Richards*

Stephen Richards, in his dissatisfaction at the replies he received in this publication, says he senses within the pages of the *Irish Political Review*, "the absence of any appetite to analyse the very strange development of Sinn Fein from the early 1990s on" (Feb. *Irish Political Review*).

Perhaps Stephen's dissatisfaction provides the motivation necessary to put some thoughts down on these matters.

I cannot speak for other writers, or for that matter for the Republican Movement (which I last had contact with at the *Ard Fheis* of 1986), but Stephen should be aware, having "for the last 33 years... been devouring everything that has come out of Athol Street", that a thesis of mine on Irish Republicanism was published by Athol Books at the time of the IRA ceasefire.

That thesis was written in the early-mid 1980s and for reasons explained within the book it did not appear in print until 1994 when the Peace Process was getting underway in earnest.

Subsequently, I remember reading (and writing) many articles in the *Irish Political Review* explaining the actions of the Republican Movement and the general political situation around the time of the Good Friday Agreement and up to the collapse of the first Executive in 2002.

I remember the *Irish Political Review* comparing this situation with that confronting Germany in late 1918/early 1919—when an armistice, or peace treaty, was turned by Britain into a German surrender. The IPR suggested that this was unlikely to happen in relation to the Provos, and its prediction of subsequent British behaviour, based upon an understanding of historical experience, proved sound. It was demonstrated in numerous British attempts (Castlereagh 'break-in' etc.) to subvert the peace project in order to turn it into a rout of the Provos.

As we have seen, the German experience was not repeated here. The Provos managed to conduct an orderly retreat from the battlefield, conducting an effect-

ive military rearguard action in 1996 (where Britain was most vulnerable, in the City of London), and successfully completed the transition from war to politics. And, as we have seen, in relation to the Boston College Tapes, England still chips away, waging its war at the political/nefarious level.

British attempts to subvert the Provo peace project foundered on the inability of the media to break the will of the Northern Catholics. They had stuck by the Provos through thick and thin, realised what the Provos were doing for them was the 'only game in town', and refused to be taken in by all the talk of 'frightfulness' in their midst. Election after election they returned to the ballot box to put it up to the Brits and make sure their bargaining power was maintained.

Part of the reason why the Northern Catholics have been impermeable to British ideas has been the fact that during the war they were subject to so much black propaganda and untruths at the hands of the media. They developed a healthy disregard for what was told them either by the agencies of state propaganda (*The BBC*) or by the gullible within their midst (*The Irish News*). It has been a situation reminiscent of how Redmondite war-recruiting propaganda, relatively successful in the towns and cities, fell on deaf ears in the countryside of Munster, which had witnessed so much lying about the land war. It was presumed thereafter that anything coming from Britain and its native friends was invalid.

It is an unpalatable fact to the Ulster Unionist or to other 'right-thinking' people that the Provisional IRA campaign gave the mass of Northern Catholics a measure of respect that changed everything in the North. That is one of those truths that dare not speak its name. It is a truth that truly sickens the assorted anti-nationalist journalists and revisionists of the South producing the bile that spits from their pens on all things northern. (I remember one typical example of this in the *Sunday Independent* during the early 1990s when one commentator – it could have been any of the usual crew – referred to the "*slurry-heads of Tyrone and Armagh who vote Sinn Fein*").

The Provos did not raise the respect and confidence of the Northern Catholic community by killing people, and least of all by killing Ulster Protestants. It was entirely through the Provos' continued ability to outsmart and outmanoeuvre the British State, and the preparedness of ordinary young men and women to sacrifice their lives for the Republican cause, that endear-

ed them to their community and produced a great lifting of confidence generally.

The Northern Catholics had been condemned to a perpetual position of being policed by their traditional enemies by the settlement and dysfunctional form of government that England imposed in 1920/1. That was not a situation that was predisposed to creating any kind of respect in a community. They had waited for half a century for deliverance from the South from this state of affairs and when the moment of truth came, in the Autumn/Winter of 1969/70 they had been badly let down.

Then they produced something from themselves and of themselves that began to call the shots – and not only in relation to those who had locally policed them but also in relation to those who had let them down and indeed in relation to the powerful British State to boot. When the British State had thrown all its vast political experience and military resources, including its elite special forces and dirty tricks, at the Provos and they had remained standing and the volunteers kept coming for more, in each new generation, the Northern Catholics knew that they had produced something very special indeed. So they stuck by it, through thick and thin, and helped it to deliver. And all the considerable efforts of the British (and Irish) States have proved incapable of separating the community from its remarkable military/political development.

It is obvious by the tone of Stephen's letter that he is an Ulster Unionist by predisposition. He says he has "*contempt for both the DUP and Sinn Fein*". It is probable that his contempt has been raised by the fact that, having set up a political system designed to put the nice SDLP and UUP in power, it is now sorely disappointing to see Sinn Fein and the DUP there and doing what the SDLP and UUP could not manage to do.

It is amazing how some Ulster Unionists (Trimble, Steven King etc.) have taken on the ideas of Anthony McIntyre as a stick to beat the Provos. Amazing but not inexplicable! Because the very people who try to propagandise the death of Irish Republicanism, in association with former Provos who they would formerly not have the time of day for, have not noticed that the Unionist Party has presided over the loss of most of Ireland and the effective end of the Union in 1920.

The following passage from Stephen's letter is pure Anthony McIntyre:

"At the end of this 25 year long bloody

campaign its leaders, who had sent many idealistic young volunteers to their deaths, and had raised communal tensions to an unprecedented pitch, decided to embark on a process that would end up with them becoming ministers of the Crown in a partitionist assembly."

For Ulster Unionism to argue its case on the basis of Second Dail Republicanism is surely a measure of its decline.

Of course, Anthony McIntyre is no Second Dail or Anti-Treaty Republican (the two are not the same thing and separated Sinn Fein from Fianna Fail in the 1920s). He is of the Northern Catholics, whose participation in the struggle was more than likely to have been a result of experience of life under the statelet rather than devotion to Commandant Tom Maguire (if I remember his name correctly) and those who walked away in 1986. But for all that he is a rather doctrinaire believer in the purity of ideas.

The basis of his criticism of the Provos is that they were defeated, refused to admit it and have conned the rank and file into believing that they are still Republicans, pursuing the dream. And Stephen agrees with McIntyre that on this basis all the "*deaths were needless deaths*".

One thing that can be said immediately about this position is that Britain did not get where it was in the world by taking this naïve view of politics and war.

England did not go into the Great War with any formal demands. As in other wars, it tends to simply engage in conflict on some excuse or another when advantage is sensed. It then decides what can and what cannot be gained in the fluctuating course of the war and formulates demands on this basis. Then, victory or otherwise is proclaimed. It is usually victory, despite the non-achievement of objectives, which hardly seem to matter in some cases, like, for instance in its conflict with the Ottoman Turks. Or otherwise, the thing is altogether forgotten about in the interests of the State.

There are some grounds for understanding the Great War as a superficial victory for Britain over Germany, but also as a substantial defeat from the United States. If it is seen as a siege of Europe, as many Imperialist thinkers did see it, to repress the commercial development of the Continent under German hegemony, it has so far failed—despite a second round to finish the job a couple of decades later. But 'so far' is the operative phrase here, because this conflict is far from over from Britain's standpoint, in any case. Important battles are ongoing nearly a century after 'the war to end all wars'.

Britain waged its Great War to remain top-dog in the world. It did not care that second-dog happened to be Germany. If France had been second-dog, as it had been until comparatively recently, it would have dealt with it, perhaps in alliance with Germany, in a similar fashion. The objective was simply to remain top-dog and control the seas.

To remain top-dog England felt it had to do to Germany what Rome did to Carthage. But in the course of doing down Germany it found itself reliant militarily and financially on the United States. And the US bided its time, realising that Britain's attempt at maintaining its top-dog status had misfired and now the turn of America had come.

So, in objective matters of power politics, whilst the Great War on Germany resulted in its defeat it also defeated Britain in its waging of it.

It is almost universally believed in Britain, at least, that the Second World War on Germany was also a victory for England. But, in any objective reading of its results it also represented a defeat, despite all the dressing of it in Churchillian oration.

War is, therefore, a complicated business in what is victory or defeat.

Liddell Hart once pointed out that "*Victory in the true sense... surely implies that one is better off after the war than if one had not made war*" (*The British Way In Warfare*, p41).

The Republican Movement is in an immensely more powerful position today than when it was the small rump that existed in 1969 before war was embarked upon. And as for the people they fought for and who comprised their membership, the Northern Catholics, well that is a no-brainer.

Can the same be said of the State that squandered its Empire in trying twice to cut Germany down to size? Or can it be said of the Ulster/Unionist Party and how it lost the Union?

The standard Republican criticism (that some Ulster Unionists parrot) of Sinn Fein is that it has ended up 'administering British rule' in the Six Counties, or as Stephen puts it, they have ended up: "*becoming ministers of the Crown in a partitionist assembly.*"

It was neither a Republican or British war aim that that would end up being the case. But war is the sort of catastrophic activity that results in such unpredictable events. And it was surely the case that what the British Empire and the world had become in 1919 was unimaginable to the

Liberal Government in Britain which had begun its war on Germany in August 1914.

If there is a standard British war aim at all, it is to disorganise and weaken the selected enemy to such an extent that England gains a position of political or economic advantage from which it can advance to greater things. As a result British wars have tended to be both very numerous (with numerous enemies) and continuous – that is continuing in political form long after military engagements have ceased.

If the German Army had conducted an orderly withdrawal in late 1918 and Germany had not suffered a collapse behind the lines, which was produced by the Royal Navy starvation blockade, the history of the Great War would have been written in a very different way and the subsequent history of Europe would have been entirely different. The formal military position in late 1918 represented a stalemate with the *Entente*, despite great superiority in blood and treasure, it having never set foot on German soil in four years of war. It was what happened after the 'end' of the war (which we are encouraged to believe happened on November 11 and to commemorate with Poppy-frenzy) that really determined its result and outcome.

It was never a British aim to put Michael Collins and Sinn Fein in Dominion power in 1921 when the Irish democracy asserted its will in 1918. A majority in Britain could not even countenance the thought of John Redmond as Prime Minister under a system of meagre Home Rule governance in 1914. But when the assertion of Irish democratic will was backed up with a resolution not seen before, and not anticipated at the time, England had to alter its aims in Ireland.

It was not in itself the signing of the Treaty and the administering of Crown authority by Collins that had the desired effect from the British standpoint in 1921. It was the subsequent disorganisation of the Irish democracy as a result of this that impressed the British agenda on Ireland. And it was not the partition of the country that produced a continuation of Imperial hegemony in Ireland but the establishment of a semi-detached pseudo-state in the North that acted as a lever on the whole island for the future.

In the mid-1990s it would not have been Britain's intention to see Sinn Fein call the shots in the Peace Process and emerge as a power in the devolved administration. It would have been the intention to disable and disorganise the most

vigorous political force in the North by preventing it completing an orderly retreat from the battlefield to the political sphere, translating the things it had achieved militarily into political gains for its community.

England knows all about the importance of remaining intact in the field of battle for as long as possible. It did this in 1940 when it only had the hope that something would turn up that would get it out of the mess it had created and got itself into. It had facilitated Hitler's dominance across a large part of Europe through its disastrous behaviour in the 1930s and only got out of this situation by helping Stalin and Bolshevism into a similar position (more than Hitler in the East but less in the West, due to the US intervention).

And that war was called a victory!

I remember the Unionist commentator, Eric Waugh, writing in the liberal *Belfast Telegraph*, that he had it on good account that the senior military elite who planned and carried out the Ambush at Loughgall had plans to use helicopter gun-ships Israeli-style along the border against the resurgent IRA. But these people, who ran the war in its closing stages, were wiped out in a mysterious helicopter crash *enroute* to an important military planning exercise in Scotland. And Britain decided to go with the negotiated settlement strategy instead.

Tommy McKearney in his recent book *The Provisional IRA—From Insurrection to Parliament* wrote the following:

"The most basic problem facing IRA strategists was how to devise an operational policy for dealing with an enemy that was too powerful to be defeated in a conventional military sense. Britain was never going to suffer a rout similar to that inflicted on them at Singapore in February 1942... the IRA could only hope for total success by inflicting such pain on the British that London would lose its will to stay... in the light of IRA resources, that was a huge undertaking. In spite of this, many IRA volunteers at ground level in the early 1970s were carried along on a wave of optimism believing that they could indeed inflict a military defeat on their enemy. This misconception grew largely from the spontaneous nature of the organisation's founding and initial development. The IRA did not create the circumstances in which the organisation found itself. Nor could it anticipate the series of momentous and traumatic occurrences, such as internment without trial in August 1971 and Bloody Sunday shortly afterwards in January 1972, that caused its ranks to swell so rapidly. In practice, the Provisional IRA and its Army Council was often responding to events

that were happening with mesmerising rapidity.

"As a consequence, the leadership frequently reflected and often tried to reflect the rank and file mood as much as moulding that outlook. Under such circumstances, it was nearly impossible to curb ambitious demands or make a pitch for pragmatism and... it was difficult to explain the difference between a prudent compromise and unprincipled capitulation. This in turn, coupled with momentous circumstances, led the IRA to commit itself by 1972 to a stark objective of British withdrawal and an all Ireland Republic. This was a political stance, which made it difficult if not impossible to discuss or to contemplate an alternative, in the event that the organisation found itself unable to impose its own preferred solution. It was, moreover, a position that tended to flounder on the question of Unionist opposition to a United Ireland on Provisional IRA terms... How to win over or accommodate a significant section of the Unionist community was a dilemma that continued to confront the Provisional IRA throughout its existence" (pp103-4).

McKearney is not an enthusiast for Sinn Fein and has been an associate of Anthony McIntyre for many years. His brother, Padraig, who was killed at Loughgall, was also an opponent of the Republican leadership by all accounts. However, this passage says something very important: that the Republican Movement that emerged in the North post-1969 was not simply an ideological cause, it was a product of the conditions it emerged from and within, the experiences of existence of its rank and file and the actions they were subjected to by the State and those who wished to see Croppies lying down once again. These facts always made its motivation and momentum problematic in relation to objectives and how it might settle.

The Provos went into their war with the formal aim of an independent United Ireland based on a federal structure (*Eire Nua*). That war proved surprisingly irresistible for a couple of years and British attempts to stem it were brushed aside. However, ultimately the Provo campaign came up against a strong will within the Protestant community to resist incorporation within an all-Ireland state. This was particularly demonstrated when the SDLP attempted to jump on the back of Provo military success to make good their Council of Ireland and continue the progress toward Irish unity through political manoeuvring and deception.

It was probably around 1977 or 1978 that the Provos realised that the formal aims of their campaign were probably

unattainable. In some ways this realisation manifested itself in the ditching of the Southern Second Dail leadership (O'Brad- aigh and O'Connell etc.) and the reins of power being taken by the pragmatic Northerners (Adams, McGuinness etc.). From then on there was a scaling down of the war and a refinement of it into '*armed propaganda*'. The logic of 'Armed propa- ganda' and talk of the impossibility of a military solution signalled that the conflict could only end at the negotiating table.

The problem that then confronted the Provos was to continue the war until Britain was prepared to make a functional settle- ment that would represent a transitional stage toward the formal objectives of the war. But Britain had other ideas and it engaged in a trial of strength with Repub- licans over the issue of criminal status in the prisons.

That trial of strength was claimed by Mrs Thatcher as a victory. But it was a very illusory victory since it greatly enhan- ced the credibility of the Republican movement, destroyed the notion that the Republican struggle was merely an out- break of criminal activity and provided the springboard to electoral success in the following years. And it also had a funda- mental effect on British understandings because it showed that, not only had the Republican Movement a solid bedrock of support that would not be easily whittled away, but given the circumstances, the mass of Catholics would go over to it when faced with the alternative of support- ing the Provos or the existing arrangements of governing Northern Ireland.

There is a notion being perpetrated by some that to describe the transition that the Provos achieved from war to politics is somehow a 'revisionist' imposition by those who wish to paint the Republican movement with the most enlightened shade.

The Two Nations theory was given the same treatment by the same people in the early 70s.

The Two Nations theory was simply recognition of empirical facts that made the situation in Ireland in 1969 under- standable. The same recognition of empir- ical facts needs to be employed in dealing with what Stephen calls "*the very strange development of Sinn Fein from the early 1990s on*".

In 1969 the Republican movement was made up of a very small core of Northerners with a Southern leadership motivated by Second Dail Republicanism. During the 1956-62 campaign the impetus had been almost entirely from the South. But every-

thing changed in the Autumn/Winter of 1969-70 when hundreds of new volunteers were taken into the movement in the wake of the events of August 1969.

In the course of becoming a mass move- ment of activist Northern Catholics, and in being left high and dry by the Lynch Government in the South, the Provisionals took on both a new composition and a new orientation that was not immediately apparent. The Second Dail character of the Republican movement was swamped by a more pragmatic Northern element which was largely infused by the desire to make themselves first-class citizens in their own land. And for the first time the traditional relationship between North and South in which Northerners passively waited for Southern deliverance was ir- revocably changed as the North created something for itself and designed to operate in its own interests. These facts had important implications as the war continued, the Southern establishment further distanced itself from Northern Republicanism and the formal aims of the campaign began to appear unachievable by military effort alone.

So when Britain began to signal that it was prepared to impose an internal Northern Ireland arrangement in which the minority status of Northern Catholics was to be formally set aside in politics and government, and to treat the Republican prisoners as political prisoners by releasing them, the transitional settlement of the Good Friday Agreement was possible.

Another factor in this was the develop- ing revisionist movement in the South which was overtly hostile to traditional nationalism and the withdrawal of support to Republicans in the North as a consequence.

In such circumstances the Republican movement realised that a strong power base constructed around devolved govern- ment in one region of the island would prove a significant obstacle to any attempts to erode the national struggle further and would provide a springboard for further advances in the South.

The realisation that the military cam- paign was being run down caused tensions to rise in some areas. Belfast and Derry were tightly controlled by the Republican leadership and it was apparent that armed activity was being minimised and electoral requirements made predominant. Opposi- tion was therefore confined to individuals. South Armagh was geared toward fighting a long war of attrition against the British and it was capable of great tactical flex- ibility. The area adapted well to the require- ments of the latter stages of the war

extending its operational capability to the island off the Irish coast—Britain.

It was in East Tyrone that most concern was expressed about the direction that the struggle was taking. The area had seen a great infusion of young volunteers around the time of the Hunger Strike and it was here, in the heartland of Republicanism in the North, that an alternative course was attempted. It seems that units of the East Tyrone Brigade believed that they could extend the area in which British forces could not operate wider than South Armagh. From 1985 on, something on the lines of the War of Independence was attempted in Tyrone. Military installations were attacked, destroyed and even captured, and construction firms used by the Army targeted to prevent rebuilding. Dozens of volunteers were involved in attacks on Border Posts and the British even resorted to hiding their casualties after an SAS unit was wiped out in Cappagh.

However, the upsurge in East Tyrone showed the limitation of military activity, even with the provision of new weaponry from abroad. The East Tyrone Brigade suffered heavy casualties as the British began to employ new surveillance technology, that had not been available in years gone by, to track movements and target operations. Whilst conventional British Army and RUC found it increasingly impossible to operate in the area, undercover soldiers were employed against IRA units and Loyalist hit squads were provided with Intelligence to target the wider Republican support base.

Stephen argues that the Provo campaign was "*conducted on behalf of a minority of a minority*". But what does he mean by 'minority'? The Northern Catholics slipped easily between Nationalists and Republicans throughout the existence of Northern Ireland as if there was very little at issue between them. All it took was an event or a chance of one or other to defeat a unionist for the Catholic vote to jump from one persuasion to another. Who could say who held the majority in Catholic politics during the seventies when the Provos were boycotting elections and not taking electoral politics to be anything meaningful? For many, the SDLP represented them at the ballot box whilst the Provos represented them in other ways. Nationalists were the political wing of the Provos before Sinn Fein was developed as an electoral machine. They had learned the lesson of Bonar Law well: "*There are stronger things than parliamentary majorities*"—particularly in relation to Britain's attitude to Ireland.

Could it have been any other way? The Catholic community realised the only purpose of elections was to register one's vote against the other side. The electoral business in the province was totally disconnected from its meaningful function in every other state in the world—voting for or against the Government of the state.

It is rather pointless to suggest that because Catholics were a minority in Northern Ireland they should have accepted the democratic will. Nationalists of all varieties always considered the Northern State to be an artificial construction designed to subvert the national democratic unit. One might as well ask why Unionists did not accept the democratic will in 1918 within the unit they considered operable for centuries.

Stephen suggests that the Provisional IRA "*engaged in sectarian murder... like its loyalist counterparts*."

The Provos declared war on the British State and made particular efforts to direct their war against the forces of the British State. Unfortunately for the Provos, the Six Counties were not held directly by the British State. In return for being a semi-detached annex of the British State the Ulster Unionists were given the state security apparatus which interposed itself between Britain and the Northern Catholics. First there were the B Specials and then the Ulster Defence Regiment, which represented a substantial continuation of the Specials. The conduct of the Provo war was complicated by this factor and the repeated attempts of Britain to keep the conflict at arm's length and Ulsterise it, in order to let 'Ulstermen carry to can' in the words of Jim Callaghan.

McKearney is very accurate and honest in what he says about the consequences of the British policy of Ulsterisation:

"It is difficult to accept that Britain was unaware of the consequences arising from placing locally recruited militias (Protestant Unionists for the most part) in direct conflict with the IRA. Unless the IRA abandoned its campaign, it was inevitable that as the two sides came into conflict, the struggle would assume sectarian dimensions. As history records, this happened and many RUC and UDR members died, often while off duty. Whatever rationality the IRA offered for the imperative of acting as it did, many Protestant people viewed this campaign as a sectarian assault on their community. This anger in turn lent a semblance of justification from a Unionist point of view to a largely indiscriminate killing campaign waged on Catholics" (p140).

The Provos attempted to deal with the Protestant complication largely by ignor-

ing it and claiming that the war was against the British State and no one else. This posed a problem in many areas where the war against Republicans was largely undertaken by the Protestant militias in conjunction with local civilians:

"The British used its locally recruited part-time Regiment, the UDR, supported by an RUC Reserve to gather intelligence and act as a lightly armed counter-insurgency militia. Strenuous efforts have been made over the years to portray the two forces as well-meaning, part-timers doing their best to protect society, insinuating that any attack on their members was motivated purely by sectarianism.

"Lost amid this tendentious propaganda is the reality. Both the UDR and the RUC Reserve were recruited locally and had, therefore, a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the areas of operation. As local men, they were able to distinguish between various accents that are so distinctive to a Northern Irish ear, but would not resonate with regular soldiers reared in Britain. A County Derry accent would go unnoticed, for example, if questioned in South Tyrone by Londoners, but would immediately draw the suspicion of a Dungannon UDR patrol. As local men with roots for many generations in an area, some UDR members were even able to recognise young Republicans by family resemblance to older relatives. They had, too, the ability to differentiate between families sharing similar names, an invaluable asset to the authorities in parts of the pre-postcode Six Counties where locals used ancient patronymics to identify each other. In closely mixed rural areas, members of the UDR or RUC Reserve were intimately familiar with the rhythm and pattern of life in their districts and could recognise instantly if something was out of place.

"Whether on or off duty, these men acted not only as the eyes and ears of the regular army but actively supported it logistically and militarily. That they had dual military and civilian roles added to the danger they posed to the IRA. Employed as school bus drivers, postmen, refuse collectors and every other position in the workforce, they had a perfect cover for travelling covertly in the Republican districts, not only to observe but also to monitor. A dust man may appear a harmless worker until he sifts through the bins for information—a routine practice by every intelligence agency" (McKearney, pp117-8).

McKearney recounts how the IRA had, during the 1956-62 Campaign, attempted to avoid attacks on the RUC and Specials because they saw them as "*deluded Irishmen*" who would someday come to their senses. But the post-1969 Northern rural IRA units found it impossible to ignore the role they played in repressing the Catholic community and keeping the

Croppies down. Increasingly, therefore, they were targeted by the IRA.

When these militias began supplying Intelligence, weapons and personnel to Loyalist assassination squads, things became even more difficult for the Provos. And it is common knowledge that IRA units had to be restrained from taking the war directly to them, since such actions were a diversion from the real target of the war and could be portrayed as 'sectarian'.

Stephen will find that the dilemma that faced the Provos is still a live issue among Republicans today in East Tyrone. . There are mutterings that the IRA leadership restrained the volunteers from taking on the loyalists in the interests of winding down the war and securing a peace settlement. And in doing so they created the impression that the IRA was incapable of responding to the increased targeting of Republicans and their families by security-force/UVF collusion. This had the effect of encouraging demands for peace within the wider community.

Repeated attempts were made by the Provos to encourage Protestants to return to the spirit of their predecessors in the United Irishmen. Of course, this was futile but it was sincerely meant. And it acted as a restraining influence on communal passions which were the natural manifestation of life in the Northern statelet.

As a result the Provo war was substantially directed against the British State and its forces. On occasion there were incidents which descended into the sectarian morass. However, these were largely exceptions or mistakes (termed '*collateral damage*' when they are perpetrated by the big battalions of the West). And when the IRA returned to war in 1996 to secure a functional settlement killing became almost incidental.

The Loyalist campaign against Republicans was wholly different. It was summed up in the Loyalist phrase '*any Taig will do*' and largely consisted of random attacks against vulnerable Catholics. In the last decade of the war, when Britain took control of the Loyalist paramilitary groups through its agents, an attempt was made to refine their targeting. Montages were provided of '*known Republicans*' who might be considered useful dead. Sinn Fein representatives were assassinated and Republican families were targeted to create a reign of terror in many rural areas. The Loyalist groups became a useful adjunct to the British war effort against Republicans, which at this stage seemed to be mainly directed against the Sinn Fein electoral rise.

It was perfectly possible that a gang of

armed Hibernians could have emerged on the Catholic side as a mirror image of what developed on the Protestant side. However, the achievement of Republicanism was in marshalling the material produced by the conditions of life in the sectarian slum that might have been predisposed to this kind of thing to a nobler cause. The disciplined military structures perfected by the Provos provided the means by which those with a vigorous political (or purely military) disposition could channel their efforts into a strict targeting of the British State interest and meanwhile deter other organisations that might emerge and consider departing from the main political concern of Republicanism.

So what might have become a sordid sectarian morass was prevented by directing energies into purposeful military activities and political objectives.

Stephen argues that "*the present Sinn Fein critique of the dissidents is therefore incoherent*". But it is entirely logical and coherent to the average Catholic—and that is where it counts. In the past decade dissident activity has been minimised without the necessity of employing force on

the part of the Provos. The force of argument and the understanding of the Catholic community of the necessities of the political process have produced ever increasing votes for Sinn Fein.

The Sinn Fein view is pretty straightforward and clear: force brought us this far but it is counter-productive once a settlement has been made. Under such circumstances the taking and giving up of life is pointless for all concerned.

I, for one, have neglected to write about affairs in Northern Ireland in recent years because the situation has been 'parked' by the Peace Process and there is an awful lot of more significance elsewhere in the world to write about.

The only party to the conflict that gains by the intrusion of Northern Ireland events into the affairs of another state is Britain—which set up that pseudo-state with its perverse form of government for such a purpose. It is one of the chief achievements of the Provo Peace Process that the effects of that political aberration may be minimised over time—if it is not too late already.

Pat Walsh

Comments On Desmond Fennell's picture Of Ireland

Desmond Fennell's picture of Ireland (*Irish Political Review*, January 2012) is boldly drawn. He names things clearly and draws conclusions firmly, and the challenge is fairly put to others whether they can make more sense. I would like to try from a different perspective.

If we take up the story from the late nineteenth century, maybe we will see what is "normal" and "*abnormal*" about Ireland. But we might miss what is unique. Whatever our current condition, our history gives us the right to think ourselves something special. It would be best to keep the focus on that, rather than on whether we're fully "*normal*".

To my mind, the shaping moment came not in the late nineteenth century but a full three centuries earlier. About 1590 the picture was already very complicated: Gaelic Ireland was not Catholic only (if only because of the O'Briens of Thomond) and Catholic Ireland was not Gaelic only, nor indeed rural only. Nevertheless, in Gaelic and "*Gaelicised*", rural, traditionally Christian Ireland, something crystalised at that time. It was a will to defend Irish tradition and not to accept any arrangements which involved its

destruction. And in the first place there was a will to defend the Irish religious tradition and to reject Queen Elizabeth's innovations.

In his recently-published book *Ó Chéitinn go Raiftearaí* (about how Irish history was written from the 17th to the 19th century), Vincent Morley says that Ireland was the only country in Christendom where the majority of the people refused to accept the principle laid down at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555: *cuius regio, eius religio*, "whose realm, his (or her) religion". There might be some argument about that, but Ireland was the most clear-cut case. A people made the extraordinary decision to be "*half-subjects*", as a furious King James the First expressed it. This obstinacy was sustained through the worst disasters and despite all the various rulers of England could do. And it went together with another firm conviction (which is crystal-clear in the Irish-language writings of the 17th and 18th centuries): that Ireland's traditional lordships and culture should be maintained or restored, and that the structures intruded by England should be destroyed.

The Irish ended up with strange allies. But it was either have strange allies or none. The long alliance with the Stuarts could be justified purely on the grounds that "*the enemy of my enemy is my friend*". In fact, it became much warmer than that. The Stuarts were praised, loved, and hopes were fixed in them, in dissociation from the known record of their reigning kings. From an Irish point of view, apart from their genealogy, it was hard to find many merits in those kings except negative ones. That is to say, at a certain point in his reign James the First stopped persecuting Catholics; Charles the First didn't persecute much at all (though his agents kept on trying to dissolve Ireland socially and reconstruct it). And Charles the Second? Well, he was not Oliver Cromwell!

Only James the Second behaved well towards Ireland, before he was overthrown. The Irish Jacobites kept hoping that the latest Stuart pretender would prove to have courage, ability and luck, and that as King he would permit Ireland to resume its own evolving course which it had of old. By taking sides with the Stuarts, the Gaelic Catholic Irish got some purchase in the real effective politics of the 18th century.

However, there's no doubt that the French Revolution blew away a great part of the world that the main line of Gaelic Irish thinking used to relate to. France's 1789-93 plus Ireland's 1798-1800 made huge breaches. One can see people like Micheál Ó Longáin, the Cork United Irish leader and poet, doing audacious bridging jobs. But, as it turned out, not everything could be bridged. Particularly after the Famine, over a few generations the uncompromising Gaelic Irish made one of the most drastic concessions that is possible for any people. They gave up their own language and adopted the conqueror's language. They also produced an English-speaking political culture and took part in regular English politics, or liberal democracy.

The question is, was there are any continuity at all? Should we think in terms of a new Irish politics and a new Irish people? Between Eoghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird and Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin there's no problem tracing the linking thread; but where's the link between Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin and Thomas Davis? What happened to the Gaelic-and-associated Catholic Irish was so drastic that it makes it tempting to see them in their 19th century selves as "*new men*", "*blank pages*", and so on. In reality there was very considerable continuity, in fact continuity was the primary thing and

cultural revolution remained secondary.

First of all, one can see clear continuity in the major political campaigns. Take O'Connell's campaigns: a campaign for full rights for Catholics, followed by a campaign for Repeal of the Union with England and political autonomy for Ireland. That is in total conformity with the policy of the Kilkenny Confederation in the 1640s and with the main aims of Irish Jacobitism thereafter. (The third element of the Kilkenny Confederation's oath involved loyalty to the English King and acceptance of his legitimate prerogatives. While there was no question of feeling any warmth for the 19th century Georges and Edwards, such as one might have felt for a Charles or a James, the question was whether they should have pragmatic acceptance as ultimate sovereigns of an autonomous Ireland. In O'Connell's time that seemed to be broadly agreed, though there were republican dissenters such as Walter Cox. We know that the issue was to cause difficulties later.)

However, there was also a deeper continuity in terms of historical and national consciousness. Vincent Morley's great merit (in *Ó Chéitinn go Raiftearaí*) is that he has shown this more clearly than anyone had shown it before. In the early nineteenth century a view of Irish history was brought over from the Irish language and relaunched in English. It was expounded in books such as Denis Taaffe's *Vindication of the Irish Nation, and Particularly Its Catholic Inhabitants, from the Calumnies of Libellers* (1802) and *An Impartial History of Ireland, from the Period of the English Invasion to the Present Time* (1810), and it was forcefully propagated in Walter Cox's *Irish Magazine*, the most widely-circulating journal of the time. The key figures were members of Dublin's Gaelic Society and former 1798 men; some people belonged to both categories, e.g. Taaffe.

Writers producing a tamer Irish history, which made little of Ireland before the Normans, received a public trouncing in the *Irish Magazine*. One such was John Lawless, author of *A Compendium of the History of Ireland, from the Earliest Period to the Reign of George I* (1814). Geoffrey Keating's principle, stated more than a century and a half previously, was reaffirmed: Irish history must be written from Irish sources. *The Irish Magazine* poured scorn upon writers who found fault with historical sources "*which perhaps they have never seen, and even if they had, they would not be able to understand them*".

Historical opinion was being formed in English and Irish simultaneously. In the early 19th century there was still a flourishing manuscript literature in Irish-speaking areas. Keating's *History* was being copied and circulated; so were historical poems from the 17th and 18th centuries which gave an authoritative summary view of Irish history.

By the time Young Ireland came on the scene, the population at large had received its notion of Irish history. All the Young Irelanders could do was restate and re-elaborate. Morley quotes the statement attributed to one of France's 1848 men, Ledru-Rollin ("*There go the people, I am their leader, I must follow them!*") and remarks that this was the policy followed by Ledru-Rollin's colleagues in Ireland. In an essay on Irish history Thomas Davis wrote:

"This island has been for centuries either in part or altogether a province. Now and then above the mist we see the wheel of Sarsfield's sword, the red battle-hand of O'Neill, and the points of O'Connor's spears; but 'tis a view through eight hundred years to recognise the sunburst on a field of liberating victory. Reckoning back from Clontarf, our history grows ennobled (like that of a decayed house), and we see Lismore and Armagh centres of European learning; we see our missionaries seizing and taming the conquerors of Europe, and farther still, rises the wizard pomp of Eman and Tara—the palace of the Irish pentarchy."

Davis re-elaborated Irish history with great flair and charm. He gave it a breath of romance, and he made it something that not only Catholics but generous-minded Protestants could relate to. But his perspective was not original (which was one of its merits). He took his point of view from a pre-existing consensus.

The main Irish population, commonly called Gaelic, had assimilated many others over time. The Fenian John O'Mahony reflected on this, introducing his translation of Keating's *Foras Feasa* in 1857. He observed that the Tuatha Dé Danaan and the Fir Bolg had been injured long ago by the Milesians, the Gaelic invaders who arrived from Spain, but one couldn't do much about that now, nor could one now redress the wrongs that the Gaels had suffered from the Normans:

"In Ireland, more especially, the foreign element has become so absorbed in the aboriginal, that it would be as just to think of avenging the wrongs of the Danaan or the Belgian upon their Spanish conquerors, as it would be those of the latter upon the followers of Earl

Strongbow. These have long since merged into the Gael—so have some of the descendants of the more recent conquerors of them all, the Cromwellians and Williamites of later days. The oppressed natives of Ireland, of whatever name, creed or blood, represent the ancient rights of its aboriginal inhabitants. Their village tyrants, though some of them be of Gaelic name and blood, and a few of them even of the national faith, are now the only foreign enemy. They represent William of Orange, Cromwell, Elizabeth, and Strongbow—they represent also the pirate sons of Miledh, and even now they “grind the faces of the poor and beat the people to pieces” as mercilessly as ever did tyrant plunderer of old. They still walk in the blood-stained track of the robbers who preceded them.”

With qualifications of that kind, one can say that over about a century the English-speaking Irish nation, or the Irish nation led by English-speakers, won victory in three great struggles that had gone on for between two-and-a-half and three-and-a-half centuries. There was Catholic Emancipation in 1829; reconquest of the land at the end of the 19th century; autonomy/independence in 1922. Irish statehood continued the story. The people, and their state, sought to exercise those liberties fully or to round off their achievements (e.g. by ceasing to pay annuities). There were two more national aims which had not been achieved and remained the most difficult of all. Firstly, there was the aim of reviving the Irish language and somehow reconnecting the broken thread of Irish tradition.

It's remarkable even that a serious effort was made. It is not the least surprising thing in a story full of surprises. Consider the state of things in the late 19th century: floods of English being spread by all kinds of agencies, including Land League agitators; the Catholic Church cultivating an English-speaking respectability; an immensely powerful Imperial culture radiating from the neighbouring super-power; tens of thousands of families changing their language.

However, in the early 1900s, just at the time of the conclusive land settlement, the Gaelic League began to take off. Astonishingly, it attracted the young and able. It proved to be a school of revolution. And from the foundation of the Free State its aim became a State objective, and one to which no little energy was devoted (especially considering the divided or double mind that the people had on this issue). But the work was not successful, and this remains the most abnormal thing about us. The language that we speak is not our own, it's the language of our world-

overturning neighbour.

The second unfulfilled and immensely difficult national aim was political unification of the entire island. It was demanded by the Irish national population of the North, who had kept in touch with the national development elsewhere (though they'd never been able to drum up much enthusiasm for the Stuarts, for example, and in their case the scope for reconquest of the land was limited by the fact that confiscated lands had been settled by a democracy of working farmers). However, unification would have to involve assimilation of a local majority population who, with high community morale and Imperial British pride, had shown no desire for that.

When the North exploded in the late 1960s and early '70s, it is clear that the Irish State was at sixes and sevens in terms of policy. The times were disorientating, and a good illustration of that is the extraordinary article published in the last issue of *Irish Political Review*, written for the *Times* of London in July 1972 by Raymond Crotty, Professor of the dismal science of economics. (I think many parts of this article are just plain daft, or else they result from an over-thorough application by Crotty of a sound enough principle: that if one hopes to induce the British establishment to condescend to do one a favour, it is advisable to flatter them remorselessly. On no account whatever should they be criticised, either directly or by implication (for example, by saying something bad about Northern Ireland); at most one may chide them for sometimes being over-indulgent and giving us undeserved praise. In fact, as has been pointed out, there was not the slightest reason to suppose that the British would have been willing to do what Crotty wanted: to begin treating the Irish Republic as a foreign country and restricting the free movement of labour. Only Enoch Powell, on strict British nationalist principle, was in favour of that.—But Crotty may simply have been disorientated. The late 1960s and early '70s were horrible times of disorientation. I was there, I could testify.)

As I recall it, there was extensive sympathy or support for the IRA in the Irish Republic in the early '70s, and this feeling was well represented in the Fianna Fail parliamentary party. Charles Haughey probably organised backbench opinion behind the scenes and deterred Jack Lynch from measures of repression. Anyhow, in effect the IRA had the free run of the South until late 1972. Lynch had “stood by” in August 1969 after swearing he

wouldn't, and he continuing standing by, in the sense of letting others have a go at solving the problem.

There was a broad popular consensus that Stormont was rotten and had to be brought down. After the fall of Stormont there was still very considerable pro-IRA feeling in the South, but there was not the same extent of agreement with their continuing military campaign, especially as time went on. In late 1972 Jack Lynch began confronting the alternative Óglaigh na hÉireann. The next Government, headed by Liam Cosgrave, replaced State passivity with militant negativity. All this absence of policy was destructive, but one should acknowledge that Irish Governments in the 1980s began to get back in touch with Northern nationalists and to grope towards an adequate policy, and in the 1990s they worked well to produce the best available settlement. They took on this duty and saw it through, in defiance of several senior propagandists (or members of the “*Correctorate*”, to use Desmond's word), who, with Conor Cruise O'Brien as *ensemble* leader, were daily spitting fire and brimstone.

The picture Desmond paints is connected with his feeling that a promising path of Irish national progress was wantonly abandoned, or cut off. However, one must keep in mind the state of the world. Considering the position in the first half of the 20th century from the perspective I have drawn, one can say that the state of Europe and the world was on the whole very favourable to continued Irish national progress. Appalling things may have been happening in Europe; our neighbour may have been causing or exacerbating famines in other people's lands (Iran), and bombing villages from the air (Iraq) in preparation for incinerating cities. But Ireland was enabled to stay out of all that and to chart a course of its own. De Valera provided bold leadership, and fortune favoured the brave. (Cormac Ó Gráda, dismal scientist, in his Whitaker lecture at the Central Bank last July, reviewing the Economic War, pronounced that “*de Valera's vision would have proved disastrous in the long run*”. However, the Economic War ended before the long run, and de Valera happened to win it. And Ireland gained, as even the dismal science must still to this day acknowledge.)

Ó Gráda did not forget to sneer at de Valera's “*bucolic values*”—it was a gibe that the older practitioners of the dismal science would have expected. But in the 1930s such values had been widely held. In France and Germany large bodies of opinion wanted rural society preserved.

(One of the many aspects of the German tragedy is how this strand of thinking became tangled up with Nazism. That was why Martin Heidegger became a Nazi. In fact, the technological demons and world-transforming spirits had a grip on the Nazi Party, and their grip became tighter with the passage of time.)

Even in Russia there was one Bolshevik Party leader, Nikolai Bukharin, who did not agree with the policy of smashing traditional rural society and went so far as to foment rural rebellions to try to stop it. Strangest of all was what happened in Britain, the pioneering urban society. Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the British Labour Party, looking for ways of coping with the great crisis of the 1930s, came up with a policy of "*Back to the Land*". In books such as *The Need For Roots*, which Simone Weil wrote during wartime for the Free French, one can feel rural society as a real force making its impact even on very unlikely people.

That is the European context in which Article 45, Section 2, sub-section 5 of the 1937 Constitution was drafted: "*The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing: ... that there may be established on the land in economic security as many families as in the circumstances shall be practicable.*" True, the provision is so phrased that a Government could hardly breach it. Behind the drafting is an awareness of the 1936 Census result for the number of people working on the land, which showed a drop of 6% over 10 years. However, this provision was not humbug. It represented the widespread conviction that the rural communities were a priceless part of the nation and that the extreme urbanism of Great Britain was not wanted here.

If the world had somehow emerged from World War II sick of urbanism and industrialism, and all it had led to, and resolved to pursue a slower, autarkic life within national boundaries, concentrating above all on preserving traditional country life and restoring it where it had faded ("*Back to the Land*"), this would have given Ireland a favourable situation for continued national development. But life has taken a different course. Over the past 60-odd years the tremendous alliance of capitalism, science and enlightenment ideology has produced a fury of urbanism and anti-traditional change such as the world had never yet seen. (As regards the part played by Marxism, I think Heidegger's point has been proved: what divided the USA and the Soviet Union/China was of much less consequence than what they had in common.)

The most far-reaching change that has occurred is the destruction of rural communities. The world has seemingly decided that it doesn't want country people, it wants to be all urban. Between cities and towns there will still be food supply zones, but the people who live in them will be urban-focused and urban-minded, and they will re-deploy their resources according as their invisible sovereign, the market, dictates—to produce wheat and rape for biofuels, or whatever.

What remained of the rural communities in Ireland died about 1960. I personally saw that happen. There was no brutal violence as in Russia, but a combination of peaceful processes. First of all, rural depopulation came to a critical point. In south-west Cork it was hard not to feel that the community was being bled white: of my mother's two brothers and two sisters, one brother and both sisters emigrated, and this was nothing unusual. Secondly, the introduction of certain machines, especially the hay-baler and above all the combined harvester, put an end to forms of collective work which rural community life was bound up with.

Mere numbers give no idea of the impact. (Though even the numbers are striking. Slightly more than half of the gainfully employed males in the Irish Free State were working in agriculture at the end of World War II. In 1961, after a heavy wave of emigration, there were still 43%. Then the decline accelerated. At present the figure is about 4%, but the age profile of farmers is high and this percentage will shrink further.)

In my opinion, because of what Ireland had been, the disappearance of the rural communities had a deeply disorientating effect.—I am aware that the typical sociologist would see this problem from the opposite end. The sociological case might be put as follows: in Ireland's towns there are too many people with country values; in fact, these towns are full of ex-country folk who have brought the country with them, refuse to cut their ties, and go on indefinitely being only partially urban and defectively modern. (See, for example, Maura Adshead and Michelle Millar, *Ireland as Catholic Corporatist State: a Historical Institutional Analysis of Healthcare in Ireland*, University of Limerick 2003, online, pp6-7.)

Desmond Fennell suggests that with more resolve the Irish nation and state might have weathered the storm of the 1950s without doing an about-turn and beginning a retreat, which would prove to

be permanent, from the pursuit of self-sufficiency. I think a more dour and industrious people would have been needed for that. Besides, the Norse and Icelanders, who sternly kept themselves free of dependence on others, had many advantages. For one thing, Britain and the United States didn't have such a pull on their populations.

Anyhow, in the late 1950s T.K. Whitaker famously went to the Fianna Fail Minister for Finance and told him that if something wasn't done we would soon have to ask England to take us back. We know what was done as an alternative to that option: foreign manufacturers were given enticements to set themselves up in Ireland. And that's basically the story of the last 60-odd years.

All Government policy since then has followed the same path. Ireland has gone from being one of the most protected economies in the world to one of the most open. Joining the European Community/Union/Monetary Union was all about "*opening up*". The policy measures that made possible the Celtic Tiger opened us up still more. (Recently some academics have been talking about a possible further step along this road: that Ireland should facilitate the market penetration of Chinese firms to the EU, offering them the same service that we have already provided for American electro-technical firms. The idea is not obviously absurd, but the measures required to give Ireland a competitive advantage for this purpose would probably be vetoed by the EU.)

The positive side of all this is that we have not asked England to take us back: the state has kept going. And like all modern states, the longer it keeps going the stronger it gets and, without ethnic forces to undermine it, or without the US Air Force doing its best, dissolving it is a very difficult task indeed. (Some of our senior media propagandists would like to reverse independence, dissolve the state and restore the old United Kingdom, but they dare not campaign in favour of something that would be generally seen as lunacy.)

The State's response to the economic crisis has increased our dependence on the will of others. Ireland has accepted fuller public responsibility than any other State for the debts of its private banks. (At the other extreme was Iceland, where the State refused to take any such responsibility, and where the people resoundingly vetoed two proposals to pay some consolation money to British and Dutch banks so as to make the financial world feel better.) The

resulting Irish public indebtedness means that, under the new EU financial supervisory arrangements, we will be one of the most supervised. The EU has a feeling that it ought to be a State, the better to manage its money. Over time a kind of ghost State has evolved, and now this ghost proposes to set the parameters of national budgets and veto what it doesn't like. However, as Desmond points out, we retain the right to remove ourselves by a sovereign act from this ghost State's domain, and if we were to do so no one would send troops to burn our cities.

In one of Marx's letters to Engels, expressing irritation at the Irish nationalist press, he remarked that Ireland is the sacred island which must always keep itself apart from the profane struggles of the rest of the world. He would not say that now. Mary Harney, leader of the Progressive Democrats (defunct, but not long ago highly influential), asked what vision she had of Ireland in the future, answered honestly: "*A good place to do business*". That's a modest little vision, and unlike de Valera's it might be immediately realisable. In the coming years Ireland may be better or worse placed to seek comparative advantage within the capitalist world market-cum-civilisation that is evolving. But Ireland has ceased to stand for a different, non-Baconian civilisation, as it had done for centuries.

One would not want to draw premature conclusions. People have been saying for four hundred years that Ireland is or may be finished, that perhaps all that lies ahead is *Saxa nua darb ainm Éire*, a new England called Ireland. During those four centuries the country sprang some surprises. Even now, while official Irish culture may be what Vincent Buckley called it, a nothing, much of unofficial Ireland still seems to be something. In some ways the people have been slow and reluctant to be normalised, as indeed sociologists are complaining.

(Normalisation is the positive mission of those ideologues whom Desmond calls "*the Correctorate*". For the most part they are uncreative, reactive and imitative. But in so far as they go beyond the negative mode—anti-Gaelic, anti-rural, anti-Catholic, anti-Republican—their mission is to make Ireland a "*normal*" Enlightenment nation. The principal model of enlightened normality in this context is naturally Britain.

Incidentally, Dublin's Millennium Spire is the first major monument of the normalised Ireland. Desmond complains that it signifies nothing, but for postmodern art

it's a point of honour that it shouldn't signify anything which is obvious at first sight. Very probably, like most of these things, it's being ironic. As a spire it must be saying something sly to the spires of St. Patrick's and other churches of the town. As in: "*I'm taller than you!*" At the very least it does signify tallness. It is still, I believe, the tallest sculpture in the world. As such it may be seen as a hymn to technology, our mighty ruling power.)

The world is now moving so fast that even the greatest enthusiasts for movement can end up wanting to hold it back. Take, for example, Francis Fukujama, champion of universal liberal democracy, and Jürgen Habermas, champion of universal Enlightenment. In the past decade both of them have published books warning that the new science of genetic engineering could take humanity past the point of being humans, and since they would rather that didn't happen, offering their ideas on how

we can build a Dutch dike to prevent our humanness being swamped. (See Fukujama, *Our Post-human Future*, 2002; Habermas, *Die Zukunft der menschlichen Natur*, 2002.) What remains of Ireland still resists this movement and this kind of prospect. That pre-Enlightened Ireland is a mighty and fascinating historic fact; Ireland drifting in the Baconian world can never amount to so much. In my view, the most important thing is to preserve *foras feasa ar Éirinn*, the basic knowledge of Ireland. If the world should ever change from its present course, Ireland will matter.

John Minahane

An Argument Defending The Right Of The Kingdom Of Ireland (1645) by *Conor O'Mahony*. First translation from Latin.

Introduction, *John Minahane*: Conor O'Mahony, the 1641 Rebellion and the Independence of Ireland.

232pp. 2010. €25, £20.

A West Cork Protestant Testament

2010 saw the publication of a wonderful memoir by A.J.S. Brady entitled *The Briar Of Life*, described on its cover as "*a compelling and exquisitely written account of Protestant family life in early 20th century Cork*". Indeed it is. Brady died in 1986 at the age of 86, so the memoir was posthumously and privately published by his family. The pity is that it did not appear in either the 1980s or 1990s, for no honest publisher could have published without shame *The IRA & Its Enemies* by Peter Hart (1998), a book so "*riddled with lies and evasions*", to apply Hart's own classification to himself. Nor, if the Brady memoir had been freshly published at the time, could an academic Supervisor or External Examiner with any self-respecting regard for their responsibilities have got away with sanctioning the Trinity College PhD thesis upon which Hart's book was based, without an even more grotesque exhibition of the brass necks they have hitherto displayed as Hart's sponsors. Brady's memoir has been briefly cited by Niall Meehan (*Irish Political Review*, February 2012), but it is worthy of closer attention in its own right.

Brady was the son of a Fermanagh-born Church of Ireland clergyman and his Cork City-born wife. The Rev. Mr. Albert Brady served as Rector of several West Cork parishes in succession—Ballydehob, Brinny and Macroom. His son's memoir is a warm-hearted one, with much dry

humour. Yet it is notable that in the first two parishes, where there were very compact Church of Ireland congregations, the author did not write of any interaction on his own part with local Catholics beyond his family's immediate domestic servants, drivers and gardeners. The situation was different in Macroom, where his father's congregation was more scattered and where he, in turn, forged a friendship with Dean Higgins, his Catholic counterpart. The author described his father thus: "*My father, though he had the inhibitions of a Lutheran, was a good natured man. He not only was sociable with Roman Catholics, but also with their priests*" (p86). The son, arriving at adulthood in Macroom, interacted even more deeply, marrying a local Catholic. The last 100 pages of this 240 page memoir therefore become more sombre at many intervals, not only because of the personal heartache and heartbreak caused for the couple by both Protestant and Catholic hostility to this mixed marriage, but because of the Macroom experience of the British Black-and-Tan attempt to crush Ireland's War of Independence.

Rev Brady was a moderately-disposed Unionist who behaved honourably during that War, notwithstanding the fact that he was to act as a Chaplain to the British Army, Auxiliaries and Black-and-Tans occupying Macroom. His son A.J.S.—

more commonly known as Stephen—could be described as displaying a mildly Free State bias in his narrative, although he mistakenly credited Griffith, rather than Collins, with the "*Stepping Stone*" argument for the Treaty. But he was distinctly unimpressed by the first motley crew of Free State mercenaries—men who had not at all fought in the War of Independence—as they made their Civil War entrance into Macroom in August 1922:

"Early in August a Free State contingent, having come by sea from Dublin for the good reason that it dared not make the journey overland, disembarked at Passage, County Cork. Pro-Treaty Macrompians were elated when it was rumoured that the troops were on their way to Macroom. The Republicans reacted by burning the Police Barracks and the Courthouse. Having done so, they evacuated the Castle next day, and drenched its ground-floor rooms with petrol... The building was soon an inferno" (p199).

"When the Free State contingent arrived in Macroom, the Castle was a shell smouldering with the redolence of dying fire. The spearhead of the advancing forces was a horse drawn crib manned by four men armed with rifles. And the force itself was in character with its vanguard. In dress, deportment, equipment and transport, it showed that it was an impromptu detachment that had been recruited in haste and committed to active service untrained. The spruce, trained, and comparatively well equipped Irish Army of today bears no resemblance to its progenitor of 1922, which was but a military baby in a green napkin. In the quasi-military, footsore contingent that came to Macroom that evening many of the men wore ill fitting uniforms, and many, in civilian attire, looked like freebooters. It was not in general easy to tell an officer from a private, for an officers' caste takes time to evolve. A small, hard core of British soldiers, who had temporarily discarded khaki for green, was conspicuous despite its disguise" (pp201-2).

Brady was more impressed by the entourage that accompanied Michael Collins into Macroom on 21st August. The Bradys' gardener excitedly informed them: "*The Big Fellow is at Williams's Hotel, drinking where the Black-and-Tans used to drink.*" Brady managed to squeeze his way into the premises:

"The bar at the rear of the shop was packed with military men standing at ease in groups, taking drinks at the long counter. As I looked at them, all clad sprucely in well tailored uniforms with shining brass buttons and polished belts, I saw the nucleus of an officers' caste was in being. General Michael Collins was standing at the head of the counter. His

aide-de-camp Emmet Dalton was standing beside him."

Brady heard Collins say: "*For once in my life I'll let the old country down. A drop of the Scotch for me.*" Brady continued:

"Writing now almost fifty-two years later I see Collins as he was that afternoon; an impressive, stalwart figure restless with dynamic energy ... He had taken his military cap off. His expression in repose had a set look of determination and a shadow of underlying ruthlessness. From the way he glanced constantly around I gathered that he had not yet rid himself of the alertness inherent in a fugitive. Though he certainly cut a dash as a brass hat, the uniform seemed, in some way, to be out of character with his rebel past. Dick Williams's barmaid Aileen Baker was a merry, comely girl with up-swung, pouting breasts. In the bar that afternoon Collins took her in his arms, carried her to the hall of the hotel, ran upstairs with her, as though she were weightless, and set her standing on the landing. We all clapped and cheered. Collins was laughing as he ran down. He had sensitively mobile features that would momentarily light up in a smile, or cloud in a frown... As I watched Collins leave the hotel that afternoon, I heard the cheering, and saw the faces of the milling crowd, but I did not see the shadowy, grinning spectre in his wake" (pp203-4).

It was on the following day that Collins met his death. Not that Collins had needed to 'liberate' Macroom from anything that the Brady family might have deemed intolerable. It is not unlikely that part of what Stephen Brady had previously found so tolerable about the anti-Treaty IRA in Macroom was that its political commissar was a Protestant and its military commander of Protestant ancestry:

"The Republicans were now in control at Macroom. Erskine Childers was with them, and was editing a paper they were printing on a mobile press... As I was making my way up the rectory avenue one afternoon, a limping man, who was on his way down, saluted me perfunctorily as we passed each other. This was as near as I got to know Erskine Childers, who had been paying a courtesy call on my father, with whom he had taken tea. He had given my father the impression that he was a cultured, frustrated idealist in a *cul-de-sac*. Subsequent events were to show that my father was right. Childers when he was captured three months later at Glendalough, not only had a pen, but also a revolver in his pocket. Michael Collins had made him a present of it. And that gift resulted in his being sentenced and executed. Griffith in a rare flash of temper earlier denounced Childers, had called him a damned Englishman, and had insinuated that he was deviously meddling in murder. There is no charity

in politics. The other side is always wrong. It has to be" (p198).

The most interesting part of Brady's memoir is signalled as follows in the book's introduction:

"In the early 1920s as the son of the local Church of Ireland rector, he was in a unique position to freely visit Macroom Castle, where the Black & Tans were stationed, take photographs {a fascinating collection, reproduced throughout the book—MOR}, get to know some of these men and ascertain their views on the occupation of Ireland."

Of the Black-and-Tans Brady himself wrote:

"When I had got to know these men, I found that they were a mixed lot. Many appeared to be amiable, but time was to prove that most of them were ruthless killers" (p170).

Brady provided an insightful description and analysis of the Kilmichael Ambush from three key sources (pp177-184). The first two were the Brady family's doctor, the Catholic Loyalist Jeremiah Kelleher who examined the bodies of the dead Auxiliaries, and his own father who was to conduct their funeral service. They were to observe horrific wounds as a result of such close combat, but they made no suggestion of gratuitous mutilation. There was also all-round acceptance by Macroom Loyalists of the fact that there had indeed been a "*false surrender*"—no doubt gleaned from the mouth of the one surviving Auxiliary—though without any white flag, as introduced by Brady in figuratively embellishing the retelling of that Ambush. But it was Brady's employment in the mid-1920s in the office of Tom Grainger—the Church of Ireland solicitor who had persuaded Rev Brady to become the Macroom Rector—that was to provide him with a particularly unique perspective:

"On the 28th of November 1920, a patrol of two Crossley tenders, each manned by nine Auxiliaries, left Macroom and did not return. Other Auxiliaries from the Castle set out in search of them. On the road running from Macroom to Dunmanway they found them next morning at a place called Shanacashel in the parish of Kilmichael. Seventeen bodies were lying on the ground... Doctor Kelleher, when summoned from Macroom, certified that sixteen of the men were dead... My father saw the sixteen corpses when they had been brought to the Castle, where they were lying naked in a shed adjoining the Keep. He forbade me to look at them... The undertaking firm of John Martin Fitzgerald had to work overtime in getting

sixteen coffins ready. They discreetly got in touch with several IRA carpenters, who took a risk, came in, gave a hand with the work, and so had the satisfaction of driving nails into coffins for dead Black-and-Tans... At least two of the dead men were Roman Catholics."

There had been one survivor found on the battlefield, while the eighteenth Auxiliary, a man named Guthrie,

"had contrived to creep away from the battlefield, but was intercepted, and shot, by IRA men as he was making his way back to Macroom on foot. My father was present when his remains were being exhumed from a bog hole a few years later. A gold signet ring was still on the fore-finger of the corpse."

As for the survivor:

"Doctor Kelleher ... found a flicker in the pulse of an Auxiliary named Forde... He recovered, but was partly paralysed for the rest of his life. He made a claim for compensation, and was awarded £10,000. Tom Grainger acted for him ... (and) I had an opportunity of inspecting the Forde file in Grainger's office some years later ... I found a letter from Forde to Grainger, in which he acknowledged receipt of a cheque for £9,900 ... To cover Solicitor and Client Costs, Grainger had deducted £100 from the full sum awarded. Forde called him a robber for having done so... Forde was to pocket his nett compensation of £9,900, live till November 1970, and so survive both the Battle of Kilmichael and the British Empire."

The most unique feature of Brady's Kilmichael chapter, however, is the photographic reproduction on page 179 of—

"the original map of the Kilmichael Ambush prepared by the British Military and used by T.P. Grainger, Solicitor in the Forde compensation case ... (and) later given to A.J.S. Brady by the Grainger family".

Brady provided a detailed accompanying narrative to the map:

"It is in colour, and was prepared by a military engineer. It shows the positions of the seventeen bodies on the ground, and the positions that were occupied by the men of the West Cork Flying Column. These men were led by Tom Barry, who was a British ex-serviceman. An appraisal of Barry's achievements in the Anglo-Irish War shows that he neither lacked courage nor military skill... When most of the Auxiliaries had fallen at Shanacashel, the few still in action hoisted a white flag in surrender, and promptly dishonoured it by shooting three young men of the Column—Michael McCarthy of Dunmanway, James O'Sullivan of Kilmeen, and Patrick Deasy of Kilmacsimon, Bandon—who had emerged impulsively from cover, to accept their

capitulation. {In *Tom Barry*, her 2003 biography, Meda Ryan established that O'Sullivan had been instantly killed and Deasy fatally wounded as a consequence of that false surrender, but McCarthy probably fell in action beforehand—MOR.} And so, with the exception of one who was thought to be dead, those few surviving Auxiliaries died, in an aftermath of IRA fury..."

"I remember that an Auxiliary and I were talking about the condition of the country a few days before the ambush. *'I and my companions are King's men'*, he declared. *'We're ready to die for the Crown and the Empire.'* Having paused, he added: *'The Irish must of course get their freedom, for this is their country, not ours.'* *'You shouldn't be fighting them so'*, I said. *'We've an imperial image to preserve'*, he explained. *'We must beat them first. We can't afford to give them freedom, till we've proved that we're better fighters than they are.'* The ambush at Shanacashel put a bloody smudge on an imperial image" (pp181-2).

A fortnight later, Brady's brother and aunts were to experience another Imperial image:

"In Advent 1920 Cork city got a picture of the religious conception of hell. On the night of the 11th of December, in retaliation for an IRA ambush at Dillon's Cross, Crown Forces were ordered to burn. Soldiers and Black-and-Tans set fire to the City Hall, the Carnegie Library, and many buildings in Patrick Street... Drunken men in uniform, singing, shouting, and blaspheming, reeled about the streets. They smashed windows, splashed petrol in, and threw grenades in then. Shop after shop went ablaze. A pall of incandescent smoke hung like a red shroud above the city. In Patrick Street the rat-a-tat-tat of machine-gun fire was sporadically punctuated by the cracking of bursting grenades that sent shrapnel flying at random. My brother Noel was staying with my aunts at No. 7, Patrick Street. There in the apartments above the chemist's shop they spent a night of terror... Noel opened a window and looked out. A bullet whistled past his head and pocked the wall above the sideboard beyond the table behind him. When Sir Hammar Greenwood, Chief Secretary, was questioned in Parliament about the burning of Cork, he blandly told the House of Commons that the fire had started accidentally in the City Hall, and had spread from there to the other buildings that were destroyed. And so Sir Hammar Greenwood became notorious for being the man who set fire to the river Lee. Had he studied a map of the locality, he would not have made that statement. The south channel of the Lee flowed then, as it does now, between the City Hall and the other parts of Cork where the flames raged that night" (pp185-6).

Brady had a more amusing exchange

with an Auxiliary to relate from the War of Independence. On one occasion, when talking to an Auxiliary in Macroom Castle, the latter drew Stephen's attention to a poster offering a reward of £10,000 for Michael Collins "*wanted dead or alive*". Brady observed:

"A smile ran through my mind, for I knew that Collins had recently been in the district, and that an IRA leader named Richard Mulcahy slept in a house at New Street occasionally, within a few hundred yards of the Castle. *We had some furniture stored in a loft at the rectory for the owner of that house, for he was aware that that his premises would be burned down, if the Auxiliaries discovered that he was harbouring rebels*" (p189; my emphasis—MOR).

The Rev. Mr. Albert Brady was no Loyalist informer! Neither as a moderate Unionist, nor—still less—as an Anglican Rector, had he ever any occasion to fear the IRA. Indeed, by virtue of his kindly assistance to a neighbour, *Sunday Independent* columnists would probably brand him as an accessory to IRA "*terrorism*"! He might even be denounced as a "*Lundy*"! His son summed up the War of Independence thus:

"The IRA was now active again. The Irish blood shed imprudently by the British Government after the abortive Rising of 1916 proved to be a fine fertiliser for the seedlings of sedition. With its roots established in soil drenched with the blood of its martyrs, Sinn Fein flourished. A proud, individualistic people were welding themselves into a unity of purpose that had never been hitherto achieved... When Sinn Fein took to arms and challenged the might of an Empire then at the zenith of privilege and power, many pictured the Movement as a stripling David going out with a sling against the Goliath of Gath. But, as David slew the giant, the IRA killed British rule in twenty-six counties of Ireland. In those elusive Flying Columns there were hard, dedicated men who not only were ready to endure discomfort, but also to forfeit their lives, for a cause they believed to be just. Many lost their lives, many their health, and some endured more than physical discomfort, for they incurred the interdict of excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church, a few of whose bishops were rather less than patriotic" (pp142 & 188).

July 1921 saw the Anglo-Irish Truce, and December 1921 the 'Treaty', which was followed by the Black-and-Tans evacuation of Macroom Castle and its takeover by the IRA. Brady went on to recall April 1922 as follows:

"In the *Cork Constitution* one morning, we read that several Protestants had been

murdered in Dunmanway nearby. My father had intended to travel to Dublin that day. He decided that he had better stay at home now. We were still discussing the matter when there was a ring at the front-door. I answered it, and found myself confronted by a military looking man in civilian attire. He had a revolver in his holster on his thigh... The man saluted my father. *'Have you read the paper this morning?'*, he said. *'I have'*, replied my father. *'There's news in it that's not pleasant reading for a man in my position.'* The man nodded. *'That's why I've come to see you'*, he said. *'Don't be alarmed. Nobody here would hurt you or anyone belonging to you. In case strangers may trouble you though, I'm going to put a guard on the rectory.'* My father thanked the man, and shook hands with him. When Irish country people wish to speak well of a man's breeding and bearing they say: *'He has a good drop in him.'* That may be said of Charlie Brown, the Brigade Adjutant of the IRA who called to the rectory that morning; a Roman Catholic whose ancestry goes back to the late Rev Mr Richard Brown" (p194).

Brady's narrative immediately continued:

"British troops were still stationed at Ballincollig, County Cork. Shortly before the impending split in Sinn Fein had become a splenetic cleavage, three officers came to Macroom one afternoon. A private was driving their car... They were not long there when IRA men arrested them, took them to the Castle and held them there. Having mobilised a force, the IRA were active that night; they occupied the Castle in strength, laid a land-mine in the Square, and ran an underground cable from it, so that it could be detonated from the Castle. The town was in tension next day. An armed IRA man, who was a friend of mine, approached me in the Main Street. *'I just want to give you a tip'*, he said. *'Be discreet; whatever you know, keep your mouth shut. If you're wise, you know nothing.'*

"A British contingent arrived in the town that afternoon, and parked an armoured car in the Square, with the gun in its turret trained on the gate-house archway of the Castle. Two 18-pounder field guns were hauled up Sleaveen Hill, and trained on the Castle. A detachment went to the Castle, interviewed men of the IRA, and demanded that the officers, private, and dog, be handed over at once. The IRA men denied that they had them in custody. An officer came to the rectory... I pretended to be surprised at seeing him. *'It's a change to see khaki again'*, I said. *'It could be a change for the worse'*, he said grimly. *'We're looking for four of our men; three officers and a private. They were here yesterday on a pleasure trip... Do you know anything about them?'* I shook my head, and brought him to my father, whom I had already alerted about what the IRA man

had said to me. My father was frank with the man... *Seeing that the officer was inclined to be sour, my father reminded him that since the IRA were now in control in Macroom prudence dictated that people should not fall foul of them. He added that he personally had nothing to complain of as regards the way they were treating him.* {My emphasis—MOR} ... Having fruitlessly questioned a number of residents, the British withdrew to Ballincollig. They were not long gone when an IRA man called to ascertain what we had told the officer. When I gave him an account of the interview, he went away without having to ask to see my father" (pp194-5).

Brady described Bernard Montgomery's back-down in the face of fierce Irish Republican determination and resolve exactly as he had seen it. But he himself was not a historian. He had not studied the archives. He was not to know that all three British officers were, in fact, senior *Intelligence* officers. As John M. Regan has pointed out:

"One of the officers, Robert Hendy, was Major (later Field Marshal) Bernard Montgomery's battalion intelligence officer and amongst the most senior ranking intelligence officers killed in the period... IRA Commandant Frank Busted—an atheist and the son of a Protestant father—came into contact with Hendy and the two other intelligence officers near Macroom. According to Peter Hart, Busted was involved in their murder. But nowhere in his massacre chapter (thesis or book) does Hart discuss the possibility that events along the Bandon valley were connected by Busted to those around Macroom. Did the intelligence officers' capture inform the violence against the Protestants? Confronted with the evidence, it is ahistorical to assume that it did not, but that was what Hart did in his book" (*History Ireland*, January/February 2012).

Brady was never privy to such evidence and he had no reason to assume that the two events were in any way related. But his memory had also got the chronological sequence wrong. For the officers had not been apprehended "*shortly before*" the outbreak of Civil War in June 1922. Regan has further written:

"The brigade officer responsible for West Cork was temporary captain Robert Alexander Hendy of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Hendy became the 17th Infantry Brigade's Intelligence Officer under Montgomery on 28 January 1922... Captain Hendy was known as a particularly energetic and efficient officer. He was first posted as an intelligence officer to Cork, in December 1920. *About twelve or so hours before the killing began at Dunmanway on 26-27 April,*

Hendy was kidnapped by the IRA ten miles away in the town of Macroom. {My emphasis—MOR.} Hendy travelled to Macroom that day with two other British intelligence officers, temporary captains George Alexander Dove and Kenneth Henderson, along with their driver, Private JR Brooks. Dove was attached to divisional headquarters at Cork as an intelligence officer with the Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards)... The officers and Brooks were 'arrested' by the IRA soon after they arrived, and their murder two days later marks an unprecedented truce-time event. Recognition of any of this invites special consideration of the wider context, alongside other unprecedented happenings in West Cork" (*History*, Journal of the Historical Association, 2012).

If Brady was ignorant of the officers' Intelligence activities in April 1922, he was well aware of the record of one such officer in another respect. His narrative continued:

"The three officers, private, and, dog, were taken that night to a place called Kilgobnet, a few miles west of the town ... shot there and buried... When news of the affair reached Westminster, Churchill urged that the Treaty be abrogated... Hendy's father wrote a long letter to *The Times*. I have a cutting of it. He denounced the British Government and held them responsible for the untimely death of his son, whose life he described as having been ineffably beautiful. He called the IRA the *'Reds of Macroom Castle'*. He maintained that the British should not have surrendered their authority in Ireland, till the new Free State Provisional Government had consolidated its position, and was firmly in control. When the four men's remains were being exhumed years later, Dove's father was present. He was an elderly man. With his hands clasped behind his back, he walked to and fro while the digging was in progress. I have a footnote that throws light on a dark night's work. Mr Henry, when writing to the *Times*, was probably not aware that the life of at least one British officer was not ineffably beautiful. By order of that Hector, an IRA Patroclus was trussed like a fowl for the oven, had a rope tied to his ankles, was thrown on the road, and dragged behind an army vehicle at high speed to his death. And so the so-called Reds at Macroom Castle that night were red with the wrath of Achilles" (pp195-6).

A "*truce-time*" British intelligence operation that Brady had personally witnessed, however, found him more than forthcoming in relating in all its horrific detail—a blueprint to turn the country into one massive concentration camp:

"A British officer, bringing a map, called to the rectory one day. He wanted

the names and addresses of all parishioners who were known to be loyal to the Crown, and also wanted particulars of any other people for whose loyalty my father could vouch. He told my father that plans were in hand for the reconquest of Ireland, if negotiations for a Treaty should break down. Loyalists were to be moved to specified areas; the rest of the country would be treated as hostile and subjugated indiscriminately. Block houses were to be established ten miles apart. Their positions were marked red on the map. Lloyd George was apparently not making an empty threat when he announced that the alternative to peace was immediate and terrible war" (pp191-2).

We are indebted to this Protestant patriot for bearing witness with such integrity.

Manus O'Riordan

HEROES

The bronze plaques rattle loose in the wind,
the statues with bird-shit hair corrodes,
the graves patronised by other than kith-and-kin,
the wreaths long withered,
headstones upon stone the rain erodes.

But listen to the traffic bawl,
watch the buildings grow more tall,
from super to hyper the shopping mall.

Since they were revolutionaries
you preach it, not practise it,
be a visionary
as an illocutionary.
The dead don't issue writs.

Just listen to the traffic bawl,
watch the buildings grow more tall,
from super to hyper the shopping mall.

They say to die such a death must be sublime,
(a lot of that you take inside)
though to die a second time must be a crime
when ideological grave-robbers decide
that all is benign.

I know:

Listen to the traffic bawl,
watch the buildings grow more tall,
from super to hyper the shopping mall.

Wilson John Haire
10th July, 2011

This letter was sent to The Irish Times on 2nd March, but was not published

Corporation Tax

The Irish Government seems intent on hanging itself out to dry over the indefensible Irish corporation tax rate. ('German envoy at odds with TD over tax', Irish Times, 2nd March).

Government spokespersons have endorsed the very dubious findings of the recent Pricewaterhousecoopers report that the effective rate of corporation tax in France and Germany is actually lower than in Ireland. If this were so, surely the multinationals would have noticed and—if the Irish defence of the 12.5% rate as essential for FDI had any substance—have upped shop and moved to those tax paradises?

The more this issue is examined, the less it seems to have anything much to do with US multinationals and the more it seems to have to do with Irish companies, who benefit every bit as much as multinationals from the low company tax rate. In other countries there are higher rates, but with substantial write-offs against productive investment such as in plant, marketing and employee training. Surely this would be a much better system here too, and favour productive companies (e.g. manufacturing) over purely service ones (e.g. property conveyancing)?

We must ask is not Ireland's negotiating position in Europe being compromised by persistent adherence to the absurd "principle" of a low nominal corporation tax for all companies regardless of productiveness? Has it finally become a millstone around the neck of this country?

Philip O'Connor

This letter appeared in the *Irish Independent* on 12th March

Irish Merchant Navy?

I qualified as a merchant sea officer at 19 years of age. The trouble was, few Irish ships were available and I had to join the British fleet during World War Two.

It was the aforesaid British who left us without ships. Vast amounts of Irish money was invested in UK shipping lines, but the British never allowed Irish money to have a controlling interest in any one company.

The war came and Ireland nearly starved. We were without oil, coal, wheat, tea and every other import. The Irish government searched the scrapyards of the world to find the rusting hulks that helped us survive.

The Dun Laoghaire mail boat had been left in Irish registration. But when merchant seamen received danger money, the crew opted for transfer to Britain.

For them, it became a big mistake. Merchant navy men no longer belonged to private companies but to the wartime shipping federation. You went where you were posted. This meant the battle of the Atlantic, the Russian and Malta convoys, North Africa the invasion of Italy and D-Day, and full involvement throughout the war. Some 25pc of merchant sailors lost their lives, the highest casualties of all services.

We did learn a lesson and, after the war, tried to develop a fleet of our own. There was great pride as well as employment in our superb new ships. Through lack of government interest and appalling management, we lost the lot.

Today we give billions to foreign shipping companies to carry our ever-growing export trade. This is madness.

We can save vast amounts and give huge employment by rebuilding a merchant navy. There are thousands of Irish seamen available to man such ships. Investment in Irish shipping must be one of the safest and most lucrative ventures in sight.

As an island nation, we should have our own fleet.

Dermot C. Clarke

The "Irish Bulletin" (12 th July 1919 – 11th Dec.1921) was the official organ of Dáil Eireann during the 1919 – 1921 period. Lawrence Ginnell, then Director of Publicity for the Dáil, first started it in mid 1919 as a "summary of acts of aggression" committed by the forces of the Crown. This newsheet came out fortnightly, later, weekly. We reprint below the summaries published for March 1920.

Date: March:-	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total.
Raids:-	156	105	71	153	32	401	918.
Arrests:-	71	36	25	319	20	8	479.
Sentences:-	-	-	1	-	3	1	5.
Proclamations & Suppressions:-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1.
Courtmartials:-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1.
Armed Assaults:-	2	2	-	1	2	1	8.
Deportations:-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2.
Sabotage:-	4	-	-	-	2	1	7.
Murder:-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1.
<u>Daily Total:-</u>	233	144	98	473	62	412	1,422

Date March:-	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	Total.
Raids:-	21	504	371	4	318	21	1239.
Arrests:-	31	7	4	11	12	4	69.
Sentences:-	2	-	3	-	-	19	24.
Courtmartials: Suppressions & Proclamations	-	-	-	-	1	-	1.
Armed Assaults:-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2.
Deportations:-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2.
	-	27	-	-	-	-	27.
<u>Daily Total:-</u>	55	539	378	15	332	45	1364.

THE WEEKLY SUMMARIES FOR THE WEEKS ENDING 20 AND 27 MARCH 1920 ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

Euro In The Ring

There was a good spat on RTE's *Prime-time* on 17th February between Elmar Brock (a Christian Democrat MP, "close to Angela Merkel") and Cormac Lucey (economist with *Irish Daily Mail*) about an alleged German plot to eject Greece from the Eurozone. Lucey cited a *Spiegel* cover story (*Obituary For Common Currency*)—along with the *Financial Times*, and the maverick David Marsh (who wrote a history of the Bundesbank and who had a doom-laden story in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) last July calling for the Euro to be reduced to 11 core countries)—to make his case of a plot by senior German Finance Ministry and European Central Bank officials to have Greece expelled. Lucey claimed all kinds of nameless

officials were spinning to the press for an ejection of Greece.

Brock laughed all of this off, referring to these sources as coming from the press of "a country which is not part of the Euro, from a country which does not like the Euro". He demolished David Marsh from the *Financial Times*, he added) as an inveterate opponent of the Euro from the start, and another representative of the Anglo press. Brock stressed that Merkel and Schäuble—as well as the Finance Ministry and the main Opposition parties (Social Democrats and Greens)—all supported the resolute Government strategy of doing everything possible to save the Eurozone, keep it intact, and keep Greece within it. He said that the idea that there was a line-up of surplus countries against deficit countries

was incorrect—Germany had a large deficit and was in fact the first country to have breached Euro discipline.

The gloves are beginning to come off—and it was certainly Brock : Lucey 10:0 at the end. The British-founded/licensed *Spiegel* should be regarded with caution. SPIEGEL last year announced the end of the Euro and a few months ago predicted Merkel's fall to an inside *coup* (a line taken up by the press in Ireland), but it was all baseless sensationalism. An Opinion Poll in early February has 7 out of 8 Germans expressing confidence in her as Chancellor, and the Christian Democrat party—which supports retaining Greece in the Euro—again leading in the polls. As regards Marsh in the FAZ, his article unleashed a wave of rejection, including in the editorial line of the FAZ itself. **Philip O'Connor**

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

IS OIL WELL IN CORK?

During February 2012, the Stock Market Value of Providence Resources started to rise dramatically because of a strong rumour that the company had struck oil fifty kilometres south of Barryroe on the Seven Heads in County Cork. It has now been confirmed by Tony O'Reilly the Chief Executive of Providence that flow rates of 3,514 barrels of oil a day have been found. In a burst of enthusiasm, the Providence Technical Director John O'Sullivan has predicted that flows could get to 20,000 barrels a day! The company says the oil is of very high quality. However, all the resources used in the drilling are from Aberdeen and not from Ireland. So far. Which leads us to think "what use is this oil for Ireland?" It has been said already that the oil may be pumped on to tankers at the oilwell and may be shipped away to a refinery. It is Ireland's oil and will Ireland benefit from it? Will the State be paid royalties? No mention is made yet of what benefit Ireland's oil will be to Ireland and until that is made clear there is no point in getting excited about it. We need to know what are the licensing agreements in place. Hopefully the terms will not be like the terms in Mayo where the gas is apparently being given away free.

The Providence Oilwell is in 100-metre deep water and most of our Celtic Sea territorial waters are within the 100 metre depth and therefore technically accessible for drilling. Oil is going to become much more valuable as it gets more scarce and so this means it should yield a very high royalty now or else be left underground, for years if necessary, until it pays to pump it out so that the State and people of Ireland can benefit from it. Otherwise what is the point of having oil off our coast?

FRACKING FOR OIL AND GAS

Fracking sounds indecent somehow and in reality it is indecent. Fracking is literally breaking up the country. The strata of the underground rocks are broken by hydraulic pressure and the oil or gas comes up. But doesn't necessarily come up only where it can be extracted—it can and does come up elsewhere to poison the earth and the atmosphere. And water can go down. Down into the fractured rocks deep underground and come out somewhere else as polluted water. In the USA where Fracking was done, the water became so polluted

that the water coming out of domestic taps could be set alight by the very process of coming out of the kitchen taps.

Iceland is not so badly in need of energy that the country should be broken up for it by Fracking. To permit Fracking would really be "selling our souls to the devil". Fracking might make ten or twenty people into millionaires but the other four million or so of us would be destitute indeed. It does not stack up!

THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT

Article 9.3 of the Constitution of Ireland is:

"Fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State are fundamental political duties of all citizens."

This seems to be obvious and self-explanatory. Any self-respecting Irish citizen would approve of this Article and would abide by it.

Except the Editor, the journalists, and the printers, who wrote "1916 The Easter Rising was an abject failure" in *Sunday Independent/Life* magazine on 18th March 2012. The writer says the Easter Rising "taught us the habit of celebrating embarrassing defeats" and "The Irish gained valuable experience in celebrating humiliating defeats as if they were triumphs ..."

Eilish O'Hanlon in her article mocks and endeavours to insult the 1916 leaders by name. She mocks the wording in the *Proclamation* which is the Irish Declaration of Independence. She maligns Roger Casement for his support for Germany in 1916 and she repeats the British lie that Roger Casement was "an enthusiastic homosexual" who "may have misunderstood when he heard crowds in Berlin shouting 'Up the Kaiser!' And took the exclamation as an invitation." A whole page is devoted to this sort of mocking abuse in the course of which she implies that infants and children were given rifles to join in the Rising. Some gratuitous blasphemy was thrown in also. The final sentence is "on second thoughts, the Brits should have used bigger shells".

The Constitution of Ireland is flouted and lampooned by the *Sunday Independent*. Men and women were fighting and dying for Irish freedom. They were up against the most savage and brutal Empire the World has ever known and the War of Independence that started with the *Declaration of Independence* on the 24th April 1916 ended only with the Truce on 11th July 1921 and the Treaty of 6th December 1921. It is necessary that the Government should introduce legislation which would enforce and give teeth to Article 9.3 of the Constitution for the sake of the self-respect of the nation. In the present economic climate in USUK countries, it is vitally necessary for Ireland to have pride in itself, to stand upright and get on with the job of improving our

productivity and our economy. It is Government's job to put in place every possible legal framework to enable recovery, and to reinforce national self-respect by enforcing Article 9.3 is just one of the vital things the Government can do for the Irish people just now.

HOUSEHOLD CHARGE

The Minister says "Charge"! and how the public service will charge.

The proposed Charge is in reality a tax on households. The British put a tax on our windows, one time, and windows disappeared. Poor people could only afford maybe one window or none at all. The British put a tax on hearths, the Hearth Tax, and hearths disappeared. Poor people could afford only one hearth for cooking food. Rich people could afford as many windows and hearths as they wished for. Is our national memory so short that we forget these awful unjust taxes? If households are to be taxed they will start to disappear. They have started to disappear. They are going abroad. Who wants to stay in a misfortunate country which taxes the household—the very basis of our society? It just doesn't stack up.

The previous Government, when its back was against the wall, accepted the IMF/ECB/EC demand that Ireland must introduce a property tax by 2014. But we already have enormous property taxes. All of our City Councils, County Councils and Urban District Councils are mostly funded by Rates on Commercial properties. These Rates are enormous and are, of course, passed on to the consumer in the prices of its products. In addition to the Commercial Rates, every building created since 1973, which means a majority of buildings including homes, has had Value Added Tax 13.5% plus Stamp Duty up to 6% paid on its cost and what are these but taxes on property? It is invidious to compare taxes between one country and another because each separate Government will have its own mixture of income sources, no matter what they are called in practice e.g. income tax, corporation tax, value added tax, customs duties, excise duties, stamp duties and so on and on

The "Household Charge" is a tax on homes. Everybody has a right to live somewhere and taxing a home is like taxing the air we breathe.

TITANIC

Why do we have all the hoo-ha about the ship Titanic which was in fact a disastrous failure due to the British Admiralty secretly insisting during the building of it, on alterations to the watertight bulkheads? It was apparently the Admiralty's insistence on altering the height of the bulkheads which enabled the water to fill each successive compartment so that the Titanic sank bow first. It sank exactly because the British Admiralty secretly changed the original plans and they could do so because

they grant-aided the construction of any ship they could then requisition in time of war. There is nothing to celebrate about the Titanic which sank because of the direct interference of the ship's design. But the British do this. Like they celebrate Dunkirk as if it was a victory when it was a massive defeat—a cowardly running away on a tremendous scale. Like they celebrate the battle of Agincourt 1415 when in fact they lost the 100 Years War and England lost all her traditional territory in France by 10th October 1453.

THE MAHON TRIBUNAL

It is costing about €300 million. Will it be worth it? Did we not all know that corruption was endemic in the planning system? The way the planning system works actually causes corruption and so why is the system not changed? It is not changed precisely because it is still, now, yielding money for the politicians and let us be honest—the whole public service in this area especially in planning offices. It is hypocritical of the politicians and the national media to be now having an orgy of righteous-sounding comment when they themselves have and had at all times the power to change the planning regulations and to make the whole "planning" system more transparent and simpler so as to greatly reduce opportunities for bribery. They are guilty of dereliction of duty for not doing it. Will they do it now that the Mahon Report is out in all its lurid detail? Will they what?

As to the Mahon Report itself I haven't read it yet. There are 3,270 pages in it. Maybe life is too short . . . And maybe Judge Sue Denham of the Supreme Court said something very relevant when she said the Oireachtas has given "the Tribunal a job to to do to investigate urgent planning matters and she said what was happening 10 years later was the antithesis of an investigation into urgent planning matters." It is now fifteen years since the Mahon Tribunal was set up and the Report is just issued as we to press. "Urgent" means **15 years!!** And is it relevant to its intended purpose?

NAMA

No one is naïve enough to think that corruption has stopped. NAMA is quite clearly and brazenly looking after the interests of bankers and developers instead of the tax-payers of Ireland for whose protection NAMA was allegedly set up. No corruption in NAMA? Yeah—pull the other one!

THE ECONOMY

Every night the trucks full of consumer goods trundle down the UK's M4 towards the Irish ferries. Tesco, M&S and all the other UK retailers in Ireland are all stocking up. It would be far better for the Irish economy if we bought our own home-produced products. Ireland is the UK's biggest customer which apparently the

GUILDS continued

contributing regularly to a common purse for sick benefits, burial and other purposes, and maintaining at altar at which they met on the Festival of their Patron Saint. The Mason, on the other hand, went where the work was available, sometimes under compulsion when royal castles were under construction on the Welsh Marches or elsewhere.

"In Tudor and Stuart times we find the Masons formed into actual guilds in conjunction with other building trades, but their medieval organisation was of a regional or national character. Exactly how this functioned we do not know, but there are references to a periodical assembly of Masons of the Old Charges, which will be considered later. Another trade which was not confined to the towns was that of the Minstrels and they have left definite traces of periodical regional assemblies.

"Though the Mason-organisation was distinct from that of the general run of the Guilds, much of the gild machinery was known to and adopted by the Craft, as will be seen by the Old Charges. It has also been suggested that our ritual may have been inspired by the annual productions of Miracle Plays, the various sections or interludes of which were taken over by various Crafts with more or less suitability" (*The Pocket History of Freemasonry*, Pick & Knight, Frederick Muller Limited, 1963).

UNSKILLED WORKERS

Beside the skilled craftsmen, covered by the gild organisation, the larger towns soon attracted a floating population of escaped serfs and others who formed a submerged class of unskilled and irregularly employed labourers. In London this section was especially large, and, while the conditions of skilled workers may

UK does not thank us for, as witnessed by the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Tory Minister George Osborne who on Budget Day 21st March 2012 said:

"We sold more to Ireland than to Brazil, Russia, India and China, put together. That was the road to Britain's economic irrelevance".

When you mediate on that statement does it seem to you there is "parity of esteem" between the Irish and the British in the UK's political elite? Well George—maybe we can take the hint finally and then we'll see what's what—eh?

DEFENCE FORCES

What are members of our Defence Forces doing in Afghanistan with USUK armies oppressing and killing the Afghans? For sure it a long way from peacekeeping duties with the UN. For St. Patrick's Day, all the Irish media carried reports of the

have been fairly satisfactory, the medieval slum population lived in depths of filth and poverty that can hardly be imagined.

One later development must be noted which accentuated the class differentiations in the towns. This was the growth of merchants and dealers who dominated the productive crafts. Thus, by the end of the Fourteenth Century, the London Drapers control the fullers, shearmen and weavers, and of the twelve great guilds from which alone the Mayors could be chosen, only two, the weavers and the goldsmiths, were productive. The same thing took place more slowly and to a less extent in the other towns, and serves to remind us that it was in the form of merchant capital that the first great accumulation of bourgeois property took place.

CIVIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES

By the fifteenth century the conduct of members of the craft guilds had become less a matter of custom guided by general principles than the fruit of minute regulations and ordinances. The great expansion of English capitalism had occurred in the early phases of the Hundred Years War, {1337-1453} but this period of fortunes, easily won and quickly lost, had passed and the merchants themselves advocated a policy of elaborate regulation and restriction, putting obstacles in the way of newcomers and trying to share all available trade among themselves.

• **See also: *Freemasonry And The United Irishmen, Reprints From The Northern Star, 1792-93. With Introduction on Freemasonry In Ireland by Brendan Clifford, Athol Books, 1992.***

Irish soldiers being presented with sprigs of shamrock. According to *The Irish Daily Mail*, 23rd March 2012, the shamrock was presented to our soldiers by the British Deputy Commander Lt. General Adrian Bradshaw in Kabul. Why couldn't we present it to ourselves? After all, it was our shamrock. Or was it? The answer to these little questions are the real news. Maybe Alan Shatter is not a Minister to approve of sending out Irish shamrock to the Irish soldiers in Afghanistan at taxpayer's expense. Or maybe the shamrock was picked in Afghanistan? And who picked it actually? We could reflect on these little matters for hours. But why were Irish soldiers put in the humiliating position of receiving their St. Patrick's Day shamrocks from a Lieutenant-General of the British Army? It doesn't stack up. It stinks of self-abnegation and also of something far more sinister.

Michael Stack ©

GUILDS continued

their fells in the waters within the town jurisdiction, and only for them might the Leicester wool packers and washers work. Strangers who brought wool to Leicester for sale could sell only to guildsmen. Certain properties essential to the manufacture of wool were maintained for the use of gild members, who also seem to have had their wool weighed free on the guild wool-beam. Against these advantages a prospective guildsman had to set the many obligations which he must undertake when he swore the guildsman's oath. He had to pay an entrance fee and subject himself to the judgement of the gild. It was the guild that fixed wages. In 1281, the whole community of the Leicester guild merchants determined that wool wrappers should be paid both Winter and Summer a penny a day with food, and flock pullers three halfpenny without food and a halfpenny with food. If any employer was found to have paid more, he was to give six shillings and eight pence to the "*community of Leicester*". The guild forbade the use of false weights and measures and the production of shoddy goods. The guild enforced its rules against its own members in the guild court. It could impose a fine or forbid men to follow their trade for a year.

PROFIT

The advantages of membership of the guild extended further than profit in the wool trade. Members were free altogether or in part from the tolls that strangers paid, and the guild made every effort to see that strangers paid their tolls in full. Guildsmen alone were free to sell certain goods retail. Guildsmen, too, had the right to share in any bargain made in the presence of a guildsman, whether the transaction took place in Leicester or in a distant market. The mayor had the special privilege that his bargains alone were free of this tax. In the general interest, the guild forbade middlemen to profit at the expense of the public. The practice of "*regrating*", as it was called, was constantly attacked by those who suffered from it, and the guilds always tried to check it. At Leicester, butchers' wives were forbidden to buy meat to sell again in the same market unless they cooked it. In 1221, the Worcester citizens complained that the men of Droitwich used to come to Worcester market early while the Worcester people were all at church and buy up the food, so that when the knights of the shire and the other Worcester people got to the

market there was nothing to buy, because the Droitwich men were holding it all to sell at a higher price.

In order to eliminate competition from outsiders as far as possible the gild limited the hours at which goods could be exposed for sale in the market. "*Forestalling*" goes with "*regrating*". The Droitwich men complained that the Worcester men injured them by refusing to let them buy food in Worcester market before the third hour.

Guildsmen feasted in common and they supplemented the feasts by the barrels of ale which, in Leicester at least, were a common fine laid on offenders. The accounts show frequent payments for a bull, required it may be assumed in early days for bull baiting. When men who were not natives of Leicester joined the guild they paid an entrance fee of 20 shillings and a bull. In the latter part of this period newcomers no longer supplied the bull itself, but paid a sum of money varying from six shillings and eight pence to 12 shillings and six pence instead of the actual animal.

CRAFT GUILDS

The guild merchant generally came to be associated with the governing body of the town. Its jurisdiction was general and its members followed many trades. At an early date, the men following individual crafts began to form associations with the object of furthering the interests of the suppliers and consumers of their own particular commodity. There was no point in members of a trade organising themselves in a guild if there were not enough of them in the town to make their guild effective. They must, in fact, be well enough off to secure from entrance fees and other sources enough money to purchase the right to association and all that association entailed. Common feasts, a regular meeting at which rules could be made and breaches of them dealt with, and ultimately a place to meet, both on social and business occasions, were necessary. The trades associated with wool were possibly the first to organise themselves in this way. Guilds of weavers and fullers appeared during the twelfth century in most important centres. Early in his reign, Henry II confirmed to the weavers of London their guild as they had had it in his grandfather's day and forbade that anyone not of their company should practise their craft in London, Southwark, and the places dependent on London, except in accordance with the custom of Henry I's day. In return for this charter the weavers agreed

to pay the king two gold marks a year, that is, 1,440 silver pennies, a large sum which even the weavers occasionally found it hard to meet. The weavers' gild of London became so important that the city was jealous of it and tried to bribe the King to dissolve the guild. The city, however, did not pay the bribe they had offered the King and the weavers increased their annual payment. Instead of paying two gold, 18 silver marks, they agreed to pay 20 silver marks in future; 1,600 silver pennies instead of 1,440.

LONDON

"The London list is particularly interesting. Each of the guilds had an alderman as its chief officer and his name is given. Occasionally the gild is distinguished merely by his name—the gild of which Goscelin is alderman. There was a butchers' gild and pepperers' gild. The goldsmiths' company makes its first appearance as a unit on this occasion, although it is highly probable that the London goldsmiths had some form of association in Henry I's reign. More interesting, because unconnected with trade and therefore suggesting a survival of the Anglo-Saxon conception of a gild, are the gild of St. Lazarus and the Pilgrims' gild. The former was probably some sort of leper charity and the latter a club to help its members who wished to go on pilgrimage. There were four bridge guilds, each with its own alderman. Presumably their purpose was to keep London Bridge in repair. In discussions of medieval merchant and craft guilds there is always so much to say about the organisation of medieval trade that the 'burial and benefit' aspect of the medieval gild is sometimes overlooked and always under-stressed. The guilds are the direct ancestors in spirit of the working men's clubs, and the Freemasons" (*English Society in the Early Middle Ages*, *ibid*, p.177-1951).

FREEMASONS

Yes, Freemasons proudly claim their inheritance from the guilds!

"Before passing on to consider the 'background' of the medieval Mason we must consider the Gild system. Many Crafts had their trade secrets; many, perhaps most, from the tenth century onwards tended to form Guilds for the better governing of their members and for securing a high standards of technical skill. The Masons, too, had their trade secrets of a technical character, but they were in a different position from other Crafts, the members of which generally followed their trade throughout life in the same locality.

"The Craft Guilds were essentially products of the larger communities, their members well-known to each other,

continued page 29

GUILDS continued

who arrived late, who went to sleep during speeches, wore too festive clothes, swore, "for extraordinary laughter", for making rude jokes, for "hitting the Clerk in the teeth"; and for calling another member "the bass string of a Welsh Harp".

These offences were committed at the meetings not of the guild merchants, which comprised all the traders within the borough, but of the craft guild of bakers.

Offences, particularly those against the Assizes of Bread and Ale, were punished by public penance, the offender being made to stand in the pillory or being drawn through the street, on a hurdle, perhaps with the faulty loaf hung round his neck or a description of his crime written in large characters for all to see.

Other guild ordinances concerned the maintenance of order, transport of goods, street cleaning, the imposition of curfew, and so on. At Beverley, an assembly of the whole community decided that no carts shod with iron should be allowed to enter the town; this was intended to preserve the road surface and also to diminish the noise of iron wheels clattering over cobbled streets.

CRAFT GUILDS

As the towns grew in size Craft Guilds came into being, in addition to, and sometimes in opposition to, the Merchant Guilds. These included only the men of some particular craft; smiths, saddlers, bakers or tailors. They aimed at regulating the whole of industry, laying down rules as to price, quality, conditions of work, and so on. They were composed of master-craftsmen, each working in his own home, usually with one or more apprentices and sometimes with journeymen or wage labourers. The latter were men who had served their period of apprenticeship but had not yet been able to become master-craftsmen.

At first the journeymen do not appear to have constituted a separate class, but were men who might expect to become masters themselves. Towards the end of the Thirteenth Century, however, clearer class divisions begin to appear. The number of journeymen increased, and many of them remained wage earners all their lives. By imposing high entrance fees and by other devices the guilds became more exclusive and harder to enter. As a result, separate guilds of the journeymen, the so-called Yeomen Guilds, began to arise.

These guilds, like the first Trade Unions, were discouraged and often forced to work secretly. Consequently we only hear of them casually, when their members appear in court or in such cases as that when the London Guild of Cordwainers (leather workers) declared in 1303 that "*it is forbidden that the servant workmen in cordwaining or other shall hold any meeting to make provisions that may be to the prejudice of the trade*".

In 1387, again "*John Clerk, Henry Duntone and John Hychene, serving men of the said trade of cordwinders... brought together a great congregation of men like unto themselves, and did conspire and confederate to hold together*", and were committed by the Mayor and Aldermen to Newgate prison "*until they should have been better advised what further ought to be done with them*". Similar records of strikes or combinations exist for other trades and towns, as in the case of the London saddlers, 1396, weavers, 1362, and the Coventry bakers in 1494.

"The town corporation and local guild could not command so wide a field of national vision as the State... The great days of medieval corporate life in guild and borough were on the downgrade throughout Tudor times, {1485-1603} so far as economic regulation was concerned" (*A Shortened History of England*, G.M. Trevelyan, Pelican Book, p.208-1959).

A few remarks about London—

"London never possessed an important institution which appears in most other towns of note in the generations after the Conquest {Norman 1066}, the Gild Merchant. The idea behind all guilds was simply association for mutual profit, both spiritual and secular, in a difficult world. In Anglo-Saxon days there had appeared in Canterbury, Winchester and London, if not in other centres, an institution known as a *cnihitena gild*. In origin these guilds were most probably associations of the *cniths*, or servants of great men settled by their lords in a town to look after their interest and provide them with goods. If this is the origin of the *cnihitena gild* of London it must soon have had a far wider membership than this. By the time of the Conquest this gild was very wealthy and leading citizens belonged to it. But there is no evidence that the gild, as a gild, had any responsibility for the affairs of the city" (*English Society in the Early Middle Ages*, Doris Mary Stenton, A Pelican Book, p.177, 1951).

In all probability London did not acquire a guild merchant because it did not need one to foster its sense of civic unity. In other towns the growth of the town as a community which could act as a corporate unit would have been far slower had it not been for the guild merchant. The ancient borough court, the *portmoot*, was presided over by the *reeve* who was a royal officer, though he was also a member of the burgess body. The *reeve* saw that the King's commands were carried out and his dues collected, although it was the sheriff of the shire in which the town lay who was responsible for taking the money to the Exchequer and accounting for it. The *portmoot* was an ancient court of justice, but it could not easily adapt itself, even with the King's approval, to the business of organising the common life of the town. It had no means of raising money for necessary works. It was bound by the traditions of its origin.

But the guild merchant was allowed to charge an entrance fee, so that it had a common purse. The two bodies, the burgesses of the town and the brethren of the guild merchant, who were after all very largely the same people, came to be identified in thought in most towns. Under their chief officers, known as aldermen, the merchant guilds in English towns during the twelfth century helped the towns to draw nearer the conception of a corporation. During the last twenty years of the twelfth century many of the more important towns had won a degree of independence assured to them by royal charter and had acquired a common seal for the common business of the town.

WOOL TRADE

Every medieval town was intensely individualistic and the guild system increased this tendency. The primary aim of the merchant guild was to further the mercantile interests of its members and to exclude strangers from a share in the benefits that guild association gave. The records of the Leicester guild merchant are more complete than those of any other town and they show how tight a hold this association had over the trade of the town. The wool trade in Leicester as in most other centres in this age was the dominant trading force. It was impossible to prosper in this trade in Leicester and to remain outside the guild. Only guildsmen could buy and sell wool wholesale to whom they pleased and guildsmen must not sell it retail to strangers. Only they might wash

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MONDRAGON, Part Six

Guilds and the Town

"The first extant charter of a gild is that by which, in the reign of Canute, {King Canute, a Dane, King of Denmark and England-1016-1035} Orcy gives the guild-hall (*gegylde-healle*) at Abbotsbury in Dorset, 'for God's love and St. Peter's', to the *gylde* of the place.

"Every gildsman (*gegylde*) was to pay annually, three days before St. Peter's Mass, one penny, or a pennyworth of wax. On the eve of the feast every two gildsmen were to bring one large loaf, well sifted and raised, for the common almsgiving. Five weeks before the same festival each member had to bring a measure of clean wheat, and within three days afterwards a load of wood. On the death of any member, each of his fellows was to pay 'one penny at the corpse for the soul'. These were the 'Mass-pence', of which we hear so much in later times.

"Other rules provided for an annual feast, for almsgiving, the nursing of sick members, the decent burial of the dead, etc. The ends of the gild appears here to be purely religious and social; yet, in the somewhat later charter of a Cambridge gild, the old principle of mutual assurance against crime and its penalties received marked illustration. Gradually this feature disappears, and the gild assumes the aspect of 'a voluntary association of those living near together, who joined for a common purpose, paying contributions, worshipping together, feasting together periodically, helping one another in sickness and poverty, and frequently united for the pursuit of a special object', usually a religious one. These objects the guilds continued to promote down to the Reformation, when they were destroyed and plundered." (*A Catholic Dictionary*, William E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, Virtue & Co., Ltd. London, p.365-1952).

By the end of the Thirteenth Century almost, all towns of any size, except a few under monastic rule, had won a certain measure of self-government. After gaining freedom from feudal exactions, the main object of any town was to keep its trade in

the hands of its own burgesses, on the principle that only those who paid their share towards the freedom of the town had the right to share in its privileges. This object was attained through the organisation of the burgesses in the Merchant Guild. These guilds, which included all the traders in any given town (at first no clear division existed between the trader who bought and sold and the craftsman who made the goods, both functions being normally performed by the same person) were rigidly exclusive and their regulations were enforced by fines and, in extreme cases, by expulsion.

The origin of the English town is obscure. The first signs of urbanisation begin when the *vill* {village} aspiring to become a borough when the inhabitants have begun their struggle to secure a charter of liberties from their feudal overlord, or in cases of Crown property from the King himself.

The towns rapidly developed into independent units, clinging tenaciously to their hardly-won privileges and prepared to defend them against every menace. Foremost among these privileges was the

right to form a merchant guild intended to control all the trade within the borough, to ensure that sellers received a fair price for their goods, that customers were protected against fraud, and to promote the good of the community in all social as well as economic matters.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Private enterprise was regarded as selfish and was discouraged by such regulation as that of *scot and lot* which decreed that any trader making a fortunate purchase at a bargain price was bound to share it with his fellows, allowing them to buy from him at the price he had given and retaining only his own allotted portion. It was the aim of the guild, too, to fix a price that would be equally fair to both buyer and seller, the 'just price' or ideal price of goods, and to prevent any trader from buying large stocks at a low rate and keeping them until the price had risen. Buying in advance was known as "*forestalling*", holding up supplies was "*regrating*", and both were punishable offences.

Membership of the guild was compulsory, and every member had to make a small annual contribution to the guild funds; at Hull and at many other places one payment was enough for both man and wife. Women it seems could become full gild members; in many cases no doubt they were widows or daughters of deceased traders, but they appear to have traded independently as well. Discussion of guild business in public places and particularly before strangers was a serious offence, punishable by expulsion from the guild. Brawling and insubordinate behaviour at guild meetings were also punished severely; fines for breaches of etiquette in attendance at the *halimote* of the Bakers of London were imposed on members

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