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Euro Crisis:

Politics of Recovery vs Politics of Illusion

There are certain immutable economic laws that cannot be wished away by fine words or good intentions. If a country continues to consume more than it produces, it will develop a dependent relationship with its creditors. To reduce its dependency it will either have to produce more or consume less.

If the creditor is benevolent the debtor might obtain some concessions. But that is not a very dignified position for a debtor country to be in. Since 2008 Ireland has made a decent attempt at solving her economic crisis and has been hoping for concessions on the basis of what may arise elsewhere. But it appears the Euro summit agreement of 29th June on separation of bank debt from sovereign debt is far less than it was widely taken to be. The prescription for the Spanish financial crisis is looking remarkably like the one for the Irish crisis. Ultimately the State must pay.

The Left in Ireland has never had to think about these issues. That element which has eschewed power has contented itself with railing against the real world, while the element which has participated in power has had no vision other than a purely moral imperative to keep Fianna Fáil out.

The Left in Britain was different, 40 years ago. Harold Wilson's Government understood that a country could not continue consuming more than it produced and set about implementing a socialist solution to the problem. His policies of austerity included penal taxes on unearned income and capital, draconian restrictions on consumer credit, and wage restraint. These policies were implemented with the support of the Trade Union Congress. From being a basket case economy in 1964, Britain ended up in 1970 with a balance of payments surplus second only to Germany. All of that was squandered in the subsequent decade when the Labour movement reverted to the politics of protest, and opened the door to the Thatcherite alternative.

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The Moriarty Tribunal

The successful Supreme Court case allowing two representatives of the losing consortia for the 1995 Mobile Phone Licence award sue the State is the latest bizarre twist in this 15 year old saga.

The State has spent about 300 million euro on a Tribunal whose findings it has now to defend itself against. The winners of the licence find that they will be in the same corner as the State fighting against the findings of an Oireachtas-appointed

Tribunal in which hundreds of millions more will be at stake. Up until now, the current Taoiseach has been placed in the invidious position of being unable to endorse the findings of the Moriarty Tribunal lest it undermine the State's case against the losing consortia.

While technically the findings of the Tribunal are inadmissible as evidence there is no doubt that its exhaustive investigations will be an invaluable guide to the

The Past Was Orange

So the Grand Secretary of the Orange Order has addressed Oireachtas (Senate). He urged that "*the burden of history*" should be discarded.

But the human mode of existence is historical. Humanity is what it has made of itself over time in different places and circumstances—in history. There is no situation lying outside history into which it can remove itself. In these parts the practical meaning of discarding the burden of history is becoming British. And, quite apart from the question of whether that would be a good thing, there is the sound working assumption that it is not a possible thing. It has been tried before. Britain failed completely to make Ireland British. All it ever produced was hangers-on.

The Grand Secretary thanked the Fianna Fail leader for inviting him to address the Senate. Micheal Martin, like former Fine Gael leaders before him, has sickened of the historical situation in which he is required to act, and he is looking for an escape from history. He now sees the War of Independence, which had to be fought

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plaintiffs' cases. The cases against the State and the winning consortium were initiated in 2001. In the light of this it was extremely irresponsible of the State to allow the Tribunal to continue its investigations.

The *Irish Political Review* is of the opinion that there was no corruption involved in the licence award. Not even Moriarty could find any evidence of improper influence exerted on the key advisors: the Civil Servants' working group; or Andersen Management International.

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Summer Floods & Water Privatisation

Michael Robinson

(Report, p25)

In 1987 Ireland implemented a social solution to the economic crisis, but this had nothing to do with the Left. Indeed Social Partnership was implemented in spite of it. The far reaching reform was initiated by Charles Haughey under the influence of the German Social Democratic Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

The weakness of Irish Social Partnership was that it was led from on high. The labour movement did not have to take serious responsibility for weaknesses in the economy. When the economy boomed in the 1990s, financed by German credit, nobody thought that the party could end. In Germany, by contrast, the competitiveness of German industry was preserved about ten years ago by reforms initiated by Gerhard Schroeder in consultation with the Trade Unions. Nevertheless, Social Partnership in Ireland survives in the form of the Croke Park Agreement, which was negotiated by the previous Government, as well as in many other structures in industry and the public sector inherited from the Haughey/Ahern eras.

The Labour Party has been too busy denigrating the record of the previous Government or blaming the Troika for difficult decisions to focus on defending the social gains that were actually achieved. And the Left opposition wallows in its Keynesian illusions, aided by the *Financial Times*, the mouthpiece of Finance Capital, which sees opportunities in the disabling of the Euro, and hence promotes solutions to its crisis that would tend toward such a disabling.

The Left demonises the Eurozone Compact as a simple-minded "austerity" strategy designed to smooth the way for a neo-liberal make-over of Europe under German leadership.

This is to misunderstand quite a few things, not least of which is the nature of the German state.

Despite much domestic opposition by the free market interest, Merkel, with the increasing support of the opposition Social Democrats, has shown a determination to

see through both the Fiscal Compact and the introduction of a banking union, which will inevitably involve a great deal of bank debt resolution. Despite the caricature of her as a neoliberal, she is no such thing, just as she is no Keynesian. And in this her economic strategy both at home and at Eurozone level is remarkably reminiscent of Harold Wilson. The idea that Social Democracy and Keynesianism (or what is called Keynesianism) are synonymous is a fallacy. In the Wilson era, when British Labour was at its height, it was determined to impose control over the economy, and that was anti-Keynesian. The Government's whole orientation was to protect the value of sterling and return the economy to a balance of payments surplus which it succeeded in doing with the high-tax austerity policies of Roy Jenkins.

The new French Socialist President, Francois Hollande, who is much quoted by Irish politicians because of his espousal of growth, is as firm in his support for the basic currency disciplines proposed in the Compact, as was the former Socialist Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. In the months preceding the historic EU Council of November 2011, at which the Fiscal Compact was launched as a Eurozone initiative following Cameron's exercise of the British Veto, the President of Poland threw his backing behind Merkel: "*What Poland fears more than German power is German inaction.*"

For states involved in Troika "*Programmes of Financial Support*"—and let us be realistic and assume Spain to be one of these—there is no disagreement that deficits must be reduced and consumption brought into line with production. Nor is there any doubt that economies and fiscal systems need fundamental re-structuring to achieve this and lay the basis for a healthy political economy into the future. Against the background of the noisy street demonstrations by the Spanish *indignados*, a former advisor to previous Socialist Government commented:

"This country needs really fundamental changes. We need an ample majority to carry through the fiscal and economic changes in a way that convinces the whole country this is just and fair; it is not enough just to have an absolute majority [in parliament]... What we need now is a new [national] pact, between the parties, but including the Basques and the Catalans. To recover our credibility we need to agree among ourselves" ...[Prime Minister] Mr Rajoy, some analysts are starting to suggest, needs to forge a national consensus urgently, through

something like the 1977 Moncloa Pacts, the multi-party social contract that underpinned the transition to democracy" (*Financial Times*, 23rd July).

The Irish *Programme for Financial Support* with the ECB/IMF/EU 'Troika' was negotiated by Brian Lenihan and his team in 2010, just before the change of Government. The Troika was concerned chiefly with the 'bottom line'—how the deficit would be reduced. It was up to the Government to propose the precise steps. Despite popular perceptions, the Troika does not 'impose' any conditions, except to insist on adherence to already agreed European policies.

Lenihan saw the opportunity the crisis programme presented to carry through some reforms which many long knew were needed but would be impossible to introduce under the normal workings of the media/political process we know as parliamentary democracy. These included widening the tax base to encompass wealth (property) tax, charges for expensive resources (water), tackling the privileges of elite special interests (the 'sheltered professions') etc. Attempts to curb such groups in the past had invariably faltered. Many of these very progressive reforms—and not just reductions in the level of public service employment—were listed as structural reforms in the Programme.

Brendan Keenan, one of the most perceptive commentators on Irish budgetary politics, believes that the ability to pay any more of the mass of Irish society, whose disposable incomes in the two years of the Programme to date have radically shrunk, has reached its limit (*We've Hit A Fiscal Wall—it'll take a lot of nerve to plough through it, Irish Independent*, 12th July 2012). But, while cuts in services and public sector employment have been rigorously implemented, the structural reforms of property tax and of the sheltered professions—reforms on which the Government has stalled—would seem to offer the scope needed for the final deficit reduction without affecting the mass of people Keenan is referring to.

The main lessons from engagement with the Troika loan programme would seem to be that the only given is that deficit reduction targets be met. This is meant to be achieved by a combination of savings and revenue raising measures, and by "*structural reforms*" in line with long established EU policy which, under EU Competition Policy, particularly the Services Directive, can (though must not

Letter Sent to 1916 Commemoration Advisory Group

Inviting 'Our Gallant Allies'

20 July 2012

Dr. Maurice Manning
Chancellor, National University of Ireland,

Dear Dr. Manning,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chairman of the 'Advisory Group on the Centenary Commemorations' of the 1916 Rising. I hope your plans for the commemoration are progressing well.

As you know, a major impetus for the Rising was to seek to limit recruiting for the war that Britain had declared on Germany and Turkey and a number of other States. Leaders of the Rising such as Connolly and Casement had made their reasons for supporting

Germany quite clear. The war was, in Casement's words, *'a crime against Europe'*.

Hence the reference to "*our gallant Allies in Europe*" in the Proclamation. I hope that this central aspect of the Rising is given due recognition in the commemorations.

This aspect of the Rising has taken on a new significance with the passing of the referendum on the Fiscal Treaty. This was a very clear decision by the people to form a new alliance with our Eurozone neighbours, chief among whom is Germany. It would be most appropriate therefore that this is also recognised as part of the celebrations as there is a great symmetry between this new alliance and that promulgated in the Proclamation.

It would seem fitting that the German Government is given a prominent role in the commemoration ceremonies and that its President and/or Chancellor be invited to play such a role.

This would be doing justice to the vision of the leaders of 1916 and would help enhance the Fiscal Treaty that should by then be well established and functioning in Ireland's and Europe's best interests.

I would be grateful if you would put this suggestion to your Advisory Group and I look forward to your, and their, response.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Lane

necessarily) include elements of privatisation. This element was proposed by the Irish government itself. What is clear is that the choices made in terms of tax policy, service cuts, welfare and minimum wage rates etc., are all determined by the political forces within a programme state.

As is now being discussed in Spain, an inclusive Pact across the social interests to deliver a programme of adjustment and recovery, as was achieved by the Haughey government in 1987 in negotiation with the social partners, would offer the most socially progressive means to achieve this. The European Commission—commenting on calls in Ireland for the Croke Park agreement to be set aside—made it clear recently that it welcomed negotiated solutions for structural reform and would not endorse the undermining of them. But, unlike 1987, the prospects for a social solution to the crisis in Ireland do not seem to be on offer, or to be an option any element in this government are choosing to pursue.

BRITANNIA'S CHILDREN

They talk of 'Hitler's Children' in terms of genetics as they appear on British television, these children, grandchildren of Nazi leaders, in tears, wishing for eugenics. Some had themselves sterilised to end the line, some, have gone into reclusive decline, handpicked to show the guilt of the German nation. But what of the centuries-old empire and Britannia's children, whose grievous oppressive occupation they still defend. How many war criminals still operate in the shadow of Big Ben. They will not apologise, their conscience is clear, their past is their future, old colonies to destabilise, a new colonial frontier.

Wilson John Haire
27th May, 2012

Past Was Orange

continued

when Britain refused to accept the decision of the ballot, as an act of genocide. (The relevant part of his extended interview with Pat Kenny will be found in the current issue of *Church & State*, No. 109.)

The Orange Order, too, is uneasy with history. It was for a century the core institution of Ulster Unionism. The Pan-Protestant alliance against all-Ireland devolution within the UK—Home Rule—was organised by it. Then, when the country was partitioned and the Six Counties, instead of being governed within the democracy of the British State, was set up as a pseudo-democracy—whose only real power was that of policing the large Catholic minority by the small Protestant majority—the system hinged on the Orange Order. It had a controlling influence on the Unionist Council, which controlled the Unionist Party, which fronted for the system as the Government in the Stormont Parliament.

In 1970, when it was clear that the Northern Ireland system could not continue without drastic amendment, we proposed that Dublin should exert a positive reconciling influence by recognising the Ulster Protestants as a distinct Irish nationality, and that it should treat July 12th as an Irish folk festival. Jack Lynch—in whose footsteps Micheal Martin follows—slapped down that proposal. Ireland was a nation, he said, and there could be no peace until Partition was ended.

A war was brewing in the North at the time, encouraged *de facto* by Lynch. Then in 1970 he precipitated it with the tomfoolery of the Arms Trials, which left Northern Nationalists with a sense of betrayal, but also with a sense of adequate self-sufficiency. A war sustained for a quarter of a century in a region of the foremost democratic state in Europe is an impressive event. It impressed the British State, but was too big an event to be comprehended by the Irish State in the development Jack Lynch gave it. Failing to crush the Provos, Whitehall agreed to a drastic alteration of the devolved system in which power was shared between the Orange Order and the IRA. But the Orange Order has failed to hold its position within that arrangement.

Its front-man, David Trimble, compromised himself by signing the Good Friday Agreement, which in effect negated

the majority status of the Protestant community, while refusing to gain the benefit that would have come from operating the new system with a will. (In doing this he was advised by Official IRA men Lord Professor Bew and Eoghan Harris.) He had signed under duress from Tony Blair. The horse was dragged to the water but wouldn't drink. And its place was taken by Ian Paisley's DUP.

The Orange Order is one of a complex of mysterious institutions in the culture of what was once a ruling class—Apprentice Boys, Black Preceptors, etc. Paisley has never been part of that milieu. On July 12th he usually addressed the Independent Orange Order. The IOO was founded in the early 1900s, around the time of the great Land Act which subverted landlordism. It followed the collaboration of Protestant tenant farmers in the North, led by T.W. Russell, with the Southern tenant farmers, led by William O'Brien, Canon Sheehan, and D.D. Sheehan. The possibility of that collaboration becoming a force in politics was prevented by the merging of the Home Rule Party, under John Redmond's leadership, with a Catholic secret society, the Ancient Order of Hibernians. That merger made the Home Rule Party a Catholic sectarian equivalent of the Orange/Unionist Party.

The Orange Grand Secretary told the Senate that religious minorities were "*better treated in the North than the South*" (Irish Examiner, 4 July). This was proved by the growth of the Catholic population in the North and the decline of the Protestant population.

When we were campaigning for the democratisation of the North by including it within the British political system, we were opposed by the Orange Order. Northern Catholics, deprived of a democratic outlet for their energy in the political life of the state, and subjected to communal rule by the Protestant community, was driven in on itself and made to live its own life in isolation. But it was so large a minority that it was viable on its own. It also had relief from the stifling pressure of the devolved system (which is now being called the Northern Ireland *state*) by the continuing presence of the institutions of the British state. It had British amenities in everything except political life.

It was a dreadful system. Carson didn't want it, but Whitehall persuaded his Orange/Unionist colleagues to have it. And they also wanted the greatest possible piece of Ulster—i.e., the greatest possible Catholic minority to dominate outside the democratic political system of the state.

The Protestant Penal Laws had constituted the Catholics of all Ireland into a political body. The Northern Ireland system did the same thing to the Catholics within it. The 26 County system did not do that to the Protestants. It was impossible for a Catholic in Northern Ireland to become Prime Minister, or any Minister. There have always been Protestants in Dublin Governments, and there have been two Protestant Presidents. The political system drew Protestants into the functioning of the state, while the British system in the North excluded the Catholics from the political life of the state and compelled them to act as a political body. The avenues of opportunism were not open to them.

Add to those considerations the fact that the Catholics in the North were a third of the population and belonged to the lower social regions where reproductive power tends to be greater in any society, while the Protestants in the South were less than ten per cent, and were the remnant of a ruling class that was in steep decline as a result of the process of democratisation long before independence.

The *Sunday Independent* reported the Grand Secretary's speech under the headline, *State Still A 'Cold House For Unionists'*. It is not entirely clear from the report whether the Grand Secretary spoke of Unionists or Protestants. The *Independent* is so deeply into revisionist obfuscation that it has probably lost all sense of the difference. In the South the object of Unionism could only be to abolish the state, and states do tend to look coldly on subversives. No doubt there are Protestants whose purpose is to subvert the state, but there are also many who participate in it. In the North Catholics were excluded from participation in the politics of the state, and by virtue of that fact they were subversive. Subversiveness was foisted on them by Whitehall for some purpose of its own. It is true that the Protestants were also excluded from the politics of the state, but they rather liked it as they were cock of the walk at home.

Toady Tremor

Mark Hennessy, a British toady on the staff of the *Irish Times*, has become concerned about the flare-up of hostility in Liverpool to the commemoration of Jim Larkin (see report of 23rd July). Catholic/Protestant conflict was a regular feature of life in Liverpool for many generations. That was also the case in Glasgow. This was a spill-over of the conflict in the North of Ireland. But it was

utterly different from Ireland. It was mere sectarianism. In Ireland it has been called sectarianism, but it was actually the substance of politics. In Liverpool and Glasgow it was contained, channelled and defused politically by the system of party-conflict which took such things in its stride. It is unlikely that the human race will ever become so docile and uniform that 'sectarianism' will be absent from it.

The British leaders who excluded the Six Counties, when Partitioning Ireland, from the party-system on which the most durable system of representative government in Europe was based—a system

which it pioneered—were well-acquainted with its merits, and with its effectiveness in Liverpool and Glasgow. They could not have thought they were arranging for good government when they made the Six Counties a place apart. They had a purpose beyond the North. The 'sectarian' conflict inherent in the Northern system could be used as leverage on the South through a mixture of blaming and coaxing. And how skilfully its has been done!

Hennessy makes passing mention of the history of "*sectarian tension*" in Liverpool, but does not care to dwell on how it was rendered politically harmless.

observers the Treaty was never the core issue in the referendum and people did not vote either way in that referendum on the basis of its contents even if they pretended to understand it. People cast their votes on the basis of the circumstances which they as individuals were experiencing the world at that time. They were not concerned with the legal or constitutional issues that the Treaty threw up but the relationship of the referendum to the wider arguments about what Ireland as a society was being asked to accept in the context of an ongoing austerity and the rationale behind that acceptance.

It is of course quite possible to view the Treaty as a thing in itself, as something without context, something that is a good or bad within its own terms. But of course these things do not exist in a vacuum and John himself does not treat it that way. He also sees it in a particular context. When he says that "*The Treaty will bind us closer to Continental Europe and diminish British influence*", he is viewing it in terms of a certain contextual narrative. This of course is a perfectly legitimate way of looking at the issue and it certainly has its own internal logic but there is another way of looking at it and that is the way in which I viewed it. For my part the question I felt needed to be addressed was in the 'here and now', aside from all the aspirational clauses that in some people's eyes invest it with the contextual legitimacy of what it may or may not represent in the future, whether it justified the price being demanded of Irish society and whether there was any tangible link between that price and the aspirational future it was meant to serve.

However, John appears to disagree that this approach has any validity. From the second and third paragraph of his reply I am unclear if he is asking us to view the Treaty as something outside the context of austerity but his position appears to imply that the issue of austerity should not be allowed to encroach upon the hygienic logic of the Treaty and the clear line of sight between it and the *denouement* of his contextual narrative. But unfortunately, in terms of actual politics, austerity does encroach. The fact that in the lead-up to the referendum the Treaty was almost always discussed in the context of Ireland's continuing access to bailout funding shows that it was viewed in the context of such things. It was in terms of austerity and continuing access to bailout funding that the electorate cast their votes and not because of any aspirational belief in a closer intimacy with Continental Europe. While that may have been part of what

Referendum Debate Continued

Austerity, Aspiration And The Treaty

I appreciate John Martin taking the trouble to reply to my article advocating a "No" vote in the referendum on the Fiscal Treaty. However I was disappointed by the fact that he choose to concentrate upon minor arguments and not to confront the central issue that the article raised.

John says at the outset that he disagrees with every aspect of the article and then proceeds to concentrate his attention on two themes, neither of which constitutes the main thrust of the thing. The article was written in response to the particular narrative in which the referendum was being set in this magazine and elsewhere. At its core, that narrative relied upon the possibility that the current crisis in Europe will produce an expansion of the German social model at the cost of Anglo-American influence in the region. According to this rationale, the Treaty and the austerity (or if you like fiscal discipline) was viewed as a necessary sacrifice for something that would eventually work its way out in terms of a closer political and economic union in the interests of the working class. At the core of this scenario the German social model is held up as the new social order that will result from this process. That was the way in which it was presented in this magazine and that was the thing with which I took issue.

The central purpose of the article was therefore to investigate the nature of the German social model and the extent to which it was capable of having an existence outside the specific peculiarities of the history, culture and politics that brought it into being. John's reply fails to address any of this but instead concentrates on the one hand, upon the failure of the article to deal with the nitty-gritty of the Treaty

itself, and on the other, upon the privatisation of the East German economy in 1990-1993.

He states that I do not deal with the content of the Treaty or attempt to equate any of its clauses with the Ordo-Liberal economic doctrine while making the claim that both are related and he is correct on that score. I do not equate any of the clauses of the Treaty with the doctrine of Ordo-Liberal economics for the simple reason that it would be difficult to do so. However, that difficulty has nothing to do with the irrelevance of the one to the other but more to do with the fact that one is an international pact centring on the fiscal arrangements between states and the other is an economic doctrine. They are separate animals but that does not mean that they are unrelated under specific conditions. Just as the cat and the mouse are biologically different and only assume a particular relationship in the context of sharing the same house so too does the constitutional and legal terms of the Treaty and the Ordo-Liberal economic doctrine assume a particular relationship by dint of them both sharing the same political context of the current crisis in the Eurozone.

So, when John draws attention to the obvious fact that I fail "*to give an example of a clause within the Treaty that reflects this Ordo-Liberal doctrine*", is he seriously claiming that the Treaty has nothing to do with the current crisis or that the terms of the austerity being imposed as part of the solution to that crisis are not consistent with Ordo-Liberal economic doctrine? If the former he is very much in a minority and I will leave the reader to judge if he is correct regarding the latter.

Beyond a very small number of political

John perceives as the contextual logic of the thing, it was certainly not how it was viewed by the vast majority of the Irish electorate.

Fear rather than aspiration was the prime motivation in how people voted and fear rather than aspiration continues to be the motivation of all the Eurozone peripheral populations. While it could be argued that fear is as potent a motivation as aspiration in the formation of the new European Jerusalem, and therefore worthy of forbearance, I have always dissented from such means of social engineering. I cannot believe that it is possible, without incurring even greater problems, to walk national populations into new social and political arrangements in the absence of a positive commitment to those arrangements.

Regarding the privatisation of East Germany. The issues raised here appear to me to be quite trivial in terms of the larger argument that remained unaddressed. However, for the sake of clarity, the point of quoting the 200 billion dollar loss in the context of the German unification process was not to show the level of subsidy incurred by the West German taxpayers, as John claims. The point was to illustrate the fact that the unification process could not have happened without the injection of a huge amount of West German and other capital that had its basis outside of the East German economy. It strikes me that the point was made clearly enough and any other interpretation could only be on the basis of an imposed interpretation. While the 200 million dollar loss was in effect a subsidy by West German taxpayers, that subsidy does not reflect the full extent to which outside capital was required to bring the unification process to a (relatively) successful conclusion. The subsidy was the smaller part of the overall financial investment in the thing and the fact that everything other than the 200 million dollar losses was recouped is irrelevant to that argument.

Incidentally, while we are on the subject of subsidies, although it was not stated in the article, the total subsidy incurred by the West German taxpayers (which continues to generate resentment by the way) was much more than the 200 billion dollar losses relating to the disposal of property and other assets of the East German economy as it does not take account of the enormous cost to the German state of the social welfare and other payments in sustaining the dispossessed and unemployed population of East Germany in the course of the unification process.

The purpose in delving into any of this

was to provide an example of the fact that Germany historically has been prepared to depart from its economic model in pursuit of a political objective. When it viewed the injection of significant amounts of capital, and its relaxation of the money supply as a necessary pre-requisite of the unification process, it displayed a pragmatic understanding of the fact that political objectives sometimes require a temporary departure from its long-standing social and economic model. The purpose of drawing attention to that particular part of Germany's recent history was to make a comparison between what was deemed necessary and therefore acceptable in that unification process with the approach which the current German Government is taking with regards to the periphery economies of the Eurozone and the stated object of closer integration. In the one case it adopted a pragmatic approach to the question of the money supply while in the other it adopts a dogmatic approach.

But perhaps describing it as a dogmatic approach is unjust. There could be another explanation, which explains the difference between the two situations. Admittedly, the comparison between both situations is not a symmetric one and any conclusions based on that comparison must be tempered by an awareness of the differences as well as the similarities between what the West German Government was attempting to do in 1990-1993 and what the German Government is demanding of the Eurozone at present.

With regards to the attitude towards the money supply: In the case of East Germany the West German Government was only prepared to encourage such a huge investment and relaxation of its money supply because it knew it would result in a new political entity over which it would henceforth exercise control in terms of the new unified economy. It could be argued that this has echoes with the present, where Germany has demanded a more centralised control over national budgets as a precondition of it relaxing its hold on the Eurozone purse strings. That is a valid argument based on a comparison of both situations. However, it is also an argument that swings two ways and can sustain a different conclusion in the context of the Eurozone situation.

The political commitment of the West German Government to the cause of German reunification was robust, determined and made possible by the collapse of the East German economy. That commitment was backed by the economic sacrifice involved in the relaxation of the money

supply and the subsidy incurred by the West German taxpayer. But that political commitment and economic sacrifice was only deemed acceptable and necessary on account of the shared sense of identity that had survived the social and political division of the previous forty-plus years. Although there was significant opposition to the project from both sides of Germany, the shared sense of nationhood proved sufficiently strong for that opposition to be overcome. It was the sense of shared German nationality that was a core component in enabling the unification process of 1990-1993 to take place, despite the cost and the significant opposition to the process both in West and East Germany at the time. The question is, can that same motivation be deployed as the driving factor in the realisation of what is claimed to be the Eurozone agenda?

Germany is the key to the realisation of that agenda. But we look in vain towards the German population for evidence of a real willingness to sacrifice their well-being for such an agenda. Whatever temporary measures the German Government has taken to keep the Eurozone project ticking over has been met at every step by the reluctance of its populace—and this at a time when it is acknowledged that the German economy has prospered because of the Eurozone. No, the evidence is that such a commitment is not present and it is more likely that the same sense of German nationality that made one unification process a success will in fact act as a counter to that prospect ever becoming a fact with regards to the other. This is the reality from which we have to view things like the Fiscal Stability Pact and the Bank unification scheme, the Single Bank Regulator and all the other schemes, which on an almost monthly basis now find expression on the Eurozone "Wish List".

While all such schemes would undoubtedly constitute an encroachment on the power of financial capitalism, they never seem capable of realisation. These schemes are always pointed to somewhere in the vague future or just beyond the horizon or are made dependent upon some other factors being present or some misinterpretation or reinterpretation somehow intervening. We are told that they are aspirations. But they are aspirations without any evidence of their realisable future in the present and when aspirations fail to possess such a critical ingredient they no longer possess the characteristic of an aspiration. Instead they begin to take on the character of an illusion.

With all the aspirational will in the world and all the 'might be' and 'could be'

scenarios, without the basis for their realisation being present in the here and now, whatever other justification there may be for asking a population to accept austerity, there is no justification for asking it to accept austerity (or if you will, fiscal discipline) on the basis of those aspirations.

John also implies that, by describing what happened in terms of the West German position in 1990-1993, I am somehow criticising it. Let me state that I have no view one way or the other on the rights or wrongs of what West Germany did in 1990-1993 as I don't know enough about it. I never said that Germany was wrong to allow foreign money to flood the East German economy in 1990-1993, only that it was considered necessary and I cannot understand where John got that idea. I merely described what happened and tried to place that historical incident in the context of what is happening at present in the Eurozone.

My account of German finance capitalism as being "*just as predatory as Anglo-American finance capitalism within the wider world*" also comes in for criticism and is somehow seen as evidence of my being biased against German finance capitalism. Again, I've no idea where John gets that impression or indeed if he is arguing that German finance capitalism is better than Anglo-American capitalism in its operation in the wider world. To me they are both culpable agents in bringing about the present crisis and that is how I describe them and nothing more. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary I would also say that, outside the legal constraints imposed by the German state and sustained by the cultural and political strengths of German civil society, that German capitalism in all its manifestations is just as predatory as any other capitalism.

As I write there is an example of how German capitalism operates in Britain and I apologise for raising this type of anecdotal evidence but, in the absence of anything more substantive on either side of the argument, it seems it is all we have to go on. In January this year Britain's biggest fresh milk supplier, Robert Wiseman Dairies (which accounts for 30% of the domestic milk supplies in the UK), was taken over by the German dairy giant, Muller. In June the company cut the price of a litre of milk paid to dairy farmers by 2 pence and intends to further cut the price by 1.7p in August at which time the price being paid by the company will be 24.73p per litre. Lest this be seen as Muller merely responding to an action initiated by the

other British milk suppliers this was not the case. Muller took the initiative in this and led the way for the other milk suppliers to cut their prices in early July. The result of this is that many small dairy farmers (and they still exist in Britain), already struggling because of the behaviour of the supermarkets, will be driven out of business. However, the point is not to demonise German capitalism in the context of British capitalism but to illustrate that the Muller situation only shows that German capitalism, like any other, adapts to the prevailing political and economic circumstances wherever it finds itself and in circumstances where such an environment permits it, it will behave like any other capitalism in its drive to maximise profits.

I attach no moral judgment to this and I use it simply to illustrate the fact that capitalism is capitalism and as an economic system it does not carry within it any innate sense of morality or social responsibility. It is the legal capacity of a State informed by an inherited political culture and a level of Trade Union organisation such as exists in Germany that is the only thing capable of imposing a particular mode of behaviour on capitalism—a mode of behaviour that compels it to function against its natural inclinations. In the absence of any such constraining element in the societies of the other Eurozone countries, we cannot expect German capitalism to behave in any other way. But it is not only that which places a question mark over the idea of a benign German capitalism eager to export its model to the rest of the Eurozone. It is also the fact that the austerity (or if you will, financial discipline) programmes of the bailout countries are compelled to include within them the dismantling of whatever capitalist constraining structures that those societies have somehow inherited from their individual pasts.

None of this sits comfortably with the idea of the existence of a German Government eager to encourage the development of a European-wide socially-controlled capitalism. The existing German Government's vision of Europe not only fails to encourage such restraints on capitalism in other countries but positively encourages the opposite. As was stated in the article, the measures demanded of the periphery countries are just not consistent with the idea that somehow Germany is acting as an honest broker in this matter and are in fact more consistent with the conclusion that it is simply carrying on where 'free for all' globalism left off. In fact there is more evidence of a German Government agenda that seeks use the crisis as a means of

disarming the rights of the working class and Trade Unions within its own social model than there is of it wishing to see it replicated in its present form throughout the Eurozone. How else are we to interpret Merkel's call for the German model to be changed to take account of wider European conditions other than an expression of the natural desire of German capitalism to break free from the constraints which it imposes upon German capitalism?

Competition is the key word designed to open this particular constraint on capitalism both in Germany and the wider Eurozone. The workers of the weaker Eurozone economies are urged to pursue the object of becoming as competitive as Germany, and German workers are being urged to become as competitive as China. For this to happen the obstacle of what has been called European Welfare Capitalism needs to be dismantled and societies reduced to a state where workers, bereft of protective structures and organisations, will be compelled to work for whatever wage the free global market can sustain. The current attack on the capital constraints within the weaker national economies and consequent erosion of domestic markets has to be seen in this context. Although Germany, with all its strengths and with less of a reliance on its own domestic market than the weaker Eurozone economies, is not immediately vulnerable, it is nonetheless part of that process and its superior social model will itself increasingly come under threat. The real forces driving capitalism in Europe at present have the weaker Eurozone countries in their sights but are nonetheless already manifesting themselves within Germany itself.

That is the perspective we need to adopt in order to inform our understanding of what is happening in Europe at present and not to become side-tracked into support for a process that may or may not be leading to a united Europe. The question which will increasingly have to be faced is do we want a united Europe at any cost and if so what type of Europe will that turn out to be?

Eamon Dyas

Mitbestimmung

There's a Die Welt interview with Angela Merkel from August 2009, headed "*International Rules for Economic Activity*". It is at http://www.angela-merkel.de/page/117_205.htm

The German Chancellor touches on *Mitbestimmung*, the Social Market and

Financial Regulation. Here is an extract, loosely translated:

"*Die Welt*: Is German Mitbestimmung one of the principles of the Social Market Economy that you would like to see extended worldwide?"

Merkel: I believe that in the worldwide crisis the special value of cooperation of employers' and employees' representative bodies has been borne out. Internationally, German Mitbestimmung can't be adopted in a one-to-one correspondence. But a fair cooperation of employees' bodies and enterprise leaderships, also an increased participation in the enterprise by employees, this I consider an interesting element which could also be spread wider internationally. We have been told by the unions that even in the ILO, for a long time our unions were laughed at when they said that the principles of the social market economy should be internationally secured. But resulting

from the worldwide crisis, this laughter has to some extent disappeared. I too have been concerned with this theme for years. When I took over leadership of the CDU in 2000, I established a working group "New Social Market Economy" to work out ways of complementing the social market economy with an international dimension. During the German G-8 Presidency, as Chancellor, I put the theme of regulation of the financial market on the day's agenda. At that time there wasn't much of an echo, but through the crisis the pressure for action has become greater. I will not slacken my grip on this until we make genuinely decisive progress on this matter."

John Minahane

Editorial Note: It is noteworthy that these views by Merkel could not be found in an English language search of the Internet.

Europe Subverted

Other things being equal, one could only wish the European Union collapsing in ruins. The world would certainly be better off without it as it is currently constituted. It has made a mess of itself and is now intent on making a mess of others.

Its spokesman declared the Russian election invalid because the outcome of elections should be uncertain. It was apparent that the Russian electorate wanted a return neither to the catastrophic *laissez-faire* democracy of Yeltsin nor to the other kind of democracy represented by the Communist Party, though they were beginning to remember it as not all bad. They wanted the Bukharinite mix of the New Economic Policy, as devised by Putin—capitalism restrained from catastrophic activity by an authoritative State. They knew what they wanted and they got it. And that was not at all to the taste of the pedants of the EU democracy without a *demos*—which no longer knows what it wants and has forgotten what it once wanted.

The EU was constructed as a post-Fascist system. Fascism had arisen as a defence against Communism in the elemental chaos brought about by the Great War and the Victors' Peace that followed it. It was successful through striking a compromise between capitalism and socialism. That fact was deliberately obscured by the propaganda of the 2nd World War. But one major Fascist state ran its full course—Spain. And today we are told that one of the obstacles in the way

of a thorough implementation of austerity and labour flexibility is the difficulty of breaking down the restrictive labour protection measures that were part of the Fascist system.

The stability of post-1945 Europe was achieved through a continuation of that compromise by the Christian Democratic movement. Its current instability comes from a dismantling of that system by a later generation, often by Social Democrats

The architects of the post-1945 European development had it as a major objective to put an end to the manipulation of European politics from the outside. De Gaulle and Adenauer knew what Britain had done to Europe over the centuries and were determined not to let it happen again. A later generation, which had become too enlightened for Christian Democracy, let Britain in, and were then unable to protect Europe from doctrinaire capitalist/globalist dilution and subversion.

Europe lost the historical sense of its founders and sought an alternative purpose in random expansion and aggression. And Ireland is now a participant in destructive European aggression in the world. The Foreign Minister, eager for a repetition of the freedom that was brought to Iraq, wants the Syrian Government referred to the International Criminal Court and to chastise Russia and China for not allowing Chapter 7 Resolutions of the Security Council against it.

But, although the world would be better for loss of the EU, one cannot wish for that

because Ireland has made itself utterly dependent on it financially. It is also the only thing standing between Ireland and Britain's fond embrace. Yet the country acts in a contradictory manner. It hovers between the two poles of attraction. Europe in this respect is Germany. Ireland, inspired by British globalism, has made itself financially dependent on Germany—and so it naturally echoes British Germanophobia—which serves an intelligible British interest but does not serve any reputable Irish interest.

*

The Syrian Government gave an undertaking not to use chemical weapons in the Civil War—a war brought about by US manipulation of Islamism—but said it would use them against an invader. President Obama warned that, if it resisted invasion by all the means at its disposal, the outcome would be "*tragic*" for it. Is there any doubt that his meaning was that it would be nuked?

In 1991 Iraq was given the green light by the US Ambassador to act against Kuwait, which had been encroaching on its oil-fields while Iraq had been protecting the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia by making war on the Islamist Revolution in Iran—with Western support. But, when the Iraqi Army crossed the frontier, the Kuwaiti Government and its allies used the event to set about the destruction of the Iraqi State, which had served its purpose. While America was preparing for war, President Bush the First had his Secretary of State, James Baker, meet the Christian Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Tarik Aziz—remember that lost world, in which Iraq could have a Christian Minister?—and warned him that, if an Iraqi Government mounted a defence with all available weapons, it would be nuked. The threat was made discreetly and was leaked. But President Obama has dispensed with that kind of subtlety.

If Obama decides to invade Syria and destroy the state—to free the Syrians from the "*regime*", as he puts it—the EU will toe the line. And then it will be a cheerleader for action against Iran

The EU has no will of its own in foreign affairs. And such will as it had in its own internal affairs was subverted by the subversion of the Commission. The EU is Britain, and Britain is the USA in foreign policy. And the EU in its internal affairs is Britain.

For the purpose of protecting the Eurozone, the EU is Germany, with France as a seconder. There is a possibility that

financial events will force the Eurozone to push Britain and the EU out of the picture.

Everything depends on Germany. But what is Germany? It has constructed a very effective economy out of the ruins of the War, but it was taught not to think by the great terror-bombings of civilian populations in 1944-5, and the great ethnic cleansings of Germans under United Nations auspices in 1945-6 in which a million or so were killed.

Official Germany in the post-Christian Democratic generation dare not act within its own history—it dare not know its own history—and the signs are that it no longer knows what history is. But beneath the official stratum knowledge of some kind must be lurking.

The recent circumcision scandal is instructive. A court found, in a Muslim connection, that circumcision mutilation was an assault on the person. The great majority of the circumcised in Germany are Muslims. But Jews have been returning to Germany, despite the view put by many propaganda-historians, many of them Jewish, that Germans are inherently anti-Semitic with a tendency towards genocide. The leaders of this very small Jewish minority declared that the circumcision judgment was a continuation of the Holocaust. One of the great principles of the post-1945 German order is the strict separation of powers. Politicians must not try to control the judiciary. In breach of this principle two motions were rushed through the Reichstag, one declaring male circumcision to be OK and the other condemning female circumcision. The theoretical ground of the difference does not seem to have been gone into. But the actual ground was, of course, that the Jews do not do female circumcision, while members of some other religions do.

Bodily mutilation as a means of reinforcing collective identity, religious or other, is probably as old as humanity. Circumcision, whether male or female, is mutilation. It is the excision of a part of the body. In the case of the male it is a kind of disfigurement, but in the case of the female it is scarcely ever seen. If the ground of the operation is not disfigurement but de-sensitising—and that is certainly how one hears it put with regard to female circumcisions—then that also applies to the male.

Ritual mutilation has been condemned as barbaric. Maybe it is. But something that has for so long been part of human life is not going to disappear.

The significant thing about the German affair is the legislative rush to overrule a

judicial finding at the behest of a very small minority of the population, and in defiance of German public opinion in the matter, while the judicial ruling would have been allowed to take its course if it had only applied to the very much larger minority of Muslims.

Germany, of course, supports the Jewish state in Palestine (which long ago expanded by conquest far beyond the territory awarded to it by the UN General Assembly), which operates policies which anywhere else would be called *ethnic cleansing*, and which has been armed with nuclear weapons for use against its neighbours. Meanwhile the EU seeks to destroy the Syrian State in preparation for a strike against Iran.

Report

Sinn Fein's Political DNA

A meeting (Conway Hall, 19.07.12) on the new Left parties in Europe, was partly to launch the book, *New Left Parties In Europe* by Kate Hudson. The groups were Syriza of Greece, Sinn Féin, Respect and some others. The chap from Syriza was textbook 'Marxist'. I'm not sure if Respect is keeping the right company: positioning yourself to the left of the Labour Party is good, but painting yourself into a 'revolutionary' corner is a different matter. (Respect has joined a Euro-left grouping). The guy from Syriza may have been a bit uncomfortable with idiomatic English.

Daithí Doolan of SF wasn't. Like most Irish people he's lived in England, he mentioned taking part in the campaign against the Poll Tax and being a Trade Unionist. He was able to remain an Irish Republican and contribute to the host society, by way of political and Trade Union activity. It was his attitude to Irish politics that bamboozled me. Apparently the Catholic Church and Fianna Fáil combined to keep Ireland a backward, capitalist state. I recalled Seán Lemass's quip that it was useful for FF election candidates to have had a row with the Bishop. One of the 'pillars' of FF policy was to put the First Dail's *Democratic Programme* (allegedly a Labour wish-list) into effect. SF and FF share a considerable amount of 'political DNA' and SF will have to take a reasonable attitude to that shared DNA. Otherwise it will remain a protest party in the Republic.

One matter that SF will have to come to terms with is the fact that the Irish state is the genuine article. It is not a "*failed political entity*", nor a neo-colony. In taking a contemptuous attitude to the

'actually existing' Republic, Sinn Féin is playing into the hands of the revisionists and neo-Redmondites in the media and in the leadership of the Labour Party (and, apparently, the leadership of the pale reflection of Dev's Soldiers of Destiny). Despite the attacks (nearly all of the 'national' media including RTÉ, expend large quantities of energy finding fault with every and any aspect of the Irish state), the Irish people are still Republican.

A problem is that some aspects of British Left thinking has penetrated Doolan's, and possibly Sinn Féin's, soul. The British Labour movement from the mildest social democrats to the self-conscious 'revolutionaries' are alienated from the British state. Possibly they ought to be. The Irish state, however, is a different matter. It was created by, among other agencies, Connolly's Irish Transport & General Workers Union (now SIPTU) and its Citizen Army. And the ICA is part of Sinn Féin's heritage, a legacy from the War that put the current Irish state in place. Sinn Féin could stymie the revisionists. The latter want the Republic to become a British dependency.

Ireland often does the UK's dirty work in the EU. Irish officials and Commissioners have helped to subvert the Christian Democratic project, which was to make Europe independent from Anglo-Saxon, interference. The EU is now a shambles, but Germany seems to be sloughing off its guilt feelings about the two World Wars it fought—but didn't start. This is partly due to Israel's racist attitude to the Palestinians. And partly to do with the fact that Mrs. Merkel is a Protestant Ossie (the German Democratic Republic took a non-sense attitude to the Nazis, they were a fact of life, pretending that they were not about in large numbers was absurd): she has no residual guilt to expiate. She seems to be rather beady-eyed about the City of London's parasitical attitude to the Union.

Ireland is taking a 'Pro-European' line in the current crisis (meaning a pro-German, and thereby an extent, anti-Anglo-Saxon one). How long the political class can flourish outside its Anglo comfort zone, is problematical.

Sinn Féin should recall 'our gallant allies in Europe' noted in the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916. Prior to 1914 the German attitude to Ireland was entirely benign. As was its attitude to Islam. The University of Berlin's Islamic Studies course was started in the 1890s. Fianna Fáil's Charles Haughey transformed Ireland's economy and infrastructure by laying the groundwork for acquiring Euro

8bn from the EU (a.k.a. the unknown German taxpayer). The successor-states to the USSR were offered €4bn to be shared among them.

Being agin' 'Europe' is not a thing in itself, it has consequences in the political (and economic) spheres. It can effectively put you lining up with the US / UK with their 'liberal' non-interventionist economic line and their destructive wars since the collapse of the USSR.

Sinn Fein's anti-Imperial heritage should guide its approach to Britain and Europe.

Seán McGouran

Moriarty Tribunal

continued

Michael Lowry, the relevant Minister, was not privy to any significant special inside knowledge on the deliberations of the advisory group. So the meetings Lowry had with Denis O'Brien, Tony Boyle (of the unsuccessful Persona Group) or Tony O'Reilly (leader of another unsuccessful consortium) could have had no significance.

Contrary to the impression given by some media reports, the deliberations of the expert advisors were not truncated by Michael Lowry. It is true that, once the advisors made their recommendation on schedule, Michael Lowry wanted to make the decision public as soon as possible for various legitimate reasons. But he did not make the decision to go public off his own bat. He obtained prior approval from a Cabinet Sub-Committee consisting of the Taoiseach John Bruton, and Ministers Ruairi Quinn, Proinsias de Rossa and Dick Spring of the Labour Party. If Lowry was wrong to go public so soon after the recommendation—which we do not believe—Bruton, Quinn, de Rossa and Spring were complicit in his wrong doing.

As we go to print a suggestion has been made by Senator Diarmuid Wilson (FF) that Lowry had a greater involvement in Denis O'Brien's investment in Doncaster Rovers than was previously thought.

It remains to be seen what the significance of this is. But the mere "involvement" of Lowry in an O'Brien transaction is no proof of corruption. Lowry was a politician who liked to have a finger in every pie and give the impression that his influence was far greater than it actually was.

We can only hope that the Courts will vindicate the integrity of the State and bring an end to this exorbitant debacle.

A Literary Fantasy

Thomas McCarthy, the Cork poet, is in despair. It's the kind of despair that goes with the literary mindset. Life experiences come via the prism of books for these people. McCarthy as a life-long librarian, as he reminds us on a regular basis, has therefore a double dose of the conditions that can give rise to this literary *angst*. All human life must surely be in them there books and, when it does not appear to be so, despair is a likely result.

He gave his thoughts to the Sunday Independent (1 July) and no doubt repeated them at the Bowen/Trevor Literary Festival in Mitchelstown on 22nd July where he was to deliver the main lecture on Bowen. As he told the *Sunday Independent*:

"We are now such a damaged people—I have great anxieties about the emotional damage that has been done to the Irish population... I have been a librarian all my life. When you work in a public library you get a feel for people and for the public mood." ... "What really worries me now is that we have lived through four years of trauma since the great financial crisis that has decimated the public service and ruined employment in Ireland and damaged the ordinary life of trade and the prosperity of our cities and towns.

"I feel there has been an astonishing decline of morale in the country—the people just don't know what to believe. They have nobody giving them a view of the future—it really worries me. Because how can a people go on if they have no view of the future?" (SI 1.7.12.)

The poet said Irish people feel as if they are stuck in a deep pit. "*We are desperately looking around for someone to throw us down a rope*" etc. etc.

Ochóne! Ochóne! He should have added something about the awful weather for good measure.

But Thomas has found some solace. Apparently, we have been here before and this is a favourite comfort for literary people in these situations, no matter how farfetched the analogy might be—but it's in another book and therefore it's real. And McCarthy's analogy is about as farfetched as you could get:

"History has come around—we have met it on the road again. Except that now we are in the age of Enda Kenny and not Henry Grattan, but we must think with the intelligence of Grattan's parliament as to how we move forward. Sometimes I feel the ground of history has opened up and swallowed us..."

The ghost estates now haunting parts of rural and urban Ireland were nothing new. Thomas McCarty pointed out:

"In many ways the great Anglo-Irish mansions were Ireland's first ghost estates. (Writer) Elizabeth Bowen says they were 'a gesture too large'—the economics of them never worked out.

"Those big houses went into decline from the time they were built. They were an excessive gesture of building. They were almost like what we did ourselves in the last 10 years."

It is mind-boggling, to say the least, to see some analogy between the parasitic ascendancy elite of the Penal Laws who built their luxury houses on the brutal exploitation of the mass of the people and the people of the Celtic Tiger era. Nobody in that latter era can be accused of any such thing. People, exercising their democratic rights, got carried away and they themselves are paying the price for what they did. But who could find in the modern era—

".. a machine of wise and deliberate contrivance as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man" (Letter of Edmund Burke to Sir Hercules Langrishe relative to [...] the Roman Catholics of Ireland, 1792).

That is what 18th century Anglo Ireland was, as described by one who knew it well.

McCarthy goes on:

"Just like the Celtic Tiger generation, the Anglo-Irish had only completed their own boom of the 18th Century when they lost their parliament—and their political and economic independence—with the Act of Union in 1801.

"Before they could cope with the excessive building problem, their parliament was abolished. They no longer had the means to cope with what they had done. It's like the way the Troika has arrived in Ireland—the way the Act of Union arrived in Irish life. We no longer have control of our destiny—just like the Anglo-Irish..."

They '*lost their parliament*'—the machine that Burke described so well. And good riddance to it. The people were glad to see the back of it and the only people who bemoaned its going were the Orangemen and Daniel O'Connell.

The Troika does not come with an army, a paramilitary police force, a tax exploitation system such as tithes, a spy network, broken promises, overseeing an absentee landlord system, etc. It comes with financial support, and puts proposals for improved fiscal systems. The people have considered these and voted for them in a referendum. Only a person lost to reality could see any analogy with an earlier era.

Jack Lane

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

SINN FÉIN AND FINE GAEL

Last month the Long Fellow commented on the *Red Sea/Sunday Business* opinion poll (24.6.12). The most noticeable feature was the drop of 3% in Sinn Féin support. However, as interesting was a rise in support of 2% for Fine Gael. Support for the other parties was stable. Is it possible that there are some voters whose support floats between Sinn Féin and Fine Gael? At first glance this would appear to be unlikely: Sinn Féin and Fine Gael are at opposite ends of the Irish political spectrum. But appearances can be deceptive.

"MODERN" AND "HISTORIC" SINN FÉIN

Sinn Féin and Fine Gael have one thing in common: both, albeit for very different reasons, share a disenchantment with the 26 County State.

What is now called Sinn Féin arose from the outbreak of war in Northern Ireland. At the very earliest, 'modern Sinn Féin' can trace its origin to the 1970 Official/Provisional split. But it is probably more accurate to say that it began in the early 1980s at the time of the Hunger Strikes when it became clear that a political alternative to the SDLP would emerge. 'Modern Sinn Féin' has only a tenuous connection with 'historic Sinn Féin'. The only group that celebrated the centenary of "*historic Sinn Féin*" in 2005 was Ruairí Ó Brádaigh's Party.

'Modern Sinn Féin' took no part in the building of the 26 County State. Indeed, if its memory extends as far back as 1970, its experience of that State was one of rejection. The Arm Conspiracy Trial signalled the abandonment of Northern Nationalists by the Southern State.

FINE GAEL

Although Fine Gael was founded in 1933 it can trace its origins to the Pro Treaty side in the Civil War (Cumann na nGaedheal). It also absorbed the Redmondite middle class, wealthy farmers and, of course, the Blueshirts, as well as some stray Southern Unionists. For the component parts of this party the development of the Southern State was a disappointment. It should have been them who determined its evolution, but instead the losing side in the Civil War became the dominant party. The success of Fianna Fáil was a moral

catastrophe.

So when Alan Shatter declared his support for pardoning Irish Army Deserters during the Second World War because the State had been "*morally bankrupt*", it should not have been too much of a surprise that Sinn Féin supported him.

The only real surprise was the Party of the State, Fianna Fáil, was silent on the matter: a sign of the demoralisation of that party.

THE LABOUR PARTY

An element of the Labour Party shares the disenchantment with the Irish State. The State has not developed along the lines that it wished and the party did not participate in working class advances, such as the establishment of the Labour Courts and Social Partnership. The Irish Labour Party thinks we should have had a two-party system as in Britain where the Labour Party alternated in Government with a Conservative Party. Since the State is democratic, disillusionment with the State is reflected in disillusionment with the people.

The recent RTE series on the Labour Party (*Labour's Way*) ended with a sense of foreboding for the prospects of the Party. Gilmore's "Frankfurt's way or Labour's way" speech may come back to haunt him. Ruairí Quinn's signing of a pre-Election pledge against University Fees is also likely to damage the Party. The documentary had the following justification from Quinn for signing this pledge, which he knew he could not keep:

"God these people have voted for the wrong thing three times in the last fifteen years; and the country has been destroyed. I just couldn't afford to take any chances. I wanted to nail this down."

So the people could not be trusted to do the right thing (vote against Fianna Fáil). They needed to be conned in to doing so!

THE IRISH ECONOMY

The Labour Party and Fine Gael constantly repeat the mantra that Fianna Fáil destroyed the economy. The statistics don't bear that out. GDP grew by 1.4% in 2011. Of course we are still below the peak GDP which was reached in 2007. GDP in 2011 was 16% lower than 2007, when the bubble was about to burst. But is it realistic to make comparisons with an unsustainable level of national income? A comparison with the slightly less frothy year of 2006, shows that GDP was 10.5% less in 2011 at current market prices.

The GDP per person employed in 2006 at 87.3k is almost identical with the figure in 2011 at current market prices. A reason-

able conclusion that can be drawn is that the fall in national income was caused by a decline in employment in the building industry and the retail sector. The remainder of the economy was largely unimpaired.

The last Fianna Fáil-led Government managed to stabilise the economy by introducing policies of austerity from 2008 onwards. If it had followed the advice of Noble Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman and opted for a "*stimulus*" package, Ireland would be now in the same position as Greece.

Fianna Fáil's big mistake related to the period before 2008: it did not understand the significance of the expansion of private credit. It assumed that, because the public finances were in order, the economy was on a stable footing. The Party might plead in mitigation that it was under no pressure from the Opposition to do the right thing. Indeed all the pressure was in the opposite direction.

The *Labour's Way* documentary referred to above reminded us that in this period Pat Rabbitte's Labour Party had discovered the virtues of tax cuts.

THE BANK GUARANTEE...AGAIN

A drop in national income of 16% from the peak level is traumatic. It may be true that the cause of the drop lies with policies pursued over a long period before 2007, but that is very unsatisfactory on a human level. There is a psychological need to crystallise the cause of all our woes into one moment in which the villains could be easily identified.

From that psychological perspective the Central Bank Governor, Patrick Honohan's Report on the Bank Guarantee was unsatisfactory. It concluded that the policy errors had already been made by 2008. By the night of the Guarantee the Government was engaged in the thankless task of damage limitation. Although Honohan's report made some minor criticisms of the scope of the Guarantee, it concluded that Anglo-Irish Bank was of systematic importance and therefore had to be saved. David McWilliams described the situation in more graphic terms. The Irish banks were all at the edge of a cliff, joined by a rope tied around their necks. If one of the banks were allowed fall, it would have dragged the others down with it.

At present the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee is vying with the Finance Committee to conduct another investigation, but it is difficult to know what more can be said about the affair.

SPANISH BANKING CRISIS

Many of the issues faced by Ireland in

2008 are now being faced by Spain. It is said that Spain's banking crisis is less severe than Ireland's. We shall see! Senior Bondholders will be looked after. However, the situation regarding Subordinated Bondholders is more complicated in Spain. In Ireland this latter category received a small fraction of their money. However, in Spain many of the subordinate bondholders are 'retail investors' with modest means whereas in Ireland the subordinate bondholders tended to be Investment Funds. This will present a greater political challenge for the Spanish authorities.

BRITISH BENEVOLENCE!

There is something very strange about the British media's commentary on the Euro crisis. Given that Britain was opposed to the Euro from the outset, it might be expected that her journalists would confine themselves to "I told you so" articles. But no! They want to save the Euro from German errors. Indeed some newspapers normally associated with monetarism have suddenly become born-again Keynesians.

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard in the *Daily Telegraph* admits in his article (11.7.12) that he doesn't particularly want to save the Euro, but that doesn't prevent him from lecturing the Germans on what they should do to save what he doesn't particularly care for. Here is his solution:

"In my view, direct bank recapitalisation is indeed a crucial step that must be taken to break the diabolic nexus between banks and sovereigns—each dragging the other down—if Europe's leaders wish to hold the euro together and save their project."

What this means is the Euro-zone countries as a whole should underwrite the losses of banks in countries with "light touch" regulation. This might very well happen. But it seems reasonable that countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Finland would demand that measures should be put in place to ensure that this never happens again. The Euro cannot survive if banks in individual countries are allowed lend recklessly—in many cases to their cronies—knowing that the Euro zone as a whole will foot the bill.

But then, as Evans-Pritchard has admitted, the survival of the Euro is not a concern of British journalists.

SCIENCE IN IRELAND

The discovery of the Higgs boson particle has prompted questions as to why Ireland did not participate in this project. Full membership of CERN, the relevant research institute, amounts to about 11

million euros, while associate membership is about a million.

In much more straitened times Eamon de Valera set up the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies with the participation of the distinguished German physicist Erwin Schrödinger. The latter gave a lecture in which he said there was no logical basis for the belief of a first cause or divine creator. T.F. O'Rahilly also outlined his theory that there were two different Christian missionaries—Palladius and Patrick—who had been confused as one figure, St Patrick.

By any standards these were interesting intellectual developments in 1942. But how did the court jester of *The Irish Times* respond to them? Myles na gCopaleen commented:

Letter Dispute

Views Of Sinn Fein

Just when I was still reeling from Pat Walsh's riposte (April *Irish Political Review*), and indeed when my half-written attempted response to it was still festering in our home computer, which then mysteriously died, I was both surprised and gratified to find that Brendan Clifford had been prompted to add his voice to my refutation (June *Irish Political Review*).

I have no desire to try to say the same things in a different way, which would be wearisome to everybody, but it might be helpful for me to clarify a few points.

When I talked about "lively debate" this wasn't in the context of Brendan's views at all, but of *Irish Political Review* as a whole. It seems to me that in recent years IPR has become a criticism-free zone for Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA, and I thought it would be interesting to throw a few small stones into that placid pond, just to see what would happen. I had taken it for granted that *Irish Political Review* was the forum for a wider range of opinions than Brendan's.

In my first letter I mentioned Martin McGuinness's own admission, under scrutiny from the southern media, that the Provos (which he left in 1974 and lived to tell the tale) did some (unspecified) "atrocious" things in the course of their 25-year long campaign. But I have yet to see any hint of this in the columns of *Irish Political Review*. So McGuinness has a moral compass, of sorts; whereas the applicability of moral categories at all in the field of political conflict is vehemently denied by Brendan. As for Pat Walsh, it seems to be a case of "mistakes, they made

"... the fruit of this institute, therefore, has been an effort to show that there are two Saint Patricks and no God" (*The Irish Times: a History* by Mark O'Brien, Four Courts Press, page 130).

He concluded that there was a risk the Institute:

"... would make us the laughing stock of the world".

This unfunny and small-minded reaction would have contributed nothing to intellectual freedom in the country. And yet the conventional view is that de Valera was the rigid conservative and Myles na gCopaleen/Flann O'Brien/Brian O'Nolan was a broken man whose comic genius was stifled by Ireland's authoritarian culture!

a few, but then again, too few to mention".

This opens up a much wider debate, one I would be very happy to contribute to if it wasn't for the danger I would bore everybody to death. But in a way I had anticipated the objection by referring to the dishonourable nature of much of the Provo campaign. Strange times call for strange measures, no doubt, but if the French Resistance in the last War had made a habit of planting bombs to kill French people, or to devastate French cities, I think a few eyebrows would have been raised. Judging from some of his writings I think the concept of honour still means something to Brendan.

It was a funny game the Provos played, one where they made up the rules as they went along. "We want the world and we want it NOW" (from that eternal adolescent Jim Morrison) was the message that I was hearing from them during my youth and early adulthood, reinforced by every news bulletin of every day. If there were attempts to persuade Unionists of the wisdom of falling into line, as Pat Walsh maintains, I must have missed them. It was more a case of *metuant dum timeant*: let them hate us as long as they fear us.

Despite the best attempts of "the two sovereign governments" as the SDLP liked to call them, Gerry Adams's response to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 was to say that it had "copper-fastened" the Union, so why should Republicans pay any heed: the struggle continues etc.

But it lay in the Provos' gift to let us know when Republicanism had achieved its objectives so it could call off hostilities.

We now inhabit the Republican nirvana, in which Northern Ireland is as securely within the UK as it was before; the spectre of sectarianism haunts the land, and indeed is institutionalised; and Sinn Fein is in office, and enjoys the baubles of office, but lacks any real power to implement its agenda. As do the Unionists, but then they have got used to that over the past 40 years. So, we didn't have a democratic political system in Northern Ireland and we still don't. *Plus ça change.*

If there are some within the Republican community who find the present condition of things a bit indigestible, how can Sinn Fein sit in judgment on them? I know very little about Anthony McIntyre, but if he says a black crow is black then I have to agree with him, whereas if Pat Walsh or Brendan Clifford or an angel from heaven should say a black crow is white, I must respectfully demur.

As for Brendan's thoughts on the 1859 Revival, and Paisley being a product of it yet able to transcend it in some way, well I wish there were world enough and time to for me to chase all those foxes. Brendan thinks I haven't been listening to him properly over the past thirty three years. I could say the same about him! I do remember though when Paisley went on the Carson Trail in late 1980. I even attended a Carson Trail rally in Newtownards in early 1981. And towards the end of 1981 there was a very engaging pamphlet that came out of Athol Street, with which I totally agreed, entitled *Paisley on the Lundy Trail*. Paisley in his various manifestations has only really been a Paisleyite; and Paisleyism has meant whatever he wanted it to mean at the time.

I really don't want to learn the arts of peace from Sinn Fein and the DUP. If Northern Ireland didn't slide into total sectarian chaos during the 1970s and 1980s it wasn't for want of trying on their part.

And as for Brendan's own development during all those years, I have been fascinated by it. This reorientation has involved him sometimes in saying things that are the opposite of what he used to say. Once again, this is a whole subject in itself. It's said of St. Augustine that the Reformation itself represented a struggle between Augustine's doctrine of grace and Augustine's doctrine of the Church. In the same way I believe that future generations will find in Brendan Clifford an articulation of unionist and republican views that Unionists and Republicans themselves could only dream of; and, sadly, which neither side benefited much from.

Stephen Richards
5th June, 2012

A Reply

I would have thought it was obvious even to somebody who only glanced at it now and then that the *Irish Political Review*, insofar as it related to the North, was a propaganda sheet in support of a particular view of the situation in the region—the view that it was systematically misgoverned as a region of the British state excluded from the democratic political system of the state, and that undemocratic government in an enclave of a democratic state leaving two hostile communities in a relationship of simple antagonism with each other, but with one being accorded the power of police over the other, will have consequences—which in a moral/emotional/subjectivist response by the detached, superficially-interested outside observer can all be condemned and dismissed as atrocities, and half of them can be so dismissed by the partisan insider.

The propaganda was written on the assumption that there was one great atrocity—the setting up of Northern Ireland by Westminster for an ulterior purpose, and that it was not realistically conceivable that it had been set up for the purpose of "*good governance*" of the Six Counties. That was a view I arrived at about forty years ago and I took steps to propagate it. I don't know that "*a wider range of opinions*" was ever expressed in the *Northern Star/Irish Political Review*. It certainly wasn't done when I was Editor. And I haven't noticed that it has become a morass of groundless political opinions since. But, if I had remained Editor, I doubt that Stephen Richards' letter would have been published. It was neither a correction of some misrepresentation of his views, nor a criticism of the basis on which events within the Northern Ireland situation were relentlessly analysed year after year, decade after decade, nor a contribution to the general position of the magazine.

If he had shown that I had misconceived the situation, and that Northern Ireland was after all a democracy, or a democratic region of a democracy, and that "*good governance*" was possible within it, I would have been happy to give way, drop the whole thing, and do something else altogether. But he hasn't. And neither has anybody else.

Moral/emotional condemnations of incidents, in the turmoil necessarily generated by the perverse system, as atrocities, is something that we decided very early on that we would not do. And

we ridiculed the heated moralistic condemnations expressed by representatives of the Power that established the system and maintained it.

Pascal said there would be much less trouble in the world if everybody stayed quietly at home. Good Unionists did not see why Catholics should not do just that. But democracy, as made functional by England, is a system of mass conflict in which people are not allowed to stay quietly at home. And Catholics in Northern Ireland were subjected to all the incitements to action of the political propaganda of the state while being excluded from the means of action that were laid on in the rest of the state. And they had in addition to put up on a daily basis with Protestant communal rule, often applied in a way that was insultingly informal. The wonderful thing is that most of them did stay quietly at home for almost half a century.

I don't know when I "*vehemently denied*" the applicability of moral categories in politics. What I recall saying quite a few times is that my insight into the Northern Ireland mess came from a reading of Aristotle when I was young, and my understanding of his statement that man is a political animal as meaning that his conduct is profoundly influenced by the constitution of the state in which he lives. The constitution of Northern Ireland as a region of the British state was not conducive to the kind of conduct that was normal for the British state.

If I have not been listening to Stephen Richards over the past 33 years, I don't know where it is that I might have listened to him. If he has written something against the assumptions on which *Northern Star/Irish Political Review* propaganda was based, I have not seen it.

If Martin McGuinness has admitted to atrocities on the Southern media, then there is hope for the dissidents, who condemn him for having stopped the war prematurely, that they will have another innings.

The successful conduct of a political movement requires a considerable degree of objective understanding of situations and an ability to manipulate moral/emotional feelings in the populace. Plato said it, and Blair did it. If McGuinness's objectivity is broken down by the shysters on the Southern media, his effectiveness will soon be at an end.

Miriam O'Callaghan asked him, in the Presidential debates, why he had found it necessary to murder so many people. He said it was a disgraceful question. She complained in the *Sunday Independent*

magazine that it was a routine question to which he should have given the routine answer—that she was a middle-class Dubliner in easy street and didn't understand the North. Such is the morality of the Southern media.

I can't see what similarity there is between the French Resistance under German Occupation and the Northern Catholics excluded from the democracy of the state and subordinated to intimate Protestant policing. The Provos didn't destroy nationalist towns as far as I know. And I know that Belfast forty years ago was very much a Unionist town. That is something that changed greatly in the course of the War. I don't think the change would have happened without the War.

And the French Resistance did not destroy French towns. It was the American and British liberators that did that, on a very large scale, in 1944.

As to my "reorientation": what it amounted to was an admission that the project of democratising the North as part of the UK was hopeless. London would not allow it. Dublin and the SDLP were against it. And, after it had been made a public issue in the North, the Unionist middle class by the application of basic sectarianism, destroyed the cross-community movement that had been built up by twenty years of effort. Long before that, I had said that I saw the Provo approach as the only realistic alternative to the Athol St. approach. The Unionist middle class chose Ulsterism in preference to British democracy, and now they turn to 'dissident' Republicans (who condemn the Provos for ending the War) for debating points against the Provos.

They chose their bed and now they complain about having to lie in it. But "*Vous l'avez voulu, George Dandin!*" This is what you wanted—or at least it is what you chose.

"*Plus ça change*" etc. So nothing has changed then. So what's the complaint?

"*We now inhabit the Republican nirvana*". What has this sarcasm got to do with what has been said in the *Irish Political Review*? The point of which is that there is no "*We*" in Northern Ireland. There is, whichever side you look at it from, Us and Them. The system established their relationship in such a way that a change that is better for Us is worse for Them.

And the *Irish Political Review* told Stephen that the Good Friday Agreement established democracy in Northern Ireland and he finds that it didn't! What I recall

being said is that it established a formal apartheid system which greatly improved the position of the Catholic community, and therefore worsened that of the Protestant community. But Unionism had chosen communal conflict as its battleground, so: Hard Cheese!

And "*honour*"! How does Honour suddenly come into it? We're talking about the British State constructed by means of the Reformation and "*honour*" is mentioned! Honour as a social bond was dissolved centuries ago. Burke coquetted with it with regard to Marie Antoinette, but only to lament its passing, along with chivalry. Fifty years earlier Walpole, the constructor of the British Constitution, was frank enough about his guiding principle: Every man has his

price. Honour has so little to do with the conduct of public affairs in the British state that every scoundrel in Parliament is an honourable member.

In his first letter (November 2011, *Irish Political Review*) Stephen complained of something called "*ad hominem*" in the conduct of the *Irish Political Review*. I did not know what that meant. I vaguely assumed it meant addressing the person instead of his argument, and could not how the *Irish Political Review* could be accused of that. So I looked it up and found that it means playing to the gallery, conciliating people's prejudices. I am at a loss to see what prejudices the magazine plays to in search of popularity. But Stephen is resorting to what I thought it meant: personalisms.

Northern Ireland: Threat Of Regional Pay

In his Autumn Statement in 2011, the Chancellor George Osborne (apparently) set the Coalition Government on a path towards introducing Regional Pay across the UK.

In Northern Ireland, Civil and Public Servants have already endured pay freezes for two years, which, with inflation biting, has effectively meant pay cuts. As part of the briefing for the NI Assembly, on the proposed Pension Contribution increase, officials in the Department of Finance (DFP) warned that the public sector union NIPSA would regard this as a further pay cut on top of the pay freeze in place and might react accordingly. And react they did, most notably on 30th November 2011, when the public sector unions acted in an unprecedented show of unity across the UK in almost all sectors.

This effective reduction in civil and public service pay has already contributed to taking Demand out of the local economy. Workers have put off spending for a combination of reasons; some because they simply cannot afford it, others because they have been induced to panic and uncertainty at the Coalition Government's rhetoric about the continued need for austerity and the planned cuts in public services ahead. This has left even more vulnerable, the Small and Medium Enterprises that our local economy needs to protect most.

THE "CROWDING OUT" MYTH

Despite these factors, there is a myth perpetrated by certain private sector interests and supportive newspapers, that the very existence of a substantial public

sector in Northern Ireland, with allegedly high wages, actually "*crowds out*" the private sector and retards economic development. This however is nonsense, even though it is often repeated. Indeed DFP officials also know it is nonsense. In their *Pay And Workforce Strategy—JULY 2004*, Paragraph 1.30 they note—

"It has been argued that the level of public sector pay impacts negatively on the performance of the Northern Ireland economy by crowding out private sector growth. However the concept of crowding out applies more to a national context than to a region such as Northern Ireland where the link between public expenditure and business taxation is weak. In addition, it is the overall size of the public sector rather than public sector pay levels in particular, that is important with respect to crowding out. A stronger argument is that high public sector earnings force private sector firms to offer earnings higher than they might otherwise have been with a negative impact on competitiveness. However, in practice the labour markets for public and private sector markets are in many ways distinct which is reflected in research findings which suggest that public sector pay settlements have a negligible impact on private sector pay" (source—Zabalza and Kong (1984), *Pay determination in the public and private sectors*, Centre for Labour Economics.)

NI PRIVATE SECTOR PAY

The reality of the labour market in Northern Ireland is outlined in a further DFP document—*2010-11 Northern Ireland Public Sector Pay and Workforce Technical Annex (April 2010)*. In paragraph 26, commenting on the Annual

Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Analysis, based on 2009 data, it is noted—*"the average private sector wage in Northern Ireland is 21% below the UK average (£581.20)".* And further—*"Northern Ireland Private Sector earnings are lowest of all UK regions for each major occupational group, with the exception of Professional Occupations (Wales lowest) and Personal Service occupations (North East lowest)".*

The more recent ASHE survey for 2011 shows only a slight change in these ratios, with private sector earnings for all employees in Northern Ireland now being 17.8% lower than the UK average.

So does this indicate a monstrous pay lead by a bloated civil service? Well no. Paragraph 37 of the Technical Annex, states—

"It should be noted that the Institute for Fiscal Studies recently carried out a detailed study of UK public-private sector pay differentials. This study indicated that for the period 2006-09, the average raw public-private wage differentials were 19% for men and 24% for women respectively. However, once factors such as education, age, work experience and qualifications had been accounted for, the respective differentials reduced to just 2% and 7% respectively. This demonstrates the importance of comparing like for like when assessing public-private sector pay differentials."

MYTH OF PUBLIC SECTOR SIZE

A further DFP *Public Sector Pay And Workforce Strategy For 2009-2010* also challenges this myth and, on the issue of the size of the public sector, it confirms that, although the public sector here accounts for a higher proportion of jobs than in the rest of the UK, *"this is in part due to the lower employment rate in Northern Ireland and the greater need for public services due to the demographic structure of the population and its socio-economic status"*.

Notwithstanding that, there has been a decline in the proportion of public sector jobs here since 1992, with a pronounced decline between 2007 and 2008.

Responding to the Chancellor's Statement, Alastair Hatchett, Head of Pay & HR Services at Incomes Data Services stated—*"George Osborne's promise of greater regional pay differentiation for public sector employees is based on some common myths about the way national and local pay levels are determined"*.

In his article on 17th January 2012 in *Public Finance*, Alastair Hatchett explained —

"Myth number one was asserted in the Chancellor's 2011 Autumn Statement which said: 'While private sector pay is

set in accordance with local labour markets, public sector pay is usually set on a national basis.' Here is a classic example of not comparing like with like. The fact is that most large, multi-site private sector companies have national pay structures. These organisations, among them retailers, banks or telecom companies are not dissimilar to large, multi-site public sector organisations that have national pay structures."

The second myth concerned *"private sector pay being set in accordance with local labour markets"*. Hatchett explained,

"In reality, large, multi-site private sector companies operate with up to 4 or 5 bands or zones within a national framework. Typically these bands or zones are based on the established pattern of inner London, outer-London, South East and large city allowances. Zonal systems, widespread in the retail sector, allow for a store to be moved to a higher paying zone if labour market conditions require this."

The third myth was the notion that there is significant regional pay variation outside of London and the South East. The reality was that there was *"much more similarity than difference"*. For example, *"most of the retailers and banks that operate with zonal-type pay systems have national pay structures outside the South East that have worked well for them for some time, without seeking to differentiate between Newport, Newcastle or Nottingham."*

The fourth myth which has resonance in Northern Ireland is that *"local labour market/cost-of-living factors have displaced skill level, qualification and job weight in setting pay in the private sector"*. And yet, as we have established above, there is significance in the factors *"such as education, age work experience and qualifications"* required in the respective occupations across the public and private sectors.

NI ECONOMY REALITY

The reality is that the Northern Ireland economy is characterized by an under-performing private sector. In a recent report titled *An Analysis Of The Social And Economic Impact Of Loss Of Jobs In Northern Ireland*, commissioned on behalf of the Department of the Environment, it notes amongst other things:

- * "Growth in output and jobs has tended to be in relatively low value added areas, which has resulted in average wages remaining significantly below the UK;
- * The economy has historically been under-represented in higher value added sectors such as finance and business services;

- * A large proportion of the population is registered as being economically inactive, with social exclusion levels well above other parts of the UK;
- * Many of our households live in poverty, with joblessness and skills deficiencies, important contributory factors."

This latter factor of skills deficiencies is confirmed in the *Technical Annex* referred to above. In paragraph 10 of Section 2, *Labour Market Overview*, it is noted —

"Whilst Northern Ireland outperforms the UK average in terms of both GCSE and A level qualifications, this educational attainment is not reflected in the labour market. The percentage of the Northern Ireland workforce (aged 19-59/64) without any qualifications in 2007 (20.3%) significantly exceed the UK average (11%) as well as that in England (11.4%), Scotland (12.6%) and Wales (14.9%)."

And so, despite the impression given by the champions of our allegedly much envied educational system, we do not sufficiently educate our people in the qualifications they will need to compete in the modern economy. The globalization of capital and labour mean that we cannot compete with developing countries on the cost of labour alone, although as I have outlined, we have tested that premise with our average wages in the private sector remaining significantly lower than in the rest of the UK. We are thus obliged to compete on quality and innovation. But our education system is failing to properly educate our children and there is no real commitment to equipping them with the requisite technical skills and apprenticeships to real jobs, which would help the growth of an innovative private sector.

ENTER REGIONAL PAY

It is then into this fragile economy, with all of its acknowledged disadvantages, that the Chancellor (apparently) wants to impose, what is euphemistically called 'regional pay'. At its simplest, regional pay means that in regions where pay is already low, it stays low. By the Chancellor's logic, we should already be a magnet for inward investment, given our low wages. But we aren't for the reasons given, and the economy is stagnating across the UK. Freezing and cutting public sector pay in this region will simply add to the fall in demand and further hinder growth. The economy would be put into a tail-spin.

But then perhaps the threat of regional pay isn't actually a serious proposition?

My view is that the Chancellor must know that regional pay isn't a magic bullet, far from it. He must also know that it can distort local economies and cause vulnerabilities to equal pay claims that can lead to public bodies being mired in tribunals and court cases.

REGIONAL PAY AND EQUAL PAY

Alistair Hatchett identified as "*myth number ten*" on regional pay "*that the public sector should start varying pay without regard to any other factors*", warning that:

"Employers in the public sector have spent much of the past ten years trying to develop pay systems that would eradicate equal pay challenges. Paying people doing 'like work' at different rates of pay 'for no good reason' would re-open the gates to equal pay challenges and any number of challenges about unfair treatment. Even zonal pay systems can provoke arguments about unfairness over where the lines are drawn."

That has certainly been the case in Northern Ireland where the NI Civil Service has had to pay out millions in equal pay settlements for clerical staff in recent years, with some equal pay claims still pending.

REGIONAL PAY—MISDIRECTION?

Unless he is a complete fool (which I don't rule out), the Chancellor is most likely using regional pay as a propaganda tool. The Coalition Government's narrative is based on the assertion that it was "*profligate*" spending by New Labour during its tenure that caused the "*unprecedented government deficit*", that regional pay is a matter of "fairness" and will correct the apparent greed of public servants in the regions who are taking from the taxpayer more in pay than they are due. In short "*we are all in this together*" and regional pay is but one measure to ensure we all contribute to the recovery.

Essentially the Chancellor's announcement is most likely part of an ongoing strategy of *misdirection* from the real causes of the current recession. It provides an opportunity to keep pressure off the banking sector and the City of London, which now spend millions of pounds annually in lobbying the governing parties in a campaign to avoid any meaningful regulation of banking.

This misdirection provides political cover for the austerity cuts and the rolling back of the State. A misdirection that the Archbishop of Canterbury has referred to in his comments on "*the Big Society*" ideal as—"*aspirational waffle designed to conceal a deeply damaging withdrawal of the*

state from its responsibilities to the most vulnerable" (quoted from his forthcoming book *Faith In The Public Square*).

The further misdirection in the call to reduce Corporation Tax here will have to be dealt with separately, but again demonstrates an economic illiteracy that would finish off our local economy with the cuts

in public expenditure that we would have to endure to fund it.

If however the Chancellor is indeed serious about this proposition, then the Union movement must rise up and engage him in the mother of all battles.

Michael Robinson

11 July 2012

An Irish Anti-Fascist Volunteer And Some Other Soldiers

Part Two

On September 17th last I travelled to Ballinskelligs, Co. Kerry, to attend the memorial Mass and burial among his people of the ashes of the late Seán Cronin. Wikipedia provides the following biographical summary:

"Seán Cronin (1920–9 March 2011) was a journalist and former Irish Army officer and twice Irish Republican Army chief of staff. Cronin was born in Dublin in 1920 but spent his childhood years in Ballinskelligs, in the County Kerry Gaeltacht. During the Second World War, Cronin was an officer in the Southern Command. He later emigrated to New York, where he found work as a journalist. In America, he became involved with Clan na Gael and later joined the Irish Republican Army. In 1955 he returned from the United States and began work as a subeditor in the *Evening Press*. He was soon put in charge of training in the IRA. He outlined his ideas in a booklet, *Notes on Guerrilla Warfare*. He became the chief strategist for 'Operation Harvest', the IRA Border campaign which saw the carrying out a range of military operations from direct attacks on security installations to disruptive actions against infrastructure. He was arrested and imprisoned several times over the course of this campaign (1956–1962). On two occasions, from 1957 to 1958 and then 1959 to 1960, Cronin was IRA chief of staff. He also served as editor of the Sinn Féin *United Irishman/An tÉireannach Aontaithe* newspaper. Jailed for his activities, he left the IRA in 1962 after his release from prison. He later became a journalist for the *Irish Times*, becoming that paper's first Washington DC correspondent. He was the author of a dozen books and pamphlets, including a biography of republican Frank Ryan, *Washington's Irish Policy 1916-1986: Independence, Partition, Neutrality*, an authoritative account of Irish-US relations; *Our Own Red Blood* about the 1916 Easter Rising; and a number of works on guerrilla strategy, including an early Sinn Féin pamphlet *Resistance* under the pseudonym of J. McGarrity. After several years of illness, Cronin died in Washington on 9 March 2011. He is survived by his second wife, Reva Rubenstein Cronin."

Cronin never deserted any front to which he had pledged allegiance. His anti-fascist principles, no less than his anti-Imperialist ones, saw him commit to the defence of de Valera's policy of wartime neutrality by enlisting as an officer in this State's Defence Forces, and it was his fellow wartime Army officer, Douglas Gageby—first as *Evening Press* editor and subsequently as *Irish Times* Editor—who would twice secure Cronin's employment as a journalist, on either side of the waging by Cronin of a different war and his imprisonment as a consequence.

Cronin's role as IRA Chief of Staff, with its supposed corresponding office of President of the imaginary Republic that had been perpetuated by the remnants of the Second Dáil, sits uneasily with his role in the wartime defence of the *de facto* Republic established by de Valera in real life. Moreover, in his role as a historian, his otherwise unsurpassed and unsurpassable biography of Frank Ryan only finds itself in an awkward spot with his unconvincing attempts to square the circle by assigning legitimacy at one and the same time to both de Valera and the IRA that the same Dev had no alternative but to ruthlessly suppress. Yet Cronin was a man of such transparent integrity that people of diverse political standpoints held him in the highest regard. I can think of no other Republican whose death could have evoked such equally fulsome tributes from mutually bitter political opponents as Micheál Mac Donncha of Sinn Féin, Seán Garland of the Workers' Party and Ruairí Ó Brádaigh of Republican Sinn Féin—the latter two having been key participants themselves in the Border campaign, although it was Ó Brádaigh who was chosen for Cronin's funeral oration.

At the George Brown commemoration in Kilkenny in June 2011, I paid my own tribute to Seán in my capacity as Ireland Secretary of the International Brigades Memorial Trust. But, two years prior to his death, I had already saluted him in the

February 2009 *Irish Political Review* with an article entitled *The ex-IRA Chief Of Staff, The Free State General And Irish Defence Policy*.

I first became friends with Seán Cronin during the 1970s, notwithstanding fundamental political differences arising from my 1971-82 membership of the B&ICO and my espousal of its Two Nations analysis of the national conflict in Ireland. (I remain a Two Nations unity-by-consent Republican in the Father Michael O'Flanagan tradition which, of course, is why I regard with total disdain Jeff Dudgeon's charges in the March 2012 *Irish Political Review* regarding "*Manus's own prejudices regarding Ulster Presbyterians*", and that I am "*religiously prejudiced*"—in other words, a charge that I am a sectarian bigot). But the criticism of Cronin's 1956-62 Border campaign arises not only from its disregard for the position of the Ulster Unionist majority. The then IRA's concept of liberation from the South also disregarded the realities of the position in which the Ulster Nationalist minority was placed. Indeed that IRA perspective had already been challenged by *Saor Uladh*, whose East Tyrone leader, Liam Kelly, held that it was primarily Northerners who would have to undertake their own liberation, and whose Border campaign commenced a year prior to that of the IRA itself.

My own last meeting with Seán Cronin in 2007 was at once both poignant and revealing. He had been invited back from Washington by veterans of the Border campaign to mark its 50th anniversary. I visited him the morning after that event. While he could still talk about the past, advanced Alzheimer's disease meant that he had no short-term memory whatsoever. I asked him how it had gone the night before. "*I can't remember a single thing about it!*" he replied. But self-awareness and reflection had obviously been undertaken before the onset of his illness. His wife Reva tried to remind him that on his departure at the end of that commemorative evening the IRA veterans had lined up to give him a standing ovation. "*Why?*" he asked. "*Because of your leadership of the campaign.*" "*Yes, the failed campaign!*" was Seán's own self-judgemental response.

Republican veterans, currently holding diverse political positions, some of whom are personal friends of mine, were also present at September's Ballinskelligs ceremony. It was there that I had my first and only conversation with Jim Lane, who had taken part in the Border campaign, initially as an IRA volunteer but subsequently as a Republican dissident. It

was an amiable conversation, for we had no shared political history to generate any mutual antagonisms. We missed out on that by a year, when I had been on the other side of the Atlantic. I have since learned that the website www.irishlabour.com contains an August 2005 memoir by Jim Lane entitled *Miscellaneous Notes on Republicanism and Socialism in Cork City 1954-69*. In other words, it stops short of saying where Lane had been politically during 1970. I should, however, state where I myself stood in relation to Irish politics in that same year. In the Summer of 1970 I was active in the Boston campaigns of the Friends of Irish Freedom. The highlight of our activities was an anti-British, anti-Partitionist rally we held on Boston Common, and at which I myself spoke. But it was our guest speaker who generated the most excitement—an Ulster Protestant member of People's Democracy who proved to be as anti-British and as anti-Partitionist as the rest of us—Jeff Dudgeon.

As that year unfolded, however, I myself was being rapidly forced to put my thinking cap on, as the late Pat Murphy bombarded me with Irish Communist Organisation literature and its developing analysis of the national conflict in Ireland. By the end of 1970 I had become a convinced Two Nationist, a stance from which I have never since departed. I suppose it was not too long afterwards that Jeff Dudgeon also ceased to be an all-Ireland Nationalist. I should, however, in all fairness acknowledge that in Jeff's Boston Common speech, as was also the case with my own, there were no derogatory references whatsoever to Ulster Presbyterians, and therefore no sin of Anglican arrogance on his part that might subsequently have suggested a need for over-compensation.

Following my return to Ireland in February 1971 I joined the ICO—too late, however, to have had any shared experience with Jim Lane's own in-and-out membership of the ICO between February 1970 and January 1971. Nonetheless, I do have some observations to make on the following excerpts from Lane's memoir, both in respect of what it obscures in respect of the politics of Kevin Neville, as well as my own, admittedly childhood, memories of political gatherings in Cork during the early 1960s, which do anything but corroborate the picture painted by Lane of the strictly de-limited time frame concerning which he chose to write as follows:

"From a very early stage, I associated with a small circle of people within the movement who saw themselves more as

socialist republicans than simply republicans. This diverse group included a Spanish Civil War veteran, Jim O'Regan, who had also been involved in the IRA bombing campaign in England after his return from Spain. He was arrested and served about eight years in English prisons during and after World War Two... Then there was Gerry Higgins, who had been a member of the Cork Socialist Party (CSP) in the 1940s. He had also been a member of the Liam Mellows Branch of the Irish Labour Party. The CSP had been led by Michael O'Riordan, another Spanish Civil War veteran, who was also a former IRA member and former Curragh Camp internee... Michael 'Screwback' O'Riordan never forgot to pay attention to his native city. Regularly, down through the years, he visited the city and, on every occasion, an invitation-type meeting would be arranged in a hotel room where old comrades and potential recruits for either the IWL/IWP or CPI would meet up with him... At most of the meetings, attended by Jim O'Regan and Gerry Higgins in the early days, O'Riordan used to try to get Jim O'Regan to dump on the Republican Movement and join 'the party'. At that time, Jim was Adjutant of the 1st Cork Brigade IRA and had fundamental differences with O'Riordan's party on their approach to the national question. Gerry Higgins believed they did not have any policy on the national question, they just wished it would go away in the goodness of time... The IRA campaign started in the Six Counties on 12 December 1956. Interestingly, it received support in *Trud*, organ of the trade union movement in the USSR, but was condemned by the Irish communist parties. Our left-wing circle was very disappointed with that development, old comrades of Mick O'Riordan's particularly so.

"The IRA campaign continued, but those Cork volunteers who had evaded capture were called home... We soon learned that this was the view of the Cork No.1 Brigade IRA, and that that they much regretted that they had ever supported the launching of the northern campaign in the first place... During September 1958 we approached members of the Cork IRA staff and told them we were aware that GHQ were looking for volunteers, particularly those with some previous active service experience and that we were ready to go at short notice. Our request was immediately denied—we then told them we were going to resign, which we did the following evening at the home of Jim O'Regan, the brigade adjutant, where we handed in our resignations. We then set about collecting arms and ammunition with the intention of going to the Six Counties and assisting the campaign. (pp 1-6)."

"At the relatively young age of 43, our comrade Kevin Neville died on 16 June 1964. Kevin had joined Saor Uladh in the early 1950s and was among the small group from that organisation who attacked

Roslea RUC barracks in County Fermanagh on 26 November 1955. A fellow Saor Uladh volunteer, Connie Green, lost his life in that incident. As a young man, Kevin had joined the IRA in Cork and was interned during the early 1940s. Gerry Higgins told me that, following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Kevin Neville heeded the advice of leading socialist figures and sought and received parole from the Curragh Camp, going on to join the RAF. The advice given at the time was that all able bodied socialists should join the armies of the Allied forces in the fight against fascism and in defence of the Soviet Union. Later, when back in Cork, he found there was no welcome for him in the ranks of the IRA and so he eventually joined Saor Uladh... In Cork, we formed a committee to erect a headstone over the grave of Kevin Neville at Inniscarra, County Cork. The Kevin Neville Commemorative Committee met at Dún Laoi, North Mall, to do its work over the winter, but suspended its meetings a few months before the unveiling, as its work was near done. When the chairperson, Maura Sheehan, reconvened a meeting, to our surprise she announced that the oration on the day of the unveiling would be given by Michael O'Riordan of the Irish Workers' Party. Jim Savage and Maura Sheehan, both members of the IWP, brazenly attempted to defend their action of arbitrarily deciding to invite him to speak. The socialist republican element challenged this departure from basic democracy and won over the middle ground to successfully win a vote to stop the O'Riordan oration" (pp10-11).

Jim Lane's account is misleading about Kevin Neville on three fronts: (1) The political character, context and timing of his decision, as a Republican internee, to "sign out" and enlist in the RAF; (2) Neville's recognition of this Republic as a member of the Irish Workers' League/Party; (3) His even more explicit and emphatic recognition of this Republic as a member of Saor Uladh. There is, however, one character assessment in Lane's memoir with which I would concur, that concerning Jim Savage, leading me to conclude that Savage and Lane probably brought out the worst in each other in their mutual antagonism. For years my maternal aunt, Máire Keohane Sheehan, and her husband Donie, had been attempting to impress upon my father that Savage's duplicitous behaviour was bringing the Party into disrepute, but to no avail, until it proved to be far too late when my father finally wised up to Savage and snapped.

It was in 1997 that my father launched Unseann MacEoin's 1,000 page volume of memoirs, *The IRA In The Twilight Years 1923-1948*. This was a book we

both welcomed, while recognising that all such oral history witness statements not only have to be cross-checked against each other, but should also meet other tests of historical authenticity. It was only after the launch that we each read the book in greater detail, if not yet in full. A particularly grotesque and lurid allegation by Savage—concerning the role supposedly earmarked for Cork IRA officer Jobie Sullivan during what ended up as an aborted attempt to rescue Tomás Óg Mac Curtain from the Cork Courthouse where he was on trial for his life—grabbed my attention. "Is that true?" I asked my father, knowing that he had been the IRA officer in charge of that operation. "No!" my father snapped, "It is not! Savage wasn't even there!" Savage, of course, maintained to MacEoin that—as some sort of "scout"—he had indeed been there: "I was on the run at this time and my part in the Courthouse action was solely as an observer beforehand and a look-out afterwards" (p813). Was this a case of 'history' repeating itself as farce? Remember the "Kilmichael scouts", of two decades previously, whom Peter Hart claimed to have interviewed!

The straw that finally broke the camel's back with my father came when another account by Savage, slandering my father (and, by implication, my mother—which is what finally made my father explode), was put into print in the bizarre 500-page memoir by Derry Kelleher entitled *Buried Alive In Ireland*. (The same book has the 'persecuted' Kelleher represented on the front cover by the face of the crucified, thorn-crowned Christ!) My father finally wrote to Kelleher on 10th July 2001, threatening libel proceedings unless there was an immediate retraction, only for Kelleher to die within weeks—on July 28th to be precise. That, then, was that, so far as Savage's slander was concerned. So it is to other issues in that book that I now turn.

The book was ostensibly dedicated to a roll of honour, in which members of three Groups of veteran activists were named and listed by Kelleher.

"Group I: The Cork Republicans, subsequently the founders of the Cork Socialist Party, who had been incarcerated in the Free State 'Tintown' Internment Camp of the Curragh, Co Kildare {incl. Kelleher himself, Savage, Kevin Neville, my uncle-in-law Donal Sheehan and my father—MO'R}; Group II: Those comrades associated with those of Group I in Tintown in the Connolly Study Group {incl. Neil Goold, Johnny Power, Jim Kerr and Liam Dowling—MO'R}; Group III: Those others associated with Group I in the formation of the Liam Mellows

Branch of the Labour Party and/or subsequently the Cork Socialist Party {incl. my aunt Máire Sheehan and Kevin's brother Dan Neville—MO'R}."

Other than my own introduction of him in Part One of this article in the May issue of *Irish Political Review*, Lane and Kelleher are the only others I know of who have written anything of Kevin Neville's RAF service. It is evident from his memoir that Jim Lane never had a single conversation with Neville himself about it. The hearsay source he gives, Gerry Higgins, had not been a contemporary internee, and had no direct experience of the discussions that might have preceded Neville's enlistment. But nothing could be more of a caricature than Kelleher's account. It was already evident from the one mention of Kevin Neville in the MacEoin volume (p644) that Kelleher held a grudge against Neville from their IRA days when the latter felt obliged, for internal discipline reasons, to report Kelleher to a superior officer, Jack Lynch. (No, not the former Taoiseach! This Jack Lynch (1907-1990) was the veteran Republican father of the late Conor Lynch.) Perhaps it was such a grudge that fuelled the following venomous reference in Kelleher's own volume:

"The Curragh Connolly Study Group's overview was sufficiently compelling that it was felt that Ireland should not be neutral and two of the released internees, Kevin Neville of Cork and Jim Kerr of Wexford, had joined the RAF to take part in the War against Fascism. In hindsight this latter action was quite acceptable but it was highly dangerous to be viewed as, effectively, provoking a German and/or British invasion by an overt stand against neutrality. Luckily such an overt stand was not pursued and de Valera received no opposition, except from the Fine Gael deputy James Dillon, in holding the moral high ground of neutrality. After the Battle of Stalingrad the erroneous position of the Cork Socialist Party in this regard was redundant." (p293).

My father's well-thumbed and scribbled copy has this section underlined and question-marked with utter incredulity, but Kelleher was no longer alive to have it out with him. The Connolly Group's support of the War against Fascism was also grounded on this Republic remaining neutral during that War, as detailed in my narrative of the Group's politics in my 2010 *Irish Political Review* series on John Betjeman, *The Spy Who Grew Up With The Bold*. This was a standpoint my father never once deviated from, and is best summed up in the statement in his book *Connolly Column* (1979):

"Ireland (apart from Northern Ireland which was part of the United Kingdom)

was neutral in the World War, because involvement with either side would have created an Irish civil war situation in itself. Both the British and the US exercised considerable pressure on the Dublin Government to allow the use of Irish ports ... In that period Frank Ryan was clearly conversant with the situation in his own country and the conditions that made the Irish Government's policy of neutrality both inevitable and generally acceptable. Despite his political criticism of de Valera, he was more than capable of taking a positive position on this aspect of neutrality" (p154).

By way of contrast, it was none other than Kelleher, as a Stickie or Official Sinn Féin leader in the 1970s, who continued to celebrate those in the IRA who had allied themselves with Nazi Germany!

Yet friendly accounts can also be misleading. This, unfortunately, is the case with *The Making of an Irish Communist Leader: The Life and Times of Michael O'Riordan 1938-1947* by Michael Quinn, which was published by the Communist Party of Ireland and launched in July 2011. I generally welcomed its publication and had been of assistance to the author with photographs and documentary material. I particularly welcomed the fact that Michael Quinn had acceded to my request that his narrative should not regurgitate Savage's lies about Jobie Sullivan, and that on no account should he refer to the Curragh Internment Camp as a "concentration camp", a Sinn Féin / IRA piece of self-indulgence that used to make my father apoplectic. I also appreciated the fact that his reproduction in full of a 1939 letter from my father acknowledged that it had received its first publication in the July 2007 issue of *Irish Political Review*, and that in quoting from C..D. Greaves's account of the latter's 1939 meeting with my father, he also credited the November 2010 issue of *Irish Political Review* with its first publication. It is a pity, however, that the author did not take account of my own articles on the Curragh, which I had sent him, including actual quotes from *An Splannac* and the following clarification published in the May 2010 issue of *Irish Political Review*:

"In January 1940 one Fianna Fáil source had in fact approached my father with the offer of a commission in the Irish Army, while at the same time another Government decision, signed by Seán T O'Kelly, was being taken to arrest and intern him!"

Had he taken note of that date, the following narrative from Michael Quinn would not have started out on the wrong foot:

"O'Riordan departed from Spain with shrapnel in his shoulder—a souvenir from the Battle of the Ebro—and in December 1938 he arrived in Dublin... As O'Riordan settled back into life in Cork ... the 21-year-old had to make some crucial life-altering decisions. He refused an offer from the Irish army of an officer's commission. (The Irish army was anxious to attract into its ranks combatants like O'Riordan, with recently acquired skills and experience gained under combat conditions.) His decision was to resume active IRA membership, but this time he did so 'on the Party's Instruction', as recorded in his letter of April 1939 to Bill Gandall... On 22 February 1940 O'Riordan was arrested under the Offences Against the State Act (1939) ... and sent for detention without trial to the Curragh Internment Camp... Departure from the camp came for O'Riordan in August 1943. {Jim Lane put it as follows in a 2009 audio interview on the same website as reproduces his 2005 memoir: 'Mick Riordan, too, was inside in the Curragh for a while.' If 'a week is a long time in politics'—as British Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson once put it—well, then, 'a while' must constitute an entire political era!—MO'R} ... Ironically, one of the camp guards, Lieutenant Terry Flanagan, had been in the Connolly Column and fought in Spain. He had done what O'Riordan refused to do in taking up an Irish army commission" (pp5-6, 22 and 10-13).

"O'Riordan became the secretary of the Connolly Group ... *The Connolly Group* was formed around Neil Goold-Verschoyle (as chairman), with Michael O'Riordan as secretary and the former International Brigaders Johnny Power and Paddy Smith. *Together with those internees who had come to regard themselves as communists or socialists, the group grew in number to more than sixty.* {My emphasis—MO'R}... The group issued a handwritten paper for a short while, called *Splannac* (Spark)—reflecting the name of Lenin's paper *Iskra*—compiled by O'Riordan... No copy is known to have survived. {But a copy does survive, from which I quoted excerpts in the May 2010 issue of *Irish Political Review*—MO'R.} After Nazi Germany launched 'Operation Barbarossa' against the Soviet Union in June 1941 the group formulated a policy of encouraging internees to sign out and enlist in the British army to help in the Allied cause. With the news of the German army's early success in advancing to the gates of Leningrad and Moscow, and, mindful of fascism's victory in Spain, it seems that Goold and O'Riordan's policy was the only immediate contribution they could make in support of the Soviets' perilous position. This proved to be very controversial within the camp. *Under government policy ... any internee could sign out at any time, provided they gave a written undertaking to respect the state's constitution and to cease all IRA activity.*

Few Republicans took this drastic step as it entailed an implicit recognition of the legitimacy of the Irish state. (My emphasis. It was *this issue*, and not any spurious and groundless narrative of a supposed 'policy' of British army enlistment, that in fact put the Connolly Group at odds with other Republican internees—MO'R). To propose signing out and joining the 'old enemy' bordered on the downright dangerous... Regarding the communist group, Tony McInerney 'resented them forming a cell... I thought it was disloyal... They worked hard to persuade IRA men to join the British army.' ... Many also questioned why Goold and O'Riordan did not follow their own advice. Some may have had difficulty in accepting that for Goold his duty now was to continue his mentoring work with the Connolly Group; and for O'Riordan, having done his soldiering against fascism in Spain, his emphasis now was on developing his own theoretical and leadership ability and preparing himself for the political battles ahead. *Indeed from Pierce Fennell's account we get a glimpse of O'Riordan's thinking at this difficult and frustrating time: 'and O'Riordan to my mind was just as dictatorial in his leftist attitude as Seamus O'Donovan was in his right wing attitude.'* {My emphasis—MO'R} ... Nevertheless the policy bore some fruit, and at least six men left the camp to join the fight against fascism in the ranks of the British army (according to McInerney)... Mattie O'Neill's summation of the attitude of the majority in the camp towards the Connolly Group is telling... *'When numbers of them signed out and went to join the RAF ... they were not loyal to Republican tradition and the true standpoint of an IRA man'*" (pp13, 17-19 and 23).

The author's narrative, if true, was trying far too hard to be kind to my father's reputation. His soldiering days were over at 25! If, after refusing to serve in the Irish Army, he had indeed gone on to try and persuade young Irishmen to join the British Army while declining to do so himself, he would hardly have been worthy of any more respect than the butt of Peadar Kearney's satirical song, the recruiting officer Sergeant William Bailey, who had at least joined that same British Army. But such a narrative was fundamentally mistaken and misleading. Michael Quinn erred in not taking account of my dating of the offer to my father of a commission in the Irish Army as having been made as late as January 1940. Both my father and I, however, were ourselves responsible for Quinn's further misunderstanding of that particular issue. In September 2001 Ciarán Crossey of the "*Ireland and the Spanish Civil War*" website <http://irelandscw.com> interviewed my father, and it was during the course of that interview that it was first stated that "*even O'Riordan himself was offered a commission*". But while the first part of the sentence which next followed

did indeed come from my father, the second part was solely the conjecture of the interviewer himself: "*This post was offered by a senior member of Fianna Fáil, and was obviously refused...*" (See *Connolly Column*, 2nd edition, 2005, p229.) When I was preparing that second edition of my father's book for publication, with updated appendices, I asked him why he had turned down such an offer. "*I didn't!*" was his reply. He had been quite prepared to consider it as an option, but had not been given the time to do so before being interned within weeks. Yet he stubbornly forbade me to correct or amend the Crossey text—lest it be read as a put-down of a friendly interviewer—and I unwisely complied. For the lesson now to be learned is that if you don't correct the inaccuracies of friends, they will be compounded by the distorted accounts of political opponents.

Notwithstanding the assertions of Jim Lane, Derry Kelleher and Michael Quinn, there is not a shred of evidence to support the contention that the Connolly Group was recruiting for the British armed forces. Those who did enlist did so on their own individual initiative, rather than as a result of any political direction. If there had been any recruitment campaign, it would have to be judged an abysmal failure. Quinn attributes the figure of "*at least six men*" to Tony McInerney, but what the latter actually said was "*Six may have done but that would be all*" (MacEoin, p679). I can name Paddy Smith, Kevin Neville, Jim Kerr and Liam Dowling. Can anybody at all name another two? Even if there had been a total of six, it would have been a pathetic "*recruiting*" tally out of the more than sixty strong "*band of brothers*" of both military age and IRA military experience that comprised the Connolly Group!

But where is there the slightest evidence of any such recruiting? McInerney was not a witness to any of the Connolly Group debates. And O'Neill had no exchanges whatsoever with my father at any point during their years of internment in the same camp!

"I did not get to know Mick O'Riordan in the Curragh because we were apart, but when I did get to know him ... as he told me himself, he had not much time for the I.R.A. as such; to him it was just another vehicle" (p728).

There was indeed outright political hostility, but no personal rancour whatsoever, in O'Neill's account of those war years. My father and O'Neill himself would both work together as bus conductors during the two decades that followed their release from the Camp, and I personally observed nothing but cordial encounters between

them. Indeed, in 1971 Mattie became a personal friend of my own, as well as being my fellow-worker, when I took up employment in the ITGWU—where Mattie himself had become an official after leaving the buses. Mattie next went on to become the founding Secretary of the Irish Labour History Society. It was with Mattie that my father had an amusing slip of the tongue when announcing my birth to him in 1949: "*That's my concept of immorality—I mean—immortality!*"

But personable as Mattie was, his Second World War stance had indeed been the polar opposite of my father's. As O'Neill related to MacEoin, he had been a key man in Jim O'Donovan's circle:

"As a result of learning wireless telegraphy ... I was seen as an expert, so when a hitch developed in the I.R.A. transmitter in Jim O'Donovan's house, I found myself called upon one day in 1940 to go out and inspect it. Jim O'Donovan, then a fairly high official with the Electricity Supply Board, had been Director of Chemicals in the Tan War, and had been drawn back into our struggle by Sean Russell, his old friend, and former Director of Munitions... O'Donovan took me upstairs to test his transmitter, which I believe was for keeping in contact with Germany... Why should we not maintain contact with the Germans? O'Donovan switched on the transmitter and I took over." (p722).

MacEoin himself wrote of him:

"O'Donovan, the former Director of Chemicals, was rediscovered by his 'brother' Director of Munitions, Sean Russell, and entrusted with his project of a guerrilla and bomb attack upon the heart of the Empire, England. His S. Plan was accepted by Russell without question, and his directives on the manufacture of balloon incendiaries using sugar, sulphuric acid and magnesium, with potassium chlorate and paraffin wax, carried out to the letter... In January 1939, the German *Abwehr* sent an agent Oskar Pfaus to Dublin... Resulting from this meeting with Pfaus, O'Donovan departed immediately for Hamburg. He had an admiration for what some conceive to be German efficiency and he spoke some German. In April he returned again to Hamburg... He was called back again to Hamburg on August 23... Readers of this work will trip across substantial references to Jim O'Donovan, particularly in accounts from Mattie O'Neill and Bob Bradshaw, relating to his activities up to the time of his arrest in September 1941 and internment in the Curragh... In the increasing flow of releases Jim was let go early in 1944 and was quickly restored to his position in the E.S.B." (pp880-1).

Like O'Donovan himself, his *protégé* Mattie O'Neill had hoped and worked for a German victory in that War, as had Francis Stuart, who was to broadcast Nazi

propaganda on Berlin radio and who would become Mattie's lifelong friend thereafter. As an appreciation in the *Irish Times* on 18th August 1992 recorded, following O'Neill's death: "*It was fitting that another writer and friend, Francis Stuart, spoke and recited at Mattie's funeral.*"

As already observed, O'Neill cannot be regarded as a reliable witness concerning the deliberations of the Connolly Group in the Curragh Internment Camp, even though he harboured no personal animosity towards my father. It was in fact another MacEoin interviewee—the one who was to display the greatest personal animosity towards my father, and who was himself an actual member of the Connolly Group, but on the opposite side to my father in the real controversy that did take place within that Group—who should be regarded as the only credible witness in that respect. I am speaking of Pierce Fennell. If one wants the best overview of Curragh Camp politics and the factions that formed as a result, it is to Fennell's interview that the reader should turn. Fennell's account of how the newly-arrived internee George Fluke had been addressed by the Camp Commandant James Guiney provides a marvellous snapshot:

"What part of this open university would you like to go into? I will put it in perspective for you. You can go and join Mr. Leddy who is totally Republican; Republican flag and Republican to the backbone. If you don't like his side of the Camp, you can go and join Pearse Kelly who is a little more liberal with his northern Republicanism; there is more give and take and he is not as dogmatic. Then if you don't like that you can go and join Mr. O'Donovan's group; the ones who believe in Hitler all the way through. If you are still not satisfied, you can join Mr. Goold, who marches under the banner, workers of the world unite. Now move yourself Fluke, you are holding us up" (p573).

Fennell joined the Connolly Group which, with reasonable accuracy, he described as a *de facto* communist group. He proceeded to provide the following pen-portraits:

"I went into a discussion with them {the communist group} and I talked about Connolly and his association with {inspiration from?—MOR} the First International... O'Riordan to my mind was just as dictatorial in his leftist attitude as Seamus O'Donovan was in his right-wing attitude. You can be a dedicated communist, which Goold was; and he was far more dedicated than anybody. But you could talk to Goold and he would talk with you; there was give and take with him, but not with Mick. Mick was dogmatic, and if you did not agree with him you were on the wrong side of the

coin. If you did not agree with the total communist philosophy you were a fascist, whether you were or not. Calling the opponents fascist was just a slogan amongst them... Among the communists Paddy Smith was a very nice self-effacing fellow: ex-International Brigade, as was Johnny Power of Waterford. Johnny was wounded, Smith had a dirty bayonet mark across his face... The International lads were a very nice group and I got on very well with them. Neil Goold Verschoyle was their outstanding theorist... About 1933 he emigrated to the Soviet Union... Some five years later he slipped home again. I used return to the hut and take down and re-read all the notes he had lectured us upon. ... All of his lectures were based on the communist ideology... Then the discussions would start at the fire at night time when we would be sitting around it... I used to argue like hell at the fire, for and against. In each hut there were one or two of the communists, so the propaganda, if you like to call it that, or the ideology, was spreading and the groups were getting bigger and bigger. One night ... I was trying to elaborate on the communist side of things, and down at the other end were the Kerry group controlled by John Joe Sheehy {who was also a G.A.A. mega legend to boot—MOR}. John Joe, who was a very upright man, got up and headed down to our fire place and he had about 15 of the Kerry lads with him, and he said: *'Pierce you have gone far enough. I do not want to hear any more communism in this hut.'* I said: *'I am not talking communism; I am talking Connollyism and if you object to James Connolly, it's time we all left the bloody hut.'* One word borrowed another and I switched subjects so that instead of quoting Lenin or Stalin, I started to quote Connolly and to challenge John Joe upon it. So instead of a fist fight he withdrew with his group to his own end, and that finished the discussion for that night... I would select a government and Dáil from the people in the Curragh, but I would have to look at them in a different light. A good government to me would have to be a socialist government on the lines of James Connolly, and there was not enough of them in the Curragh. There was really only one outstanding person of that sort and that was Neil Goold" (pp573, 575-6 and 580).

Yet Fennell was to have a sharp ideological and political break with the communist Connolly Group itself. But it had nothing to do with British Army enlistment. Had it been so, given the Fennell-O'Riordan antagonism, you can be sure that the Fennell memoir would have shouted it from the roof tops. The bone of bitter contention was neither the Western Front nor the Eastern Front, but this island itself, and the Connolly Group's recognition and defence of the sovereignty that de Valera had secured for this 26 Counties

State. It is indeed a great pity that Michael Quinn did not read Fennell with greater care, for—having so uncritically accepted the McInerney and O'Neill 'revelations' at face value—he erroneously inserted Fennell as a filler in that sandwich. In a sentence immediately following his quotation from McInerney—as if it were the case that Fennell was confirming McInerney—Quinn wrote:

"Regarding the communist group, McInerney (said) ... *'they worked hard to persuade IRA men to join the British Army'*. Even men such as Pierce Fennell, who were members of the group, disagreed" (p19).

Not so! For there had been no such project to disagree with! The next sentence in the Quinn narrative, a quotation from Fennell on "*signing out*", makes it abundantly clear that it was *this issue* that was the basis for disagreement. Fennell could not stomach *recognising this State, its army and constitution*, as is made unambiguously clear when we more fully read his testimony to MacEoin:

"The question of signing out came up in the communist section ... because they reckoned that our interest now lay behind victory for the Soviet Union, and we could do better outside than inside. The problem as far as I could see was that we went in on a principle of freeing our own country and while I could go along with their theories, I could not as regards signing out. So that was one of the points where I disagreed with them and stuck to my own guns; I would refuse to sign. Goold and O'Riordan were the principal advocates for signing out... I was told in 1944 that I was being released. That is the way it was. You would be told without warning in the morning and given a train voucher. {Fennell went home to Carrigaholt, Co. Clare—MOR}... I found I was taboo even in Carrigaholt. The so-called republicans, with the fighting ability from 1922, had now joined forces with the Free State Army and they were all in the L.D.F. {de Valera's Local Defence Forces—MOR}" (pp 573, 576).

"*Better out than inside*" referred to *anti-fascist political agitation*. When my father signed out in 1943, the majority of such Cork-based Connolly Group ex-internees established the Liam Mellows Branch of the Irish Labour Party in order to pursue such an agenda. Only one of those Corkmen, Kevin Neville, enlisted in the British armed forces, as did three other Connolly Group ex-internees—Paddy Smith, Jim Kerr and Liam Dowling. There were, of course, other Communist/Irish Republican veterans who served in the Second World War. But those of them who had previously served with the International Brigades in Spain had already

become British-based in the meantime. In *Connolly Column* my father listed some of them as follows:

"In the Second World War, five of them fought against Hitler: Paddy O'Daire who by sheer military competence broke through to become a Major in the British Army; Alec Digges who lost a leg in the fighting in Holland, and who became later a prominent activist in Britain in the solidarity movement with the anti-Franco forces; Paddy Roe McLaughlin, of Donegal, who was also in the British forces and Jim Prendergast, of Dublin, who served as a rear-gunner in the R.A.F.; Michael Lehane, Kilgarvan, County Kerry, who, unable to bring himself to wear a British uniform, but recognising the vital need for the defeat of Hitler in World War II, instead joined the Norwegian Merchant Navy. His contribution was the important one of war transportation and supply. He was killed at sea when his ship was attacked in 1943. Mick Lehane had a distinguished record in Spain, being wounded several times, the last occasion being at the battle of the Ebro" (pp 139-140. What he did not add is that on this last occasion on the Ebro Front it was my father who had carried the wounded Lehane to safety, before being wounded himself. See <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-Lehane.htm> for my own detailed account of Michael Lehane.)

Of the three International Brigade internees he wrote:

"Johnny Power, Paddy Smith and Michael O'Riordan, spent the years of World War II in the Curragh Internment Camp. There their political task was to explain to the other prisoners of the Irish Republican Movement the anti-national character of Fascism and the relationship between the Anti-Hitler War and the cause of Irish national liberation" (p139).

While emphasising that there was no policy of British Army recruiting, I am not at all suggesting that my father—notwithstanding his admiration for the Kerry ingenuity of the solution that Mick Lehane had found for his Irish Republican dilemma—had any disagreement with individuals volunteering to serve in the British forces in the wake of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. In fact, on one occasion in the early 1990s I did ask him why he had not considered so volunteering himself. He answered that he had not ruled it out in principle, but he regarded it as impractical in view of the British Army discrimination against International Brigaders, whom they regarded as "*premature anti-fascists*". (Major Paddy O'Daire was an exception that proved the rule, probably helped by the fact that it was in the Free State Army that he had served during the Irish Civil War, reaching the rank of sergeant, before

emigrating to Canada in 1929.) The efforts to volunteer made by the Jewish Dubliner Maurice Levitas, who had not only gained military experience as an International Brigader fighting on the Aragon front but had also spent a year as a prisoner in a fascist concentration camp in Spain, were repeatedly rebuffed throughout the course of 1941, and when he was finally admitted in 1942 it was to the Royal Army Medical Corps that he was consigned.

If International Brigade internees O' Riordan and Power decided there was no point in even exploring the possibility of enlisting in the British Army, how come Paddy Smith got through? Jim Savage related:

"The Connolly Group had already been formed by Neil Goad... We did not have Paddy Smith of Dublin, although he had been with the Brigade in Spain and had a distinct bayonet mark on the head to prove it. For whatever reason, Paddy became withdrawn and did not attend our classes" (MacEoin, p819).

In contrast, both my father and Pierce Fennell did place Smith in the Connolly Group. If, however, Smith had opted to assume a very low political profile in the Group, this would have made his enlist-

ment easier. But since my father's re-engagement with the IRA in 1939, his profile had been anything but low. A year before his release he was already aware of the British experience of a Spanish War veteran whose IRA involvement had ended in 1934. Peter O'Connor was a Waterford International Brigade veteran of the February 1937 battle of Jarama and the July 1937 battle of Brunete. In his 1996 memoir *A Soldier Of Liberty—Recollections of a Socialist and Anti-Fascist Fighter*, Peter related:

"When I arrived home in October 1937 the war was still raging in Spain... Meanwhile my two brothers had joined the Labour Party and persuaded me to join also, which I did in October 1938... As I was unemployed all this time I decided to emigrate again. Agents were seeking workers for factories in England. In late May, 1942, I took the boat from Dún Laoghaire. Disembarking at Holyhead I was arrested by two special branch men, searched and questioned at length about the IRA and my activities in Spain. I told them I had left the IRA in 1934 and as I was an anti-fascist and they were at war with German fascism they need not have any fear of me. *Maybe I was too much of an anti-fascist for the*

establishment {my emphasis—MOR}; they gave me short shrift and I was put on the next boat home" (pp 30-35).

If Jim Lane did not fully grasp the wartime politics of Kevin Neville, his memoir became thoroughly evasive when it came to Neville's explicit endorsement, as an officer of Saor Uladh, of de Valera's Republican Constitution. In contrast with the bold step Saor Uladh had taken, when Official Sinn Féin in 1970 and Provisional Sinn Féin in 1986 each decided to take their seats if successful in Dáil elections, their contempt for this actual Republic was both maintained and sustained. If the constructive side of Saor Uladh had been imbibed by either Sinn Féin Party, perhaps we might not now have witnessed the pathetic roles played to date by both Éamon Gilmore and Martin McGuinness in respect of this year's controversy concerning the Irish Army deserters who had betrayed their oaths of allegiance to defend this World War-threatened neutral State, in order to serve instead in the British Army.

(to be concluded)

Manus O'Riordan

Items From The Irish Bulletin, Part 13

VOLUME 2. No. 47.

IRISH BULLETIN.

8th JULY 1920.

REFUSING TO HELP MILITARISM.

SIXTY-TWO BRITISH OFFICIALS IN IRELAND SURRENDER OFFICE IN TWO WEEKS.

On June 21st 1920 THE IRISH BULLETIN published a list of one hundred and fifteen British officials who, in the previous four weeks ending June 19th, had surrendered their office rather than continue to assist British militarism to crush the demand of the Irish people for independence. To-day an additional list is given of magistrates, high police officials, police officers and men who have left the British service during the sixteen days from June 20th to July 6th. Sixty-two persons are named in this additional list including twenty-six magistrates; six important police officials and eleven head constables and sergeants of long service. As well it will be seen that the majority of the police officers and men sacrificing their pensions rather than continue to act as the agents of an alien tyranny. The following list brings the number of resignations of British officials in Ireland to almost two hundred in six weeks.

MAGISTRATES.

Dr. W.C. Lawlor, J.P., Newtownbarry, Co. Wexford.
Mr. W. Byrne, J.P., Dublin.
Mr. E. Geelan, J.P., Mohill, Co. Leitrim.
Mr. Roche, J.P., Woodford, Co. Galway.
Mr. J. Maloney, J.P., Limerick.
Mr. D. McCarthy, J.P., Skibbereen, Co. Cork.
Mr. C. O'Brien, J.P., Killeagh, Co. Cork.
Mr. D. O'Brien, J.P., Castleconnell, Co. Limerick.
Mr. J.F. Barry, J.P., Limerick.
Mr. Page, Woodford, Co. Galway (J.P.)
Mr. N. Whitty, J.P., Ballycanew, Co. Wexford.
Mr. T.J. Lane, J.P., Little Island, Co. Cork.
Major Lawrence Roche, J.P., Bruree, Co. Limerick.
Dr. F. Byrnes, J.P., Bruree, Co. Limerick.
Mr. P. Murphy, J.P., T.C., Cork.
Mr. A. Dingnan, Mullagh, Co. Cavan.
Dr. K. Delaney, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.

Mr. J.P. Maguire, Ruskey.
Mr. Keary, J.P., Woodford, Co. Galway.
Dr. P. Rowan, J.P., Tyrolspass.
Mr. M. Condon, J.P. Ballylanders, Co. Limerick.
Mr. W. O'Donnell, J.P. Ballyinaghty, Co. Kerry.
Mr. B. O'Connor, J.P., Castleisland, Co. Kerry.
Mr. D. Lynch, J.P. Tracton, Co. Cork.
Mr. P. O'Ryan, Hollyford, Co. Tipperary
Mr. W. Ahern, Tracton, Co. Cork.

POLICE OFFICIALS OF HIGH RANK.

County Inspector J.L. Holmes, O.B.E., Headquarters. Staff R.I.C. 37 years.
County Inspector W.H.R. Heard, Wicklow, 35 years service.
County Inspector J.R. Sharpe, Wexford, 35 years service.
District Inspector Irwin, Coleraine, Co. Derry.
District Inspector W. Lewis, Fermoy, Co. Cork, (retired).

District Inspector McEntee, Cavan, (retired).

POLICE OFFICERS OF LONG SERVICE.

Head Constable Connor, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. 30 years service.
Head Constable Denehy, Castlecoomer, Co. Kilkenny. 40 years service.
Head Constable Long, Armagh (retired), 35 years service.
Detective Sgt. M. Keogh, D.M.P. (retired), 30 years service.
Sergt. Hurst, R.I.C., Cabinteely, Co. Dublin, 36 years service.
Sergt. Thornton, Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim (retired), 30 years service.
Sergt. Coburn, Portsteward, Co. Derry (retired,)30 years service.
Sergt. Bevine, R.I.C., Macroom, Co. Cork, 26 years service.
Sergt. O'Gillen, R.I.C., Boyle, Co. Roscommon, 30 years service.
Sergt. J. Carey, R.I.C., Bagnelstown, Co. Carlow, 35 years service.
Sergt. J. Bourke, R.I.C., New Ross, (retired) 27 years service.

POLICE CONSTABLES.

Constable M. Connaughton, R.I.C., Limerick, 39 years service.
" J. Callaghan, R.I.C. Belfast, 20 " "
" J. Grant, D.M.P. Dublin, 15 " "
" M. O'Halloran, R.I.C., Rhode Island, 14 " "
" W. Beirne, R.I.C. Carrick-on-Shannon., 12 " "
" Jones, R.I.C Bagnelstown, Co. Carlow, 9 " "
" J.J. Keenan, R.I.C. Kilkenny, 8 " "
" M. Donoghoe, R.I.C. Kilkelly, Co. Mayo, 7 1/2 " "
" Cronin, R.I.C. Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare, 7 " "
" J. Hurley, Dundrum, Co. Tip., 7 " "
" Mullally, R.I.C. Depot, Dub., 7 " "
" W. O'Donnell, R.I.C. Cahir, Co. Tipperary, 7 " "
" M. Brophy, D.M.P. Dublin, 6 1/2 " "
" Redington, D.M.P. Dublin, 6 " "
" M. Glennon, R.I.C. Killorglin, Co. Kerry, 4 " "
" J. Malley, R.I.C. Killorglin, Co. Kerry, 4 " "
" J.P. Tobin, R.I.C. Tipperary, 3 1/2 " "
" J. Morrissey, R.I.C. Rhode, King's Co., 3 1/2 " "
" Gormley, R.I.C. Miltown, Co. Galway, 8 months "

The length of the service of the following has not been ascertained:-

Constable J. McGee, R.I.C. Tipperary.
" J. O'Malley, R.I.C. Miltown-Malbay, Co. Clare.
" B.J. Evers, R.I.C. Cork.
" Mannion, R.I.C. Limerick.
" R. Spencer, D.M.P. Dublin.
" James, R.I.C. Depot, Dublin.
" Robinson, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leit.
" Keating, R.I.C. Elphin, Co. Sligo.
" McGuirk, R.I.C. Elphin, Co. Sligo.

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From Sunday Independent 15th July

Corry 'Terrorism' Claim Challenged

I take exception to the article by Kevin Myers entitled 'On the Myths of Irish Terrorism' (Life magazine, Sunday Independent, July 8, 2012), which he says confirms allegations that Martin Corry, TD, during the War of Independence ran a ruthless killing machine in Cork and by Corry's own admission executed 27 enemy spies. That is totally untrue.

I am the only person who sat down with Martin Corry to record his actions during the War of Independence as well as interviewing 25 members of his company. His only role was as captain of the Knockraha company in east Cork, and he played no part in activities in the city. These allegations about his activities in the city are totally false and I am at a loss why some historians make these allegations about Corry without any hard evidence.

James Fitzgerald,
Chairman of Knockraha Historical Society,
Glanmire, Co. Cork

From *Sunday Times*, 8th July 2012

The Mystery Of The Dunmanway Killings

Martin Mansergh says that I and other are "trying to suggest that there may be extenuating archival evidence that explains the Bandon Valley massacre of 10 Protestants in April 1922" (Letters, 1st July). I made no reference to such a possibility. I said that no evidence exists. Martin Mansergh supplies none. If Republicans (split into three factions by the 'Treaty') expressed 'deep shame' for the killings that would be evidence and there would be no mystery. What Mansergh quotes is far from being an expression of shame implying responsibility. There was a general denial of responsibility by all nationalist bodies. Mansergh speculates that one of these Republican factions was responsible, though he can't say which—a "known unknown" in Donald Rumsfeld's language. But Republicans were not the only parties active in the situation! And the "onus of proof" cannot lie with those who merely point out that there is an entire lack of evidence about the identity of the perpetrators.

Jack Lane

Cork Employment Resource Centre, 1988 to 2012

"The first essential for the success of any party, or any movement, is that it should believe it carries within its own bosom, all the material requisite to achieve its destiny. The moment any organisation ceases to believe in the sufficiency, of its own powers, the moment its membership begin to put their trust in powers not their own, in that moment that party or organisation enters on its decline" (James Connolly, 1908).

"The bureaucratic Trade Unionism that was created at the time has no relevance in the post-partnership situation. Unless workers and the movement involve themselves politically, Trade Unions will just come to be seen as a service provider. We have to stand for something... We've marched the troops to the top of the hill a couple of times since 2008, but beyond that we've been very weak.

"It's absolutely certain that we cannot continue as a Trade Union movement as merely a service provider, we might as well put up 'Mandate Trade Union Ltd' outside the door. And you'll pay for what you get like any firm or solicitors. If that's what it's all about that will be the end of the Trade Union movement. We need to regenerate activism, 23 years of inactivity didn't help it, and we have a short window

to do it in now" (John Douglas, Mandate General Secretary and Irish Congress of Trade Unions Vice-President, *LookLeft* magazine-workers' Party, July, 2012).

The spectacle we witnessed in the week's prior to the May 31st Fiscal Treaty Referendum rightly summed up the loss of direction in the Trade Union movement.

The General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions wished to have the referendum postponed until September; Ireland's largest Trade Union were prepared to vote 'Yes' if the Government provided a stimulus package; the major 'Left' Unions advocated a 'No' vote and, led by the retired General Secretary of the Civil Public and Services Union, another section of the movement called for a 'Yes' vote.

CORK UNEMPLOYMENT

In May, 2012, there was 436,700 people on the dole, the equivalent of 14.3% of the Irish population.

There are now 45,445 people on the dole in Cork. In the city, the figure is 20,363—the first time the figure has gone over 20,000 people in almost a year.

At the height of the 'Celtic Tiger', with near full employment, the Cork Employment Resource Centre was an active and lively component of the community. To-day, with 20,000 unemployed in the city, a public, custom-built centre lies idle! What a reflection

on the Labour and Trade Union movement in that city!

Below is an account of the struggle to retain the centre, written by an activist involved over the years in its activity.

Obituary Cork Employment Resource Centre 1988 to 2012

Cork's Employment Resource Centre opened in 1988, in a small run-down building in Kyril's Street, itself a small and run-down side street off North Main Street, Cork. The Centre closed, in a welter of controversy, on 18th May, 2012, a few hundred yards from its birthplace. In its heyday, it served about 40,000 customers a year, offering a broad range of services targetted at the unemployed of Cork City and County, using the term "*unemployed*" in its broadest interpretation, to include the retired and disabled, as well as job-seekers.

The services offered themselves changed over the years, according to the needs of customers. In the Centre's early years, Ireland was in the depths of the last major recession and jobs were few. The Centre, therefore, offered social welfare advice and advocacy, a free canteen, and a few leisure classes, to help unemployed people to pass the time which lay heavy on the hands of people with little money. When the economy picked up, the emphasis changed from time-passing to preparation for the workplace, though leisure classes continued side by side with those which were work-related. In the present century, a Job Club and an office of the Local Employment Service (LES) also opened at the Centre.

Most of this was swept away on 15th December, 2011, when Seán O'Sullivan of FAS [Job Training] withdrew the funding which had been the lifeblood of the Centre for 23 years, and Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU) wrung its hands and walked away. For five months, a small band of volunteers kept the Centre running as best they could, but, without funds and with falling customer numbers, they were forced to haul down their flag on 18th May. At the very last, the CCTU took the astonishing step of locking out its own former staff. In all of this, the role of FAS, and even more the role of the CCTU should be questioned more closely than it has been.

For most of its life, the title of the Centre was the CTU Centre for the Unemployed. Its staff were funded by FAS as a Community Employment (CE) Project. Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU), under the presidency of the late Billy O'Donovan, was the sponsor body, while FAS was the main, but not the only, source

of funds.

In 2006, in order to apply for formal charitable status, the CCTU formed a company, limited by guarantee, to operate the Centre, though the CCTU remained the leaseholder for the building. At the same time, the Centre's title was changed to the CCTU Employment Resource Centre. Apart from FAS, donations from organisations and individuals occasionally swelled the Centre's coffers, and early in its development, under the aegis of the CCTU, an appeal was launched for individual Union members to subscribe the sum of 10 pence per week to support the Centre. This voluntary contribution was collected with Union dues. In the early days of the Centre, this contribution was a significant help to the Centre, but, after the retirement from the CCTU presidency of Billy O'Donovan, it was not seriously followed up. It was eroded, firstly by inflation and, later by contributors leaving their jobs, while no new recruits were sought for the scheme.

PERMANENT HQ

Up to the early 2000s, the Centre grew and prospered. It changed premises not long after its foundation to rooms in Oliver Plunkett Street, in the city centre, and then, in the early 90s, to nearby, larger accommodation in Oliver Plunkett Street. In 1998, the Centre moved to long-promised permanent, tailor-made premises in North Main Street, where it remained until the end of its life. All these premises were well-located for the convenience of the Centre's customers, but all but the last were somewhat run-down, low-rental buildings. This was necessitated by the fact that the CCTU was itself liable for the rent which, unlike most expenses, was not reimbursed by FAS. The North Main Street building was rebuilt by Cork Corporation, and let to the CCTU as, in effect, a purpose-built Centre for the Unemployed.

From 1998 until 2003 was the Centre's heyday. It had about 40 Community Employment staff, a manager, who was also the Community Employment supervisor, and an assistant manager/supervisor, who acted as financial controller. As well as the management and part-time CE participants, the Centre was authorised four full-time Job Initiative (JI) places, and a Job Club was opened. This was an organisation which provided job-seekers with training in the techniques of finding and getting employment. To this was later added an office of the Local Employment Service. The Centre itself, recognising the improving economic situation, provided more courses in subjects directly related to work.

The Bank of Ireland funded the provision of 'state of the art' computers with which were offered courses from beginners to ECDL [European Computer Driving Licence] level. The Centre was also a licensed ECDL examination centre.

Courses were given for the Safepass certificate, as well as more traditional subjects such as book-keeping. At the same time, the Centre's traditional leisure classes continued. Particularly popular were the language courses, which could also help students in finding employment, and the Art and Creative Writing and Drama classes. At least one art exhibition was held in the Cork City Library, and the Drama Classes presented a number of shows, mostly at the Cork Vision Centre and the Cork Arts Theatre. Very successful was a play written by the creative writers and performed by the Drama Group at the Cork Arts Theatre, celebrating the life of Frank O'Connor, which was attended by Frank O'Connor's widow. The Centre's actors also played a large part in the Coal Quay Festivals and the Bloomsday Centenary celebrations in 2004. Not only this, but tutor Pauline Jackson undertook regular outreach work with local schools and took part in a weekly programme on Campus Radio at University College Cork.

The art class was another success, having a long series of excellent tutors and enthusiastic students. The class held a number of successful exhibitions and co-operated with the drama group in preparing scenery, as well as painting a beautiful and imaginative series of murals up the stairwell of the Centre. Students tended to remain in the class for long periods, and helped to give a degree of continuity which the two-yearly change of tutors might have lost.

To a great extent, the Centre was fortunate in the quality of its tutors. In the nature of Community Employment, few tutors were able to remain in post for more than two years, but some would take the year out required by FAS regulations and then return. One, German tutor Melissa Odendahl, joined the Centre about three months after its foundation and remained until the last, working as a volunteer during her "years off". In 24 years, Melissa had worked out exactly what her students would want, and with Germanic thoroughness, had structured her courses to meet their needs. In general, language teachers were native speakers of the languages they taught. In general, they were young graduates spending a few years in Ireland before returning to their home countries. If they lacked Melissa's level of experience, they brought a freshness to their teaching which went far to compensate. Job Initiative, which gave permanent full-time employment to a fortunate few, greatly benefited the art and drama classes, when tutor Pauline Jackson was granted a JI [Joint Implementation] post. Computer training administrator Marion Bourke was also a JI participant. Both of these people controlled relatively complex departments where continuity and the accumulation of experience was very important.

John Holford

[TO BE CONTINUED]

AQUINAS continued

of all wealth among all members of the group, though it had come to them on the authority of Phileas and Lycurgus, was indeed to be reprobated, for it contradicted the prime feature of all creation. God made all things in their proper number, weight, and measure. Yet in spite of all this it must be insisted on at the risk of repetition that *the socialist theory of State ownership is never considered unjust, never in itself contrary to the moral law.* Albertus Magnus, the master of Aquinas, and the leader in commenting on Aristotle's *Politics*, freely asserts that community of goods±

"is not impossible, especially among those who are well disciplined by the virtue of philanthropy—that is, the common love of all; for love, of its own nature, is generous."

But to arrange it, the power of the State must be called into play; it cannot rest on any private authority—

"This is the proper task of the legislator, for it is the duty of the legislator to arrange everything for the best advantage of the citizens" (*In Politicis*, ii. 2, p. 70, Lyons, 1651). (Bede Jarrett, op.cit.)

Such, too, is the teaching of St. Antonino, who even goes so far as to assert that *"just as the division of property at the beginning of historic time was made by the authority of the State, it is evident that the same authority is equally competent to reverse its decision and return to its earlier social organisation"* (*Summa Moralis*, ii. 3, 2, Verona, 1740, p. 182).

He lays down, indeed, a principle so broad that it is difficult to understand where it could well end: *"That can be justly determined by the prince which is necessary for the peaceful intercourse of the citizens"*. And in defence he points triumphantly to the fact that the prince can set aside a just claim to property, and transfer it to another who happens to hold it by prescription, on the ground of the numerous disputes which might otherwise be occasioned. That is to say, that the law of his time already admitted that in certain circumstances the State could take what belonged to one and give it to another, without there being any fault on the part of the previous owner to justify its forfeiture; and he defends this proceeding on the axiom just cited (ibid., pp. 182-3), namely, its necessity "for the peaceful intercourse of the citizens".

These theories, it is evident, though they furnish the only arguments which are still in use among us to support the present social organisation, are also patent of an interpretation which might equally lead to the very opposite conclusion. In his fear of any general contradiction to communism which should be open to dispute, and in his ever-constant memory of his own religious life as a Dominican friar, Aquinas had to mark with precision to what extent and in what sense private property could be justified. But at the same time he was forced by the honesty of his logical training to concede what he could in favour of the other side. He took up in this question, as in every other, a middle course, in which neither extreme was admitted, but both declared to contain an element of truth.

It is clear, too, that his scholastic followers, even to our own date, in their elaborate commentaries can find no escape from the relentless logic of his conclusions. Down the channel that he dug flowed the whole torrent of mediaeval and modern scholasticism. But, for those whose minds were practical rather than abstract, one or other proposition he advanced, isolated from the context of his thought, could be quoted as of moment, and backed by the greatness of his name. His assertion of the absolute impracticable nature of socialistic organisation, as he knew it in his own age, was too good a weapon to be neglected by those who sought about for means of defence for their own individualistic theories; whereas others, like the friars of whom Wycliff and Langland spoke, and who headed bands of luckless peasants in the revolt of 1381 against the oppression of an over-legalised feudalism, were blind to this remarkable expression of Aquinas' opinion, and quoted him only when he declared that *"by nature all things were in common"*, and when he protested that the socialist theory of itself contained nothing contrary to the teaching of the gospel or the doctrines of the Church.

Truth is blinding in its brilliance. Half-truths are easy to see, and still easier to explain.

Marx was of Jewish origin. Engels was born into a family of a pronounced Protestant faith. Mao Tse-Tung was influenced by the Confucian Classics. But all would have agreed, if they ever read Aquinas, that the one phrase that stands before history as typical of Thomas Aquinas, it is that phrase about his own argument: *"It is not based on documents of faith but on reasons and statements of the philosophers themselves"* (Chesterton).

Letter from *Irish News*, 7th July 2012

Summer Floods & Water Privatisation

The piece by Tom Kelly—"Doing nothing will only store up more problems" (*Irish News*, 2 July 2012), ranged through several issues without achieving any great coherence, beyond a primitive declaration of *"Public Bad, Private Good"*.

Starting with some curious remarks about the visit of the Queen (from whom he received his Order of the British Empire), Tom Kelly moved to remarks about the heavens opening and Belfast becoming "a very unconvincing imitation of Venice", and asserted "every possible piece of floating debris and human waste popped up from our Victorian sewage and water pipes and made their way onto the kitchen tables of many affected houses."

It is puzzling to assert that it was "Victorian" infrastructure that caused problems in housing developments in East Belfast, built long after that era. But then perhaps the purpose of this piece wasn't to inform. Certainly Tom has taken an opportunity to piggy back on the wettest June since records began, to demand water privatisation and the introduction of household water charges, by which he thinks we could avoid such events in future.

Has he missed the flooding and devastation in parts of England, where water has been privatised, as he would have it here? The reality is that no current sewer system in use, either in England or here, could handle the concentrated volume of rain that fell in such a short period of time. The flooding that occurred, dreadful as it was, was an unavoidable consequence of an extreme weather event which was calculated to occur only once in every 400 years. It does not serve the public interest to set an expectation that any sewerage system could ever cope with such demands. What does need examination however is the degree of preparedness and the emergency response to such events when they do occur.

For the benefit of your readers, the Assembly has committed in the Programme for Government to—"Maintain a high quality of drinking water and improve compliance with waste water standards by investing £668m in water and sewerage infrastructure" by March 2015. That investment will come from progressive taxation, not from regressive household water charges, which the electorate has rejected. No amount of scare-mongering will change that.

Michael Robinson
Chair, NI Constituency Council,
Labour Party

AQUINAS continued

necessary.

"It is even necessary," says he, "for human life, and that for three reasons. Firstly, because everyone is more solicitous about procuring what belongs to himself alone than that which is common to all or many, since each shunning labour leaves to another what is the common burden of all, as happens with a multitude of servants. Secondly, because human affairs are conducted in a more orderly fashion if each has his own duty of procuring a certain thing, while there would be confusion if each should procure things haphazard. Thirdly, because in this way the peace of men is better preserved, for each is content with his own. Whence we see that strife more frequently arises among those who hold a thing in common and individually. The other office which is man's concerning exterior things, is the use of them; and with regard to this a man ought not to hold exterior things as his own, but as common to all, that he may portion them out to others readily in time of need." (The translation is taken from *New Things And Old*, H.C. O'Neill, 1909, London, pp253-4.)

The wording and argument of this will bear, and is well worth, careful analysis. For Aquinas was a man, as Huxley witnesses, of unique intellectual power, and, moreover, his theories on private property were immediately accepted by all the scholars.

To repeat the whole problem as it is put in the *Summa*, we can epitomise the reasoning of Aquinas in this easier way. The question of property implies two main propositions: (a) the right to property, i.e. to the use of material creation; (b) the right to private property, i.e. to the actual division of material things among the determined individuals of a social group.

PRIVATE PROPERTY INALIENABLE?

The former is a sacred, inalienable right, which can never be destroyed, for it springs from the roots of man's nature. If man exists, and is responsible for his existence, then he must necessarily have the right to the means without which his existence is made impossible. But the second proposition must be determined quite differently. The kind of property here spoken of is simply a matter not of right, but of experienced necessity, and is to be argued for on the distinct grounds that without it worse things would follow: "*it is even necessary for human life, and that for three reasons*". This is a purely condi-

tional necessity, and depends entirely on the practical effect of the three reasons cited. *Were a state of society to exist in which the three reasons could no longer be urged seriously, then the necessity which they occasioned would also cease to hold. In point of fact, Aquinas was perfectly familiar with a social group in which these conditions did not exist, and the law of individual possession did not therefore hold, namely, the religious orders.* As a Dominican, he had defended his own Order against the attacks of those who would have suppressed it altogether; and in his reply to William of St. Amour he had been driven to uphold the right to common life, and consequently to deny that private property was inalienable.

Of course it was perfectly obvious that for Aquinas himself the idea of the Commune or the State owning all the land and capital, and allowing to the individual citizens simply the use of these common commodities, was no doubt impracticable; and the three reasons which he gives are his sincere justification of the need of individual ownership. Without this division of property, he considered that national life would become even more full of contention than it was already. Accordingly, it was for its effectiveness in preventing a great number of quarrels that he defended the individual ownership of property.

"The common claim upon things is traceable to the natural law, not because the natural law dictates that all things should be held in common, and nothing as belonging to any individual person, but because according to the natural law there is no distinction of possessions which comes by human convention" (2a, 2ae, 66, 2ad 1m.). (Bede Jarrett OP, MA, *Mediaeval Socialism*, London, 1913.)

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

To apprehend the full significance of this last remark, reference must be made to the theories of the Roman legal writers. The law of nature was looked upon as some primitive determination of universal acceptance, and of venerable sanction, which sprang from the roots of man's being. *This in its absolute form could never be altered or changed; but there was besides another law which had no such compelling power, but which rested simply on the experience of the human race.* This was reversible, for it depended on specific conditions and stages of development. Thus nature dictated no division of property, though it implied the necessity of some property; the need of the division was only discovered when

men set to work to live in social intercourse. Then it was found that, unless divisions were made, existence was intolerable; and so by human convention, as Aquinas sometimes says, or by the law of nature, as he elsewhere expresses it, the division into private property was agreed upon and took place.

Here again, then, are the same salient points we have already noticed in the *Summa*. There is the idea clearly insisted on that the division of property is not a first principle nor an immediate deduction from a first principle, that in itself it is not dictated by the natural law which leaves all things in common, that it is, however, not contrary to natural law, but evidently in accord with it, that its necessity and its introduction were due entirely to the actual experience of the race.

Again, to follow the theory chronologically still farther forward, St. Antonino, whose charitable institutions in Florence have stamped deeply with his personality that scene of his life's labours, does little more than repeat the words of Aquinas, though the actual phrase in which he here compresses many pages of argument is reproduced from a work by the famous Franciscan moralist John de Ripa.

"It is by no means right that here upon earth fallen humanity should have all things in common, for the world would be turned into a desert, the way to fraud and all manner of evils would be opened, and the good would have always the worse, and the bad always the better, and the most effective means of destroying all peace would be established" (*Summa Moralit*, 3, 3, 2, 1).

Hence he concludes that "*such a community of goods never could benefit the State*". These are none other arguments than those already advanced by Aquinas.

COMMUNISM NOT EVIL!

"Distinction of property, therefore, though declared so necessary for peaceable social life, does not, for these thinkers, rest on natural law, nor a divine law, but on positive human law under the guidance of prudence and authority. *Communism is not something evil, but rather an ideal too lofty to be ever here realised. It implied so much generosity, and such a vigour of public spirit, as to be utterly beyond the reach of fallen nature.* The Apostles alone could venture to live so high a life, "for their state transcended that of every other mode of living" (Ptolomeo of Lucca, *De Regimine Principio*, book iv., cap. 4, Parma, 1864, p. 273).

However, that form of communism which entailed an absolutely even division

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AQUINAS continued

kings needed the organising skills that were only to be found in the Christian clergy. At the same time it is a remarkable fact that, while the barbarian tribes who overran the Roman Empire were all pagans, by the millennium they had all become deeply Christian societies, even in Scandinavian countries which had no Christian history.

The mediaeval Guilds can only really be understood against this background. In essence they were *religious brotherhoods* which had a variety of interlocking functions: spiritual, economic, social, and even political. It is worth stressing again that the world of late mediaeval Europe was alien to us in two ways; it was explicitly based on Christian principles, and it was intrinsically local. As the mediaeval historian Christopher Dawson observed:

"One of the most remarkable features of medieval guild life was the way in which it combined secular and religious activities in the same social complex. The guild chantry, the provision of prayers and masses for dead brethren, and the performance of pageants and mystery plays on the great feasts were no less the function of the guild than the common banquet, the regulation of work and wages, the giving of assistance to fellow-guild members in sickness or misfortune" (C.H. Dawson, *Religion And The Rise Of Western Culture*, Sheed & Ward, London, 1950.).

To sum up, economically the Guilds were a key part of the medieval objective that commercial life should be an integrated expression of the Church's teaching. There was a code of mercantile ethics decreeing that craftsmen should make their goods honestly and well, that sellers should give good weight and be satisfied with reasonable profits.

PROPERTY

The Christian scholars, in their adventurous quest after a complete harmony of all philosophic learning, could not neglect the great outstanding problems of social and economic life. They flourished at the very period of European history when commerce and manufacture were coming back to the West, and their rise synchronises with the origin of the great houses of the Italian and Jewish bankers.

Then came the translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, with the keen criticism they contain of the views Plato had advocated. Here at once the intellect of Europe found an exact exposition of principles, and

began immediately to debate their excellence and their defect. Thomas Aquinas set to work on a literal commentary, and at his express desire an accurate translation was made direct from the Greek by his fellow-Dominican, William of Moerbeke. Later on, when all this had had time to settle and find its place, Aquinas worked out his own theory of private property in two short articles in his famous *Summa Theologica*. In his treatise on Justice, which occupies a large proportion of the *Secund Secundae* of the *Summa*, he found himself forced to discuss the moral evil of theft; and to do this adequately he had first to explain what he meant by private possessions. Without these, of course, there could be no theft at all.

He began, therefore, by a preliminary article on the actual state of created things—that is, the material, so to say, out of which private property is evolved. Here he notes that the nature of things, their constituent essence, is in the hands of God, not man. The worker can change the form, and, in consequence, the value of a thing, but the substance which lies beneath all the outward show is too subtle for him to affect it in any way. To the Supreme Being alone can belong the power of creation, annihilation, and absolute mutation. But besides this tremendous force which God holds incommunicably, there is another which He has given to man, namely, the use of created things. For, when man was made, he was endowed with the lordship of the earth. This lordship is obviously one without which he could not live. The air, and the forces of nature, the beasts of the field, the birds and fishes, the vegetation in fruit and root, and the stretches of corn are necessary for man's continued existence on the earth. Over them, therefore, he has this limited dominion.

Accordingly the human animal is bound by the law of his own being to provide against the necessities of the future. He has, therefore, the right to acquire not merely what will suffice for the instant, but to look forward and arrange against the time when his power of work shall have lessened, or the objects which suffice for his personal needs become scarcer or more difficult of attainment. Property, therefore, of some kind or other, says Aquinas, is required by the very nature of man. Individual possessions are not a mere adventitious luxury which time has accustomed him to imagine as something he can hardly do without, nor are they the result of civilised culture, which by the law of its own development creates fresh

needs for each fresh demand supplied; but in some form or other they are an absolute and dire necessity, without which life could not be lived at all. Not simply for his "well-being", but for his very existence, man finds them to be a sacred need. Thus, as they follow directly from the nature of creation, they can be termed "natural".

RIGHTS AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

Aquinas then proceeds in his second article to enter into the question of the rights of private property. The logical result of his previous argument is only to affirm the need man has of some property; the practice of actually dividing goods among individuals requires further elaboration if it is to be reasonably defended. Man must have the use of the fruits of the earth, but why these rather than those should belong to him is an entirely different problem. It is the problem of Socialism. For every socialist must demand for each member of the human race the right to some possessions, food and other such necessities. But why he should have this particular thing, and why that other thing should belong to someone else, is the question which lies at the basis of all attempts to preserve or destroy the present fabric of society. Now, the argument which we have so far cited from Aquinas is simply based on the indefeasible right of the individual to the maintenance of his life. Personality implies the right of the individual to whatever is needful to him in achieving his earthly purpose, but does not in itself justify the right to private property.

"Two offices pertain to man with regard to exterior things" (thus he continues). "The first is the power of procuring and dispensing, and in respect to this, it is lawful for man to hold things as his own." Here it is well to note that Aquinas in this single sentence teaches that private property, or the individual occupation of actual land or capital or instruments of wealth, is not contrary to the moral law. Consequently he would repudiate the famous epigram, "*La Propriété c'est le vol*" (*Property is Theft*, Proudhon). Man may hold and dispose of what belongs to him, may have private property, and in no way offend against the principles of justice, whether natural or divine.

But in the rest of the article Aquinas goes farther still. Not merely does he hold the moral proposition that private property is lawful, but he adds to it the social proposition that private property is

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Mondragon, Part 10

Aquinas and Private Property

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) was the greatest and most important philosopher of the High Middle Ages. This was the period when the Merchant Guilds were at their most powerful—prior to the rise of the Craft Guilds in the 14th and 15th centuries.

The Church invested great hope in this thinker, to whom faith was more serious than any other question. This was something his teacher, Albertus Magnus (St. Albert) noticed very early on. Himself a famous philosopher, he said of his pupil that, as the 'greatest' thinker of his age, he could 'unite' the two great names of philosophy thus far: namely, Plato and Aristotle.

The philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas is characterised by an ambitious attempt to reconcile the truth of Christian faith with the thought of Aristotle. As a result, faith is certainly given primary importance—something the Church very much wanted—but reason is also accorded more rights. It is allowed to perceive that all the truths that do not emerge from revelation—in other words, below the threshold of belief, which, on earth, amounts to quite a large area.

Aquinas gave science more room for manoeuvre, which it did not hesitate to use. This, in turn, was to lead to conflicts with Aquinas. God is "*the one who exists*", Being in itself, uniting essence and existence. God, Aquinas believed, is the most perfect of creatures. To doubt him is not merely foolish but, in effect, impossible, for a perfect creature embodies all possible qualities including existence—a proof of God's existence that was used by later thinkers.

As the very first and very highest creature, God is Being, while everything created merely *has* being—in other words, only borrows it for a short span of life, according to Aquinas.

In 1557, Aquinas was declared a Father

of the Church, and his doctrines—'Thomism'—were elevated to the status of an official ecclesiastical philosophy.

ARISTOTLE

Aquinas developed his own conclusions from Aristotle, his major theological works the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologica* form the classical systematization of Latin theology. He wrote poetry and his eucharistic hymns are still used in the Catholic Church's liturgy. He is recognised by the Catholic Church as its foremost philosopher and theologian.

It was in Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* that he worked out his own theory of private property.

Aquinas studied at Paris University (1245) under Albertus Magnus (St. Albert), a noted scholar from Cologne. In 1240, his teacher at the University of Naples was the learned Irish monk, Petrus de Hibernia. Aquinas and Magnus were both friars of the Dominican Order founded in 1215.

Aquinas argued his position concerning the relation of faith and reason, i.e. "*that reason is able to operate within faith yet*

according to its own laws". He argued against both rationalists on one hand, and his own traditional theologians on the other.

"The other point of cardinal importance in the thirteenth century was the general adoption of the philosophy of Aristotle. Since the time of St. Augustine, Catholic thought had moved on the lines of, and under the influence of, the Augustinian re-statement of the philosophy of Plato. But early in the thirteenth century, the hitherto little-known philosophical writings of Plato's great pupil, Aristotle, become known in translation in the Christian schools. There was, of course, the opposition to any innovation that was to be expected from conservative schoolmen, but there were the others who perceived the great advantages of Aristotelianism over Platonism as a philosophy for use in the exposition of Christian doctrine in general, and in particular the suitability of Aristotle's Moderate Realism in the discussion concerning the universals, steering as it did a safe course between Extreme Realism and Nominalism. The energy and brilliance of these latter schoolmen won the day; the triumph of Aristotelian philosophy was largely the work of the two great Dominicans, St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas of Aquin" (John F. O'Doherty, *A History of the Catholic Church for Schools*, Dublin, 1943, p.124).

"Said Lord Acton with his sober wit :

"Not the devil, but St. Thomas Aquinas, was the first Whig" "

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

When the anarchy and violence of the Dark Ages began to end around the first millennium, the only thing that had just managed to hold civilisation together was the Christian Church. Indeed, many future great cities were founded during this period as adjuncts to religious centres. Tribal chiefs who wanted to become effective

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