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The European Union vs. The Euro-Zone!

Has Micheál Martin Lost The Plot?

All politicians across Europe will remember where they were on 9th December 2011. Enda Kenny was sitting next to David Cameron and left the EU Council meeting with him. But he had to jump, and he jumped in the opposite direction to Cameron—though there is no doubt went against his instincts. With an agreed and determined Franco-German position, he had little choice, which is just as well. Irish Taoisigh in recent years have got themselves into a mindset where hard choices need never be made as regards Europe. But Kenny has had to make his bed and if there is to be a referendum he is committed to the Euro whether he likes it not.

What then of Fianna Fail? It is necessary to consider the position of that party, as it could be critical to getting a referendum passed. The omens so far are not good.

Martin made clear where he was on the 9th of December and he was quick out of the mark in opposition:

"Martin urges Government to reject Franco-German calls. Fianna Fail leader Micheál Martin has urged the Government to reject the Franco-German proposals to tackle the Eurozone debt crisis. As Taoiseach Enda Kenny continues negotiations at the crucial EU summit in Brussels today, Mr Martin said the Franco-German plan was flawed. 'Too high a price is being asked for action which will not solve Europe's problems', he said" (Irish Examiner, 9 Dec. 2011).

He elaborated on this over the weekend that followed, making it clear this was no knee-jerk reaction.

"In a detailed written response to the summit, Mr Martin argued the deal had failed to deal with the underlying causes of the sovereign debt crisis...."

"Fianna Fail Leader Micheál Martin said the rift opened with Britain at the European summit last week could seriously threaten the survival of the European Union itself. Mr Martin also said that the outcome of negotiations on Thursday night and Friday represented almost the 'worst-case scenario' for Ireland. If the euro is to be saved, he added, it was not on the basis of anything agreed last Friday" (Irish Times, 12 December).

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This letter was submitted to the *Irish Times* on 22nd December, and published in its Irish edition on the 28th

ECB acts as political Europe consolidates

Your story 'European stocks pare losses' (21 December), buried in the business section of the newspaper, carried the quite astonishing piece of news that European banks had taken out loans of €490 billion from the European Central Bank and that these "ultra-cheap, long-term loans were designed to boost trust in banks, free up money markets and tempt banks to buy Italian and Spanish debt". A German economist is quoted as commenting: "It is

highly unlikely now that banks in the euro zone will go bust because of a liquidity shortage."

It is obvious that once the lead states of the Eurozone (Germany, France) took decisive action to consolidate the currency politically, the ECB fell into line and is now taking the necessary action. The more the euro zone is consolidated politically, the more the ECB will act as required (ultimately all the way to eurobonds).

The Coalition's First Budget

This year's Budget was presented over two days with Labour's Brendan Howlin announcing cuts and Fine Gael's Michael Noonan not announcing tax increases. Just under 60% of the Budget adjustment of 3.8 billion euro will come from public expenditure cuts with the balance being raised from tax revenue.

TAXATION

Noonan began his speech in a sombre tone. It was the 90th anniversary of the Treaty which "restored our sovereignty" but Fianna Fáil gave it away again as "fiscal autonomy was conceded to the IMF and European authorities". He went on to say:

"The task of this Government is to regain control over Ireland's fiscal and economic policies, to grow the economy again and to get people back to work".

Leaving aside the dubious history lesson, it would be interesting to know what measure or policy that Noonan or Howlin would have implemented but were prevented from doing so by the IMF and European authorities. Even without the

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Without this political consolidation Michael Noonan's "wall of money" could never be a realistic proposition. Now it is.

It is clearly in Ireland's interest to participate whole-heartedly in this consolidation and not to squander this opportunity either by holding to our indefensible corporation tax rate or, as suggested in your leader yesterday (21 December), working "to keep [the UK] at the negotiating table even if it lacks a vote there". The political breakthrough only came after the exclusion from the process of the City of London.

Philip O'Connor

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

Mondragon III

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Forthcoming: Dunmanway And Peter Hart, *Jeff Dudgeon* (Liberal Unionist candidate for the Senate)

like the EU institutions hanging around being a nuisance to all concerned.

There is likely to be an even clearer break with the EU institutions very soon. *Het Financieele Dagblad*, a Dutch finance daily, reported recently that France and Germany are considering giving the new supervisory powers over national budgets, which will be created by the new Treaty, to the ESM (European Stability Mechanism), the Euro-zone's bailout fund, rather than to the European Commission. Since the ESM is mostly an inter-Governmental institution, it would decisively shift the balance away from the use of formal EU institutions in the new Treaty. This is a logical continuation of the tendency that has arisen since the demise of the Commission that was put firmly on the agenda by Pat Cox over a decade ago, with the success he and the European Liberals had in undermining the authority of the Commission.

Martin has spent so much time in public relations chatter, that he does not seem to have seen the wood for the trees in recent EU developments. The EU is dead and he seems to have missed the funeral—which is unusual for him. And now he is trying to resurrect its ghost. He has lost the plot. His position is about as impressive as his preference for Gaybo as President.

As regards an "*adequate firewall*" to defend the Single Currency from the predatory attacks of globalist markets, led by the City of London: it is being created as a result of the determination of Germany and France to do whatever is necessary to protect the Euro. Martin seems to assume that the only "*firewall*" must be one of a deluge of money in order to secure the Euro currency. He goes for the simple demagogic option of the European Central Bank simply printing money. This is the policy which is advocated strongly in London. But a currency is built on politics not money. The financial firewall would follow if the political firewall is built. The ECB, quite rightly, is not going to pour money into a political black hole. When the ECB, following the clear political message from the Franco-German alliance that it was serious, made €469 Billion available to banks on 21st December, I did not detect a whoop of joy from Martin. On the contrary, he was still pining for a link with Britain. He complained that leaders had "*steamrolled*" through "*a solution for up to 26 member states but without thinking how issues would be handled in the absence of Britain at the table*" (ibid.).

So 26 to 1 is steamrolling, an overwhelmingly majority of over 96% is

That seems clear enough and, if he is consistent, he will be opposed to the implementation of anything agreed at the summit in a referendum. Why? He went on:

"The split it has caused may lead to another crisis, this time impacting on the future of the union itself rather than just the euro. The result is close to a worst-case scenario for Ireland as the Government's negotiating tactics having been flawed from the start', he asserted. The reason for calling the summit, said the Fianna Fáil leader, was to find a final and decisive answer to the sovereign debt crisis in the euro zone. That should have resulted in an all-encompassing agreement and an adequate firewall to prevent contagion." (ibid.)

There is undoubtedly a conflict between the EU and the securing of the Euro. It is plain for some time that this is the case. The EU institutions have been too incoherent to deal with the crux. Three years is long enough to have proven that conclusively. Because of that, an inter-Governmental solution is the only feasible

way to do so. As Micheál Martin was Minister for Foreign Affairs in the last Government, less than a year ago, he must surely have come to appreciate this? He is now proposing the preservation of a political skeleton—the EU—in place of a real plan to secure the Euro and thus achieve a real piece of European integration. *Real* because it is not for the usual high faluting mantras so beloved of our EUophiles. This is for something clear and specific that concerns every single person—the securing of their currency.

Mr. Martin is not dealing with the real world if he maintains his present position. Worse than that, it means that he and Fianna Fail will not be at the party, will not be involved in the new development which the crisis is forcing into existence. For Fianna Fail, as for all of us, it should be goodbye, EU, Hello to the new Europe! Moreover, it could also be goodbye to Fianna Fail forever if its leader takes his present position to its logical conclusion. The party could become another hulk,

suddenly suspect, when less than 4% decides to opt out! This is ironic coming from the man who ran the campaign to change the referendum decision on the Lisbon Treaty. I am sure if he had won that by one vote, he would have been satisfied and would have declared it the clearest result there could be. Suddenly, overwhelmingly democratic decisions are belittled. I suppose the 1918 Election result could be described as "steamrolling" the British Empire of the day.

Martin seems to assume that the majority of EU Member States are complete idiots and did not think about the consequences of what they were doing despite the long-heralded problem with Britain about the Euro—and many other issues. Their actions since belie any indication that the proponents of the new policy did not know what they were doing.

"According to Mr Martin, if the agreement was looked at from an Irish perspective, the absence of Britain from key discussions and regulations represented 'a huge threat to our long-term economic prospects. They are both our largest trading partner and our biggest competitor. The tens of thousands of jobs dependent on the financial services sector are only part of the areas for concern'." (ibid.).

This is pathetic. Britain will always want a trading relationship—no more and no less—which is what they always wanted with Europe. Trade will continue. He cannot seriously be suggesting that Ireland should be so concerned about its 'financial services' competing with those of the City of London's that the future of the Euro should be compromised? These are the 'services' which gave rise to the banking crisis in the first place. Those profiting by them would have included their mothers in credit default swaps if it helped their 'services' profit!

If Mr. Martin has any doubt about this, or has forgotten it, he should note the view of the current Business Minister in the British Cabinet, Vince Cable of the Lib Dems. He told the Andrew Marr show on the BBC on 18th December: "*Our big banks were at the very centre of the financial crisis, what the Europeans call Anglo-Saxon financial capitalism. It needs reform.*" He elaborated later, "*we need to put the whingeing of the City to one side and concentrate on delivering our core narrative, to achieve growth by rebalancing the UK economy*" (Dec. 20th). Cable sees the need to put the interest of business before these 'financial services' of the City and here we have an Irish Party leader who seems prepared to do the opposite by

using their concerns to stymie a plan to secure the future of the Euro.

*

As was to be expected, the breakdown caused by the British veto was not welcomed by the *Irish Times*. It was more loosening of the links with Britain, which they classified as "*A disappointing day's work*" (10 Dec) in a sad little editorial. But a few days later they had come to terms with it in a more realistic way than Martin had. The more he thought about it, the worse he got whereas the *Irish Times* got better! It wrote editorially:

"From an Irish perspective, fears of loss of business to the City have been overplayed... But if the UK is marginalising itself in the EU, a renewed emphasis on the bilateral relationship will be important. In the end, however, Ireland's place, though once defined on the world stage by our relationship with our neighbour, is now in Europe. Britain's casting off of the lines to the mainland and drift into the mid-Atlantic does not change that reality" (Editorial, 13 December 2011).

It is an extraordinary development that we have a Fianna Fail leader who cannot say anything like that. A leader who is more concerned with pandering to the alleged needs of 'financial services' than establishing a positive relationship with the Europe that is now emerging. What a turn up for the books!

The *Irish Times* was part of, and is heir to, the Anglo-Irish element in Ireland and one quality they developed was an antenna to detect how the political wind was blowing from Whitehall and how to attune itself to it. Now they detect that the wind to be attuned to is coming from Berlin and Europe. Their survival instinct in this regard has not deserted them and it may prove stronger than that of Fianna Fail's!

Jack Lane

Budget

continued

IMF/EU we would still have a debt to GNP ratio which is rising above 100%.

Perhaps the current Government would not have introduced the Bank Guarantee, even though Fine Gael voted for it in opposition and Labour only objected to it on the grounds of the powers accorded to the Minister for Finance. But since the last Election both guaranteed and unguaranteed senior debt in the bank formerly known as Anglo-Irish Bank have been repaid.

If it is true—as the Government parties never tire of telling us—that their predecessors destroyed the economy, where was the radical adjustment?

There was hardly any change in the income tax system. Noonan gave a very interesting reason for not tampering with the income tax system which he inherited from his predecessors who "*destroyed the economy*":

"The marginal rate of taxation on income is now 52 per cent for PAYE workers and 55 per cent for the self-employed. The OECD have concluded that Ireland has the most progressive tax system of the EU members of its organization and Revenue records show that the top 5 per cent of income earners pay 44 per cent of income tax."

So it appears Noonan could not make it even more progressive!

The tax rates will remain the same as will the tax bands. The much derided Universal Social Charge remains in place but from 1st January 2012, the exemption level will be raised from 4,004 to 10,036 euro. Noonan claims that nearly 330,000 people will be affected by this change. It is surprising that over one-sixth of the workforce are earning less than 10,036. Who are these people? It could only be part-time workers, such as students and housewives. Another category is non-EU migrant workers in the hospitality industry whose employers have obtained exemptions from the minimum wage legislation.

The Government has made a commitment not to increase income tax during its term. In my view this is cowardly. Income taxes are fairer because they affect the better-off more than those on low incomes. But from a political point of view they implicate the Government. The employee's payslip shows clearly why his take-home pay is less whereas for indirect taxes the increase in prices can be blamed on greedy retailers.

The previous Government agreed with the IMF and the European authorities to increase the standard rate of VAT by 2 per cent: 1 per cent in 2013 and 1 per cent in 2014. Noonan decided to increase the rate by 2% to 23% all in one go in 2012. He had some interesting things to say about the threat of cross border shopping:

"For the majority of the past twenty years, the VAT differential between the Republic and Northern Ireland has been 3 1/2 per cent and it was as high as 6 1/2 per cent as recently as 2009. After the increase I am announcing today, the differential will be 3 per cent. I do not expect an increase in cross border shopping as a result of the VAT increase".

The depreciation of sterling has contributed to cross-Border shopping in the North, but it would be foolish to dismiss the difference in VAT rates as a factor. In recent months sterling has appreciated against the Euro. If Noonan had cut the VAT rate (financed by increases in income taxes), we could have had Northern shoppers coming down to Dublin. And what would have been wrong with that?!

A casual observer of the Irish political scene might come to the conclusion that Fianna Fáil (along with its cronies in the Galway tent) fuelled a property boom by various tax reliefs with disastrous consequences for the economy. Such an observer might assume that a new enlightened Government would eliminate all such reliefs. That was at least the rhetoric of the Government parties when they were in opposition.

Noonan pointed out that at its peak the development and construction sector consisted of 20 per cent of GDP; it is now 5 per cent. It is likely that, as surplus property is sold, the pendulum will gradually swing back to a more normal level. Nevertheless Noonan feels that he should do something about this.

He reduced the Stamp Duty rate for commercial property transfers from the current top rate of 6 per cent to a flat rate of 2 per cent in respect of all non-residential property, including farmland as well as commercial and industrial buildings. He seems to think that this will stimulate the property market and "indirectly" have a positive effect on jobs in the construction and related activities. But there is already a surplus of commercial property on the market. Reducing Stamp Duty will not stimulate construction. He is reducing a revenue source for the State for no good reason. If there is a problem of hoarding vacant properties the obvious solution is to impose site taxes on these properties.

It is also difficult to understand why Noonan is exempting from Capital Gains Tax for a seven year period property purchased up until the end of 2013. Why is it necessary in these straitened times to give a tax incentive to property speculation?

Noonan decided to give tax relief to purchasers of property during the height of the boom. The rate of mortgage interest relief will be increased to 30 per cent for first-time buyers who took out their first mortgage between 2004 and 2008. There is no doubt that such people have suffered for their decisions, but in most cases they are capable of repaying their mortgages. The people who have really suffered are those who also lost their jobs. This relief

will be of no benefit to them.

Other than that, he confirmed the decision made by his predecessor that mortgage interest relief will no longer be available to house purchasers who purchase after the end of 2012 and will be fully abolished from 2018. But, for those who wish to buy a home in 2012, first-time buyers will get mortgage interest relief at a rate of 25 per cent rather than the 15 per cent proposed by the previous Government; and non-first time buyers will benefit from relief at 15 per cent instead of the reduced rate of 10 per cent proposed by the last Government. Again it is difficult to understand the current Government's thinking. Kick-starting the property market is not the solution to our economic problems.

Noonan suggested in his speech that legacy property reliefs must be reduced. But he claims that the previous Government's proposals to do precisely that were unworkable. His approach seems to be to make haste slowly. He thinks small investors will be vulnerable to insolvency if they lose these reliefs and on this basis has not proceeded with the proposals put forward by the previous Government in last year's Budget. But it is difficult to see how withdrawing property reliefs would cause insolvency since they are only of benefit to those who are making profits or earning an income (i.e. people who are solvent).

Noonan did however introduce a property relief surcharge of 5 per cent, which will be imposed on investors with an annual gross income over 100,000 euro. This will apply on the amount of income sheltered by property reliefs in a given year. Reliefs in Section 23 type investments will not be terminated or otherwise restricted for investors with an annual gross income under 100,000 euro.

One of the most controversial measures was the Household Charge of 100 euro. There are various exemptions for this and it applies to owners and not tenants. It could be said that it is still inequitable. However the amount is quite small. It is being introduced as a first step in a more comprehensive and equitable property tax, which will be implemented by 2014. On this basis it is difficult to disagree with it since much of Irish wealth is held in the form of property and unlike other forms of wealth it is not mobile.

Other measures that are difficult to disagree with include the following:

- Increase in the Capital Acquisitions Tax from 25 per cent to 30 per cent
- Increase Capital Gains Tax from 25

per cent to 30 per cent

- Reduction in the Group A tax-free threshold for Capital Acquisitions Tax from 332,084 to 250,000 euro
- Increase in DIRT from 27 per cent to 30 per cent
- Broadening the base for PRSI through removal of the remaining 50 per cent employer PRSI relief on employee pensions
- Further broadening of the base for PRSI to cover rental, investment and other forms of income from 2013
- Increasing the rate of notional distribution on the highest value Approved Retirement Funds or (ARFs) and similar products to 6 per cent
- Increasing the rate of tax on the transfer of an ARF on death to a child over 21 from 20 per cent to 30 per cent
- Abolishing the "citizenship" condition for payment of the Domicile Levy so as to ensure that "tax exiles" cannot avoid it by renouncing their citizenship

However, although the EU/IMF Programme commits us to move to standard rate relief on pension contributions, Noonan does not propose to do this. This would have been more equitable than the levies on pension funds, which he did implement.

CORPORATION TAX

The Government has no intention of tampering with our Corporation Tax rates. I have supported the 12.5% rate in the past on pragmatic and national grounds. But all good things come to an end. The current rate might well have outlived its usefulness. There is no doubt that our membership of the Eurozone is more important than our low Corporation Tax rate. Other countries in Eastern Europe have far lower rates.

About 30 years ago we had a zero rate for export profits and a 50% rate for domestic profits. When this was deemed unacceptable by our European partners we moved to a 10% manufacturing rate and a 40% rate for other activities. This was also considered unacceptable and as a result in the last 20 years the two rates gradually converged at a 12.5% rate.

In my view there must be a way acceptable to the EU for productive enterprises to be given preferential tax treatment. There have been numerous newspaper reports indicating that many French enterprises have an effective Corporation Tax as low as 8%. The Government should explore the options available rather than persisting with a sterile "no" to the EU.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE CUTS

Most people felt that they had escaped relatively unscathed from Noonan. The

bad news was left to Labour's Brendan Howlin on the previous day. This is unlikely to change in future Budgets. The refusal to countenance income tax increases is likely to make life very difficult for Howlin for the remainder of this Government's term.

Howlin began his speech with the following stark statistic: from 2007 to 2010 the annual tax revenue fell from 47.25 billion to 31.75 billion euro. Unfortunately for the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, the adjustment will be largely made through public expenditure cuts rather than increases in taxes. It looks like Labour will perform its traditional roll of being Fine Gael's mudguard.

The implosion in tax revenue was largely caused by the collapse in the property market. The previous Government was not wrong to have had high property transaction taxes. At least the State benefited from the property boom. Its real error was to believe that this could go on indefinitely and thereby became dependent on these taxes. It is sometimes said that "we" did not benefit from the boom. But the State—which is "us" in a democracy—did benefit and could avoid raising revenue from other sources.

Howlin's cuts will contribute 2.2 billion out of the total budget adjustment of 3.8 billion. Of the 2.2 billion, 755 million will come from capital expenditure and the remaining 1.4 billion from current expenditure. It is disappointing that some worthwhile projects, such as Metro North, have been postponed. Millions have already been spent on consultancy for this project. In the current environment there is a need for the State to be more active in the economy because of the decline in private sector economic activity.

Many of Howlin's announcements are a continuation of policies initiated by the previous Government. The public service pay bill will fall by 400 million euro in 2012. By the end of this year, the numbers employed in the Public Service will be below 300,000. Next year, the Government plans to reduce the size of Public Service by a further 6,000.

There will be a reduction of 37,500 or 12% of staff, against 2008 levels.

Through reduced numbers, through the pay cuts that were applied in 2010 (i.e. the previous Government) and through the ongoing pension related deduction, the overall cost of paying public servants will have fallen by 3.5 billion euro, or 20%, over the 7 year period from 2008 to 2015.

The impact of the pay reduction on the gross pay of public servants was progres-

sive and ranged from almost 9% at Clerical Officer Level to over 23% at Secretary General Level. On a similar basis, a Teacher would have incurred a reduction of 12%, a Staff Nurse over 10.5%, a Garda over 11% while a middle-ranking public servant at Higher Executive Officer level would have sustained a reduction of 12.3%.

The rates of payments of Child Benefit for all children will be "*standardised*", giving a saving of 43 million a year. This means that the third and subsequent child will be on the same level as the first two children. Last year, when Lenihan reduced the payment to the third child, Michael Noonan humorously suggested that the Minister must have been bullied by a third child. One can only conclude that the diminutive Howlin must have had a torrid childhood. Only the first two children spared him!

Howlin seems to accept the advice of Civil Servants that means testing or taxing child benefit is impractical. This is reminiscent of another Labour politician (Ruairi Quinn) who was told that it was impractical to introduce Tax Credits, but a couple of years later Charlie McCreevy had no difficulty implementing this progressive measure.

The basic level of social welfare remained untouched but most of the other social welfare payments were reduced or restricted. For example Howlin expects to save 5.9 million by increasing the payment week from 5 to 6 days. So someone on a three day week will get 2/6ths of the benefit rather than 2/5ths. This will also have implications for sick pay.

Similarly the Government has decided to reduce the fuel season from 32 to 26 weeks. Isn't global warming great?! This will save 51 million next year. Changes to the one-parent family payment will save 20.7 million.

A reduction in the employer rebate from 60% to 15% for redundancy payments will save 81 million. This is an interesting one. Following the recent high-profile closing of a call centre in the South-east, the Government must have thought that it was helping to make employees redundant. Another way of looking at it is that it was helping the employer to make decent redundancy payments. On the face of it the reduction in the rebate will make it more expensive to make people redundant. That cannot be a bad thing. However, the extra cost might be transferred to the employee. In general, multinationals pay above the statutory minimum. The new

measure might reduce this towards the minimum. Also there must be many companies that are barely surviving. In the past an accountant in a small company looking to make redundancies would at least be able to count on the 60% rebate. A 15% rebate might not be enough avoid the company going in to liquidation.

On balance I would support the reduction in the rebate, but it is a very arguable case.

Howlin had a myriad of other cost-saving measures: many of which will adversely affect low-income families. Also, many of the efficiency savings look to this writer to be very optimistic. I can only hope that I am wrong.

CONCLUSION

This Budget could and maybe should have been much tougher than it was. The Government needs to demonstrate that it can consistently achieve its targets. The experience of the 1980s shows that it is better to front-end load the pain so as to avoid prolonging the recession.

Thanks to Brian Lenihan's Budget, the General Government Deficit for this year will be 10.1 per cent of GDP. This is less than the 10.6 per cent required by the EU/IMF Programme.

The General Government Deficit target for 2012 is 8.6 per cent of GDP. Next year, the Department of Finance is forecasting an increase of 1.3 per cent in the volume of GDP with around a 2 1/2 per cent increase in nominal GDP. This appears optimistic.

The budget was largely a continuation of the policies of Fianna Fáil with a greater emphasis on indirect taxation and hidden charges. Much of the heavy lifting had already been done by Lenihan's Budget. The next twelve months will be a real test of this Government's mettle. It is likely that subsequent Budgets will need to be tougher.

John Martin

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Review: Northern Ireland What Is It? Professor Mansergh Changes His Mind by *Brendan Clifford*. 278pp. Index. ISBN 978-1-874157-25-0. A Belfast Magazine No. 38. 2011. €18, £15.

Thoughts On Northern Ireland

This work goes into great detail about that undemocratic entity known as Northern Ireland, how it was deliberately set outside the British democratic political system as an irritant to what was then called the Irish Free State, how the Protestant community was put in charge of the Catholic community resulting in a one-party partial province that became known as the Six Counties. If you're not convinced by Clifford's argument then, in my opinion, you would prefer not to know the truth. Certainly it makes me feel that I have wasted a good few years barking up the wrong tree whether it be in Belfast or London but in reading this book you'll have found the right tree. It is an honest book by a man who is not afraid to examine his own personal situation while living in Belfast a good part of his life, coming from the opposite end of the country from Cork via London. He handles many subjects with great skill and has been an active and a busy observer of life in the Six Counties like in the cultural field when he tackles dialect and poetry and the special relationships the Protestant community have had, for example, with their police force.

Certainly it is true to say the RUC has been the Protestant People's Police and still is to some extent as the PSNI (Police Service Northern Ireland). A couple of years ago when visiting East Belfast I noticed an elderly woman practically dragging a policeman to her door while scolding him for not reacting quickly

enough to a break-in. The policeman was nothing more than embarrassed. Further along that road you would see a policeman chatting to some girls and another one sitting on a chair beside a street stall joking with the public who were buying vegetables. A sure way of gathering Intelligence even though they weren't probably deliberately trying to do so. But at the top of the road was the Short Strand a tough Catholic ghetto which had won many battles against attempted Protestant pogroms.

It's hard to know what position the newly recruited Catholics to the PSNI might be in concerning the Protestant and Catholic communities. Around the 1940s and early 1950s there were still remnants of the old RIC from the South in the RUC. They either patrolled the city centre of Belfast or the Falls Road. Neither Protestant nor Catholic communities wanted them. The Protestants at around the beginning of the 20th Century felt they would one day enforce Home Rule and many of their barracks were put under siege in the Protestant areas with stones being thrown and shots being fired from the barracks in retaliation, killing a number of the demonstrators. On the Falls Road their accents were mocked and children pointing toy guns at them had their ears slapped. They were usually a fine body of men standing well over six feet and well-built. They made the most of Belfast males look like runts.

Brendan also brings up the lackadaisical

attitude of the British Army towards WW2 as noticed by Ralph Ingersoll who was sent by the American Army to England in 1942 in order to discuss the opening of the Second Front in France against Germany but Britain, as the paragraph reads, didn't want any serious military engagements at that moment. This attitude must have been contagious for British Army personnel always seemed to on a picnic in Northern Ireland. In Carryduff, County Down where I lived there was camp with its own cricket pitch on which soldiers seemed to play cricket all day until sunset during the Summer. Then came the US Army who took over the camp. They parked their heavy trucks on the cricket pitch which started a British army officer swearing at them but the US troops still kept parking and churning up the pitch until it became a muddy ploughed field.

Catholics in the Carryduff area numbered about seventy out of maybe two thousand Protestants during WW2. Another thirty Catholics came from outside the area from Drumbo when the US Army opened up its chapel to the Catholics. This brought a Protestant demonstration outside the camp in which stones were thrown at the sentries. The answer of that Army was to send out an armoured half-track mounted with a heavy machine-gun which fired over the heads of the demonstrators. Anyway the Protestant girls in the area had a better relationship with the US Army which some say might have caused the demo though we as Catholics compromised and saw the demo as having dual purposes. The Mass continued with a priest from Belfast and two US soldiers as altar boys.

This conflict also broke out in mainly Catholic Downpatrick possibly also with dual reasons like jealousy over girls and the idea that the US Army might invade

Report

Priory Hall And The *Irish News*

On 18th October, the *Irish News* carried a story about the Priory Hall development in Donaghmede, Dublin. Residents of this new development have been forced to evacuate because of severe safety risks, resulting from faulty construction. The paper's story was headlined *Hunger Striker's Tenants Get Two Days To Evacuate*, and named Thomas McFeely as a part-owner of Coalport Development, the company which built the apartment block. None of the other owners were named. Mr. McFeely was picked out for negative

publicity because of his Hunger Strike of 53 days in the Maze in 1980. After his release in 1989, he left the republican movement and worked in the building trade.

What the *Irish News* failed to mention, however, was the involvement in this building development of Anthony McIntyre, the former republican, who was cultivated academically by Lord Bew, and is best-known for attempts to blacken Sinn Fein for 'selling out' the struggle. He is known in particular for his work as "historical researcher" and the Boston College database of testimonies of republicans, given to be published after they died.

McIntyre, a Site Manager for Coalport Development, has been described by the Company itself as having overseen on its behalf "all facets of constructing building sites from initial stages to completion". He was its lead agent at Priory Hall from 2007 to 2011. It is said that information about McIntyre's role in the Priory project has been removed from the Internet since the project gained notoriety.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that the *Irish News* shielded McIntyre from negative publicity because his politics suits its general anti-Sinn Fein propaganda offensive, whilst targeting McFeely for failing to blacken his erstwhile comrades in the Republican movement.

the neutral South. The US Army did enter Northern Ireland like an invading army. In one incident a bus of the Northern Ireland Transport Board was blocking a narrow country road and apparently not going fast enough. A US officer in a jeep drew along the bus and shot the driver dead, plunging the bus over the hedge and down a twenty-foot gradient. Then there were the odd outbreak of shoot-outs between black and white US soldiers in some camps. The US camp in Carryduff consisted of the 608th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company plus burial parties for D-Day. The camp had a preponderance of army padres. One Mormon and one Jehovah Witness padre came round the doors regularly in uniform trying to convert the inhabitants of Carryduff.

Obviously the Belfast priest Father Kelly had approached the US authorities about allowing Catholics to use the US chapel. When the US Army left the Carryduff Camp it was filled with Gibraltarian refugees who had been evacuated from The Rock during WW2 and were waiting to return. This was another Catholic influx into the area which didn't go down well with the Protestant community. But the Gibraltarian flashed knives very quickly when accosted or had sectarian slogans shouted at them so they were left alone.

Bolstered by this large refugee population the Catholic Church decided to build a Church. The foundation stone was laid in May, 1945 and blessed and dedicated in 1946. Paddy Mallon, a local owner of a 1930s motor inn, donated the land free. It was on a hill and could be seen for miles. Mallon was a wealthy man and had made a lot of money out of the US Camp personnel plus, it being the only pub in Carryduff, the Protestant community were forced to use it. It was usually full after the numerous Orange parades. Again there was uproar about a Catholic Church being built in a dominant Protestant area. Mallon, who was also a landlord and owner of a lot of property and with influence, had the RUC guard the site from its foundations to its completion. He fed them well and kept them in drink. Bishop Mageean, whom Brendan mentions, came to dedicate and bless the completed Church. My mother was introduced to him as a Catholic stalwart who resisted the bigots of Carryduff by suffering their slings and arrows through hell and high water. Little did he know, it was my father, a Protestant, who was keeping his Catholic family in Protestant areas out of his fear of living in a Catholic one. The Bishop would never know that, through my father's determin-

ation not to be driven out of the area with his Catholic family, he had become the catalyst for re-building the Catholic population in Carryduff. But he did protect us at the risk of his own life.

Bishop Mageean was a grassroots bishop and a realist who preferred to approach the Protestant problem with stealth. If I had of being aware of his outlook on trying to convince the English public about the plight of the Northern Catholic as futile I would never have gone near the Connolly Association in London.

On a visit back to Carryduff a few years ago I saw a sight I thought would never be realised in my life. It was the introduction of Gaelic football to the area: Carryduff GAC, Ceathru Aodha Dhuibh CLC, founded 1972.

Pender's Census of Ireland (1659) makes reference to Caroduff (Carryduff) as having a population of twelve residents—eleven Scottish and English and only one native Irish. As time went on a much larger Catholic Church had to be built in Carryduff because of the rise in the Catholic population. It was allowed to be built by the Castlereagh Borough Council providing it could not be seen from the road. So a great hollow was made in the field. It seems the old church on the hill had disturbed them. This new church came into being in 2002. It had taken 350 years for the Catholics to have a Church in the Carryduff/Drumbo area again. The old Catholic Church of the 17th Century is just a stump of a round tower in the grounds of a Protestant Church in Drumbo.

The Carryduff Catholic Church gives the figures of 100 Catholic living in Carryduff in 1946; in 1966—600; in 1986—2,500; in 2002—6,000. Quite an increase from that solitary native Irish back in 1659. And why should I be gleeful when I am a total non-believer, when I have never been able to believe in a supreme being, even as a child. I've never been an atheist for I never believed in the first place. At times it felt like having one chromosome missing. I had had my First Communion in the US Army Camp followed by Confirmation in the new 1946 Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I was a bit young for being a dissenter but in the end being a Northern Catholic is my nationality. Willie Gallagher, a former communist Scottish MP, came to Belfast in 1950 to hold a public meeting. He proclaimed himself a non-believer to the mainly Protestant audience. A heckler shouted: "What are you going to do when you're on your death bed?" His reply was: "I'll die",

The author mentions the Ulster dialect

as something he likes, the way of speech as spoken. It's a great pity then it is being forced into the straitjacket of a so-called Ulster-Scots language. Dialect can never be a language. It has been said back in 1964 in a book called *Ulster Dialects—an Introductory Symposium*. Though it was printed by HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationery Office) and published by the Ulster Folk Museum, it brings in the nine Counties of Ulster. This book considers the Elizabethan English influence in the Ulster language as well as the Lowland Scots and the Irish language influence in the dialect or dialects, for there are a number of them. But one thing is missing that Clifford brought up and that is the Scot's Gaelic influence. Scots Catholics also migrated to the North maybe to settle or were settled.

Their influence isn't mentioned by the Ulster-Scots people. There are many Scots Catholic names around the North, especially in West Belfast. I see the Ulster-Scots movement as an attempt to combat the spread of the Irish language and with having a sectarian agenda. There can be no one Ulster-Scots language as dialects differ from County to County and even from townland to townland. My mother from Tyrone had many dialect words to the complete opposite of my father who knew some from an urban Belfast environment. Cheap canvas shoes in Tyrone were called 'gutties' but in Belfast they became 'mutton-dummies'. My mother, a bit of a snob, only used her dialect words to satirise people, especially Protestant bigots. My father, the eternal student and self-educator, only used his when angry and slightly out of control. I dared not use dialect words when in the home. At the local Protestant school no pupil also dared use a dialect word or they would find themselves pulled to the front of the class by the ear, male or female. So the playground became the place to bring out the dialect and enter into a competition for the best ones.

I recently wrote down the dialect words I could remember and came to near three hundred, but I couldn't make a language out of that. Examining an Ulster-Scots dictionary I found it to be full of bits and pieces from all over the Six Counties with rural mixed with urban, County mixed with County, and townland mixed with townland. A number of dialect words that I know weren't even mentioned. They are mainly Carryduff and Belfast dialect words. I would never want to mix them together if I were to write them into some sentences.

So many words are the image of a

person for the words speak of metaphor and metaphor is one of the joys of Northern language. Someone may say in a rural area, to describe someone going red with anger, as: '*Going red in the comb*'. A hen's comb of course when they became aggressive to one another. An urban person trying to describe someone in a similar situation my look around quickly to find some expression with: '*His face turned as red as that car's tail-light*'. You just can't have one overall language to deal with that. Their dictionary also isn't earthy. Maybe it can't, because it would have to admit that some Elizabethan English words and expressions still exist in the Six Counties like for example: '*He's fairly failed*', meaning ill-health and losing weight. The earthy bit missing is: '*Hungry-lukin' whoor*'. It can mean being sterile or being over ambitious. Everything animate and inanimate seems to be a *whoor* up North.

In the mid-Fifties I travelled extensively through the North delivering flour and animal feed. I never came across anyone I couldn't understand, yet the Ulster-Scots dictionary gives sentences as difficult to understand as some of Rabbinic Burns's poetry. Dialect words are usually mixed into a sentence that contains plain English words and if you don't completely understand a word you can have a good guess by its sound and emphasis. Florence Mary Wilson wrote the ballad *The Man From God Knows Where* about Thomas Russell of County Cork when he was active in County Down with the United Irishmen and later the ill-fated Emmett's Rebellion, after which Russell was hanged on the 21st of October, 1803. She doesn't go mad with her dialect words and therefore heightens the tension and atmosphere of the ballad. You know for sure this poet comes from North County Down. Try writing in Ulster-Scots without a word of plain English.

We used to talk of Ballymena *Scotch* but not as a language but in referring to the accent used sounding Scottish. The Ulster-Scots crowd claim an interpreter might be needed when talking to such a person. I have worked with the Ballymena *Scotch* and understood every word. Ian Paisley, senior, was born in Ahoghill, a village four miles from Ballymena town. A joke prevalent in the 1950s says that '*Ahoghill is where soda bread is called pastry*'. Meaning strong rural Scottish accent, rough food. Paisley obviously modified his accent for public speaking but he still has the Ballymena rural accent, likewise Liam Neeson, the Hollywood actor, born in Ballymena, where his mother still lives. Four or five years ago the Ballymena Borough Council rejected a motion to give him the Freedom of Ballymena. With a name like that he is obviously a Catholic.

Finally, Brendan writes of Seamus Heaney and his poem *Docker* from the collection: *Death of a Naturalist*. The first verse starts: "*There, in the corner, staring at his drink./The cap juts like a gantry's crossbeam...*" The second verse starts with: "That fist would drop a hammer on a Catholic—". First of all he's not a docker who unloads ships in port, he's a shipyardman making ships and his cap could never look like "*a gantry's crossbeam*".

I doubt if Heaney has ever been to a shipyard. Those gantries are long gone to be replaced by the huge Goliath crane standing at 315 feet and the Samson at 348 feet in 1969. There were gantries when I worked in the Belfast shipyard but I didn't see any looking like a *bucklep* (flat cap): mostly they were roosts for hundreds of thousands of starlings at night. Also, shipyardmen didn't drop hammers on Catholics. They mostly dropped them on one another by accident, especially when working in the vast engine-rooms of ships. There had been pogroms in the early 1920s against Catholics working in the shipyard because the then management allowed it to happen. During the 30-year War, the management forbade this under the pain of being sacked and barred from the shipyard for life. Result—no pogroms, though one Catholic was murdered by someone entering the shipyard from outside, obviously tipped off by someone inside or the killer couldn't have found his way around such a vast industrial complex. Some Protestant Trade-Union shop stewards had permission to carry handguns to protect themselves or any of their members being threatened with death. Their finest aspiration was to be non-sectarian but that was impossible so the next best thing was to tone down sectarianism. It was remarkable during such a bitter period for the shipyard to be the safest place to be. Joe Cahill, one of founders of the Provisional IRA, who died aged 84 in July 2004, worked in the shipyard as a joiner during the 1950s/60s. He eventually contacted asbestosis, sued Harland & Wolff, and was awarded £30,000 in May 2004. He said himself that he had no problems working in the shipyard with his Protestant workmates. Danny Morrison's father also worked in the shipyard as a painter and told me he had no problems.

I had a Protestant name as a Catholic and being a communist agitator: I had no problems though it probably leaked out what I really was, in such a family-orientated area like Northern Ireland. I didn't notice the more overt Catholics having any problems. Of course there is sectarian talk going on all around you every day but you've got to ride with it.

Instinctively operating on similar lines as Bishop Mageean about the futility of telling the English public about the plight of the Northern Catholic, you didn't try to tell the Ulster Protestant how Catholics suffer in order to convert them to a non-sectarian approach. There is no such a thing there as a non-sectarian approach in the Six Counties. Sectarianism is a way of life and you get to know what is benign and what can be terminal. If terminal, it's war and in ceasefire times you have to take things by stealth as Bishop Mageean and Father Kelly did in restoring the Catholic Church to Carryduff after 350 years.

Protestant militancy in the shipyard was a minority expression in more benign times. The vast number of the 30,000 Protestants working there during my time there were just the universal worker you will find everywhere in the world. There is a time near the 12th of July (Orangeman's Day) in the shipyard when as they say: '*the blood is up*', a sort of a cooling off towards Catholics but like a bad cold it is soon over. Shipyard Catholics generally didn't spread it around in their neighbourhood of Falls Road/Glen Road that they worked in the shipyard. It wouldn't fit the myths of those still living in the early 1920s. I've been good friends with young Orangemen and B'Specials and the born-again in the shipyard, for that's how things work. There exists such as work-relationships or a huge heavy industry like a shipyard couldn't function.

I read somewhere that Seamus Heaney had decided to live in Dublin after the publication of his poem: *Docker*. It appears he was being threatened. After I read the poem I felt like also threatening him and sending him on his way to that West Brit fantasising literary mob in Dublin.

Seamus Heaney once said that the Ulster dialect belonged to an older Ulster, and should stay there, I suppose he meant to say. No doubt many of his poems are beautifully constructed with elegant language but it's like ringing the doorbell of a well-appointed house and getting no answer for no one has ever lived there. He would probably see my notion on this matter as treachery from a fellow Catholic, considering the gnashing of teeth from Ulster Protestant poets at his getting the Nobel Prize for Literature. There is also that *coterie* of *Ulster* academia in the University of British Columbia, which I came across during a visit there in 1979, who feel it is a Northern Catholic victory that should be continually dragged through the mud by way of preferring Yeats.

Wilson John Haire

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

PROMISSORY NOTES

The Irish Times (16.12.11) reported:

"...the Government has quietly downgraded its campaign to persuade the European Central Bank to change the terms of the 30 billion euro of promissory notes it issued to bail out Anglo Irish Bank..."

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Government—and in particular Michael Noonan—has been pursuing a red herring for the last year.

Before the last General Election Fine Gael and Labour gave the impression that Senior Debt could be 'burned' if the Government would only stand up to the EU. When the new Government decided not to confront the EU, Noonan and his colleague Brian Hayes pretended that a new and better deal could be obtained over the Promissory Notes. The benefit of this strategy was sold by giving a falsely negative impression of the existing deal.

The previous Government issued Promissory Notes of about 31 billion to Anglo and Irish Nationwide (now the *Irish Bank Resolution Corporation*). These Promissory Notes or IOUs can be used as collateral by the bank to raise finance from our Central Bank. The money from the Central Bank is authorised by the ECB and our Central Bank does not pay interest on it.

The Irish Bank Resolution Corporation (IBRC) pays interest on the loans from the Central Bank of Ireland. But this is a case of the left hand washing the right hand. The interest costs of one State institution (IBRC) represent profits to another (the Central Bank of Ireland).

The IBRC receives interest income for the Promissory Notes from the State. This interest income will equal a total of 16.8 billion over a 20 year period. But again we are talking about the State dealing with itself. The 16.8 billion interest cost to the State is revenue to the IBRC (a State institution).

The real cost to the State is the cost of borrowing from non-State institutions to repay the Promissory Notes. This is likely to be far less than the 16.8 billion in interest that it pays the IBRC. The reason for this is that we can now borrow from the EU/IMF at lower interest rates than the interest that is paid to the IBRC.

AN EMBARRASSING CLIMBDOWN?

The Irish Times report gives the impression that the EU has taken an

intransigent position and the Government has meekly acquiesced. The truth is far more embarrassing: *the Irish Government has been wasting everyone's time*. A cut in the interest rate on Promissory Notes would only mean that the IBRC (a State institution) would receive less money from another State institution. A rescheduling of the debt involving the State repaying the Promissory Notes over a longer period would have a similar effect: the value of the payments to IBRC would be less. But the underlying financial position would not have changed. So, unless bondholders are 'burnt'—which has been ruled out—the State would still have to find the money to pay the IBRC.

SOLVENCY AND LIQUIDITY

Readers might well ask why has the financing of the IBRC been made so complicated. The reason is that when the financial crisis first emerged the ECB printed money or—to be technical—pumped Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) into distressed banks on the understanding that the banks had a liquidity problem and that these 'loans' at very low interest rates would be repaid very quickly. As the crisis developed it became clear that this ELA would not be repaid quickly. The ECB found that it was, in effect, subsidising various countries (e.g. Ireland) whose banks were insolvent. If the EU was one country with one regulatory authority this might be acceptable. But it isn't.

The complicated mechanism described above is a means of converting bank debt to sovereign debt. It is a way of forcing Ireland to take responsibility for its banking crisis. The ECB's position is not unreasonable. The rest of the EU might well decide that it is in its collective interests to help Ireland. But that is a political decision. It is not the responsibility of the ECB.

We Irish, very understandably, want sovereignty when it comes to our tax system, but want other people to sort out our banking system. That is not really a defensible position.

NONSENSE

The Government parties and Sinn Féin have been allowed talk absolute nonsense on the banking crisis. Fine Gael and Labour want to blame current problems on the failings of the previous Government, while Sinn Féin's strategy is to become the main opposition party. But if propaganda has no relationship to the real world it becomes ineffective.

Michael Noonan has claimed in the Dáil that the Promissory Notes will cost us 47 billion euro. This is like a person saying that he bought a car for 30,000 euro but because he paid 17,000 in interest over a twenty year period the "real" cost is

47,000. (Remember in the case of the Promissory Notes the real interest costs are likely to be far less than 17 billion over the 20 year period).

Sinn Féin's line is even more nonsensical. It is claiming that the cost of the Promissory Notes is 74 billion. It arrives at this figure by charging interest on the 47 billion for ten years (why stop at 10?!). So Sinn Féin is not only including interest on the principal (as Fine Gael does), but charging interest again on the principal and interest of the 47 billion to arrive at the 'real' cost.

FIANNA FÁIL

It is difficult to understand why Fianna Fáil has been so passive while all this is being said. Perhaps it hopes that, like George Foreman in the famous "*rumble in the jungle*" fight against Muhammad Ali, the Government parties and Sinn Féin will punch themselves out. But if this ever happens there is no guarantee that Fianna Fáil like Ali will be still standing.

Fianna Fáil has not only a party political duty, but a national duty to defend its record in Government. Its failure to do so has degraded political discourse in this country.

THE BUDGET

The Budget was not as bad as most people expected and yet the Government appeared quite fragile, notwithstanding its overwhelming majority. It was surprising to see Michael Noonan raise the white flag so quickly on Disability Benefit for under 18 year olds in response to some very mild criticism from Fianna Fáil's Michael McGrath on RTE's *Prime Time*.

The previous day the normally smooth Pat Rabbitte was caught saying that France and Germany had more clout than Ireland. Sean Fleming of FF and Mary Lou McDonald (SF) pounced on this *faux pas*. Fleming said that Rabbitte was showing an inferiority complex in relation to the national interest and McDonald said all the nations of the EU were equal.

Could this have been more than a slip of the tongue by Rabbitte? The Government in its propaganda has been claiming that it was "*restoring*" the reputation of Ireland abroad. The implication is that the reputation of Ireland has been damaged. This is not exactly a frame of mind conducive to asserting the national interest.

Finally, what can be said of Patrick Nulty, Labour's By-Election winner? Other Labour Party TDs could claim that they were elected on a Labour Party platform. Nulty, on the other hand, was elected after the Programme for Government had been agreed with Fine Gael. Nothing in the Budget should have been a surprise to him.

All of this does not augur well for the Government. ●

ITEMS FROM 'THE IRISH BULLETIN' – 6

The "Irish Bulletin" (7th July 1919 – 11th Dec.1921) was the official organ of Dáil Eireann during the 1919 – 1921 period. Lawrence Ginnell, then Director of Publicity for the Dáil, first started it in mid 1919 as a "summary of acts of aggression" committed by the forces of the Crown. This newsheet came out fortnightly, later, weekly. We reprint below the summaries published for December 1919.

December:-	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total.
Raids:-	10	4	2	1	2	505	524.
Arrests:-	1	-	2	-	-	4	7.
Sentences:-	-	-	2	1	-		3.
Proclamations & Suppressions :-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2.
Armed Assaults:-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3.
Courtmartials:-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3.
Daily Total:-	11	4	8	2	6	511 =	542

December:-	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	Total.
Raids:-	-	8	5	53	121	11	188.
Arrests:-	4	4	3	6	9	6	32.
Sentences:-	5	4	-	1	1	-	11.
Proclamations & Suppressions:-	-	2	3	-	1	2	8.
Deportations:-	-	-	-	-	9	-	9.
Armed Assaults:-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.
Courtmartials:-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.
Daily Totals:-	9	18	11	60	131	20	249.

Date:-	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	Total.
Raids:-	2	102	-	4	-	12	120
Arrests:-	1	2	-	2	1	-	6.
Sentences:-	6	2	3	-	1	6	18.
Courtmartials	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.
Proclamations & Suppressions:-	1	2	-	-	-	-	3.
Armed Assaults:-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2.
Daily Total:-	11	108	3	7	2	19	150.

Date:-	22nd	23rd	24th	27th	Total.
Raids:-	4	-	7	60	71.
Arrests:-	1	-	2	4	7.
Sentences:-	-	1	-	-	1.
Courtmartials	1	3	-	-	4.
Suppressions:-	-	-	1	-	1.
Armed Assaults:-	-	-	-	1	1.
Daily Totals:-	6	4	10	65	85.

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30th December 1919.

HOW TO RESTORE LAW & ORDER.

Lord French in a message to the Town Council of Wallasey, Cheshire, says he will not be deterred from the work of restoring law and order in his native land. Lord French was appointed Viceroy of Ireland in May 1918. The following table of acts of aggression on the part of the English Government in Ireland shows how he restores law and order.

	1917.	1918.	1919.
Military Murders.	7	6	7
Deportations.	24	21	22
Armed Assaults on Civilians.	18	81	82
Raids on Private Houses.	11	256	12,689
Arrests.	349	1,107	963
Courtmartials.	36	52	259
Sentences.	269	973	778
Proclamations & Suppressions.	2	32	364
Suppressions of Newspapers.	3	12	26
TOTAL.	719	2,624	15,390

In the six weeks ending the 20th of December of this year, Lord French's forces raided 2,829 private houses, arrested 162 men and women charged with political offences, sentenced 126 of these men and women, disperse at the bayonet point 27 peaceful meetings, issued 39 proclamations and suppressions and deported four Irishmen without trial or charge, making a total of 3,192 acts of provocations for six weeks as compared with a total of 719 such acts for the whole year 1917. The sentences passed on "political" offenders in these six weeks totalled 49 years and three months.

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HISTORY AND IRISH ACADEMIA

"Happy the land that needs no heroes"
Bertold Brecht

Whilst engaging with any kind of British media, whether watching the TV news or reading newspapers there is no escaping how militaristic British culture actually is. And the heroising of their war combatants has reached almost farcical proportions. That of course is the prerogative of *their* society as one of our English friends recently rather hotly pointed out. He—of course—got it wrong. We Irish only care when it intrudes into our society and where members of our political/media and academic communities commit us to celebrating foreign wars a la Britain. And the ridiculous idea is that—because some of our people were so economically disadvantaged that they had no other option but to enrol in the Army of Britain—we now should be canonising those poor souls for this. That, in my opinion, is a step too far.

At the same time we have the continual sniping on those of our people who actually fought for our own freedom—there is no parity of esteem even here—because they are being denounced as either "sectarian" or "psychopathic killers" by our historians. But ask yourself the question: are the Irish of today enrolling in the British Army? They are most assuredly are not and still Britain's killing machine has over 10,000 soldiers stationed in Afghanistan and too many other countries in between to even mention. But our welfare state looks after the very people who would have to join that Army in the past, yet none of our historians seem to bring up mention of that fact. Or is it that Britain had only *two just wars* that allowed for Irish participation? And what of Northern Ireland? In the many deaths mentioned in the UK news—almost nightly—there is never any mentioned that come from that area. One of the saddest sights I witnessed was when the UK Prime Minister visited the troops in Afghanistan recently in a so-called morale booster for the upcoming Christmas season. He asked a young squaddie what he liked best about being part of the troops and the young lad stated that having his wife and family receive the extra £5,000 pounds was the best part of being away in Afghanistan. Out of the mouths . . .

JOHN A. MURPHY

In the free Cork newspaper, *Cork Independent*, 15th December 2011, there was a small side-bar profile of the above-named under the title of "Emeritus Professor of Irish History, UCC" which recalls to mind G.B. Shaw's famous saying: "Titles distinguish the mediocre, embarrass the superior, and, are disgraced by the inferior."

The reason he has popped up again is that he has brought out a book: *Where Finbarr Played: A Concise Illustrated History of Sport in University College Cork, 1911-2011* (Argosy Books). Of course, being Murphy, the title itself is a misnomer as the etching on the outer walls of the Honan Chapel bears the legend: "Where Finbarr taught let Munster learn". This lovely inscription was much scorned by Murphy in his days as an actual lecturer of Irish history where his revisionist *imprimatur* bore its own bitter fruit. And of course that legacy continues ever more contorted in the vicious posturings of the latest cohort of historians. Now Murphy finds that bringing out pictorial reminiscences fills a nostalgic culture and his wares show up fully his limitations as a scholar. But still he gets the full media attention that seems to be the right of anyone associated with the revisionist cadre. There is a mention in the filler by a Kate Murray which is what caught my eye. We are told that—

"John A. Murphy, from 1977-1992 was an independent member of Seanad Éireann. He was noted for his advocacy of Anglo-Irish relations and says,

"I used my historical knowledge to advance political arguments"."

I will let it to my readers to make up their own minds about how Murphy's "advocacy" led to peace in our island. While he was taking tea with the British Ambassador (as we now know) and visiting British warships docked in our ports for the odd cocktail party, we will let history judge the UCC Professor for his efforts at bringing peace to the killing fields of Northern Ireland.

ELMA COLLINS

I wrote some time ago in the *Irish Political Review* about how Elma Collins discredited the teaching of Irish history in our schools. In an interview she gave to *History Ireland*, Spring 1997, titled *No Heroes Now* she was introduced as—

"a writer of history textbooks who had a profound if unsung, influence on the generation of students who have passed through the Southern school system over the past thirty years. Between teaching at

the Institute of Education, Dublin, tutoring at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, being an active member of the History Teacher's Association of Ireland and editing its journal 'Stair'y since 1978' —

her role in shaping the history of Ireland was colossal. In my article at the time, I showed how she traced her formation as a revisionist from those whom she regarded as being in the forefront of a new approach to Irish history—people like Maureen Wall, Dudley Edwards, Desmond Williams, Kevin B. Nolan and Jack Watt. But my biggest problem with her was her assertion that she told a girl who asked her: "but Miss, are there no heroes now?" that there were *not* as they all had "sordid political reasons" for their work for Irish freedom, reducing the poor thing to tears—(even though they gave up their lives for that goal, JH). So imagine my stupefaction when I read in *History Ireland*, November/December 2011, under the title: *No History, No Future?* the very same woman Elma Collins now moaning over the fact that changes to the Junior Cert curriculum being considered by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) will "effectively marginalise history as a subject".

Collins—now seeing what *she created*—is belatedly realising that the take-up of history is on the wane and that the new Minister for Education, Ruaidhrí Quinn, "as part of his agenda" is making mandatory certain subjects, while stating that schools "can offer small modules of history", with the result inevitably in "goodbye history". And, Collins asks, "if history vanishes from the junior cycle of schools, how many will there be studying it at senior level?" Thus the revisionists have simply destroyed history and see the writing on the wall for themselves as teachers, academics and writers of specialist magazines like *History Ireland*! When it comes to *their interests* suddenly there is a crisis. What riles me most is that we in the *Irish Political Review*, Aubane, and Athol *et al* have been saying this for what seems like forever but were written off as some kind of lunatics. But who is crying now? And I have been saying that local history societies were the new hedge schools and their efforts at producing books, pamphlets, events etc are having a renaissance like never before. How dare *History Ireland* now market an academic event under the title of *Hedge Schools* when its Editor has also supped from the poisonous trough of revisionism? In this latest edition as Ms Collins weeps, the Editor has included a quotation from Robert Ballagh—the Dublin artist and activist:

"With a decade of commemorations coming up, are we about to produce a generation of historically illiterate young people, unable to set these events in context and liable to be excessively influenced by those who wish to use these anniversaries for their own purposes?"

I would contest Robert, that the "illiterate generation" are the ones who ran us to the ground with their revisionist *dictat*. And whom does Robert refer to when he writes about those nameless people who would use history for their own purposes? There is no need for shyness on this subject Robert—naming these shadowy people will only clarify things for the rest of us and therefore be beneficial.

Collins goes on to again level charges of nationalist myth-making in the history written pre revisionism, which she says was up to "the 1960's".

"We saw the results of that in 30 years of needless "armed struggle". Better history and better history-teaching played a part in deconstructing the myths of the past from which some of this violence drew its inspiration."

And rather hysterically she queries: "Do we want to risk allowing the myths to grow again"?

Even now—Collins—will not yield to the truth about how the Northern troubles flared only when the Catholics began their quest for civil rights. History can be dying in the schools but she will not give an inch as to who was really responsible. What "better history" resulted in a change in the politics of Northern Ireland? Can't she even now see that it was as a result of the activity of the Provisional IRA that the nature of English policy in the North changed? The two communities now participate in political entities that for the last while have seen the ending of conflict. If Collins and her ilk continue to confuse and conflate their so-called "better history" with the cessation of Northern violence, they are as pie-eyed as ever. And it is their brutal historical illiteracy that added to the mayhem and has caused such a loss of direction in the political and cultural life of the Southern polity itself. There is something deeply shaming about the fact that *History Ireland* in this article by Collins quotes Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD, Fine Gael, as saying before President Obama and the world:

"... that the real wealth of Ireland was our history" ... And yet it is his government that is now about to threaten the very existence of history in our schools"

—and this quotation is then sourced from Matt Kavanagh of *The Irish Times* as if that paper, with its constant promotion of all things revisionist, had nothing to do with this very policy of the new Fine Gael/ Labour Coalition Government.

Julianne Herlihy ©

The Dunmanway Killings

curiouser and curiouser.....

Like Brendan Clifford in his review of the book, *The Battle For Cork* by John Borgonovo (*Irish Political Review*, Dec. 2011), I was also intrigued by Borgonovo's reference to the "unknown IRA gunmen" who carried out the 10 killings in Dunmanway in late April 1922. *Unknown to whom*, I wondered? Mr. Borgonovo goes on to say that the killings only stopped when Brigade Commandant, Tom Hales "threatened publicly to execute any IRA man involved in any new attacks" (p37).

This is a misleading summary of the Hales statement. It gives the impression that he, Hales, was confirming that IRA members were responsible. But that is not what Hales said. He clearly did not know who had carried out the killings. The whole point of his statement was to lay down the law for all, military and civilian. This is abundantly clear when the statement is read in full. Here it is:

"On Friday, 28th April, I issued a definite military order to all Battalion Commandants in this Brigade for transmission to all men under their command that any soldier in the area was neither to interfere with nor insult any person.

If said order will not be rigidly adhered to by all units, those concerned will be dealt with in a manner not alone upholding the rigid discipline of a military force, but in justice to the glorious traditions of the officers and men of the Brigade. Even capital punishment will be meted out if found necessary.

In the case of civilians all such offenders will be vigorously hunted up, and handed over to the constituted tribunals acting under Dail Eireann.

I promise to give all citizens in this area, irrespective of creed or class every protection within my power. In furtherance of an order already issued to the IRA to hand in any arms in their possession I now order all citizens holding [sic], without a licence, to hand them into the O.C.'s Barracks, at Bandon, Clonakilty, Ballineen, Dunmanway and Kinsale.

Anybody found in possession of arms in this area after this date will be severely dealt with.

(Signed)

BRIGADE COMMANDANT TOM
HALES."

The statement does not specifically target the IRA, as suggested by Mr. Borgonovo: it applies to everyone.

Mr. Borgonovo suggests that Tom Hales made some kind of distinction between the treatment he would mete out to killers of victims who were hardly cold—some killed that very day—and the killers involved in "new attacks". He did not do so and it is despicable on Borgonovo's part to suggest he did. This is reminiscent of the Peter Hart methodology which Borgonovo has hitherto done a lot to expose and discredit.

The Unionist *Cork Constitution* on May 1st commended Hales' statement unreservedly—and they would have been more than willing to find any shortcomings in it if any could be found. And that paper did not suggest that IRA members had done the killings. If it had done so, or if anyone had—no doubt Hales would have demanded to see their evidence. Moreover, the statement makes clear what could happen to anyone if found guilty.

I am sure Hales knew all his IRA members and could easily confirm the identity of many others outside his area of responsibility if necessary. I think the combined knowledge of Barry, O'Donoghue, O'Hegarty and plenty of others would know every single member who could be relevant. Local Commanders of Armies usually know their soldiers and the IRA Volunteer Army was at the time a more intimate army than most. There was not likely to be any unknown—or unknowable—members to its leaders.

Mr. Borgonovo could not have written as he did, if he had quoted the Tom Hales order, in whole or in part.

In checking out the Tom Hales order, I happened to look at the Inquest reports on the victims.

As far as I know these reports still provide the most immediate and direct evidence we have about these killings. And in one case we are given a specific reason for the killings, a reason given by one of the killers on the spot. Surely that should be the end of the matter—should it not?

Giving evidence on the killing of her husband it is reported that:

"Mrs. Alice Gray, widow of the deceased presented a most pitiable spectacle, and completely broke down in giving her evidence in response to queries

by the Coroner and Mr. O'Mahony, Co. Inspector. Shortly, her evidence was that in response to repeated knocking her husband came down and the door was burst in. She heard three or four shots fired, and voices saying loudly "Take that you Free Stater, you Free Stater, you Free Stater; take that, you Free Stater" repeating the words "Take that you Free Stater" several times. Then they left and there seemed to be a good number of them, judging by the noise they made" (Cork Examiner, 1 May, 1922).

If this is all as it seems, and we cannot assume that Mrs. Gray had any reason to make up a pack of lies within a few days of the atrocity, it means, for a start, that the history of Ireland should really be re-written somewhat. Certainly, there were conflicts and tensions due to accidents and misunderstandings over the 'Treaty', usually relating to the evacuation of barracks but these were usually sorted out. But I would suggest that the organised shooting of civilians who were, allegedly, Free State sympathisers was something that was qualitatively different from anything else that was happening at the time. Indeed, they should be looked on as the first killings of what is called the 'civil war'. In other words the time the 'civil war' started really needs to be brought forward by about two months. Although a failed attempt to set off the War proper, it was a real deliberate attempt to precipitate a shooting war between the two sides by a marauding gang of murderous anti-Treatyites!

It must be remembered that this killing was done, despite all the non-stop contemporaneous efforts by *both sides* to avoid war, *before* the agreed Election Pact between both sides, *before* the agreed Constitution between both sides, and two months *before* the attack on the Four Courts. This 'Civil War' motive does not therefore seem credible in the circumstances. But it is curious that our academic historians have not drawn attention to it, as it is the only evidence there is.

Why would a known Unionist/Loyalist be shot for being a Free Stater by a republican in April 1922? That would not be his defining characteristic to any anti-Treaty Republican, or to any kind of Republican, by any stretch of the imagination. It would be about the most irrelevant fact about him.

And why are the killers so vocal about their motive? Ensuring their political beliefs were well known to the world? It looks distinctly likely that the killers were protesting too much about their motives. In other words it is suspiciously like an

attempt to 'set up' anti-Treatyites. And who would want to do that? Hardly the governing pro-Treatyite IRA and hardly the neutral IRA. So who?

As this Inquest report was public knowledge at the time, it would certainly have limited the suspects for the anti-Treatyite Tom Hales. If he had taken it at face value, it would have focussed his inquiries on the type of anti-Treatyites who would go on a killing spree against those who tended to support the Treaty within a relatively small area within his command in West Cork. Such people would surely have stuck out like the proverbial 'sore thumb'—being on Commandant Hales' own side of the 'Treaty' division. He must have been very inefficient or indifferent to his responsibilities in not being able to trace such culprits, given these very pointed leads. But those characteristics do not fit the man. So why no arrests?

There was a personal issue here for the anti-Treatyite Tom Hales. His brother, Sean, who was one of the governing pro-Treatyite TDs, would no doubt have been concerned for his own safety if Treatyites were being assassinated, and he would also have taken a very keen interest in identifying the perpetrators who were out to kill people like him. The Hales were the classic case of brothers taking opposing sides on the 'Treaty'—but they would have been at one on finding these killers. Combined they were a formidable force and yet nobody was apprehended, or identifiably suspected!

Consider again the scenario: there was a murderous marauding gang prepared to kill Free Staters and roaming around a small rural area, one which had a tried and tested Army, Police and Court system, but which could not identify or locate them? If this was really so, one might ask—as the German character did in *Fawlty Towers*—"how *did* they vin the var?"

There is another Inquest report on the truly callous killing of young Nagle, one that might give some clues. Nagle's mother stated that the killer had asked him where "*he was employed*". She also said that: "*She did not know either of them and did not think they were from Clonakilty or district*" (Cork Constitution, 1st May, 1922).

These and other details provided by Mrs. Nagle could be significant, in that they show that the killers did not seem to know much about their victim and were not local. The killing of Nagle gives a distinct feeling that suggests the behaviour of professional killers.

Borgonovo mentions Jasper Ungoe-Thomas who wrote on the killings in his biography of his grandfather, Jasper Wolfe, the State Prosecutor at the time and therefore a prime public enemy of the IRA—who attempted to assassinate him three times and also to burn him out. Borgonovo says that Jasper Ungoe-Thomas "*argues that the killings were political rather than sectarian*". But what was the political purpose? And that assessment does not exactly convey the full story of either Jasper Wolfe or Jasper Ungoe-Thomas's views on the matter. What both noted about the killings was that "*they had few, if any, of the signs of a planned IRA operation*". They also noted that the killings occurred across *three* Battalion areas and were clearly in defiance of the "*alpha males*" (their descriptions) who commanded these areas. That is a highly significant point. Army commanders do not easily tolerate any such unauthorised actions 'on their patch', as they represent a distinct challenge to their authority. This suggests that they were not likely to accept such action without finding out—at least—who was responsible.

(Readers should be reminded that Wolfe, the terror of the IRA, went on to be a noted defender of IRA members in the 1920s and was later elected to the Dail for West Cork on a number of occasions. His life and career is a standing rebuttal of the sectarian thesis about the War of Independence.)

There can be all kinds of assumptions and speculations about these killings, based on the few facts available: but two things are indisputable and always need to be borne in mind: none of the killers have been identified, then or since, and the only definite and indisputable fact about IRA involvement is that it helped stop the killings.

Jack Lane

Propaganda as Anti-History:
Peter Hart's 'The IRA and its enemies' examined.

Owen Sheridan.

100pp. 2008. €15, £10.

Troubled History:

A 10th Anniversary Critique Of *The IRA & Its Enemies*

Brian Murphy *osb* & Niall Meehan.

Introduction Ruan O'Donnell.

48pp. May 2008. €10, £7.

<https://www.atholbooks-sales.org>

William Sheehan And Britain's Militarism

A hearing of William Sheehan's address to the Old Athlone Society at Custume Military Barracks on the subject of the War of Independence on November 26th warrants a further look at his book, *A Hard Local War: The British Army And The Guerilla War In Cork 1919-21* (The History Press, Gloucestershire, 2011).

In his introductory chapter, *Historical Revisionism*, Sheehan presents himself as a thorough revisionist. Taking him as a revisionist, he can be summarily dismissed. He is a very poor revisionist.

He undertakes, in the substance of his book, to demolish a number of popular myths peddled by those whom he presents as anti-revisionists. One of these myths is that there was hardly any 'informing' to the British administration by members of the Irish population against the Republicans. Another is that the British Army did not apply disciplined brute force in a well-directed manner to its task of breaking the will of the general populace that had voted for Independence and, by and large, supported the military resistance to Imperial power.

Sheehan writes that there was extensive informing by Nationalists as well as by Unionists, against the Republicans, and that informing was on the increase at the start of 1921 despite the severe measures taken by the IRA to discourage it:

"There was a strong sense [on the part of the British] in the spring of 1921 that an intelligence corner had been turned and that information was starting to flow from members of the public..." (p82).

The information volunteered by members of the public seems to be distinct from, and additional to, information gathered by paid agents—spies—who were successfully planted in the Republican milieu or in the IRA itself:

"By the time of the Truce, a total of 45 undercover agents were working for British military intelligence in the 6th Division area, and of these, 23 were considered reliable. The British Army's assessment of the effect of the IRA's shooting of informers on their intelligence network was that it had little or none, noting that "in every case but one, the person murdered had given no information [and] in that one case the murdered man was an agent known to be untrustworthy" [*Record Of The Rebellion*]. So from the army's perspective, the widespread killing of ex-servicemen and local loyalists had no

impact on their intelligence gathering" (p82).

So there were many informers and many spies acting against the IRA, and the IRA failed to discover all but one of them, and the British Army was doubtful that that one was honestly loyal to it.

I must admit that it is news to me that the pre-revisionist Irish view was that the British had few spies and informers and that these few did little damage. The view of the people amongst whom I grew up, a generation after the war, was that they had done something remarkable by holding out in the face of considerable informing and espionage. What Sheehan writes as a revisionist in this chapter only confirms the pre-revisionist view.

But the last sentence in the passage I have quoted is a *non-sequitor*. He did not prepare the ground for an assertion that the IRA killed ex-servicemen and loyalists at random, assuming that they must be spies. That sentence is a lapse into the revisionist mode proper in a chapter that, up to that point, consisted of old-fashioned factual narrative.

In the following chapter Sheehan demolishes the myth—but whose myth?—that the Army did not apply itself with diligence and intelligence to that task it was given in Ireland. That task was by the disciplined application of brute force—ordered even when apparently disorderly—to break the will of the populace that had voted rebelliously. Curfews, Martial Law, Official and Unofficial Reprisals, Hostages, Execution, and Propaganda were all used for this purpose:

"Curfews, which the British Army deployed as a punitive measure throughout the 20th century, were... aimed primarily at the control of the general population, and only in a secondary sense as an attempt to disrupt IRA activities" (p98).

"The practice of hostage carrying spread nationwide, and the hostages were not confined to the ranks of IRA supporters".

Associated with this was the device of "*civic guards*":

"The principle was that local men, irrespective of any republican, nationalist or unionist connections, were selected and held accountable for any action by the IRA" (p100).

"Official reprisals... are actually a

constant thread in British military policy of the period—the concept of collective punishment" (p102).

"...from January 1921, this policy of official reprisal really seems to have been pursued in an attempt to place pressure on the local population to cooperate with the British Army" (p103).

"The British Army recognised 'that the legal procedure was too slow and cumbersome to be really effective against a whole population in rebellion' [*Record Of The Rebellion*]..." (p113).

So the law was made political. And—

"The policy of executions led to a severe reaction from the IRA" (p105).

This included the adoption by the IRA of the British practice of taking hostages—though in a rather different manner.

The British used hostages, plucked at random from the general population, as human shields on military vehicles. The IRA arrested a Mrs. Lindsay, who had given information to the British, and used her as a hostage to be bargained against a Republican who was under sentence of death. General Strickland was offered a reprieve of Mrs. Lindsay (who was his close friend) in exchange for a reprieve of the Republican. He refused. Both were executed.

Propaganda took the form of attempted exploitation of religious and class/economic issues against the IRA, which was—

"all too aware of the fragile nature of their support in the general Irish population... Many IRA men... believed that most of the Irish population supported the British Army... This lack of support has been noted by historians such as Richard English, when he points out "that many nationalists did not support the killing and maiming which the republican army practised... Michael Laffan's view that that British officers had an overly simplistic view of the republican movement, seeing it as encompassing almost all the indigenous population, is to some extent true but it requires qualification. The army had divided up republican support base into various groups based on their support for violence, and most if not many officers [sic] would have concurred with Laffan's view that "only a small minority of the population was active in its hostility to British rule". The army accepted that most of the population was indifferent or waiting on the outcome of the conflict" (p108).

This population had voted in December 1918 to set up an independent Irish Government. If one looks at the Sinn Fein election programme and at the voting results—leaving aside the egregious red herring that many constituencies, which the Redmondites did not contest because they did

not think they had a hope of winning them, would not have been Republican at all if contested—then the election showed a very clear majority for Independence.

While some revisionists take the electorates in which Sinn Fein got no votes because nobody would stand against them as being anti-Sinn Fein and count the votes which could not be cast as votes against the Sinn Fein project, others do not dispute that Sinn Fein had clear majority support, but argue that the voters did not vote on the issues presented to them in the election. The argument, as far as I can grasp it, is that nationalist Ireland was a faction-ridden society (perhaps not a society at all, but a congeries of factions), that national policy lay beyond the horizons of these factions, that voting in the election was determined by an anarchy of politically-meaningless local feuds, and that, when these factions cast votes in an election whose formal programmes were beyond their ken, the outcome was accidental.

That was the sense of David Fitzpatrick's profoundly undemocratic Trinity College project of going behind the actual election to scrutinise the sub-national local worlds of the electors, and treating their findings (found in accordance with the esoteric techniques of the non-science called Political Science) as being the true election result.

Sheehan does not indulge in any of that anti-democratic revisionist tortuousness—anti-democratic because in what we call a democracy the vote of the populace is not subject to validation or ratification by some higher authority, and least of all by the academic practitioners of some pseudo-science. This was something that Lloyd George had to explain to members of the British democratic assembly who in the Autumn of 1921 opposed the negotiations on the ground that Sinn Fein had not been genuinely elected:

"If you are to say that you will not treat with men as elected representatives because of the methods by which they have been elected, then there is an end to the British Constitution. I have never known a party obtain a majority in the House without the other party saying that the majority had been elected by methods which were discreditable to the very last degree" (31st Oct).

The argument that the Irish did not have the right to have what they voted for is sound and reasonable by comparison with the contention that they did not vote what they voted for because they existed in sub-national fragments, incapable of forming a national will, that in their factional divisions they voted for a welter

of different things, and that the appearance that they voted for national independence was an illusion created by the structure of the British electoral system.

Insofar as the agents of British democracy, who had the job of maintaining British government of Ireland against the Irish democracy, deigned to take notice of the Irish election, their view was much like Professor Fitzpatrick's. It was that the electors did not *really* vote for what they seemed to vote for, and that, when it was made clear to them that they could not have what they seemed to vote for, they would stop voting for it. That was the view of the matter put by Major Street in *The Administration Of Ireland In 1920* (1921).

The Irish populace was given opportunities to revoke its 1918 vote in 1920 and 1921. It did not do so. In the 1920 Local Elections it followed through on the implications of its 1919 vote by voting to detach Local Government bodies from Dublin Castle and attach them to the Dail.

That demonstrate the existence of a stubborn national will to Independence.

Even if it could be shown that the 1918 vote was not actually a vote for national independence, that fact would be made irrelevant by the 1920 vote. If the electors had not applied their minds to the national question in 1918, and considered the consequences of voting for Independence, that could hardly have been the case in 1920. If they had accidentally voted for Independence in 1918, not knowing that they were doing so, they must, when they found what they had voted for, have liked it so much that they voted for it again, in more particular detail, in 1920, despite having been made sharply ware of the consequences during the interval between the two elections.

I do not deny that something like the situation asserted by Professor Fitzpatrick, etc., etc., etc., could not exist. It is certainly possible for the electors in an externally-imposed national election to vote in sub-national fragments. It often happens. The national elections organised in Iraq and Afghanistan by the invasion forces were contested by scores of political parties—about 50 parties in one and about 150 in the other. I forget which way about. These were not national parties capable of governing. They were all expressions of particular, sub-national, concerns, such as Professor Fitzpatrick etc. saw was the case in Ireland in 1918. The invasion forces did their best to conjure the miscellaneous welter of MPs into national Parliaments and Governments, with very

limited success. The national will of the elements that welcomed 'liberation' by the invasion forces was illusory.

It is not that there was no national will in Iraq or Afghanistan. There was. But it existed in connection with the Baath Party in the one case and the Taliban in the other, and the purpose of the invasions was to destroy these centres of national development, and, by means of "*shock and awe*", reduce a great part of the populace to malleable material to be reshaped to the ideals of the invasion forces.

I have never denied the possible moral influence of brute force. The morally destructive efficacy of brute force in human history seems to me to be beyond question. And there are occasions when the scale of disproportion between the modern Western capacity for violence and the defensive capacity of moral entities in other corners of the world is such that these moral entities give way in the presence of that power without it being used, either adapting immorally to it or preferring extinction.

Richard Murphy, the poet, whose family background is foreign colonial, has a poem called *The God Who Eats Corn*. He explains that his father, who was a colonial administrator or missionary (I forget which) was one of the first white men in some corner of Africa (and I think it is relevant to say that he was a Protestant white man) was regarded as a god, and there was therefore surprise that he had to eat. And Sir Arnold Wilson, who was Imperial Commissioner with the British Indian Army that conquered Mesopotamia during the Great War, remarks somewhere that what are called primitive societies—societies living still in their own Paradises—are indelibly tainted when Western power touches them.

Brute force, on the scale on which modern Western democracies are capable of applying it, certainly exerts a moral influence. There is no question but that it can destroy. The only question is whether it can construct, from the ruins of what it destroys, entities made in its own image—or suitably modified in order to serve it while appearing to be of a kind with it.

Iraq and Afghanistan were not primitive societies which withered at a touch. Wilson warned strongly against forming the Middle East into spurious nation-states, but the democratic Parliament at Westminster insisted. About fifty years later the development of a nation-state on liberal Western lines took root in Iraq, but in a political mode outgrown in the West. The West invaded and destroyed that State under the pretext or illusion of democratising it. It

got rid of a dictatorship that was nurturing a liberal secular development and got a fundamentalist religious civil war in its place.

A liberal secular regime was destroyed in Iraq while an attempt was being made to establish one in Afghanistan, where the national development was taking place through the Taliban movement. The liberal secular regime in Afghanistan was never more than a flimsy facade constructed under the shadow of the invasion forces. The liberal secular regime in Iraq collapsed under the impact of colossal *shock and awe*: the Taliban movement in Afghanistan did not. But in neither case were the elections, organised by the invaders, actions constitutive of national government by the national will. The Irish elections of 1918, 1290, and 1921 were.

Military action failed to achieve its declared object in Afghanistan and Iraq. But it did fail, you know, even by Sheehan's own account. Let him praise the ingenuity of the British military authorities in Ireland as much as he pleases, it still failed in its basic task which was "*to break the will of the IRA and the local population*" (p114).

When Ralph Inge, the famous Dean of St. Paul's, wrote in the mid-1920s that the loss of Ireland was the most shameful event in British history, he was stating a self-evident fact in terms of the British order of facts. The slave trade, the vast slave labour camps in the Caribbean, the plunder of India, the conquest and genocide in America and other places, the starvation of the Irish, these were not things to be ashamed of. Britain had the means of understanding that what it did with slavery was abolish it, that what it did to India was cure widows of the habit of immolating themselves on their dead husbands' pyres, that what it did for the Irish starvation was relieve it with soup and free trade—and as for the genocides, Sir Charles Dilke, Gladstone's second-in-command, boasted that the Anglo-Saxons were the greatest exterminating race the world had ever seen—it improved the world by clearing it of the clutter of inferior peoples, "*cheap peoples*" was the term he used (see *Greater Britain*: a best seller around the time of the First Home Rule Bill). But the loss of Ireland was shameful. England had been mastering the Irish since the time of Elizabeth, and then, after winning the greatest (because the most catastrophic), war in history, it fumbled and let them slip.

Sheehan appears to be a British militarist in outlook. And he feels for the British Army because of the unkind things that

are said about its conduct of counter-insurgency against the Irish rebels—they can only be rebels because democracy and elections do not figure in his view of things. He defends British military honour against its critics. And, although he proclaims himself to be a revisionist, these critics all seem to be revisionists.

I would agree with him that revisionist criticism of the British Army is trivial and ignorant. I agree that the British Army was purposeful and resourceful in the way it conducted its war against the Irish. In my own small way I tried to draw attention to the British use of human shields and population controls and destruction of property in the effort to restore the populace to subordination, and it is good to have my view confirmed.

But, after all, the British Army did *not* win. It did not even achieve a stalemate. In the circumstances there was no stalemate to be achieved.

War is not a self-sufficient activity, even in a militarist state like Britain. It is true, as Churchill said, that the English are a warlike people. They become uneasy when they are not fighting a war somewhere. But one has to grant it that for them war always has a purpose beyond itself, and is a means to an end. And the British Army, ingenious and brutal though it was, lost its war against the Irish because it did not enable the purpose for which it was sent to war to be achieved.

The purpose was to break the will to Independence of the Irish. It was a merely destructive purpose. In South Africa twenty years earlier it had achieved—or enabled the Government to achieve—a much more ambitious purpose. It destroyed the Boer Republics by overcoming the Boer Armies on the battlefield and then establishing totalitarian control over the Boer populations, by means of Concentration Camps and chains of fortresses, with such effect that the Boers became willing and active participants in the Empire. In Ireland the task was merely to break the will to independence that suddenly appeared amongst the Irish citizens of the United Kingdom in December 1918, so that they might continue in the status they had held since 1801—or 1829. It was, in that sense, a conservative task. And it was not achieved.

Sheehan said in his speech at Custume Barracks in Athlone that the British purpose in the War was to establish two Dominions in Ireland, suggesting that, with Partition, it had achieved this object. He does not say this in his book. When Angela Clifford commented mildly that

she had seen no evidence that such was the intention of Lloyd George in his response to the 1918 Election, Sheehan veered off the point in a series of side-issues leading nowhere. (It was so far from being the case that Lloyd George set out in January 1919 to make Ireland into two Dominions that he only contemplated Dominion status for the South after two years of war, and he absolutely refused to accord Dominion status to the Six Counties when the Ulster Unionists suggested that they should have equal status to the 26.)

In his book Sheehan complained of "*historical commandeering*" by Aubane (p13). It was surprising then that he backed away, amidst a welter of red herrings, from this softly-phrased comment from Aubane—allowing himself to be "*commandeered*".

Margaret O'Callaghan, in her speech at Athlone, said that Aubane "*policed*" her revisionist friends.

Here we have the language of coercion applied to Aubane, a local history group without financial or institutional power, by members of wealthy and powerful institutions which have considerable power of police over students who aspire to academic careers. It is absurd—but it seems to be true that these functionaries in the powerful ideological institutions of the State do feel "*policed*", oppressed, when a small group is on the loose—though without material resources, and whose publications are not reviewed in the press or noticed in academic publications—and carries on regardless with its own projects. It seems that the comprehensive thought control which they exercise in the educational system is devalued in their eyes—endangered even—if anything in society remains free of it. This is an interesting form of paranoia.

A curious and enlightening incident happened in Athlone. A member of the audience, who had no connection with Aubane and from the look of him was possibly a soldier, took issue with Margaret O'Callaghan's opinion that the War of Independence was unnecessary and achieved nothing because, in the end, Britain only did what it was going to do anyway. In her reply she denied that she had said this. What she had done was to describe the opinion of her good friend and colleague, Lord Bew, with which she did not agree.

I, too, thought she had said this as her own opinion, but I must admit that I had not listened as closely as that other man had. I was out of practice at hearing what was being suggested in the overtones of the tortuous clichés of academic rhetoric and was disinclined to attune myself to the Byzantinism of this new Kremlinology in which it seemed to me that the distinction between revisionist and anti-revisionist,

when isolated, is too vapid to be worth the trouble of getting it. The "discourse", as they say, is revisionist. And O'Callaghan's discourse was shot through with convoluted disparagement of everything to do with Republicanism. No wonder that the honest plain-speaking man heard her saying the opposite of what she thought she was saying.

Sheehan conducts a War Studies course in Cork University. I understand that there is also a War Studies course in UCD, but I have not heard that there is such a course in the Imperial University at the heart of Dublin.

The Irish Army does not fight wars, not even under the euphemism of Defence. It has half a dozen soldiers in Afghanistan, doing Bomb Disposal. The Government can send only half a dozen without the approval of the Dail and the time is not yet ripe for seeking approval. The fact that Irish soldiers are engaged in real military action as part of NATO in Afghanistan is not dwelt upon.

The military action by the Provos, which brought about the present settlement in the north, was in the official view of the State (Government and Fianna Fail) a mere outbreak of murder and mayhem. The society is open to the intensifying militarist propaganda of the USA and Britain, but is without national means of giving outlet to military inclinations worked up by this propaganda. War, which for two generations after 1945 was seen as an aberration which would be phased out if the Cold War ended in favour of Democracy, has been restored to its status as a normal human activity since the triumph of Democracy in the Cold War. Militarism—a predisposition in favour of war—now saturates the world.

Ireland, instead of being a harbinger of the peaceful world to come, has become an aberration—a State without the means of making war in a world where war is the norm and where militarist culture is inescapable. It seems that there are growing forces in Irish society feeling their way towards militarist normality, and these are covertly encouraged by the State.

There is material in Irish history for War Studies—the military resistance to British Parliamentary despotism in the 1640s and 1650s, the resistance to the Williamite conquest around 1690 which laid the basis for the Penal Laws, the Irish Brigades in Continental armies during the Williamite and Hanoverian tyranny when native Ireland was interwoven with Europe, the attempt to form a United Irish Army against the despotic Irish Parliament in the 1790s, the Fenian attempt at military organisation, and of course 1916, the Independence War following the 1918 Election, the intensified military preparations which deterred British occupation in

1939-44, and the remarkable military effort which obliged the British State in the North to mend its ways to some extent.

But it does not seem that these things are the subject of War Studies in UCC and UCD. It seems that what they study is the British way of war, and that the closest study is Counter-Insurgency, which is now the chief form of British military action. And this has the advantage of being close to home. We can study what the British did to us as a form of preparation qualifying us to do it to others.

There is, however, a streak of naivete in Sheehan's imitative war study. It lacks a dimension which is often present in the real thing, which I suppose is natural to a postulant who is being initiated into the mysteries of the matter. He writes, for example, about *The Legal Foundations Of Military Operations* to break the will of the Irish. There is no doubt that these operations were legal. It would be a poor show on the part of a Parliamentary Government if it did not make its actions, whatever they were, legal.

A British author, David French, reviewing Counter-Insurgency operations around the world, *The British Way In Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967* (Oxford 2011), comments:

"The British did conduct their counter-insurgency operations according to the rule of law. However, the implication is questionable that by doing so they acted in ways that were likely to enhance the legitimacy of the colonial state in the eyes of its subjects" (p74).

And:

"The British conducted their counter-insurgency campaigns within the law. But it was a law that they largely created themselves, and it was one that left them with wide latitude to act coercively yet legally. It was not until the second half of the 1950s... that international law really began to constrain what they could do. In the meantime coercion was the mainstay of British counter-insurgency practice" (p137).

The Parliamentary Government, having the law-making process at its disposal, made what laws it needed for every occasion. The difference between government conducted under Parliamentary sovereignty and government unbound by law is merely a difference in the way of putting things, as far as those who are acted upon by the British State are concerned. The British Parliament is its own source and determinant of law and morality. It is not bound by any external law, unless it chooses to go along with it as a matter of expediency for the time being. And, if it finds that it neglected to pass a law authorising certain coercive actions, it can legalise those actions retrospectively. It often did this in its handling of the Irish.

Sheehan has discovered that the British published propaganda pamphlets during those years of military rule in Ireland—and it was military rule, rule resting on force, from 1919 to 1922, after the fig-leaf of the Home Rule Party was cast aside by the 1918 Election, whether there was Martial Law or not: the Ministers of what Sheehan calls the Irish Government—meaning the administration in Dublin Castle—had no constituents in Ireland. One of these pamphlets was entitled, *To The Members Of The IRA* and Sheehan comments:

"The pamphlet gives a brief lesson on the rules of war, and particularly the Hague Convention, with regard to the obligation to wear a uniform and carry arms openly... Another pamphlet advised the IRA that these rules were not drafted just by the British, but by all civilised nations, "in order that war between white men should be carried out in a sportsman-like manner"... Again it is important to remember that those pamphlets were dropped from the air and read by the general public.

"No opportunity was lost to place responsibility for the continuation of the conflict squarely on the shoulders of the IRA. Even the declaration of martial law was indirectly blamed on the insurgents, the propaganda claiming "Great Britain has no quarrel with Irishmen, her sole quarrel is with crime, outrage and disorder..." (p11-2).

The Hague Convention is not cited in Sheehan's references or listed in his Bibliography. The attempt to make war *sportsmanlike* was laudable no doubt, and was certainly in the British interest after it became the dominant Imperial Power. The Committee of Imperial Defence, around 1905, discussed what Britain might agree to at the Hague and what it could not agree. What I recall from a reading of the minutes is that it agreed to outlaw the use of dum-dum bullets in wars between white men, but could not agree to banning them in actions by white men against others.

But that was in the era of the "*white man's burden*". The pamphlet quoted by Sheehan is from the era of the League of Nations, which Britain took a leading part in establishing following victory in its war for Democracy and the Rights of Small Nations. It shows how little the propaganda which roused the masses for war was taken in earnest by those controlling the War and the Peace.

Were the Irish "*white men*" in the relevant sense, or were they, in the language of Major McDowell of the *Irish Times*, "*white niggers*"?

Britain saw the world in terms of hierarchies of people before 1914, after 1918, and for a considerable period after 1945, and it is evident that the Irish ranked low in their hierarchical order. They saw the Irish post-1918 as an essentially subservient people that had somehow got

out of hand. And, if they appealed to them as "white men" to wear uniforms (and make themselves more easily crushed), it was a debating point that might have some influence with the Irish who yearned to be respectable in English eyes.

Twenty years later England launched another World War, lost the opening battle of uniformed armies, and promptly resorted to "ungentlemanly warfare" on Churchill's orders—war out of uniform, in which the enemy was shot at from behind a ditch. And they did this in France, a country which had made a settlement with Germany after failing to make good its declaration of war in regular warfare. England waged "irregular warfare" in France without the consent of the French people. In Ireland the irregular warfare was waged, with consent of the people, in defence of the independent Government which the people had voted for.

The English moral position on regular vs. irregular warfare shifts in response to circumstances. Whichever is to the British advantage in a particular time and place is what is right. I do not say this in criticism of Britain. There is no world authority capable of laying down the law, on the basis of some general standards, on which modes of killing are acceptable, and on which situations resort to force is in order.

The United Nations, under the Vetoist system which is essential to it, is not, and is not capable of becoming, such an authority. And, while Britain played an active part in ensuring that neither the League nor the UN should be such an authority, and that nationalism should therefore continue to characterise international relations, it does not seem reasonable to argue that Britain prevented a general world authority from being established. It is more in accordance with the reality of things to treat the "world authority" project as Utopian.

If Sheehan had written an entirely amoral account of the British military campaign, one might say that was in accordance with the nature of things. But what he has written is not amoral. He tells us that—

"Hart and Augustejn have paid particular attention to the subliminal sectarianism within the conflict" (p15: an interesting term—sectarianism of which one cannot find definite evidence is "subliminal").

What he has written is a British militarist account—which he makes some effort to dissimulate—but which never approaches the subtlety of the "subliminal".

And what can War Studies of this kind be except preparation of the Irish Army for Counter-Insurgency against other peoples? And is it credible that such Studies should be established without official approval?

Brendan Clifford

The following letter to *The Irish Catholic* and *Catholic Herald* was not published

Gallipoli, Two German Officers And The Fog Of Military History

Two German Officers are the heroes of my story, for they dispel the fog of Military History as it is currently presented in Ireland.

The first of these gallant gentlemen, following the defeat of the Kaiser and his own demobilisation, was Re-Commissioned in the Irish National or Free State Army, established its School of Music and conducted the No.1 Army Band. His name was Colonel Fritz Brase.

The band cut a number of records in 1930, "Fantasias", or medleys of Irish airs. Amongst my heirlooms are Fantasia No.1 and Fantasia No.4. The very first air of Fantasia No.1 is *The Foggy Dew*. Immediately following the 1916 Rising this traditional song had a new lyric, celebrating the Insurgents's gallantry. But it cast no slight on those other gallant Irishmen, "the Wild Geese" whom Britannia bade fight in British uniform "that small nations might be free" and "whose lonely graves were by Suvla's Waves and the Shores of the Great North Sea". "Suvla's waves" are by Gallipoli.

Free State Government Ministers and most Senior Free State Army Officers in 1930 had been Insurgents in 1916 and had there been any *animus* against their compatriots, often their brothers, who fought at Gallipoli, it is unlikely that *The Foggy Dew* would be such a favourite with them.

My second German Officer, Lieutenant General Liman Von Sanders, commanded the Turkish 5th Army which defended Gallipoli against the British and Anzac attack.

Von Sanders paid particular tribute to the Irishmen who confronted him. My father used quote that tribute by heart. It was relayed to later generations of Irish schoolchildren in a standard history textbook—Volume IV of *A Textbook Of Irish History* by James Carty, first published in 1931. In 1930 and 1931 Cumann na nGael under W.T. Cosgrave was in power.

In the 1950s de Valera's *Irish Press*, a Fianna Fail organ, used run a Saturday column by Brendan Behan which celebrated with great humour the Dubliners amongst whom he (Brendan) had been reared, many of whom had served in the British Army in the First World or Second Boer Wars, or were the widows and children of the same. He recalled being amongst them at a film, advertised in Dublin as "Gallipoli" but in its country of production "Tell England".

Also in the 1950s I often read the monthly *United Irishman* the organ of those Republicans who regarded both de Valera and Cosgrave as lapsed or apostate separatists. I vividly recall a piece on the Irish sacrifice at Gallipoli. It cited a British Officer surveying a landing beach through binoculars and asking—"Why are our men resting?" The poor men had no choice, being dead.

So I was surprised to read a book review by one Harman Murtagh in *The Irish Times* of February 11th last asserting that official Ireland had airbrushed the story of the Irish at Gallipoli out of history. Under W.T. Cosgrave and under Eamon de Valera the story was told though, when Liam Cosgrave was Taoiseach, songs such as *The Foggy Dew* were banned from the Air Waves by the *Diktat* of Labour's Conor Cruise O'Brien. I was disappointed when the *Irish Times* didn't publish my rebuttal of Harman Murtagh's assertion, or any other challenge to it. And I was rather bemused to learn that Harman Murtagh is President of The Military History Society of Ireland, whose journal is *The Irish Sword*.

Mr. Murtagh's baseless assertion was repeated in *Irish Times* by one P.D.Coggin on July 19th. P.D.Coggin, is a former officer of the Irish Army and unfortunately knows little of its or his country's history. He was a guest writer for *An Irishman's Diary*. Again the paper published no challenge to his assertion.

It's a sad day when one must invoke a couple of German Officers to blow away The Fog of Military History and the Smoke Screens laid down by alleged scholars and gentlemen of My Own Dear Irish Home.

Donal Kennedy

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

MORE SEMI-STATE BODIES

It has been said that each Government of Ireland has patronage in its gift of up to two thousand five hundred appointments of persons to nominally govern public bodies from such as Bórd na gCon to Universities. Two new Bills now before the Dáil are proposing to create some more of these positions. Under the *Local Government (Household Charge) Bill 2011*, Section 13, the Minister of the Environment, Community and Local Government can direct Local Authorities to delegate their functions under the Act to the "Local Government Management Agency" (the body in place to carry out the function of the Local Government Computer Services Board and the Local Government Management Services Board pending statutory merger of these Boards). The LGMA for short reference.

Also there is to be a "Burial and Cremation Regulatory Authority" the members of which are to be appointed by the Minister under the *Burial and Cremation Regulation Bill 2011*.

All of the above bodies are non-elected and all carry out functions formerly carried out by Local Authorities which were at least in theory, functioning under elected Councillors. So the present Government is moving ever further away from democracy. And these Acts are adding to the cost of government and the costs are borne by an already crippled tax-paying public. So much for the promises of the Coalition to bring about a cut in public spending on the many layerings of bureaucracy that already exist from the last Government.

COST OF DYING

The present high cost of funerals is to be increased by a significant amount to support the proposed Burial and Cremation Authority which the Act states will be self-financing. Self-financing is of course a lie—a euphemism for financed by us the people. Most of the Act is about the appointment of members to the new Board. Women are to be over-represented because while it seems laudable that three members of each gender are to be appointed. Section 2 (9) (c) states that: "A member of the Burial and Cremation Regulatory Authority appointed by the Minister shall be a

person who, in the opinion of the Minister, has knowledge or experience of matters relevant to the functions of the Authority" (which is the supervision of the operations of cemeteries and crematoria) and, since women are few among the Funeral Undertaking profession, the few females will be represented by the same number as the vast majority of male undertakers will be represented by. However maybe that will become more equitable in the future as more women enter the profession. The Bill seems to have portions copied from elsewhere and is hastily thrown together. In Section 2 (11) (g) there is a reference to Section 12 (1). There is no Section 12 in this proposed Act which has six sections in total.

Section 5 (b) says "no cremation shall take place unless an application for cremation has been made to and approved by the relevant authorities" (who are not defined in this Act) and presumably this Section is to put in place safeguards against unlawful disposal of evidence. There are no possibilities of second thoughts after cremations, such as there may be after burials. There is no definition in the Act of *Columbarium Wall* although it is twice referred to in the Act. There seems to be no good reason for this Act or for cremation. Cremation involves a huge expenditure of energy and the generation of carbons whereas burial returns to the ground what came from the ground. Why is it that people who are otherwise very PC about the environment seem to be those who favour cremation? It does not stack up.

HOUSEHOLD CHARGE

For generations we did have a Household Charge and it was called Domestic Rates. In a political stroke to get Jack Lynch elected, he and his economist Martin O'Donoghue abolished rates. It worked! Lynch got elected and his party Fianna Fail were back again in power. The Local Authorities instead of Domestic Rates received a Grant—a General Purposes Grant from the Government's Central Fund (i.e. from the foolish taxpayers—where did the tax-payer think the money was going to come from?) The other part of Local Authority spending was covered by Commercial Rates. And so, over the years, the Grant from Central Funds was reduced and reduced so that Commercial Rates had to bear a heavier and heavier proportion of Local Authority spending. Then Water Charges were introduced, and Local Authorities started charging us for parking on our own streets and charging us for disposal of rubbish.

All of which were paid for by the Rates 'abolished' by Jack Lynch. And so the Household Charge is just another way of "sending the fool further" and it is time for this merry-go-round to stop.

What the Government wants to do now is to have this money collected by Local Authorities or by the LGMA and paid by them to the Central Fund from which it will in turn be paid to the Local Authorities and it is to be provided in the Act that all this is an "executive function" and that the elected Councillors are to have nothing to do with it.

So what are Councillors elected for? Are Councils a sort of hedge-school for national politicians to learn the ropes about governing the people? If the Government is going down this road, why don't they be honest and propose the abolition of locally elected Councils and let us have an open debate on it in a democratic way instead of bit by bit depriving them of what little powers they have now left.

SECRET SERVICE

The Appropriation Bill 2011 emerged in public on 16th December 2011—the very day the Dáil went on Christmas holidays—even schoolchildren continued until 22nd December 2011 as did the parliaments of Italy, France and the UK. The Appropriations from our pockets amount to 46,374,724,000 euro, and in among the detail is 1,000,000 euro for our Secret Service. Something for us all to meditate on over the festive season.

THE DOCUMENTARY OF 2010

'*Inside Job*' won so many awards last year, including the Oscar for the best documentary feature. It also won the best awards at Cannes, New York, Telluride, Toronto and even the *Critic's Choice*. It was screened recently by Channel Four and was one of the most astonishing documentaries that I have ever seen and that says something. It is now on sale at HMV's and widely available on the net. Any questions about how our economic downfall happened is answered very clearly in this DVD. I would ask any of you to try and get to see it over the next few weeks as it should be prescribed viewing for every citizen of the so-called free world. As the trailer states:

"The Global Economic crisis of 2008 cost tens of millions of people their savings, their jobs, and their homes.

"This is how it happened"

It is directed by Charles Ferguson.

Michael Stack ©

It's Not Sufficient to be Sour

After Anders Breivik had massacred nearly 80 Norwegians, the Norwegian Prime Minister told his nation: "*This will increase our commitment to Norway's fundamental values*". It seemed he could take for granted that his audience had at least nodding acquaintance with what he called 'Norway's fundamental values'. But supposing Enda Kenny, in a speech on RTE Radio, were to assure us of his devotion to 'Ireland's fundamental values', imagine the public puzzlement that would ensue! What? Fundamental values owned and honoured by Ireland—by Ireland in particular? For at least a week afterwards the Dublin mass media would speculate about what Enda Kenny had meant.

For those of us for whom Ireland itself is a fundamental value, it is not sufficient to be sour about the anti-national ideology that is now in the ascendant in Dublin or about the actions or inactions of the Irish State that are inspired by it; or about *The Irish Times*, historical revisionism and so on. All of these trample on our disintegrated nation, true; but a more constructive approach to that disintegration is also needed. Mere direction of sourness at the agents of the Counter-revolution amounts to casting their victory in stone.

The Ireland that we value is the Ireland that the leaders of the Irish Revolution expressly aimed at. That was and remains an Irish nation that would be intellectually self-determining; sovereignly and democratically self-governing; economically self-sustaining; and culturally self-shaping.

It is what Daniel Corkery, in 1931, in *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature*, called "*a normal nation*". I cite the entire passage:

"It was... Lessing who did a man's part in giving the German nation confidence in itself and in its star... Ireland's present condition is incomparably worse than Germany's ever was, and not one but a whole battalion of Lessings would be needed to establish a normal state of mind among us. One can but predicate not one Lessing nor a succession of them, but rather a succession of nationalistic movements, rising and falling, each dissolving into a period of reaction, of provincialism, yet each for all that leaving the nation a little more sturdy, a little more normal, a little less provincial than before."

Obviously by a "*normal nation*" Corkery meant. 'normal' in the context of the Europe of that time; something like what, say, Norway or Denmark were at that

time. He meant a realised nation. such as those nations were and such as the leaders of the Irish Revolution had aimed at. A realised nation is characterised by freedom, dignity, creativity in all spheres, confidence in its dealings with the world, and the power to transmit those qualities to its citizens.

*

It is constructive to recognise that we, or more precisely, our parents or grandparents, did not bring that about enduringly for the Irish nation; in other words, that the Irish Revolution largely failed, as Corkery more or less predicted it would. True, as he also predicted, it has left us some degree of national realisation: two nationally-useful things that we did not have before it. We have a formally sovereign and democratic system of government, albeit with no due allocation of power to the nation's communities. The fact that we have pooled most of the state's sovereignty with that of other European states does not take essentially from this; we could also take it back.

But our nation is now neither intellectually self-determining, nor economically self-sustaining, nor culturally self-shaping, and is therefore far from being the normal nation that the Irish Revolution aimed at.

Obviously, and Corkery assumed this, a nation can exist in a form far short of normality or realisation. It can exist as a mass of people who are vaguely aware that they are a social unit of mankind who have shared a common course through history. But to become a realised, normal nation, existing actively in the world, that mass needs to acquire, as a first step, what Corkery calls a nationally "*normal state of mind*". I have spelt that out as 'intellectual self-determination'.

The first act of that self-determination is to create a shared idea of the nation's defining characteristics and values. Only then, with that defined notion and consciousness of its distinct self, can the nation set about realising itself factually—acquiring the other attributes of normal nationhood.

In the late nineteenth century the Irish nation performed this seminal intellectual act of defining its distinguishing characteristics and values. It came to see itself, and to present itself, as an ancient, essentially Gaelic, Catholic and rural nation, which had fought a long freedom struggle, was opposed to all imperialism, and adhered

to liberal democracy as the method of acquiring and exercising political power.

Those were not only what the Irish nation perceived as its defining characteristics, they were at the same time what it perceived as its defining set of values which together made it, the nation, a great value. Moreover, four of those valued characteristics—ancient, Catholic, rural, and pursuing a long freedom struggle—were the features which in the eyes of Europe and the wider world characterised the Irish nation.

In the decades preceding the Revolution some of those who would lead it identified another characteristic of the Irish nation which was not a value but the opposite. This was its 'slave soul' or, figuratively speaking, its bent back; in plain language, the self-doubting psychological condition inflicted on the nation, collectively and individually, by the centuries of mental colonisation. (Much later, academic study would give great importance to this national characteristic, as in Raymond Crotty's *Ireland in Crisis: A Study in Capitalist Colonial Underdevelopment*, 1986, and RTÉ Radio's Michael Littleton Lecture 2010 on 'The Role of Malignant Shame in the Rise and Fall of the Celtic Tiger', given by Dr. Garrett O'Connor of the Betty Ford Institute.) The revolutionary leaders saw the Revolution as directed as much against this 'slave soul mentality' as against British rule.

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Equipped with that defining view of itself, the Irish nation fought its Revolution. After achieving a moderate independence, it reaffirmed its identity in the terms defined before the Revolution, and set about trying to add to those characteristics 'fully sovereign, economically self-sustaining and culturally self-shaping'. Over a twenty-year period it made itself fully sovereign by taking a series of actions culminating in its declaration of neutrality in the Second World War.

Achieving economic self-maintenance meant, in effect, producing mainly through Irish enterprise sufficient saleable goods and services to pay for a standard of living sufficient to retain the existing population. This was made very difficult by the abnormally low level of economic enterprise in that same population. The State contributed electrification and in the 1930s established semi-state enterprises, encouraged tillage rather than pasture, and nurtured private industry by imposing tariffs on imports of the relevant goods.

During the Second World War, the State, faced with the steep decline in Irish merchant shipping since Independence,

established Irish Shipping to ensure the supply of basic necessities. (Norway, with a similar size of population, had already put together one of the largest fleets of merchant ships in the world.)

The effort to be culturally self-shaping took place on two tracks. On the one hand, the reborn nation endorsed the existing cultural institutions—from the Royal Hibernian Academy, the Royal Dublin Society and the National University to the GAA, Abbey Theatre and Gaelic League—insofar as they enriched the life of the nation. Simultaneously, it proceeded from where the intellectual self-determination of the nation as ancient, Gaelic, Catholic, rural, etc. left off.

While guaranteeing freedom of religious belief and practice, it endorsed the lived lives of Catholic Ireland with its rituals, moral rules, sacraments, devotions, beliefs and customs, and the lived lives of rural Ireland, especially in the west. Out of 'Catholic' sprang the largest Christian missionary movement, clerical and lay, male and female, of the twentieth century. Out of 'Gaelic' sprang efforts to sustain the Gaeltacht materially, the decision that Irish must replace English as the vernacular, and measures aimed at effecting this. These consisted mainly of making the teaching of Irish compulsory in the schools, and making knowledge of Irish necessary for entrance to the civil service.

Simultaneously, to protect the self-shaping process, systems of banning films and publications (including books) deemed injurious to Irish, more specifically Catholic, morality were instituted. In Dublin the large brothel quarter was eliminated and, later, in Dublin and elsewhere new housing estates replaced slums. Dublin's lively theatrical life was enriched by the new Gate Theatre, specialising in Continental and American drama. Galway acquired the Irish-language *Taibhdhearc* while Cork led in opera. A national radio service and the *Irish Press* newspapers were founded. AE's *Irish Statesman*, D.P. Moran's *The Leader* and the Jesuit *Studies* were followed by a succession of journals, notably *The Bell*, which carried on critical debate about the nature and course of the national revival.

The art of stained glass continued to flower; the new home-made coinage was beautiful. The rise of modernist painting in the 30s led, from the 40s onwards, to the annual Living Art exhibitions and the Independents group. The 40s also saw the foundation of the National Symphony Orchestra and the emergence of the amateur dramatic movement which flourished in the 50s. Muintir na Tíre and

Macra na Feirme joined the Irish Countrywomen's Association in raising living standards, fostering new skills and enhancing social life in the countryside and small towns.

Poetry was strong and the Irish short story attained world status. In 1951 the Arts Council was established and the *Fleadh Cheoil* founded. In 1955 Samuel Beckett was returned to Dublin with the second English-language performance (after London's) of his *Waiting for Godot*. The 60s were marked by the rise to world renown of Irish traditional music and the foundation of the first Irish television station. In 1966 RTÉ Television contributed a dramatic re-enactment of the Easter Rising to the fiftieth anniversary commemoration.

In foreign affairs, within successively the British Commonwealth, the League of Nations and the United Nations, post-Revolution Ireland played a confident and innovatory role. In the first two of those contexts, as on other occasions, Ireland enacted its opposition to imperialism.

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In the four decades from the 40s onwards, the nation's ability to realise itself durably in the terms in which had defined itself crumbled piecemeal and ultimately dissolved. During the War years heavy migration from the countryside to the cities and abroad took place. As this increased dramatically during the 50s, Ireland ceased to be characteristically a 'rural' nation. As the Gaeltacht shrank, criticism grew of the state's reliance for language revival on the schools. The language movement, notably *Gael Linn*, produced new approaches. Also from the 40s public criticism of the crudely undiscerning book censorship became persistent. At the end of the 60s it was reformed and rendered minimal.

The heavy decline of population in the 50s provoked a decisive response in the Whitaker/Lemass economic policies. Faced with the apparent evidence that the Republic could not be economically self-sustaining, the Lemass Government called foreign industrialists to the rescue. In the 60s over 300 of them arrived. Henceforth the Republic was to be dependent, economically, on a combination of foreign investment and enterprise, and after 1972, when Ireland joined the European Economic Community, on subsidies from that quarter. For the first time since the Famine, the population began to rise.

Another result of the Government's new 'realism' was its replacement of the policy of making Ireland 'Gaelic' again by a vague policy of creating a bilingualism,

with Irish retaining an honoured public status.

Simultaneously, in the 60s, American left liberalism, calling itself 'liberalism', was engaged in its ideological takeover of Western Europe. It was imperial America's answer to Russia's implantation of the Communist ideology in the countries of Eastern Europe and in East Germany. From London, its European centre of diffusion, the new liberalism was introduced to Ireland by Irish sympathisers; first, tentatively, in *The Irish Times*, then on RTÉ.

By the early 80s the Irish ideological pluralism of the Dublin mass media was being replaced by a left-liberal orthodoxy. The Irish liberal Correctorate (every West European country had one) made clear its aversion to treating the historic freedom struggle as a national value. Accordingly, it was strongly hostile to the ongoing armed struggle of the Northern nationalists. The Irish liberals also preached that the nation's Catholicism (or indeed any religion) was not a national value and should therefore not influence the Republic's affairs. On both these matters, they used the co-ordinated Dublin media daily to create a substantial public that was similarly minded.

The Correctorate was *de facto* displacing the Catholic Church as moral teacher of the nation. The legislators were conforming to it as diligently as they had to its predecessor.

In 1985 a visiting Australian writer, William Buckley, noted the new public orthodoxy in his book *Memory Ireland* and sketched it as follows:

"Ireland is not a nation, once again or ever, so the new story runs, but two nations; maybe several; it does not have its characteristic religion—or, if it does, it ought not; it does not have its characteristic language, as anyone can see or hear; it has no particular race or ethnic integrity. Ireland is nothing—a no-thing—an interesting nothing, to be sure, composed of colourful parts, a nothing mosaic. It is advertising prose and Muzak."

But it was not until 2003 that Ireland's new condition was affirmed symbolically in the centre of its capital city. For years there had been public debate about what should replace Nelson's Pillar at the centre of Dublin's O'Connell Street, opposite the GPO. The Pillar, honouring Admiral Lord Nelson, hero of Britain and the British Empire, had been blown up by republicans in 1966. Prominent among the suggestions for its replacement were a statue of Pearse or Connolly or statues of both, to join the other statues lining the street; a monument

honouring the Easter Rising; or a monument commemorating generally the ultimately victorious Irish freedom struggle.

In the late 1990s Dublin City Council decided to erect instead a spire of stainless steel, 221 metres high, three metres wide at the base, 15 centimetres at the apex, and signifying—literally, how right William Buckley was!—Nothing. Completed in 2003, it affirms the nation's condition there today.

*

So while the ancient, rural, Gaelic, Catholic nation, heir of a long freedom struggle, recedes in memory, we live amid the furniture of national nothingness. Irishmen who died fighting Britain's wars being commemorated on a par with those who died for Irish freedom. The nation speaking, never mind not Gaelic, a foreign English shaped largely by American films, tv series and pop songs with some input from British television and newspapers. The Irish Catholic Church, discredited by its tolerance of paedophile priests, is under verbal attack from anti-Catholic Irishmen echoing the Ian Paisley of old and the old Ascendancy. Those two cardinals of the Correctorate, O'Toole and Browne, in print and on the airwaves, habitually using the adjective 'Irish' with the same negative connotation as did Englishmen for centuries, while exploding in a raving vocabulary of 'hideous', 'appalling', 'outrageous', 'horrific', 'disgraceful'. Of our exports, the healthiest part of the Republic's economy, 90 per cent coming from foreign-owned firms. Uniquely in Europe, and for the first time in a century, Irish magazine shops not offering a single home-produced magazine of ideas. A Government passive in the face of the world, going now along with some action led by others, and, now again, following other leaders.

It is easy to be sour and to snipe, but it is not sufficient, changes nothing, confirms national defeat. The needed response is to ponder and discuss what to do. Is it to try again? Our first attempt to make Ireland a normal nation was not, its economics apart, a bad effort; might a second attempt, with some lessons learned, succeed?

First, let it be said that no normal European nation has gone through history with its initial act of intellectual self-determination fully intact. I mean with the valued distinguishing self-identity that was defined by that act maintained fully intact. As history progressed and circumstances changed, every normal European nation has adapted that valued self-identity while retaining its essential core. Think of such experts in this high political skill as England and France.

That is not to say that, given appropriately skilled leaders, Ireland might have done this at some point in the wake of the Revolution. On the one hand, we were beginners, mere amateurs, and acquiring and transmitting those adaptive skills takes several generations.. On the other, we were subjected to a foreign ideological invasion that valued nothing of what Ireland stood for and that had the power of the post-War American empire behind it.

"Trying again", even with the acquired benefit of an existing Irish state and functioning democracy, does not seem practicable now. It would require us, as did the first attempt, to identify a set of valued distinctive characteristics of the existing and imagined Irish nation for which there is a general consensus. And such a consensus is now simply not there; nor even the nucleus of it. Indeed, there is no consensus that even in some undefined way Ireland is a value, except in international

sports events because it is 'our side'.

I may be wrong, and would be glad to hear other views. For myself I take solace from William Buckley's modification of his 'nothing' judgment: "*an interesting nothing, to be sure*", he said, "*composed of colourful parts*". I agree about the "colourful parts". Ireland is full of them, many of them not only colourful but, because of their confidence and initiatives and the pleasure they take in being themselves, inspiring.

What we have been talking about, is the common roof, the gel, the collective pride and power of all the parts, that would give the Irish a proper shared home in the world and a confident voice in it. What to do in these disintegrated days? While encouraging the most promising of the disintegrated parts, to keep in mind that ultimate objective and to ponder it.

Desmond Fennell

St. Fintan's Widgery Hit By Well-Deserved Belt Of A Crozier

Wikipedia includes the following in its entry on Lord Widgery:

"He was handed the politically sensitive job of conducting an inquiry into the events of 30 January 1972 in Derry, where troops from the Parachute Regiment had killed 13 civil rights marchers, commonly referred to as Bloody Sunday (a 14th person died shortly afterwards). Widgery was faced with testimony from the soldiers, who claimed they had been shot at, while the marchers insisted that no one from the march was armed. Widgery produced a report that took the army's side. Widgery put the main blame for the deaths on the march organisers for creating a dangerous situation where a confrontation was inevitable. His fiercest criticism of the Army was that the '*firing bordered on the reckless*'. The Widgery Report was accepted by the British government and Northern Irish Unionists but was immediately denounced by Nationalist politicians, and people in the Bogside and Creggan areas were reported to be disgusted by his findings... In January 1998, on the eve of the 26th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, Tony Blair announced a new inquiry, criticising the rushed process in which Widgery failed to take evidence from those wounded and did not personally read eyewitness accounts. The resulting Bloody Sunday Inquiry lasted 12 years before the Saville Report was published on 15 June 2010. It demolished the Widgery report, finding that soldiers lied about their actions and falsely claimed to have been attacked. Prime Minister David Cameron, on behalf of the United King-

dom, formally apologised for the '*unjustified and unjustifiable*' events of Bloody Sunday. As a result of the Saville report, even observers who are natural supporters of the Army now regard Widgery as discredited—the conservative historian and commentator Max Hastings has described the Widgery report as '*a shameless cover-up*'."

The November/December issue of *History Ireland* has, however, drawn attention to the following manifestation of recalcitrant dissent:

"The Ulster Museum is in hot water again. Visitors have complained that the museum has not updated its exhibition on the Troubles to reflect the findings of the Saville inquiry into Bloody Sunday ... that the dead were innocent and their deaths '*unjustified and unjustifiable*'."

But what are we to make of someone who tries to "Widgerise" an earlier Bloody Sunday? The worst historical offences of the *Irish Times* are not always found in the columns of that paper itself. Its Assistant Editor, Fintan O'Toole, is from time to time employed by *The Observer* to 'educate' the 'thinking' British public on Anglo-Irish relations. Fintan was at his most obsequious on the occasion of the British Queen's visit last May. Under the heading of *At Last, Britain And Ireland Have Grown Up*, O'Toole proclaimed on 22nd May:

"The risks the Queen took were not physical. A massive security operation

sealed off the events from most of the Irish public. The pathetic nature of the protests, which struggled to gather more than 200 people at a time, made the security seem disproportionate, but it was a necessary evil. And it did allow the Queen to take risks of an entirely different kind. She stepped repeatedly on to dangerous ground. She laid a wreath at the garden of remembrance that is dedicated to the generations of Irish rebels who took up arms against British domination and paid with their lives. She touched the raw nerve of Bloody Sunday in 1920 when she visited Croke Park."

But it was O'Toole himself, and he alone, who was responsible, a fortnight previously, for obscenely opening up that raw nerve at its most extreme, by gratuitously introducing a Widgery perspective that British Imperialism itself had been too ashamed to sustain beyond the immediate aftermath of that 1920 massacre. On 8th May, under the heading of *Can The Queen Win Over Croke Park?* O'Toole's *Observer* 'essay' had opined more than informed (my emphases and exclamations):

"The 14 people who were killed at Croke Park stadium in Dublin on 21 November 1920 were far from the only victims of the Troubles of 1916 to 1923 that led to the foundation of the Irish state. Indeed, 31 people in all were killed on that single day alone. Yet those killed when troops and police opened fire on the crowd at the headquarters of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) are remembered more clearly than many of the others. They died in the most traumatic of a concentrated series of violent incidents. There was another Bloody Sunday during the more recent Troubles in Northern Ireland, but this was the day for which the term was coined. In the early morning, 14 secret agents, the core of the British Intelligence operation against the Irish Republican Army, were killed in their suburban Dublin homes by a squad organised by the IRA leader Michael Collins. In the evening, three prisoners, two of them senior IRA men, were killed by the British 'while trying to escape'. But it is what happened in the afternoon that makes this month's visit by the Queen to Croke Park, the headquarters of the GAA in Dublin, so resonant. Tipperary and Dublin were playing a game of Gaelic football in front of a crowd of 5,000 people. Croke Park was surrounded by a mixed force of armed members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, regular troops and members of the Auxiliaries, an irregular force largely recruited in England and attached to the Irish police to help fight the IRA. Armoured cars blocked the exits from the grounds. The intention was that all the spectators leaving Croke Park would be searched for arms. **Military and police participants later claimed they were fired on by someone in the crowd.**

Whether or not this was true (!!!)—and there was no independent inquiry—what happened next is broadly clear. Over the course of a few minutes, the police and Auxiliaries fired 228 shots, and an army machine gun at one of the exits fired 50 rounds. Fourteen civilians were killed, two of them trampled to death in the panic. Sixty more were injured. **The secret military inquiry, which became public only in the past decade**, concluded that the firing was 'carried out without orders, and was indiscriminate and unjustifiable'. **The almost universal view among Irish nationalists** was that the killings were a deliberate reprisal against unarmed civilians for the assassinations of the intelligence officers earlier in the day."

What a loathsome suggestion for O'Toole to promote! He speculated that it might very well have been true that the Black-and-Tans invading Croke Park had first been shot at by some GAA fan, and that the Tans just retaliated, even if it was over-reaction, although exceeding by no more than 3 an evening-up of the 'score' for that day's deaths. That any such suggestion constituted an outright slander on the Croke Park victims was not only "*the almost {?} universal view among Irish nationalists*", it was already the conclusion of the British military authorities themselves in the immediate aftermath of Bloody Sunday. Moreover, this conclusion had not just been made "*public only in the past decade*", but had been proclaimed by one of those British military authorities as far back as **eight decades ago**.

That account, published by a Brit officer in 1931, unsurprisingly described and denounced as "*murder*" those executions/assassinations of undercover members of the British forces of Occupation that had been carried out by the Army of the Irish Republic's democratically elected Dáil. But, under his Chapter heading of *The Lesson Of Bloody Sunday*, the Brigadier-General in question proceeded to say far more than that:

"The Fourth Commandment {called the Third Commandment in the Catholic tradition—MOR}, which regulates the observance of the Sabbath, was never intended to apply to India or Ireland in time of rebellion, because those who take part in war fight on seven days in the week and banish God from their calculations during the performance... (But British) soldiers were both figuratively and literally caught napping on Sunday morning, November 21, 1920, many Secret Service, court martial and intelligence officers being murdered in their sleep or in their baths or bedrooms. The idea behind the massacre was, of course, diabolical, but so are all rebellions... The

'Shinners' chose Sunday as the day for action much in the same way as I carried out a raid into the German trenches after lunch on Christmas Day, because I knew the enemy might then be caught off their guard... Assassination of sleeping spies is outside military decency... (but) Collins drove the fear of God into the English in Dublin... Collins took advantage of intense military stupidity... (and) drove the terrified outlying 'foxes' into cover behind barbed wire and sentries... {He} gained the initiative and made a Free State possible. The blame... lay with the British Government, of which Mr. Churchill, who is making difficulties in India today, was a member. Collins's victims were selected officers in possession of important Sinn Fein secrets, who could not be easily replaced; but men who inadvertently became witnesses of events and therefore dangerous to the lives of the murderers were also killed and wounded. Documents seized in the post by Sinn Feiners, and now on view in Dublin, definitely linked up Whitehall with Government assassinations..."

"Lunching at the Shelborne Hotel, I received orders there to send a company to Croke Park to co-operate with the military and the Regular RIC in rounding up a large crowd of hurley enthusiasts {sic: it was in fact a Gaelic football match that day—MOR}, who were to be warned by megaphone to leave the grounds by certain gates, there to be searched for arms! It was hoped to find some of the murderers of the morning! Seldom had a more stupid, ill-judged, ill-timed order been given by military men! Was it likely that armed men would, in such circumstances, stick to their arms? Would they not throw their weapons on the ground? About a dozen revolvers were found after the crowd had dispersed. The search for arms did not take place, as the 'Black-and-Tans' from Phoenix Park Barracks, ablaze with blood lust and fury, fired into the crowd from lorries, killing many, some of whom were women. The officer in command of my party, Major EL Mills, horrified and furious, managed to stop the firing, but much damage was done... {In} the Croke Park massacre... crowds were huddled together in enclosed spaces... and collected for enjoyment or recreation without hostile intent... On returning to barracks, Major Mills reported to me the whole facts concerning these tragic murders, whereupon I made him write out a full report, which was in the hands of superior authority within half an hour. A coroner's inquest—one of the last of its kind—before which Major Mills gave evidence, rightly returned a verdict of wilful murder against the police. The evidence did Mills no good, but, for once, the truth was told..."

"Michael Collins won on Bloody Sunday in the morning. The 'Black-and-Tans' fouled their nests and therefore lost at Croke Park in the afternoon. The entry in my diary for that day reads: 'The worst day in *history*... umpteen officers

murdered in bed by 'Shinners' ... Croke Park Massacre: many murders by RIC. Mills furious... 'A few days later a martial array of coffins, draped with the old Union Jack, moved slowly through London on gun-carriages. Ministers of State paid homage! It was a great day in London for anti-Irish propaganda. As I lay unconscious on November 23rd in a military hospital (having been knocked out in a motor accident), men were waiting to measure me up too, for a free ride on a gun-carriage through London!... to swell the list! Did the coffins contain only the remains of murdered British officers and policemen? One suicide had an honoured place in the cortège!—anything to swell the numbers! Who was responsible for the murders? Was it only Collins? Ministers sat mute with bowed heads, while, at times, the whites of their eyes turned heavenward. The palms of their hands showed white. They did not blush!... It is as well to remember that Mr. Churchill, who has once more blown himself up over the present situation in India, and is now playing an active and not so lonely a part in Indian affairs as might be expected, was a member of the Government which introduced the 'Black-and-Tans' into Ireland and failed to protect the innocent people" (*A Word To Gandhi: The Lesson of Ireland*, 1931, Chapter V, "The Lesson of Bloody Sunday", pp53-61).

The author of that withering—*"Savillised"* if not 100 percent civilised—refutation of Fintan O'Toole's "Widgery" legend of Ireland's first Bloody Sunday massacre had been none other than Brigadier-General Frank P Crozier, the first Commander-in-Chief of the RIC Auxiliaries, who was to resign in both disgust and protest at what he called *"this intolerable fascism"* which the British Government was demanding he should impose and enforce in Ireland. A well-deserved belt of a Crozier on Saint Fintan's Widgery! The blurb on the cover of this Crozier book read:

"Describes with fearless frankness the disastrous policy pursued by the British Government during the Irish Rebellion. His case is that anything between martial law and concession of demands leads to reprisals, murder and chaos. In India martial law is impossible. The choice, therefore, is between a situation infinitely worse than the Irish, or practical concession of Gandhi's terms."

In the book's analysis of the Irish question Crozier further argued:

"Had I known what I was in for in 1920, when I consented to go to Ireland to take part in suppressing the Irish Sinn Fein revolution, I should, in the words of Mr. Baldwin, never have touched it 'with the end of a barge pole'. One lives and learns!... The difficulties of the government soon necessitated the introduction

of ex-service recruits to the RIC from England, flushed by the blood of Germans and the bellicose teachings of the Churches" (pp 18-19).

"...A blood-thirsty speech {had been} delivered in the spring of 1920 by a Divisional Commissioner of the RIC, Lieutenant-Colonel Smyth, at Listowel, to a party of old-time RIC men who were ordered to murder indiscriminately, at the dictation of the Commissioner, who claimed to speak on behalf of the Government. A fracas followed immediately after this speech, in the police barrack, Colonel Smyth being subsequently dragged out of the smoking-room of the County Club in Cork by Collins's agents and done to death in cold blood at the point of a revolver, *pour encourager les autres*. His plan was put in practice against himself!... The murder of a Divisional Commissioner of Police was not a matter to be lightly dismissed by the Government... Recruitment for the depleted ranks of the police was speeded up in England, while an Auxiliary Division of Police was formed by the recruitment of demobilised ex-officers of the Great War, for a definite purpose—assassination... If they themselves (the originators of the counter-murder plan) wished to survive, and at the same time secretly exterminate, they must refrain from preaching murder to policemen of the Irish race, and, instead, bring over Englishmen to do the dirty job—hence the formation of the Auxiliary Division... In other words, it was desired to spread the doctrine of extermination, but not at the price of the assassination of Divisional Commissioners!... So it came to pass that, by the end of August 1920, I had sent four newly formed companies of Auxiliary police to counties Kilkenny, Limerick, Cork and Galway, each a hundred strong, well armed, clothed in their old Army officer uniforms minus badges of rank (a device used to avoid the attention of the Treasury, for the Division was in being, without proper authority, for several weeks before the 'gaff was blown') and supplied with transport... The 'Black-and-Tans', a nickname given to the new English recruits of the old RIC, on account of their green caps and khaki clothing and their similarity to the famous pack of hounds of that name, noted for its ability to hunt and *kill anything* ... went from bad to worse, till they kicked the dust of Ireland off their boots forever in 1922, on account of the futility of the whole régime" (pp 22-28).

"During the Sinn Fein insurrection in 1920 the British Government set up a vile, evil-minded Propaganda Department in Dublin, with branches in many parts of the world, the like of which had probably never been heard of before in connection with work inside the British Empire. In Ireland trained and well-paid men doped the English and American public, incited the local Irish police to misdeeds and issued news sheets which contained not 'news' but 'views' for the

consumption of the guardians of the law! To such an extent did the doping and incitement of the police progress in Ireland, that Lord Buckmaster, an ex-Lord Chancellor of England, declared that if he, as a barrister, had had to defend a 'Black-and-Tan' policeman in a murder charge in Ireland in 1921, he would have set up a defence of 'incitement by the Government', owing to the murderous character of the contents of the news sheets!... The extremists of the Right are just as difficult as the extremists of the Left, but far more dangerous! Hence Mr. Churchill, who as a member of the Government once did much to bring about and prolong the trouble in Ireland, is now making more in India... Revolutionary extremists do not murder indiscriminately or without a cause; this was proved in Ireland. Indiscriminate murder is, in all revolutionary circles, considered futile. I have had considerable experience of revolt—Ulster, 1914; the Baltic, 1919-20; Germany, 1920; Ireland, 1920-21; Egypt, 1925; and my mind is as clear on the subject today as it was in 1914, when I received instructions from the Shadow Carson Government in Ulster to murder Irish policemen if necessary. During revolution, once the ball starts rolling, both sides work to a set plan which includes murder. The ball has been rolling in India for a long time—there have been many foul murders on both sides. It is not without significance that both in Ireland in 1820-21 and in India British soldiers were seldom murdered in cold blood. The reason? They do their work above board. The officers murdered in Dublin on Bloody Sunday were not regular regimental officers: they were 'specialists', employed on dirty secret work, spying, collecting statistics *sub rosa*, or faking evidence and so forth" (pp83-88).

"Police operating in a civilised country where the majority of the population is kept in a state of repression, invariably do so, not as the custodians of law and order, but as the 'bolsterers up' of an unwanted Government... The 'Black-and-Tans' in Ireland were merely the expression and instrument of a Government which had lost its moral sense of duty and was steeped in the blood lust of the Great War... One of the things which horrified me most in the Baltic in 1919-20 was the way in which the police exercised their functions, wrung out confessions by torture and flung people into jail without trial. But it must be remembered that the Baltic States were new and their difficulties very great. Things are better there now. The plea of newness cannot be raised on behalf of England or India, yet the tortures imposed on the Indians by the Budmash irregulars in 1919 or on the Irish by the 'Black-and-Tans', for the extraction of evidence, intimidation and confessions were on a par with what went on in the new Baltic States in 1919-20 when I was there" (pp131-2).

It is indeed a sorry state of affairs when,

nine decades after the 'spin' on Bloody Sunday—emanating from what Crozier described as Britain's "vile, evil-minded Propaganda Department"—had already been dismissed by the British military authorities themselves, it has been left to Fintan O'Toole to resurrect and regurgitate its suggestion that the "Black-and-Tan" massacre in Croke Park might "possibly" have been provoked by a GAA fan shooting first! But Crozier gives the lie to

O'Toole. In 2002, excerpts from four other books by F.P. Crozier—including *The Men I Killed* (1932)—were republished by Athol Books, under the latter title.

Manus O'Riordan

General F.P. Crozier: *The Men I Killed* (1937), *Irish Memoirs* and other writings. Introduction by Brendan Clifford. 152 pp. Index. . . 10, £7.50.

Naval Warfare

The Royal Navy did not just have blockade as part of its armoury. It also had the power of bombardment to direct against the enemy and Captain Grenfell provides a service in reminding us how it was a precedent that was applied in the Great War during a largely forgotten event:

"The possibility of direct assault by navies is frequently denied by advocates of the 'military' school of thought. They are in the habit of saying that since sea power in its military aspects stops at the coastline, direct attack from the sea cannot be decisive in bringing a country to submission. That, they hold, can only be achieved by an army...

"It is not quite true to say that the power of navies stops with the shore. It actually extends as far inland as the naval guns can shoot from...

"It happens to have been the habit of men of many nations in the past to build their capital or key cities close to or even on the sea. In all such cases, a threat to bombard the capital or key city from the sea might well appear such a paralysing prospect to the intended victims as to bring about their national capitulation.

"Such was the actual result in two cases that will occur readily to the mind. In 1801, Nelson sailed in with his ships to a position overlooking Copenhagen, with the determination of coercing the Danes into abandonment of the armed neutrality against Britain... Under this threat of the destruction of their national capital, the Danes submitted to the terms which Nelson offered them. The fleet alone had brought Denmark to reason.

"A very similar episode occurred in the war of 1914-18. In 1916, the Greeks were uncertain on which side of the conflict in progress their best interests lay. The nation was, in fact, divided into two factions. The Venizelists, who followed M. Venizélos, were pro-*Entente* and had established themselves at Salonika, where they were in open co-operation with the Anglo-French military force which had just previously occupied the town. On the other hand, the King's party, still ensconced in Athens, had leanings

towards the Central Powers. The Greek Army, which outnumbered the Allied troops at Salonika, was behind the King, and a majority of the people were probably also on his side. It was not impossible that the Greek royal forces would march on Salonika and endeavour to eject the British and French occupation troops; and if they had, the political consequences might have been exceedingly unfortunate for the *Entente* cause.

"But there was another factor, not so far mentioned, which was to be the dominant one in the situation. At Phaleron Bay, in full view of Athens and within easy gun range of it, lay a Franco-British fleet of battleships, with their turrets trained on the capital. The Royalists, comprising the legal Government of Greece, were overawed, and the Allied forces remained unmolested at Salonika, enjoying the open and increasing support of their Venezilist friends.

"These are two actual cases of a country being completely subdued by sea power alone, by reason of their presenting territorial targets of superlative national importance to ships' guns. That these two cases, moreover, are not bound to be so exceptional as they might seem is indicated by a study of a map of the world. Such a study demonstrates what a large number of countries are similarly exposed in this respect. Not only the capitals of Greece and Denmark, but also of Sweden, Norway, Finland, Holland, Italy, Portugal, Japan, Brazil, Uruguay, the Argentine, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Eire and New Zealand are near enough to the sea to be open to sea attack; and the same can be said of the financial capitals of the United States, Australia and Egypt."

The political and military assault launched by Britain on neutral Greece and the devastating effect this ultimately had on the Greek people across the Balkans and Asia Minor is almost completely forgotten about today.

The Greek King Constantine and his Government tried to remain neutral in the Great War but Britain was determined to enlist as many neutrals as possible to fight

the war for it. So they made offers to the Greek Prime Minister, Venizélos, of territory in Anatolia which he found too hard to resist.

The Greek King, however, under the Constitution, had the final say on matters of war and he attempted to assert his country's right to remain neutral. He was then presented in the British Press as a German puppet.

Captain Grenfell, an honest naval officer, makes no bones about what England was doing in Greece: "*The Royalists, comprising the legal Government of Greece, were overawed*" by the Royal Navy. This was against the wishes of the Greek democracy, who agreed with the King's policy, as "*a majority of the people were probably also on his side*". And the British Fleet prevented the Greek Army from being able to "*eject the British and French occupation troops*" who were violating Greek neutrality.

To accomplish the deposing of King Constantine the *Entente* decided to occupy Salonika and set up a rival Greek Government there under Venizélos. However, this Army, much of which had come from Gallipoli, found itself hemmed in by the German successes against Serbia to the North and the Bulgarian entry into the war on the German side. And as a result the Germans joked that the British had set up the biggest POW camp in the world, of its own soldiers, maintained at its own expense!

It was the Royal Navy that extricated the *Entente* from this embarrassing situation. Through a starvation blockade of the Greek coasts, and a seizure of the Thessaly harvest by Allied troops, a widespread famine was produced in the neutral nation. And then the British Fleet gave Constantine an offer he could not refuse—abdicate or see Athens flattened by the guns of the Royal Navy.

Captain Grenfell does not mention the consequences of these events, however. The *Entente* subversion of Greek neutrality led to disaster for the Greeks in Anatolia after the Venizélos puppet Government in Athens was subsequently enlisted as a willing catspaw to bring the Turks to heel after the Armistice and the imposition of the punitive Treaty of Sèvres.

To save British blood and treasure, the Greeks were presented with the town of Smyrna/Ismir and then encouraged by Lloyd George to advance across Anatolia towards where the Ottoman State had established itself in the form of a Turkish State, at Ankara (after it had been suppressed in Constantinople). But the Greek

Army were beaten back by Atatürk before Ankara, and a later Turkish offensive scattered the Greek Army. And the two-thousand year old Greek population of Asia Minor fled on boats from Smyrna when Britain withdrew its support, after the Greek democracy had reasserted its will to have back its King.

Grenfell notes in his book that the Turks had been forced to reestablish their capital in Ankara because of the proximity of Constantinople to the guns of the Royal Navy. But it was this very move by Atatürk, which negated British power against the Turks, that necessitated the use of the Greeks as a British catspaw and led to the disaster that befell the Greek Army outside Ankara.

And perhaps, if the Irish democracy had been able to read the last sentence of the above extract of Grenfell's book, they might have followed Atatürk's example and moved their capital to a small town in West Cork in 1921, far beyond the range of the Royal Navy.

Pat Walsh

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Labour Comment: Mondragon 2

Review. Bruce Ackerman: "*The Decline and Fall of the American Republic*" (pp.270: £27.14. The Guardian Bookshop: post free.)

Antiquum Documentum

Bruce Ackerman is Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale. His books have been influential in political philosophy, constitutional law and public policy. With Anne Alstott he wrote *The Stakeholder Society*, which influenced Tony Blair

On 6th December 2010, "France 24" broadcasted an interview, in which Professor Ackerman discussed this, his most recent work. The 12-minute dialogue is still available on the Internet and gives a good indication of the scope of the book, but—to state the obvious—not its depth. In this instance the old maxim might be rephrased to "*the devil and the delight are in the detail*". The book sets out the author's arguments on the legitimacy of some of the most critical events in recent world history.

The approach is authoritative, and has received fulsome praise from the author's American colleagues. (Opinions expressed here are those of a cantankerous sean-Chorcaigheach!)

THE REPUBLIC AND ITS CONSTITUTION

"*The American mind is dominated by heroic tales of the Founding Fathers, who built an Enlightenment machine that can tick-tock its way into the twenty-first century, with a little fine-tuning by the Supreme Court.*" Ackerman hypothesises that, under the guise of stability, fundamental changes are being surreptitiously and unlawfully effected and establishing precedents.

THE EXECUTIVE: "THE MOST DANGEROUS BRANCH" OF US GOVERNMENT

The President, head of administration and Commander-in-Chief, normally acts within current law or applies to Congress to have the law amended. But, if he loses the support of Congress, he may attempt to rule by Presidential Decree. Being personally chosen by the "nation" as a whole, he may assert "*that he, not Congress, better understands what the People want*". He can support his action with "(pseudo-)scientific consultants to package non-rational appeals to the public in {his} struggle for continuing political support".

The doctrine of Separation of Powers, whereby State power is divided amongst the Executive, Judiciary and Legislature, has been subverted in a rivalry between the elected organs of State. It is further "*compounded by the increasing politicization of the military*". Ackerman regards the military role in formulating Iraq War strategy as "*the most explicit intrusion into policy since MacArthur's conflict with Truman*".

"... for the first time in history, it was Colin Powell, the paradigmatic armchair general, who dominated the media coverage and gained enduring political influence. The triumphant bureaucratic-warrior then began to lecture Bill Clinton on his responsibilities during the presidential campaign of 1992—writing a New York Times op-ed {sic} opposing American intervention in Bosnia, following up with a Foreign Affairs article elaborating his broad strategic vision: 'As chairman of the joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. armed forces, I share the responsibility for America's security. I share it with the president and commander in chief, with the secretary of defense and with the magnificent men and women—volunteers all—of America's armed forces.'"

A PROPOSED SOLUTION

Ackerman's solutions conform to the existing Constitution, excepting a proposed "*Supreme Executive Tribunal*", similar to the French *Conseil d'Etat*. "*The tribunal will look and act like a court*" and its "*nine members will think of themselves as judges for the executive branch, not lawyers for the sitting president*". He appears to wish to add a tier of government to perform a function already within the remit of the Supreme Court.

"Since the Supreme Court won't intervene early enough to check similar abuses in the future, the only remaining option is to create a new institutional mechanism that will put a brake on the presidential dynamic before it can gather steam."

—or ask the Court to do its job; or....

Ruairí Ó Domhnaill

CO-OPs continued

had been another point answered in *The Outline*—

"What we offer is proportion. We wish to correct the proportions of the modern state. A considerable return to the family farm would greatly improve this proportion" (*ibid*).

G.K. Chesterton's premature death in 1936 at the age of sixty-two was a body blow for the Distributists, they had no other larger-than-life champion to put in his place.

Cardinal Francis Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, died the year before Chesterton but was not sorely missed by the Distributist intellectuals. They had been shocked by Bourne's support for the British Government during the General Strike of 1926, which in their opinion seemed to fly in the face of the social teachings in the papal encyclicals.

MONDRAGON AND DISTRIBUTISM

"The greatest existing example of how Distributist ideas can and have been put into practice is the famous Mondragon Cooperative Corporation in the Basque region of Spain.

"While not avowedly Distributist itself in name, its governing principles certainly are. It saw its beginnings in 1956 when a Basque priest, Don José María Arizmendiarieta, inspired five young engineering graduates to borrow money and begin an enterprise producing oil stoves and paraffin heaters. Rapid success and the need for further investment saw them establish a co-operative bank which, in turn, saw the multiplication of associated cooperatives.

i) Fr Arizmendiarieta was a man of similar thinking who took up the challenge and proved through the establishment of the Mondragon cooperatives that it is indeed possible to live without complete dependence on either market or state for one's livelihood" (Damian Wyld, *News*

Weekly, Melbourne, 3.7.2011).

Don José María Arizmendiarieta died 36 years ago, he was indeed a remarkable and prophetic man! Were he to return today, adhering to the sole concept of Distributism, he would be shocked to see how his Mandragon concept has advanced—but I doubt if he would be disappointed.

He has made a signal contribution to Workers running their own industry and proved that substantial working class development is possible within workers' control and that such development is a useful, if not a necessary, preparation for any form of socialism which is not to be 'bureaucratic', even if it is "*workers' capitalism*".

Were Belloc and Chesterton to return today and be told that Mondragon was the classic example of what Distributism is about—they would cry!

CATHOLIC ACTION LEARNS TO CHANGE!

In last month's *Labour Comment*, we published an article by Race Mathews, an Australian Labor Party member and former public representative and avowed Distributist.

He attacks Bob Santamaria, the leader of Catholic Action in Australia who died in 1998 and is held responsible for keeping the Australian Labour Party out of office for 23 years. Santamaria was motivated by a deep distrust of Communism, which had inordinate influence in the Australian labour movement from World War II up until mindless Leftism messed it all up

"Santamaria's response to the marginalising of Distributism for which he bears primary responsibility was to turn his back on it. Successive editions of his memoirs trace the diminution of his enthusiasm. Whereas the initial memoir in 1964 outspokenly celebrated the indebtedness of his generation of young

Catholics to the ideas of Belloc and Chesterton, Santamaria was already by 1981 heavily qualifying the Distributist connection with the reservation that:

'Although it was later to be written that I was profoundly influenced by the writings of Belloc and Chesterton, in fact whatever influence there was came from the readings of others and listening to their discussion.'

"The final edition of the memoirs in 1997 was less circumspect. Responding to a friendly reference to his Distributist convictions by the one-time Australian Labor Party leader, Bill Hayden, he wrote: 'In fact whatever economic ideas I express are not 'Distributist' in the Chestertonian sense of that word.' It was a low-key farewell to so long-standing and central affiliation." (*Collateral Damage: B. A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholics*; Race Mathews; 2005).

RONALD KNOX

"'The body of ideas,' says Monsignor Knox of Gilbert's [Chesterton] sociology, 'which he labelled, rather carelessly, 'distributism', is a body of ideas which still lasts, and I think will last, but it is not exactly a doctrine, or a philosophy; it is simply Chesterton's reaction to life.'" (Maisie Ward: *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, Penguin Books, 1958).

Ronald Knox was another Oxford convert, ordained a priest in 1917. He was the son of a Low Church Anglican bishop. It is often boasted "*that he almost converted Harold Macmillan*". He summed Chesterton up well.

MAISIE WARD SUMS UP!

In a note to the 1958 edition of her book, Maisie Ward writes: Since this chapter was written the aftermath of the second World War and the emergence of the Welfare State have given to Distributism an air quite curiously remote. Was this struggle against monopolistic capitalism and the stranglehold of bureaucracy as futile as its critics held, or was it as Chesterton believed a last bid for freedom and vitality in a dying society?"

INSIDE THE SPIDER'S PARLOUR

La Belle discotheque, Berlin, April, 1986, begins the fix.

Pan Am flight 103, Lockerbie, December, 1988, seals their fate.

UTA flight 772, Niger, September, 1989, renders Libya supine.

35 million dollars begins the journey into the spider's parlour.

2.7 billion dollars contributes to the coming media

squalor.
170 million dollars,
further tightens the collar.
These payments lead to *sans* sanctions and to the path of other dimensions: the elimination of so-called weapons of mass destruction,
two human sacrifices on the altar of Western aspersions,
ending revolutionary ways,
keening to MI6/CIA, Libya obeys, opens up to oil exploration,
draws Western business adoration.
(forget the US bombing '86 that killed

Gaddafi's adopted daughter Hannah)
In from the cold, into the sauna.
Is Libya now equal?
Well, that's another sequel.
They thought they were.
Asked repayment of compensation paid, (that protection racket affair)
wanted tens of millions for lost trade which sanctions mislaid.
Too hot in the Libyan desert for US Oil, they ran, the bailiffs foiled.
Benghazi the bait, enter the spider, war planes as outriders.

Wilson John Haire
5th April, 2011

CO-OPs continued

geneity, just as homogeneity threatened to overwhelm rural England".

Part of the impetus for Distributism had come from the convert generation's earlier experience before they ever heard of Papal Encyclicals—another of the many cases in which pre-conversion influences were adapted to the new Catholic setting. Chesterton's and Gill's early economic ideas had been drawn from Christian Socialism. At the start of the century, Chesterton had opposed Britain's role in the Boer War because he saw the Boers as a republic of self-reliant small-holding farmers, under threat from a British Empire at the beck and call of gold and diamond merchants. Chesterton, writes his biographer Michael Ffinch, "*had always seen the Boer farmers as he might have seen the yeoman farmers of Gloucestershire or Herefordshire*", and he heartily approved of their rough independence.

IRISH 'PEASANTS'

Another formative experience had been the *Irish Land Act of 1903*, by which Irish tenant farmers had been allowed, for the first time, to buy their own farmland, which they then did with alacrity. Hilaire Belloc had approved, noting that "*the Irish people had deliberately chosen to become peasant proprietors... when they could have become permanent tenants under far easier terms*". The incident had contributed to Belloc's indictment of wage slavery in *The Servile State* (1913), the sacred text of Distributism. The examples demonstrated, said the Distributists, that people would rather have land ownership with poverty than wages and luxuries. Moreover, widespread farming would restrain the aggressive centralizing State.

The Distributists knew that they were vulnerable to the charge of utopianism. When their anti-Banker rhetoric took on an anti-Jewish cast, as it usually did in the speeches and writings of Belloc, it provoked fears of Fascism, but its assault on Oligarchy Capitalism laid it open to accusations of Communism from conservatives and businessmen. In short, Distributism contained something to annoy everyone and never managed to make the turn from ideal to reality. Many of the Distributists became ardent conservatives during the 1940s, especially when the outcome of the Second World War left "*Godless Communism*" as the sole effective challenger to a US-dominated "*Christian West*".

As alternatives to Capitalism, the Catholic revival and Distributism made far less progress in the 1930s than Communism, which generated more intellectual enthusiasm than at any other time in the English-speaking world.

"The Catholic intellectuals' own view, of course, was that they alone had a programme, based on the encyclicals, which blended sound economic and moral principles, but they could see which way the wind was blowing. Daniel Lord, a Jesuit, says Arnold Sparr, "always confessed to a sneaking admiration for the Communists" because of their success in inspiring youthful enthusiasm and idealism which his own church could not seem to match" (Sparr, *To Promote, Defend and Redeem*, U.S., 1990, p45).

"To say we must have Socialism or Capitalism is like saying we must choose between all men going into monasteries and a few men having harems. If I denied such a sexual alternative I should not need to call myself a monogamist; I should continue to call myself a man."
(Chesterton).

DISTRIBUTIST LEAGUE

From *G.K.'s Weekly* grew The Distributist League. Its start in 1926, less than a decade after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and just months after the General Strike, was marked by intense enthusiasm, and its progress was recorded week by week in the paper. The inaugural meeting took place in London in September, 1926. Chesterton summed up their aims: "*Their simple idea was to restore possession*". He added that Francis Bacon had long ago said: "*Property is like muck. It is good only if it be spread*". Chesterton was elected President.

By November, 1926, the sale of his paper had increased two-fold to 8,000 copies.

Chesterton was asking for a return to the sanity of the field and workshop, of craftsmen and peasant, from the insanity of trusts and machinery, of unemployment, over-production and starvation. "*We are destroying food because we do not need it. We are starving men because we do not need them.*"

A major influence on Chesterton's views was the 1891 Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *On the Condition of the Working Class (Rerum Novarum, literally New Things)*. This document continued the Catholic Church attack on the twin errors of extreme individualism and collectivism but also took the radical step of supporting Trade

Unions and offering Church guidelines for alleviating social evils.

At the first formal meeting of the central branch of the League it was agreed: "*that members should make a habit of dealing at small shops*". They should avoid even small shops which sweat their employees, each branch should prepare a list of small shops for the use of its members. (*See above.*)

The same type of outlook is prevalent today under the slogan "*Shop Local*" at your Multi-National store and the populist guff of Joe Duffy and his RTE *Liveline* campaigns, like the Friday Fiver! It is not that long ago, if this proposition was raised at a Trades Council meeting, you'd be met with the rebuff "*We're all in the EU now!*".

ALL TALK, NO ACTION!

When he was challenged as to when the League was going to act on Distributive principles, Chesterton answered that their immediate task was to propagate the League's principles. Their work was to talk.

"I wonder whether as time went on he did not recall his own old comparison between the early Christian and the modern Socialist. For Distributists far more than Socialists should have been vowed to action. There was a grave danger both of making their propaganda ineffective by lack of example and of weakening themselves as Distributists" (Maisie Ward, cited above).

NO MACHINES

The Distributists soon began to argue and quarrel about the admission of machinery into the Distributist state, about the nature of one another's Distribution, and what was necessary to constitute a Distributist. Chesterton himself felt that machinery should be limited but not abolished:

"...the order of things had been historically that men had been deprived of property and enslaved on the land before the machine-slavery of industrialism had become possible".

"In other words, he did not want men to be employees. Men working for themselves, men their own employers, their own employees—that was the objective of Distributism. A wide distribution of property was its primary aim" (*ibid.*).

BACK TO THE FARM

"*There's nothing for it but to go back the farm*", said Chesterton. He noted the fact that America still had this large element of family farms as a basis for recovery. The suggestion that Distributists wanted to turn everybody into peasants

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Comment

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Distributists Occupy Wall Street

The American Chesterton Society—

Posted By **Richard Aleman** On 9th November 2011

At the first formal meeting of the central branch of The Distributist League it was agreed: "*that members should make a habit of dealing at small shops*". They should avoid even small shops which sweat their employees, each branch should prepare a list of small shops for the use of its members.

"And that is only a beginning. We hope to enlist the support of the small farmer and the small master craftsman. We hope, little by little, to put the small producer in touch with the small retailer. We hope in the end to establish within the state a community, almost self-supporting, of men and women pledged to Distributism, and to a large extent practising it. Less and less, then, will the juggling of finance have power over us; for it does not matter what they call the counters when you are exchanging hams for handkerchiefs, or pigs for pianos..." (Maisie Ward, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, First published in 1944. Penguin Books 1958).

Many of the Distributists were converts to the Catholic Church, a lot of them with strong Anglican backgrounds. Eric Gill, the sculpture and type designer, was a biting critic of capitalism, when he wasn't attacking his new-found faith. Evelyn Waugh was another. Father Vincent Mc Nabb, the Dominican Professor of Philosophy born in County Down was often described as the "*Father of Distributism*".

The two intellectual dynamos behind The Distributist League were Gilbert Keith Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc.

Belloc was born in France in 1870, shortly before he and his family fled from Paris to escape the invading Prussians. He returned to France for national service and throughout his life remained loyal to the ideal of French—and Catholic—culture.

At Oxford, he had a distinguished career as a history student, become President of the Oxford Union and made a name as a public speaker.

He was elected to Parliament in 1906, first as a Liberal and for a short time as an Independent, before retiring in 1910. His growing disillusionment with party politics, economics and society in general led him to write in 1912 possibly the most famous work of his long literary career—a work which led directly to the emergence of the Distributist movement—namely, *The Servile State*. He later expanded on these ideas in other works such as *The Crisis of Civilization* (1937).

Chesterton was born in London in 1872

to a middle-class family. During his childhood, his parents were caught up in the then society craze of Spiritualism. Although nominally an Anglican, G.K.'s early life was plagued by a sort of "*spiritual crisis*" —perhaps a mirror to the widespread "*fin de siècle*" attitude of despair prevalent among British intellectuals at the time.

In matters of politics, he initially joined the Liberal Party while his younger brother Cecil became a Socialist.

In matters of religion, he went through stages of scepticism before settling for a time on an acceptance of the general truth of Christianity. It would take several decades and major events in his life—and probably

the influence of his good friend Belloc—to finally convert him to Catholicism.

PAPAL ENCYCLICALS

The Distributists laid great emphasis on the compatibility of their teaching with Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and its sequel, Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).

"The great papal encyclicals... deprive Catholics of all excuse for complacently ignoring social evils which should challenge the conscience of all Christian men", wrote Albert Lunn.

Distributism was based on the conviction that Capitalism was a depersonalising system that turned men and work into commodities and gave them all an interchangeable money value. It placed bankers and financiers at the centre of society and human spiritual values at the margin. Far from being a system that guaranteed the right of citizens to hold private property, said the Distributists, Industrial Capitalism was concentrating property in the hands of a dwindling number of plutocrats. Against the plutocracy, Distributists—many, though not all, of them Catholics or Anglo-Catholics—favoured a dramatic redistribution of land, enabling rootless urbanites to return to the soil as farmers and to feel an organic connection with the actual earth that fed them. They favoured decentralisation, folk crafts, regional variation and dialect. As one historian said: "*Distributists celebrated hetero-*

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