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A New Treaty With 'Our Gallant Allies'

In politics context is everything. The greatest vices and the greatest virtues are totally interchangeable depending on the context—the particular object to be achieved. The EU was, and is, considered a most virtuous institution by all pro-Europeans. Now it is the favourite weapon of the anti-Europeans to defeat the Fiscal Compact. Cameron justified his action on 8th December last year on the basis that he was defending the EU against the 26 other members who were ignoring it in proposing the Fiscal Compact among themselves. If he had the guts to follow this through, he could legally bar all work and people concerned with the Compact from every EU building. Bill Cash and Bruce Arnold are now also great defenders of the EU. Anthony Coughlan has not yet taken up this argument. Anthony is probably too honest to play this game but that only means he is just a pedant when it comes to politics.

However, there is a need to explain to the electorate how this situation has come about. After 40 years' membership of the EEC/EU we are back to square one, legally speaking. To utilise a favourite analogy of the past in relation to Europe: the train we were on has run into a siding and a new one has started moving from the station and we must decide which one to join. Trying to be on both is a rather absurd position to be in. But why are there now two trains?

The explanation for this dilemma begins and ends with Britain. After less than a decade of membership, Britain changed tack politically and began a campaign to subvert the EEC/EU development. It has succeeded up to now. The only surprise is that they blocked a measure so openly and clearly last December. These things are rarely done so frankly. Clarity not being a virtue in these situations. Even those hitherto blind, deaf and dumb to Britain's ways, such as John Bruton, realise what has happened.

This Fiscal Compact Treaty presents a straightforward political choice between those who essentially created the present problem (Anglo Finance Capital with the policy of money deregulation which it foisted upon the world) on the one hand, and those who can be more reliable allies in Europe. If the Fiscal Compact is agreed, all the rest concerning tax arrangements, bail-outs, etc., will fall into place. The only realisable European political arrangement will then be able to develop.

Britain sees this clearly and hence its opposition. The '*Open Europe*' press summary of 5th April (which is produced by a well-funded British Euro-sceptic pressure group) gave an indication of the shape of a non-British Europe already taking place:

"In an interview with the FT [Financial Times], French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé claimed that France would adopt a more assertive stance with the EU if Nicolas Sarkozy were re-elected at the upcoming Presidential elections. 'It's not a bad method from time to time to bang the table' he said in reference to Sarkozy's threat to suspend French participation in the free movement Schengen area, adding 'it is a very good vision of what Europe should become—a Europe with borders'. He also reiterated Sarkozy's call for a Buy European Act, stating that 'we have a divergence with our British friends who see Europe as a big free trade area. That is not our vision. We must introduce into free trade the notion of reciprocity'."

Similarly, in a TV interview on 11th April, Sarkozy is reported as saying:

"They don't agree with me, which I find very funny, you know, because I don't agree with them... The FT, as they say in informed circles, has always defended the Anglo-Saxon model, considering the French irredeemable and that we would do better to align ourselves to the Anglo-Saxon model... The FT has for many years said that the solution for the world

continued on page 2

Syria

The turn of events in Syria indicates that the world is in the process of returning to Great Power politics.

Nothing other than Great Power politics is possible, unless the Great Powers submit themselves to some kind of world body which is independent of them. The United Nations is not a body of that kind, and was not intended to be. Its creators, essentially the Powers that defeated Nazi Germany, Russia and America, exempted themselves from UN authority at the outset. Each remained absolutely sovereign, with a Veto power which prevented the UN from attempting to interfere in their affairs, or even criticise them.

But twenty-two years ago the Soviet system collapsed and America became the only Great Power. By means of the moral influence of brute force—and by arm-twisting when moral influence was not sufficient—it ran the world, using the UN as its instrument. Russia was in disarray. The actual Chinese Government had been excluded from the UN for a quarter of a century after the American client Government of Chiang Kai Shek was defeated by the Communist Party in civil war. Chiang retreated to the island of Formosa (Taiwan) with a remnant of his Kuomintang movement, was protected there by the US Navy, and the US recognised his Government in Taiwan as the legitimate sovereign power over the Chinese mainland, and vetoed attempts by the actual Chinese Government to take the seat on the Security Council.

China had no experience at operating Great Power politics in the UN Security Council—the only part that matters, and Russia under Gorbachev forgot how to do it. But Russia is now remembering, and China is learning.

On Libya last year they agreed to what seemed a motion of restricting use of the Libyan air force against the insurrection,

continued on page 2

CONTENTS

	Page
A New Treaty With 'Our Gallant Allies. Jack Lane	1
Syria. Editorial	1
Some Thoughts On Last-Detich Unionism And 'Norn Irn'. Pat Walsh	3
The Irish Times Regrets. Editorial	5
Promissory Note Deal. John Martin	6
Mahon's Star Witness. Editorial	7
Anne Harris. Editorial	9
Poem: <i>A Source Said</i> . Wilson John Haire	10
Shorts from <i>the Long Fellow</i> (Denis O'Brien; Elaine Byrne; Eoghan Harris; Corporation Tax; Property Taxes)	11
Elizabeth Bowen And Her Admirers. Julianne Herlihy (Part 2)	12
Items From The Irish Bulletin: 10. April 1920	14
Harris And Dunmanway. Jack Lane (Report)	14
The North And Dunmanway. Wilson John Haire	15
The Dunmanway Killings, <i>Curiouser And Curiouser</i> . Jack Lane (Part 3)	16
Naval Warfare. Pat Walsh (Part 19, Final)	18
An Irish Anti-Fascist RAF Volunteer, and some other soldiers. Manus O'Riordan (Part 1)	19
Biteback: Which Portraits Should Be Removed? Tom Cooper (Report)	23
Does It Stack Up? Michael Stack (Party Annual Conference; Dingle—Dangle; Governance; The Titanic)	24

Labour Comment, edited by Pat Maloney:
The Protestant Reformation And The Guilds
 (Part 7 of *Mondragon*)
 (back page)

NEXT MONTH:

Brendan Clifford replies to Stephen Richards' *Views Of Sinn Fein*, which appeared in the February 2012 issue of *Irish Political Review*

is that there should be no law... I think exactly the opposite.... The FT explains to us that it is necessary to do exactly what Great Britain does, which is in a far worse economic situation than France. So as for me, I accept any who volunteer to give us lessons, but not them, and not like that!"

How this new situation has come about is what needs to be explained to the electorate because, apart from providing the facts of the case, it might actually help win the referendum. Clarity might become a political virtue!

However the omens for this are not good. For example, *The Irish Times*, which feels entitled to lecture the Government and the people at regular intervals, has editorialised on:

"Explaining The Treaty

"...This time out, clear explanations and robust political campaigns are required from the outset. A lack of information must not be allowed to figure again as the public's reason for rejection" (7 April).

The paper goes to trot out the very same type of threat/promise that got Lisbon Treaty, Mark II passed:

"If voters stand aloof, they will automatically forego the capacity to access emergency funding by way of a new Eurozone 'firewall'. Such funding may not be required. But its availability could make a substantial difference to the cost of Government borrowing on international markets. That, in turn, will influence the range of public services it can afford to provide" (7 April).

So it's all about the lolly we might need and might be denied. In other words, the lowest common denominator among nations and people is the summit of its case for this Treaty. This is in keeping with the economic determinism that now dominates intellectual life. Far from giving "clear explanations" there is no attempt to point out the unique nature of this Treaty, that it *isn't* another EU Treaty, that it's an inter-Governmental arrangement, what that means, why it has arisen—and why has the European Union failed to deliver in its hour of crisis.

The Union is at a dead end, and inter-Governmental arrangements which leave Britain isolated have had to be made.

This referendum presents an opportunity to re-establish an older alliance than the EU, an opportunity to put real flesh on the alliance proclaimed in 1916 with 'our gallant allies in Europe'. If this Referendum succeeds, that would be clearly evident for the centenary of 1916 and that event could then take on a whole new meaning.

Vote Yes!

Jack Lane

Syria

continued

only to see it 'interpreted' as authority to destroy the Libyan State by bombing. When a 'moderate' resolution was sought on Syria this year, they would not allow it. The US, UK and France declared that they were "*the international community*", but Russia and China showed them that they weren't. Western intervention to destroy the Syrian State under cover of a perversely -interpreted UN resolution was prevented.

A truce was brokered to allow negotiations between Government and opposition groups in Syria to take place. Although the aim of the US etc. was to destroy the Syrian State, they felt obliged to agree to this, but from the start their object was to prevent it from actually happening. On the first morning of the truce, St. Fergal Keane of the BBC pronounced that, if the truce did not take the form of the Syrian Government allowing the "*demonstrations*" against it to resume without hindrance, then it would be spurious. This was the US/UK line, but so far it hasn't played well.

That the US objective is not negotiated peace consolidated by reform within the Syrian State, but the destruction of the Syrian State, is not subject to reasonable doubt. And the means for destroying the State is religious warfare. It has been attempted by the US and Saudi Arabia to shape the Sunni population in Syria into a battering ram which, backed by active Western support, will destroy the regime. And the EU, in the middle of the crisis it has brought about for itself, supports the destructive policy on Syria.

None of this is new. What is new is that Russia and China are ending Single Power dominance of world affairs, and are restoring the old-fashioned Great Power politics which in bygone times, before the

era of universalist illusion, sometimes maintained peace in much of the world for long periods of time.

That there is a "Syrian people", kept down by the regime and capable of establishing orderly government if only the regime is destroyed, is not even believed by those who assert it. The US object is merely to have no stable states in the Middle East which are not its client

states, and to uphold the dominance of its major client state, the Saudi theocracy, in order to keep the others in line.

In the heat of this conflict Turkey seems to have given up its ambition to operate an independent foreign policy and act as a benevolent intermediary in disputes, and to have become a partisan in the attempt to sweep aside the Syrian State by means of US/Saudi-backed religious war.

the Lord Bew of Queen's, Prof. Keogh of Cork and many others. It appears now that the politicians have agreed that it is a fable worth promulgating.

Northern Ireland: what is it? really says everything that needs to be said about the purpose of Northern Ireland and what it has done. It makes something that has had the purpose of mystification, and which has mystified even those who have administered it, from Terence O'Neill to Peter Robinson, understandable.

In *Northern Ireland: what is it?* Brendan Clifford states: "*The 'Northern Ireland state' is a propaganda construct, designed to shift political responsibility for the creation of the North away from Britain and foist it on somebody else*" (p.21).

Well, it has been foisted alright and we have been well and truly foistered upon!

Over 60 years ago, Captain Henry Harrison (OBE and MC) noted that Northern Ireland was neither "*an integral part of the United Kingdom*", nor "*a state*". It was, in fact, a "*quasi unit*"—a semi-detached administrative part of the United Kingdom State, constructed for Imperial purposes against the will of Carson and the Unionists in Ireland. Harrison explained:

"An examination of the statutory and administrative conditions in regard to Northern Ireland brings into prominent relief... the fact that here is no distinct political organism, or polity. There is not even the rudimentary structure of such an organism. It is, in good sooth, 'an integral part of the United Kingdom'—a quasi unit. It is not a distinct and separate unit, except perhaps nominally or conventionally, for certain of the purposes of legislation, finance, administration or economic treatment. Thus, whilst Northern Ireland has its own Parliament, the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster continues to legislate for it... the bulk of its revenue comes from the Imperial Treasury in London, which collects and handles its most important taxes and charges it with the cost of doing so... it is British officials 'from departments having their headquarters in London and acting under the control of the United Kingdom authorities' that administer in Northern Ireland itself, the reserved services..." (*Ulster and the British Empire*, pp.64-5).

Captain Harrison argued that Britain let the pretence emerge that Northern Ireland was a state in order that the formation and conduct of its government could not be blamed on Westminster and so that the Unionists in Ulster be allowed to have a free hand in governing and policing their minority problem without interference from outside. And in that it undoubtedly succeeded for 50 years.

Some Thoughts On Last-Ditch Unionism And 'Norn Irrn'

Peter Robinson, First Minister of Northern Ireland's Home Rule parliament, made a speech at Iveagh House in Dublin on 29th March 2012 to begin the centenary commemorations of Ulster's resistance to Home Rule.

The subject of the speech was Sir Edward Carson, who led the resistance to Home Rule in Ireland but who ended up as a statue outside the Home Rule Parliament in Stormont. In the course of his speech Robinson said: "*Edward Carson... was the chief architect and creator of the Northern Ireland state—maintaining it, against the odds, as an integral part of the United Kingdom—a constitutional outcome that remains to this day.*"

It must be a record for even a politician to get 5 facts wrong in a single sentence—but Robinson somehow managed it.

Firstly, Carson was never an architect of what became Northern Ireland—never desiring such an entity to ever be brought into existence. Secondly, he was also not its creator and its administration bears little resemblance to what his Provisional Government might have been. Thirdly, he never maintained the entity of Northern Ireland but walked away from it at its birth. Fourthly, the area was never meant to be by its architects and creators "*an integral part of the United Kingdom*", and never became such in the fifty years that the Unionist Party administered it. Lastly, the Good Friday Agreement (or its modification at St. Andrews, if that is preferred) is hardly indicative of such "*a constitutional outcome.*"

Robinson is not an ignoramus, as many others of a more academic and less practical persuasion are in relation to such matters, and he has some idea of the facts of the matter with regard to Carson and Northern Ireland, as is made clear in his speech:

"Though a statue of Lord Carson takes pride of place in front of Parliament Buildings at Stormont, a Northern Ireland Parliament was an institution he had not sought. Though he did so much for unionism and Northern Ireland, he regarded the failure to retain the rest of Ireland in the United Kingdom as a massive loss... His hope and belief had been that success for Ulster would thwart the entire Home Rule project for Ireland. It is ironic that the one part of Ireland which in 1912 did not want a local Parliament, within the Union, was the only part of Ireland that ultimately got it."

Perhaps the complexities of history would have been too impolitic for the First Minister of Northern Ireland to draw out. Perhaps they would have been wasted on his Dublin hosts and would have spoiled the atmosphere of peace and reconciliation which they wished to cultivate. And most of all, perhaps it did not matter what Robinson said at all but only where he said it and that it was generally nice to his hosts. That, after all, is the whole point is it not?

It must be a wonderful world to live in to be unburdened by uncomfortable truths with no one around who will ever point them out. It is almost like 'the wonderful world of Disney' we enjoyed as children—or perhaps it should be called '*Fantasia Norn Irrn*'.

It is just a pity that the masses are burdened by the truth of the consequences of it all.

Brendan Clifford in his recent book *Northern Ireland: what is it?*—*Professor Mansergh changes his mind*, shows how academics in Ireland have taken to writing about the 'Northern Ireland state' as if it exists. These academics include the foremost in the country, nationalist and unionist: Prof. Fitzpatrick of Trinity, Prof.

Henry Harrison was a Parnellite and then Redmondite, serving with the 16th Division of the British Army on the Western Front in the Great War. He then worked with Sir Horace Plunkett as Secretary of the Irish Dominion League, an organisation campaigning for dominion status for Ireland within the British Empire and became Irish correspondent of *The Economist* from 1922 to 1927.

In the late 1930s he wrote a number of interesting books from the perspective of someone who wished for a *rapprochement* between Britain and Ireland, so that Ireland could be of assistance to England in her coming hour of need which he seemed to know was coming with the instinct of a Britisher. He defended Irish neutrality in Britain's Second War on Germany both against British and American critics and at the same time also founded, with General Sir Hubert Gough, the leader of the Curragh mutineers, the Commonwealth Irish Association in 1942.

Harrison's book *Ulster And The British Empire* was a plea to Britain for an ending of partition in order that Ireland could do its duty by Britain against Germany in the second round of unfinished business. Harrison saw it in 1940 as "*a thing most lamentable that in the new Great War Ireland should be standing neutral*" (from the Introduction, *The Neutrality of Ireland*).

One cannot help recalling the words of George W. Bush after reading that: "*fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me*" or something like that.

However, it is an unusual book in that Harrison's anti-partitionism does not totally cloud his understanding of Northern Ireland as being a dysfunctional political unit in its own right, quite apart from its partitionist function.

In the book Harrison quotes Sir Edward Carson in the House of Lords giving the reasons why he was abstaining in the vote over the 1920 Government of Ireland Act:

"No, sir, I urge even now at this hour that the proper course is that Ulster should remain as she is and that you should govern her, as you are governing her now, from here; there is very little difficulty about it, and that you should above all things have it as a place of your own with feelings toward you exactly like your own people, and from which, if these eventualities occur, you will have a jumping off place from which you can carry on all the necessary operations because to my mind, it is utterly idle to suppose, and indeed it has been said so over and over again, that this country can ever afford or will attempt to try a complete separation of Ireland from Great Britain" (*Hansard*, col. 1292, 18 May, 1920).

Carson, in opposing Home Rule institutions for Northern Ireland, was clearly suggesting the use of Ulster as a base for the future reconquest of Ireland, in this speech. But he was conceding that the game was up, having been told behind the scenes that the Imperial interest demanded Ulster make a great sacrifice.

Carson had led the Ulster Unionist resistance against the British Liberal Government but abandoned it in its moment of triumph because what it had got was not what he had aimed to get. And as a result he retired from politics in disgust at the betrayal of the Union by the British Unionist Party.

Harrison also noticed the speeches of Winston Churchill in Parliament which give something of an indication of what the construction of Northern Ireland was really all about.

In February 1925, three and a half years after Northern Ireland had come into existence, Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was proposing the making of a grant-in-aid of 1 million and a quarter pounds to the revenues of Northern Ireland. This was opposed by Philip Snowden, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the basis that such a grant was "*illegal*" and inconsistent with the provisions in the terms of the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. Churchill justified the 'illegal' subventions to Ulster on the following basis:

"For many years Ulster's repugnance to Home Rule denied Home Rule to the rest of the island which desired it so keenly, but in 1921 the attitude of Ulster changed. Ulster, not out of any wish on her own part, contrary to her inclinations and contrary to her interest, consented to, in the Imperial interest, in the general interest, to accept a form of government which separated the administration of Ulster from the administration of Great Britain, and which establish them as a small community in the North of Ireland, with many difficulties, many embarrassments, and many perils which they had to face. I say that that was a great sacrifice on the part of Ulster, and no one who cares about the principle of pacification embodied in the Irish settlement ought ever to ignore or be forgetful of that great sacrifice. It has imposed hardships upon Ulster. They did not want any change, and were contented with the situation that existed." (*Hansard*, cols. 1665-6, 23 February, 1925)

A year later, when Northern Ireland required another Imperial subvention from the public purse Churchill reiterated his point:

"I think it right to ask the committee to bear in mind the fact that all the in-

conveniences and difficulties from which Ulster has suffered arose not from any wish of her people. On the contrary, Ulster did not ask for any constitutional change. She was perfectly content to remain in the United Kingdom, and it was only because of the strong movement of Imperial policy and many tragic events, on which I do not intend to dwell, that in 1920 Ulster consented to defer to the wish of the Imperial parliament and to set up a house of her own. From the moment that this took place, from the moment that it was quite clear that Ulster was not in any way standing in the way of the aspirations of the rest of Ireland, but was deferring to the general requirements of Imperial policy, it has always seemed to me that a very strong obligation rested upon Parliament to secure her reasonable help in the difficult and critical years attending the creation of this new government" (*Hansard*, cols. 1665-6, 22 February, 1926).

Here, from the horse's mouth, from one of the real 'architects' of Northern Ireland, it is clear that Ulster had been reluctant to accept Home Rule institutions and had only done so in deferring to the "*general requirements of Imperial policy*". Snowden acknowledged Churchill's argument that Northern Ireland should receive "*illegal*" subventions because of the sacrifices she have made to the requirements of Imperial policy as the only justification for receiving the Treasury's treasure when treasure was in short supply after the extravagant spending of it in destroying Germany.

The financial arrangements between Westminster and Northern Ireland are one of the lesser-known aspects of the Treaty. It seems that Collins was led to believe, as an inducement to signing the Treaty, that it would be impossible for Northern Ireland to opt out from the new Irish Free State due to the lack of financial assistance it would receive from the British Government under the terms of the Treaty. Of course, behind the scenes, assurances were made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Stanley Baldwin, to Sir James Craig that extra finance would be forthcoming in the event of it deciding to exclude itself from the Treaty state established in Dublin. This was the beginning of a system which was developed by purely administrative methods in which Northern Ireland ceased to make an effective contribution to the British Exchequer but received regular and substantial subsidies or grants-in-aid from the Treasury in Whitehall, for reasons of Imperial interest.

Winston Churchill, unlike his father, had been a vigorous Home Ruler who had

gone down the Falls to speak up for it and had threatened civil war against the Tories after the Curragh Mutiny threatened to frustrate it (before drawing back from his bluster when the possibility of a greater war appeared on the horizon).

So it was perhaps only Churchill who could speak up for what had happened, after all the twists and turns of Imperial policy toward Ireland between 1912 and 1922, since he had the greatest understanding and experience of the whole mess. And if anyone was an architect of it all, who had seen various plans consigned to the dustbin of history after events, it was he.

Northern Ireland had been created to serve the Imperial purpose with regard to Ireland in the light of the tumultuous events of the decade, 1912-22. The Ulster Unionists had "taken a hit" and made "a great sacrifice" in accepting a semi-detached provincial form of Home Rule so that Britain's influence on Ireland could be maintained in future. A political entity had been created that nobody in Ireland, unionist or nationalist, wanted but which would maintain a useful antagonism by giving it a sizeable minority and a parliament that provided for the juices to stew. This would also act as a prize that the part of Ireland that was lost could always aspire to but never regain without doing Britain's bidding.

So leverage, in perpetuity, was created on that which was lost by that which was held, but held out temptingly to that which had been lost—in the hope that it would never be fully lost and might be regained, someday, in one way or another.

It was a cunning plan and it has been very successful—it saw off Dev, the *Catholic Bulletin*, the *Irish Press* and now, it seems, Fianna Fail as well. The History Departments of the Universities in the south were captured and the media became its willing tool.

It therefore has been very successful in relation to its primary objective—the lost Twenty-Six. But what seeds has it planted in the Six itself?

Peter Robinson's speech was reported mostly on account of its ambition to sign Catholics up as unionists as a final fall-back position for defending the Union. Presumably, they would be unionism's last ditch. But it appears that the rug is already being pulled out from under his feet.

Brian Feeney writes in the *Irish News* of 11th April the following article, *Sinn Fein "selling out" just an exercise in triangulation*, as I finish these thoughts:

"This political strategy (triangulation) is what Sinn Fein has been executing brilliantly in the north over recent years against unionists. You must have noticed that Sinn Fein MLAs and councillors have been finding grandparents or great-grandparents who fought in the British army in the First World War. So it's OK to go to Messines to commemorate the dead of 1914 to 1918... Martin Mc Guinness... conveniently found a grandfather who had worked on the Titanic... What's going on? Triangulation, that's what. Quite simply Sinn Fein has been unashamedly taking ownership of the North. Areas of life here which for generations unionists believed were exclusive to them and of which they had sole possession have now been invaded and taken over by republicans. It gives another meaning to a shared society. Unionists look on in bewilderment as Sinn Fein confidently asserts control of what are called 'signature' projects that unionists expected might have caused embarrassment to republicans. Not a bit of it. They own the north as much as any unionist. 'An Ireland of equals' you see.

So they commemorate events of a century ago which unionists appropriated after 1921... Unionists stand open mouthed as Republicans appear to promote 'Norn Irrn'. Of course, in the next breath republicans remind them it is all part of a larger project to make unionists feel safe in a future united Ireland... At the same time no unionist could fault McGuinness for the commitment with which he operates the institutions of the local administration here. In fact, he and his fellow republicans have taken complete possession of all aspects of that administration, haven't they? They're making 'Norn Irrn' work aren't they? Unionists couldn't complain about that, could they?

"It has baffled some Sinn Fein supporters who write to this paper objecting that Sinn Fein has 'sold out'—but these supporters fail to see... that by embracing fully all the north's institutions Sinn Fein is irrevocably changing the north into a place unionists no longer own or even recognise but can't object to."

So, what will Peter do now, poor thing?

Pat Walsh

The *Irish Times* Regrets

The Home Rule Bill that caused 35,000 to be killed in the Great War is having its centenary. The Home Rule leader, John Redmond, called on Home Rulers to join the British Army for the war on Germany. There were two reasons why they should do so:

A. The Home Rule Act, which Ireland had demanded and had been granted, made Ireland a willing part of the Empire with Imperial obligations.

B. If Home Rule Ireland did not flock into the British Army, Britain might deny it Home Rule.

The matter was beautifully poised from the British viewpoint. The Home Rule Bill, against which Unionist Ulster had raised an illegal Army, had been put on the Statute Book with Unionist support but on the condition that it would not be put into effect until the end of the War, and that even then it would not be put into effect without unspecified amendment.

The *Irish Times* editorial of 12th April this year suggested that Redmond's "appeal to service in the British Empire's cause... as a first step to Irish freedom" was "a disastrous miscalculation".

In August 1914 Redmond had declared support for Britain in the War but did not

recruit for the British Army. He said that the Home Rule Volunteers would defend Ireland against Germany, thus freeing British troops for the War. It was a ludicrous proposal and was rightly ridiculed by the *Irish Times*. There was no way that the Unionists, who came into their own with the War, would have given control of Ireland to the Irish Volunteers. The *Irish Times* then published a series of denunciations of Redmond for standing between Ireland and the War. The young men of Ireland were lusting for battle, but he was holding them on a leash.

The Home Rule Bill was enacted in late September, along with a Bill suspending its actual implementation, and Redmond complied with the *Irish Times* demand that he should send Irishmen to war.

John Bruton, former Taoiseach and former EU Ambassador, was upset by the *Irish Times* criticism of Redmond's war policy:

"It is hard to argue that Redmond was wrong to take sides in a war to defend the territorial integrity of a small nation like Belgium... Redmond's position was more enlightened than that of the republicans of Easter Week 1916, who explicitly invoked in their proclamation, their "gallant allies" in Europe. These allies were imperial Germany, the Austro-Hungarian empire and the Ottoman

empire. The morality of this alliance has yet to be seriously questioned, but it should be..." (13.4.12).

It is true that the particulars of the Great War and the Republican view of it at the time have not been questioned. What has happened in recent years is that the Republic has, by general consent, declared the war of the British Empire in 1914-19 to be "Our War", and therefore, of course, a good war, but without going into detail.

One detail, to be starting with, is that "little Belgium" was a great genocidal slave state. Estimates of the slaves killed by its brutal regime in the Congo run into millions.

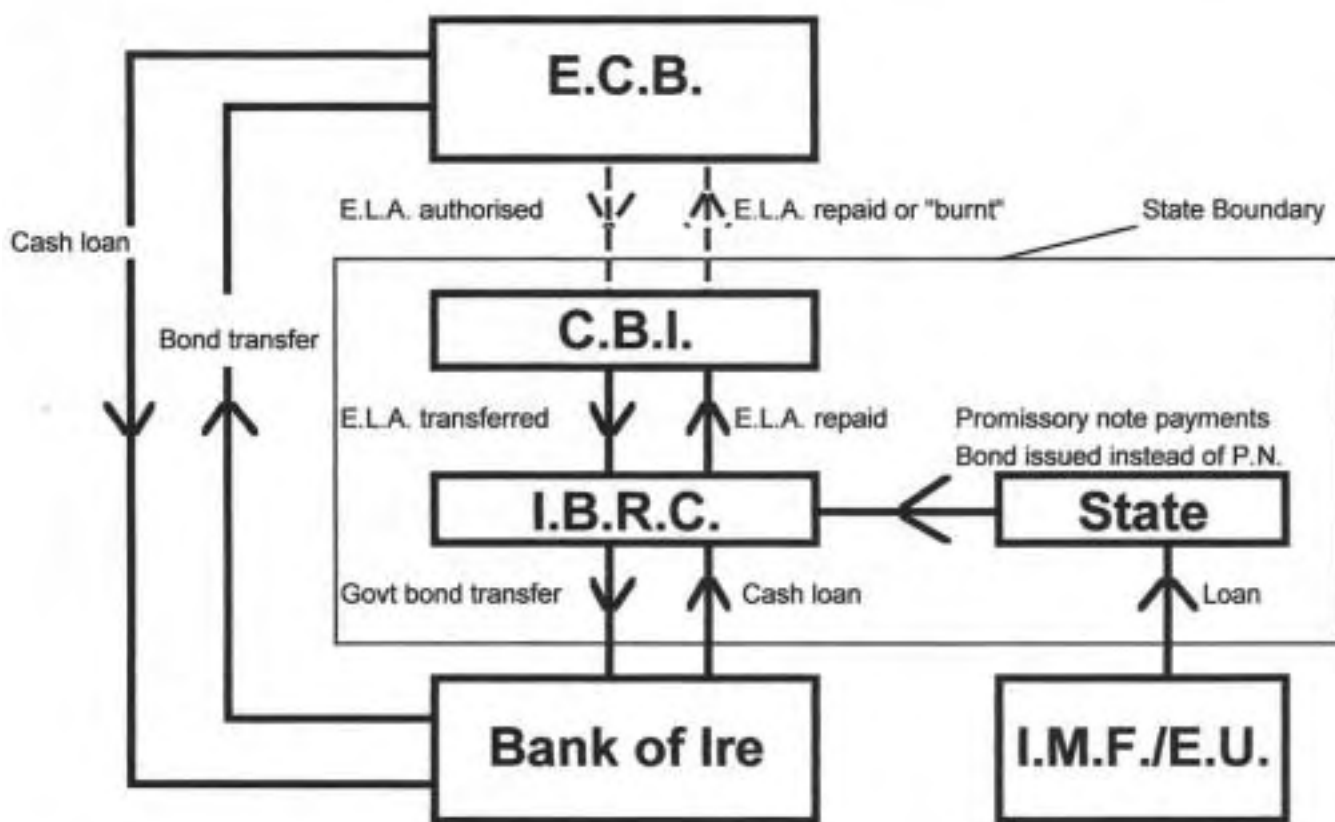
Another detail is that Britain could have prevented the German march across Belgium on the way to France by telling

Berlin that it would treat it as a reason for war. Berlin did its best to ascertain the British attitude but was misled. Germany would have accepted whatever conditions Britain put on its neutrality in the war Germany was facing with two powerful Empires. Britain had made careful preparations over a number of years for war against Germany, but the Government had the problem a strong pacifist sentiment on its backbenches and needed an incident to overcome it. The German march through Belgium was the incident. It was deliberately let happen for that purpose. Bruton might look up the warmonger, G.B. Shaw, about it.

Another detail, re violations of neutrality, is that the Greek Government refused

an offer of a chunk of Turkey in return for joining the War. So Britain invaded Greece, overthrew its Government, set up a puppet Government in its place, and in 1919 sent the puppet Government to invade the Asia Minor region of Turkey and set up a Greek Empire there. When the Greek invasion, after initial penetration into the heart of Anatolia, provoked a powerful Turkish resistance which drove the Greek Army back to the sea, amid scenes of great communal slaughter, Britain piously washed its hands of the matter.

If John Bruton wants a thorough discussion of the morality of "Our War" he can have it here. We doubt that he could have it anywhere else.



Promissory Note Deal

The deal on the Promissory Notes that the Irish State negotiated with the EU at the end of March was an improvement on the *status quo*.

To recap: the Irish Banks have been borrowing Exceptional Liquidity Assistance (ELA) from the European Central Bank (ECB) at 1% interest. This was not considered acceptable by the ECB because ELA was a form of money that was intended to be only "exceptional" or "emergency" money, which would be repaid once the banks in question had emerged from short-term liquidity prob-

lems. It was not intended as long-term funding. With this in mind, the Irish State was obliged to replace the ELA in the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation (IBRC) with loans from the IMF/EU. Loans from the ECB at 1% would be replaced by loans from the IMF/EU at 3.5%, repayable over a period of 20 years.

The IBRC (formerly Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide) owed about 42 billion euro in ELA. It could repay about 11 billion out of its own resources. The remainder was to be financed by the State over a period of 20 years in the form of

annual payments, most of which will be paid in the first 10 years. The Irish Government was attempting to postpone these Promissory Note payments. The first payment of 3.06 billion was paid in March 2011 and the second instalment was due to be paid last March.

Enda Kenny in his Ard Fheis speech claimed that the Government had succeeded in postponing the payment. This was not quite accurate and he later had to withdraw this claim.

In last month's *Irish Political Review*,

we described the basic architecture of the Promissory Notes. The diagram accompanying this article is similar to the one last month. As in last month's illustration, the top of the diagram shows the ECB authorising the Central Bank of Ireland (CBI) to issue ELA money which is passed on to the IBRC. The IBRC repays the ELA by means of Promissory Note payments from the State. However in March this year, instead of making a payment of 3.06 billion, the State issued a Government Bond to the IBRC. The IBRC used this Bond to borrow from the Bank of Ireland at a 2.35% rate of interest (see note at end of article). It then handed over the money to the CBI, which settles its account with the ECB.

The Bank of Ireland, in turn used this Government Bond to borrow from the ECB at 1% interest.

From the point of view of the State, the financing costs have been reduced. Instead of borrowing from the IMF/EU at 3.5% it is borrowing at 2.35% from Bank of Ireland. This represents a saving of 35.2 million euro in annual interest costs ($(3.5\% - 2.35\%) \times 3.06$ billion). Bank of Ireland will make an annual profit of 41.3 million on the transaction ($(2.35\% - 1.0\%) \times 3.06$ billion). However, the State owns 15% of this bank, so it is entitled to 15% of the profits, which amount to 6.2 million. So, the total savings on the Government deal equal 41.4 million ($35.2 + 6.2$). This is very small in the context of the billions that are in play, but it is not nothing. While the ECB has not reduced its liability of 3.06 billion euro as it expected, it has shifted it from a dead bank (IBRC) to a functioning bank (Bank of Ireland). This will obviate the political objections to repaying the ECB.

While the money saved is relatively small the Government can feel that it has established a precedent which can be used next year when another 3.06 billion is due for payment. It would be preferable if next year the IBRC borrowed from AIB instead of Bank of Ireland, because AIB is almost 100%-owned by the State and therefore its profits would remain within the State. This is something, which the Government should focus on in its ongoing negotiations.

John Martin

Note 1: The transaction will have to be postponed until Bank of Ireland obtains shareholder approval. In the meantime bridging finance is obtained from NAMA.

On-line sales of books,
pamphlets and magazines:

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

Mahon's Star Witness

We apologise for the description of Thomas Gilmartin as a corrupt property developer in last month's magazine. This foolish statement did not take due account of the fact that Mr. Gilmartin had been granted exemption from the law in this matter by the competent authority of the State. Tom Gilmartin on the advice of his lawyer (Noel Smyth, the famous property developer and Anglo-Irish Bank debtor), sought and obtained criminal immunity from *The Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters & Payments*. The Immunity was granted by the Director of Public Prosecutions, on the request of the Tribunal. No other witness in this Tribunal or in any other Irish Tribunal has sought or obtained such immunity. From this it can be reasonably inferred that Gilmartin was Judge Mahon's star witness. It is noteworthy that the Supreme Court has found that the Judge was over-protective of his witness. Evidence that might have undermined the credibility of Gilmartin was not made available to parties against whom Gilmartin had made allegations. The Supreme Court over-ruled the Tribunal on this matter.

Nevertheless the Tribunal carried on as a moral/legal Inquisition of a kind not seen since the Holy Inquisition. With Tribunals, the standard of proof required for a determination is lower than in criminal cases. Testimony is not subject to the rules of evidence. Furthermore, the Chairman of the Tribunal can form an opinion on the basis of what he is told without the benefit of adversarial cross-examination.

In a criminal prosecution the verdict has to be 'beyond reasonable doubt'. In a criminal prosecution the verdict has to be 'beyond reasonable doubt' However, in civil cases, the verdict can be based on 'balance of probabilities'. The difference between the standards of proof as between criminal and civil cases is because someone may lose his liberty in a criminal prosecution, whilst a civil prosecution usually only results in monetary sanctions.

The trouble with applying civil standards of proof in the Tribunals is that, with the glare of publicity associated with the Tribunal process, the consequences of an adverse determination for a person in the public eye are far more severe than for the usual respondents in civil cases. It is also quite commonplace for media reporting to go beyond the actual findings of Tribunals, but to be inaccurate in such a way that a libel case cannot hope to succeed.

There have been frequent calls for the prosecution of persons against whom there have been adverse Tribunal findings. So far there has only been one, George Redmond. The reason for the lack of action is

that the suppositions upon which a determination is made are not adequate as a basis for criminal prosecution.

There are certain matters in the Mahon Tribunal that are arguable and other matters that are indisputable.

It is indisputable that in May or June 1989 Tom Gilmartin wrote a cheque for IR£50,000 and gave it to Pádraig Flynn who was then the Minister for the Environment. It is also indisputable that Flynn was given the power to dispose of the money in any way that he saw fit. Mr. Gilmartin says that he left the payee section of the cheque blank.

It is indisputable that the cheque was not written on a personal cheque book. He had arranged with his bank that, when Flynn presented the cheque to the bank, the amount would be debited to Gilmartin's personal account. It is indisputable that Gilmartin never looked for a receipt for the payment of the IR£50,000, despite leaving the payee section of the cheque blank.

Judge Mahon makes the following indisputable comment in his report:

"Mr Flynn confirmed that the dealings he had with Mr Gilmartin were undertaken by him in his capacity as the Minister for the Environment. He accepted that had he not held this position he probably would never have encountered Mr Gilmartin, and that other than these dealings, no political or business relationship, friendship or connection had ever existed between them."

It is indisputable that Mr. Gilmartin sought Urban Renewal tax relief status for his Quarryvale properties—which at the time were exclusively owned by him—from Pádraig Flynn. Such status would have obviated the need for planning permission. Mr. Edmund Kay, a Senior Manager in AIB's property division, noted in an internal memo that Gilmartin believed he would obtain that status. The internal memorandum says that Gilmartin believed that Flynn would ring AIB to confirm that the Relief would be granted to Quarryvale. Gilmartin disputes the accuracy of this memo, but it is difficult to know why Kay would lie about this matter.

It is indisputable that Mr. Gilmartin did not obtain this Relief.

We now turn to what is disputable. Gilmartin claims that, although he left the payee section of the cheque blank, he intended the cheque for Fianna Fáil. It should be pointed out that Gilmartin was at that time a seasoned businessman. He was not an innocent abroad. In the previous year (1988) he had been writing cheques

of IR£3,500 a month to Liam Lawlor. These cheques also had the payee section left blank.

The question arises of whether Gilmartin had had such a close affinity with Fianna Fáil, that would explain such an outburst of generosity. It would appear that there was not such a relationship. In February 1989, just a few months before he gave the cheque to Pdraig Flynn, the developer claims to have had an interesting experience. As Gilmartin recounts it on oath to the Tribunal, he was brought to Leinster House by Liam Lawlor. He was ushered in to a meeting attended by Charles Haughey, Pdraig Flynn, Bertie Ahern and other Cabinet Ministers. There was also an unidentified man at the meeting. After receiving some supportive comments, Gilmartin was ushered out of the meeting by this unidentified man. The man requested IR£5 million on the basis of the assistance that was going to be given to Gilmartin. Gilmartin refused and told the man:

'You people make the so and so Mafia look like monks'.

Gilmartin is asking us to believe that he issued a cheque for IR£50,000 and the intended recipient was a political party that in his own words would make the "mafia look like monks". Why would he do this? Gilmartin claimed to the Tribunal that he hoped the payment:

"would smooth the way, smooth my path through the quagmire of corruption and the zoning etcetera'.

He thought that the people who would make the mafia look like monks would do this for IR£50,000 when apparently the going rate for assistance was IR£5 million!

A friend of Gilmartin, Mr. Sheeran, told the Tribunal that his understanding, based on information provided to him by Mr. Gilmartin, was that the payment was made by Mr Gilmartin

'to smooth his path through tax incentives and zoning etc.'

Sheeran later claimed that his statement was badly worded. But it's not easy to formulate a good wording for this.

Gilmartin's solicitor Noel Smyth formulated Gilmartin's position as follows:

"... while the rezoning was postponed on several occasions, he (i.e. Gilmartin) was under duress to pay contributions to TDs, councillors, and members of the then Fianna Fáil government and was openly threatened that in the event of his failing to do so, then his rezoning would not take place. In most instances he resisted these claims but on a number of occasions, believing that it would significantly help the process, agreed to make

financial contributions to the party which, in one case (a sum of IR£50,000), it was retained by the individual minister himself."

Judge Mahon comments as follows:

"Mr Gilmartin was cross-examined in relation to the reference in the foregoing extract to '*in most instances*'. It was put to him that these words suggested that in some instances he had succumbed to requests for the payments of bribes, including the payment of IR£50,000. Mr Gilmartin denied that he had ever bribed anyone and maintained that he could not be held accountable for the phrasing of Mr Smyth's document."

Gilmartin can't be held accountable for what his solicitor says on his behalf?! It is a novel view, as legal representatives act on the instruction of their clients. But the learned Judge says it is so.

There are two points that should be made about Gilmartin/Smyth's statement. Firstly, this is Gilmartin's version of the situation he faced as interpreted by his solicitor. Secondly, even in this version, the "*threats*" consisted of denying him a benefit. It must be said that Gilmartin had no legal entitlement to have his lands rezoned.

Nobody could accuse Gilmartin of being anything less than voluble in the complaints he made to the Tribunal. But it appears that he was considerably more circumspect at the time the matters arose. For example, Gilmartin claims that in May or June of 1988 he attended a meeting with George Redmond (an Assistant City and County Manager) and Liam Lawlor. This meeting took place at Redmond's office. According to Gilmartin he was given a map showing the landowners in the Quarryvale area. At a certain point Redmond used some pretext to leave Lawlor alone with Gilmartin. Gilmartin claims that Lawlor solicited IR£100,000 for himself and IR£100,000 for Redmond.

Redmond and Lawlor vehemently deny that such a meeting took place. However, they do concede that a meeting *did* take place between Gilmartin, Lawlor and Redmond on 28th June 1988. There was no discussion of the landowners in Quarryvale and no bribes were solicited. To support their version of the content of the meeting, a letter from Tom Gilmartin was produced dated 6th July 1988 which stated as follows:

"Dear Mr Redmond,
Re: Motorway facilities

I was very pleased to have the opportunity of meeting you and I would like to thank you for your advice and assistance. I have instructed the consulting engineers

to liaise with the U.K. Road Engineering experts that I have retained for advice regarding the provision of motorway facilities with particular emphasis on complying with safety and international road engineering standards. We are compiling a selection of aerial and photographic views to outline specific examples of the appropriate entrance and exit designs. The construction engineers will prepare a sketch layout showing our suggestion for consideration by yourself and your Road Engineering colleagues in the Council to further the exploratory discussions. We fully accept and note the point raised, that your Council acts as an agent for the Department of the Environment, Roads Division, on overseeing the construction of the Motorway and National Primary Road schemes.

We believe if agreement can be reached, that our proposal for a business park and motorway service at the Palmerstown/Rowlagh location would bring much needed investment to the area. We hope to be in a position to seek a further meeting with yourself and your colleagues in the Roads Department, to discuss our proposal further.

I will contact your secretary in due course to arrange a date and time suitable to your itinerary.

Yours sincerely, Tom Gilmartin

The letter does not indicate who attended the meeting apart from Redmond and Gilmartin. However, a letter from Michael Hartnett, a Council official, acknowledging the letter indicates that Liam Lawlor also attended the meeting of 28th of June 1988.

Gilmartin accepted that he wrote the above letter. However, he claimed that the meeting of 28th of June occurred *after* the meeting in which bribes were solicited. In other words there were two separate meetings that were attended by Redmond, Lawlor and himself. It was at the earlier of the two meetings that bribes were solicited.

If Gilmartin were lying, it would be quite despicable, acting under legal immunity, to accuse people falsely under oath of a criminal act. On the other hand, if he were telling the truth, how would this reflect on him? He believes that a bribe is solicited by Lawlor with the connivance of Redmond and is happy to meet both individuals at a subsequent meeting. Indeed, after the second meeting he expresses pleasure to Redmond at the opportunity of meeting him and would like to meet him again. Gilmartin does not make a complaint to the Gardai. It is not until 8 or 9 months later in February 1989 that he complains to Frank Feely (Dublin City and County Manager) and his assistant Seán Haughey (the brother of the former Taoiseach).

It should be noted that Sean Haughey quite properly passed on this complaint to the Gardaí. In the course of the Garda investigation there were three telephone interviews with Gilmartin. The last one occurred on 4th March 1989. Gilmartin claims that a few days afterwards he received a phone call from a "Garda Burns" warning him against making further allega-

tions. Superintendent Thomas Burns was the operational head of the inquiry. Gilmartin did not claim to the Tribunal that the call did in fact come from Burns and Burns denied that he made such a call.

Gilmartin did not make a complaint to the Gardaí regarding the call but ceased to cooperate with the Gardaí on the matter

on 20th March 1989.

By the end of 1990 Gilmartin was struggling to meet his financial commitments and was urged by the bank to seek a business partner. In next month's issue we will examine the allegations made by Gilmartin against the Cork property developer, Owen O'Callaghan, and against Bertie Ahern.

Anne Harris

Forty years ago the Official IRA set off a bomb in Aldershot military barracks which missed the soldiers and killed the cleaning staff. The *Irish News* (Belfast), noting the 40th anniversary of the incident on February 22nd, said:

"It was a devastating attack that would signal the beginning of the end for the Official IRA, allowing the younger, more militant Provisionals to take over and so shape the course of the troubles in Northern Ireland."

In fact the Official IRA remained in being and active for many years after the Aldershot bombing. It is true that it called off its revolutionary war of national liberation in 1972, but it killed many people and robbed many banks during the 1970s and 1980s. As late as 1990 it offered to shoot people connected with this publication. It was a kind of mad-dog operation, acting in ideological fantasy.

It did not "allow" the Provisionals to take over. It did its best to stop them. It failed to stop them because the Provos were not generalised Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideologists looking for a revolution. They were products of the bizarre Northern Ireland political system, and they made sense to the Catholic community from its viewpoint within that system. Northern Ireland needed to have a job done on it, and the stress under which it put the Catholic community generated the power for doing the job.

The Provo movement was not a youth movement. In the first instance its leaders were the older element which had been expelled from the republican movement by the Marxist-Leninist ideologists who took control in the late 1960s. And it was above all else a movement created by the Northern Ireland system and directed against it. It accepted support from generalised Marxist-Leninist revolutionary groups around the world who were looking for a revolution to connect with, but made it clear that it was not one of them. It engaged in revolutionary activity—a war

—with a limited and particular object, because the Northern Ireland system necessitated it. We did not support them at all because we advocated a different way of dealing with the intolerable state system, but we acknowledged that they were acting in the reality of the Northern Ireland system, which could not be allowed to continue.

The Officials acted in a fantasy. In the mid-seventies they were joined by the devotees of the ultimate form of fantasy revolutionism—the theoretical theorists of Althusserian Marxism-Leninism, of which he who became Lord Bew of Donegore was then the chief apostle.

The Official fantasists were at best a nuisance in the North, but they prospered in the South, which began to lose all historical sense of itself in the early seventies.

We give below a comment on the Aldershot bombing, published at the time by Anne Harris, who was then the wife of Eoghan Harris, who was then guru of the Official IRA. Anne Harris is now Editor of the *Sunday Independent*, which is the biggest-selling newspaper in Ireland, and is very hot on "terrorism" and very anti-Catholic. We did not hear that, on her way to becoming Editor of the *Sunday Independent*, she ever repented of her active support for terrorism. It was not necessary for her to do so. It seems that it is only the realistic terrorism which brought about the radical restructuring of the North that is entirely unacceptable to peace-lovers in the South:

"Personally Speaking, ANNE HARRIS, *Hibernia*, 3rd March 1972

The attack on the headquarters of the Parachute Brigade in Aldershot produced the most nauseating show of hypocrisy from the Irish middle class to date. It was quite clear that it took courage and determination to enter the headquarters of the technological savages who are maintained for colonial repression by the

Crown. It was equally clear that the intention was to strike at the officer class. One ex-British Army officer tells me that there there are at least two other and more accessible targets in Aldershot—barrack dormitories for enlisted men. Clearly the I.R.A. was making a political as well as a military gesture by striking at the Officers' Mess where so many Derry anecdotes and Poona guffaws must have been heard after the brigade's heroic battle in Derry.

British Army propaganda did a good job in building up the working class image of the victims. It is incredible how the Tories who so degrade and exploit their own poor while alive, can continue to exploit them posthumously. Nobody here bothered to point out that the Official I.R.A. had not placed their bomb in a recreation centre of a public house but had, to the limit of human ingenuity, struck at the lords and masters. Accordingly I found *Tim Pat Coogan's* profound analysis on R.T.E. ("an attempt to upstage the Provisionals") particularly rich in view of the heady editorial line of the *Irish Press* has been running for the past two years.

The peculiar mixture of romanticism, Hibernianism and support for the most sectarian Provisional elements have been charted before by commentators such as *Jack Dowling*. Less bumptious but more skin-crawling smug was *Dr. Cruise O'Brien's* introspection on behalf of the Irish middle class who are organised loosely in three parties under his general direction.

Dr. O'Brien wanted to know if the seeds of Aldershot were sown in some Irish schoolroom. If they were it must have been a national school. Certainly the seeds of the Mountain View Tavern and the Four Steps Inn were sown in Clongowes Wood and half a dozen other colleges maintained for the privileged. Dr. O'Brien can very easily find out by reading the *Insight* team's brilliant *Ulster* how the college boys got the lads from Barr Na Sraide N.S. to stop fish-ins on Fianna Fail waters and start bombing Protestants instead. There is also a good

account of how this piece of fascism was resisted, not by Dr. O'Brien's trendy social democrats but by men who never got further than the national school.

Personally I fail to see why, in a colonial country like Ireland teachers should not sow the seeds of Aldershot. Surely a man acquainted with *Franz Fanon* should know that a conquered people's hope of retribution is a legitimate human aspiration. But then Dr. O'Brien and Fianna Fail strenuously resist the logic of our colonial position. To jog their memory here are the latest figures. There are 986 British subsidiaries now operating in the 26 counties. More than 65% of Irish owned manufacturing industry is controlled by foreign capital, mostly British. And if he still thinks there is two nations in Ireland it can only be the merest accident that their economic structures are increasingly identical. In the Six Counties 5% of the population own nearly half of all wealth. In the south the same 5% own more than half. The responsibility for maintaining this set up is vested in many groups.

In Ireland the three political parties help keep the natives quiet. But if that should fail there is always the refined gentlemen standing at the bar of the Officers' Mess in Aldershot. In the last analysis the Irish poor, face the paras. That is why, although I'm depressed about the deaths of five waitresses, I am also sickened by the hypocrisy of the establishment reaction."

THE TWO NATIONS

Conor Cruise O'Brien never agreed with the two-nations view of the conflict in the North. It was put to him at the time and he rejected it. Even if he had agreed with it, he would have rejected it because it had been thought of by others.

Some time later the Harrises flipped and became disciples of O'Brien, *skin-crawling smugness* and all. And yet, while they changed radically, they remained much the same.

Anne Harris made some approving comments about two-nationists back then:

"In the mid '60s the university [i.e. Cork] turned out such dedicated communists that Stephen Barrett was forced to denounce one of them who had carried his politics through graduation day and past the portals of Dunmanway convent. The teacher lost his job—it should be noted—in the teeth of protest from the Reverend Mother; lay fascism has always been stronger than clerical fascism in Ireland. And I can remember the most recent attempt to form an alliance between Cork students and Cork workers. A

commerce student, *Conor Lynch*, could often be seen in the company of a well-known housing agitator, *Pat O'Sullivan*. Both are now behind bars in England" (*Hibernia*, 7 Jan. 1972).

She neglects to mention that Conor Lynch became a two-nationist in prison and put the two-nation view in letters from prison.

The teacher—who was sacked from the convent for being a Communist—she does not name at all, even though she knew well who he was. Nor did she name him in the following issue when she had to publish a correction:

"In the last issue I wrote about a young Communist graduate from U.C.C. who lost his teaching job in a Dunmanway convent because of his politics. I also pointed out that the Reverend Mother of the convent had done her best to prevent this happening. I gave Dunmanway too much credit. Sister Philomena, Superior-ess of the only convent in Dunmanway, wishes to be disassociated from anything of that sort. The brave and humanitarian Reverend Mother was, of course, in Kanturk" (*Hibernia*, 21 Jan. 1972).

But it wasn't in Kanturk either! We don't know if there was a further correction—and don't recall there being a convent in Kanturk.

The unnamed subject of these items is Jack Lane. He could not be named because

he was a notorious two-nationist, and naming him would give two-nationism a good name!

Another two-nationist prominent in the class struggle in that period is mentioned by another *Hibernia* columnist, Proinnsias MacAongusa (25.6.1971). That was Sean Kearney, who was leading a strike in a carpet factory in Gweedore, in the Donegal Gaeltacht, and publishing a Gaelic socialist magazine produced by Athol Books.

The Harrises switched over to the enemy at some point after we had ceased to take notice of their foibles. The Soviet Union towards the end of its life adopted the Official Republicans as their Irish base. Then it collapsed. Eoghan Harris then went through every conceivable position in rapid succession. In 2003 he became political adviser to the fantasist, Chalabi, in the invasion of Iraq. And he continued to rant against his Provo enemies, who had fought a war grounded in social reality and conducted it to a functional peace. That peace has now been maintained for more than a decade, despite the best efforts of the *Sunday Independent* to subvert it.

And now the *Sunday Independent* is in danger of being taken away from them as their plaything by Denis O'Brien, who is as close to being an Irish national capitalist as is to be found in Ireland these days.

Wilson John Haire
22nd February, 2012

A SOURCE SAID...

A source said but I cannot substantiate
the government killing of his tribe, appreciate,
we don't disambiguate
or for that matter abbreviate
those names that would associate
the informant with the habituate
rebellion to give his fight a palliate.

Watch my lips - see how I enunciate
the democratic right to disassociate
from the country's leadership. I expatiate
on the rebellion. The armed might I excoriate.
I watch YouTube and nauseate
at the result of those who humiliate
with twenty blooded bodies to infuriate
my sense of fair play that could asphyxiate
my humanitarian endeavours to alleviate
this trying world outside our shores, to conciliate
rogue states though they do expropriate
the truth and in lies luxuriate.

And I say again I cannot substantiate.
But here lies twenty victims and something must differentiate
between activists and stooges who misappropriate
the principles of free nations and defoliate
the tree of life and inebriate
the world media to vitiate
world peace. So, for the sake of the dead I ingratiate
myself, without apology, with the opposition, to satiate
my thirst for justice by declaring these killings a substantiate.

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

DENIS O'BRIEN

The Long Fellow is of the opinion that the Esat Digifone Consortium won the mobile phone licence competition fairly and squarely in 1995. Denis O'Brien did not have a corrupt relationship with Michael Lowry; and Lowry did not exert any improper influence on the decision to grant the second mobile phone licence. But that is a view that is not widely shared within the media which uncritically accepts the opinions of the Moriarty Tribunal.

A Project Group consisting of civil servants from various divisions of the Department of Transport, Enterprise and Communications, as well as representatives from the Department of Finance, evaluated the applicants for the licence. This Project Group appointed Danish consultants Andersen Management International (AMI) to assist in the evaluation process. Both the Project Group and AMI recommended Esat.

So, what is Lowry accused of? The original plan was that there should be a period of one month for the politicians to deliberate over the matter. But, after receiving the recommendation for Esat, Lowry decided that a decision should be made as soon as possible. There were good reasons for this. Firstly, the recommendation was clear and unambiguous. Secondly, it was based on a highly technical report which politicians were not particularly qualified to adjudicate on. Thirdly, Lowry was advised by his Civil Servants and Press Officer that delaying the decision would have run the risk of unauthorised leaks and political lobbying.

But Lowry did not announce the awarding of the licence without political consultation. He submitted his proposal to a Cabinet Sub-Committee, which consisted of John Bruton (Taoiseach), Ruairi Quinn (Minister for Finance), Proinsias de Rossa (leader of Democratic Left), and Dick Spring (leader of the Labour Party). If Lowry was corrupt in this incidence (which the Long Fellow does not accept), the aforementioned Sub-Committee was complicit in corruption.

It follows that de Rossa and Bruton must withdraw from all public duties and Quinn must resign from the Cabinet.

"Let justice be done, though the heavens fall!"

ELAINE BYRNE

A conclusion is only as good as the premise that it relies on.

Elaine Byrne's premise is that the Licence Competition was itself corrupt. Since she accepts this premise uncritically, she cannot criticise the behaviour of Esat's unsuccessful rival: the Persona Group. In her *Sunday Independent* article (1.4.12) she claims that Ireland lost 1,500 jobs as a result of awarding the licence to Esat. This was because the award incurred the displeasure of Motorola, which was the lead member of the Persona Group. Byrne says:

"The boss of Motorola warned the then Taoiseach, John Bruton, that the US multinational company might withdraw because of the "serious questions" about the awarding of the second mobile phone licence to Denis O'Brien in 1995."

And, apparently, the damage has not ended:

"Wearing his heart on his sleeve, John J Mitchell told Bruton that "appraisal of Motorola involvement in Ireland—present and future—is presently under serious review"."

It was not just Motorola that was unhappy:

"Even the US embassy got involved at the time. US diplomats directly intervened with the Irish government on behalf of four US companies who had been partners with consortia seeking to win the licence. Privately, US companies were saying that the Irish process for winning the second GSM licence was more like a process they had encountered in 'banana republics'"

But what if the competition was not corrupt? Even Moriarty does not claim that the Civil Servants or AMI, who recommended Esat, were corrupt. If Byrne's premise is rejected, it casts a completely different light on Motorola's behaviour, which preceded the publication of the Moriarty Report.

An alternative premise would lead to the conclusion that Motorola was using its corporate muscle to attempt to overturn a legitimate decision of a democratically-elected Irish Government. Also, that the most powerful State in the world had intervened in a Government decision to advance American corporate interests.

EOGHAN HARRIS

The unanimity which *Sunday Independent* journalists achieve every Sunday is a wonder to behold. For most of April they were agreed that Denis O'Brien should not obtain control of Independent News and Media. Eoghan Harris decided to take a principled stand. In his column of 1st

April he wrote:

"In June, Denis O'Brien will attempt to topple the O'Reilly regime in INM. If he succeeds, I will no longer be writing for the *Sunday Independent*."

Promises! Promises!

We did not have to wait until June. By the end of April Gavin O'Reilly had resigned as Chief Executive. It is the Long Fellow's fervent wish that Eoghan Harris stands by his principles!

CORPORATION TAX

The *Irish Political Review* cannot claim to achieve the consistent unanimity of the *Sunday Independent*. And accordingly the Long Fellow disagrees with Philip O'Connor's piece on our 12.5% Corporation Tax rate, which appeared in last month's *Irish Political Review*.

Philip says:

"The more this issue is examined, the less it seems to have anything much to do with US multinationals and the more it seems to have to do with Irish companies".

But the low Corporation Tax *is* of greater benefit to foreign multinationals. The foreign parent company of an Irish resident company that receives Irish dividends is not liable to Income Tax or Withholding Tax. On the other hand, an Irish resident who receives dividends from an Irish company is liable to Withholding Tax at the standard rate of Income Tax. If his income is sufficiently high, he will be liable to tax at the higher rate on that income and will be able to use the Withholding Tax as a tax credit. But such a shareholder does not receive any tax credit for the Corporation Tax that the company has paid.

In general the higher the Corporation Tax rate, the less an individual will be taxed on dividend income. About 30 years ago Irish non-exporting companies were taxed at a 50% rate. However shareholders received a tax credit of 35% on dividend income in recognition of the fact that the income had already been taxed. So, it could be said that the tax on profits that could not be used to reduce a shareholder's income tax was 15%, which is not much different from the current Corporation Tax rate of 12.5%.

One could have a discussion on the question of whether the foreign corporate sector should make a greater contribution to the State's revenue, but there should be no doubt that our low Corporation Tax primarily benefits foreign-owned productive enterprises.

PROPERTY TAXES

The most glaring anomaly in our tax

system has been the complete absence of property taxes. One of the first things that a foreigner—particularly a continental European—notices about this country is the amount of large houses. The Long Fellow knows of prosperous businessmen operating in a cash business who evade tax by sinking surplus cash into their property in the form of extensions, top of the range bathrooms and kitchens.

Fianna Fáil set the ball rolling by

preparing the ground for a Property Tax. Fine Gael, which is beginning to look like the party of State, is successfully implementing that policy. It will be interesting to see if the Government has the political will to introduce a fairer system, now that householders have registered their property.

Meanwhile, the so-called Left in this country has performed its traditional role of mindless opposition.

The next in the series was to be on Daniel Corkery, to be edited by her other colleague Heather Laird—and of course we all knew that Eibhear is the overall editor of the series.

Coughlan then introduced Mary Leland which I covered in the April issue of *Irish Political Review*.

LELAND'S ADDRESS AT FARAHY CHURCH

On the 11th September 2011, there was the usual service of prayers and hymn-singing in memory of Elizabeth Bowen, celebrated by Dean Robert MacCarthy of Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin and the local Canon Toomey. The Dean thanked the Board of Trustees of the St. Colman's Church, Farrahy (who initially leased the building from the Church of Ireland JH) and the local FÁS team for all their work.

I am always struck by how little money is collected from the people present. As the bag is passed around, it is only small change that many people—mostly the Protestants—give, whereas we Catholics always have paper money to give.

When the service finished, Mary Leland was introduced and she made a startling start to her address. She got out of her seat and then to much eye-brow raising and uncondoning expressions, she genuflected generously and it brought to mind that saying which I roughly paraphrase on this occasion "*one get take the woman out of Catholicism but not the Catholicism out of the woman*", as exemplified in this case.

Mary Leland started her speech with the lovely image of her having played tennis that morning and then gone out to her garden and cut sweet pea—as a sort of obeisance to the memory of Bowen. She stated that this set off an association of memory—such Bowen items as in the latter's *Preface* to the second edition of *The Last September*, where the characters "*were playing tennis and cutting sweet pea*"—oh the leisured pursuits of the long lost Eden of the Big House is such a seductive trope for our writers of today. There is such nostalgia for this sort of thing exhibited by our chattering classes that I realise that our culture—pluralist, inclusive and many faceted—has been sheared off from the elite who are for the most part urbanites.

Leland stated that she had left the Catholic Church and had found her place in the more liberal Anglicism of the Church of Ireland and Church of England, with their loud Protestant confident hymns.

Elizabeth Bowen and her Admirers

Part Two

"Wherever I was in 1916, I was not murdering my neighbours."

James Dillon, Dáil Debates, 22nd April 1932.

"This remark was just a reminder of just how much outside the mainstream Dillon was, and an indication to the rest of the House that he would fight to defend the name and honour of his father's party. As he put it: "I am in the presence of two loyalties. I have a loyalty higher to the memory of these men than I have to this House" which Maurice Manning accepts was "in itself a strange statement, indicating a less than full acceptance of the full legitimacy of the Dáil"."

James Dillon. *A Biography* by Maurice Manning.

"His real and lasting significance may be less in what he did than what he was ... the embodiment of a type of nationalist rare in any country, and of incalculable value to the Ireland of his day."

F.S.L. Lyons on John Dillon.

THE UCC ACADEMICS

Professor Patricia Coughlan was a speaker at the launch of Eibhear Walshe's book, *Elizabeth Bowen's Selected Irish Writings* at Fota House on the 1st October 2011. She begins by praising the book itself as a very "*handsome*" product, being hardback and with a full length portrait of Bowen on the cover. She had only just acquired the book, she said, and pointed out that the portrait itself by Patrick Hennessy, reproduced courtesy of the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, was one of her favourite portraits of Bowen, being in many ways the most beautiful and most telling of the many portraits of Bowen that exist. The speaker went on to say that she was going to say a little bit about what was being celebrated—and that was of course Eibhear himself. He, she stated was "*a long-time colleague*" of hers in the School of English at University College Cork: they were "*across the corridor from each other*" for more years than she cared to

remember and during all that time they "*have never had a cross word*".

She went on to remind us of—

"Eibhear's long-standing study and growing contribution of our literary and cultural history of Ireland generally but in particular of Munster and more particularly again of Munster's women writers of various ethnicities and background—Teresa Deevey herself, like Eibhear a Waterford person, and also Molly Keane and Elizabeth Bowen—members of the ascendancy before he corrected me not to say so—and the person of her native city, Kate O'Brien. He has brought a very well researched sensibility to the thought and literary perspective of these literary writers and his work is now considerable and formidable indeed and his biography of Kate O'Brien is considered the seminal work on that writer which is a *magnum opus* indeed. And his work is not confined to Munster or women, these works that I mentioned are accompanied by important and critical works on the very different topic of Oscar Wilde.

"As well as that Eibhear is very well received in the international critical sphere and is a commentator on the history of gay and lesbian writing from that sensibility and from that he has made very important and cited articles on this topic which are very highly rated. As well as that Eibhear is widely known as a highly-entertaining contributor to broadcasting and he may be more widely known to the public for his witty and highly-ranked memoir about his family and growing up which is called 'Cissie's Abattoir'."

Coughlan's *spiel* about the qualities of Walsh's writings—considering their admitted "*closeness*", as she said herself, made her—in my opinion completely—critically blind.

She ended up by congratulating Eibhear and Cork University Press for this book, made up of so many essays that she couldn't wait to read, particularly as they were collected and edited with much scholarly intention.

She went on to consider the now usual Bowen fare. She talked about her long and devoted love affair with the Canadian diplomat Charles Ritchie. Leland considered its endurance to be its most striking feature. They met up in Paris, Canada, London, and even Bonn—where Leland alleges wrongly that Ritchie took up a most important diplomatic position just to be near Bowen and Bowen's Court—his home in Ireland.

It is now well known that Bowen was running out of money long before her husband Alan Cameron's death in 1952. Seeing the writing on the wall, she started selling off the silver and whatever other pieces she had and finally her jewellery in Cork. Leland reminded us of the awful day when Bowen was in Cork to sell the remaining few things she had—that she leant on the writing ledge in the GPO and wrote a heart-breaking letter to her lover, Charles Ritchie, asking for \$100 saying she was doing so because she was just so desperate. He sent her on the \$100 (which in my opinion just showed what a tightwad he was, as he was by then earning serious money and came from a wealthy family background. JH)

Mary Leland went on to tell us of meeting Elizabeth Bowen in 1970 in Doneraile for an interview "*with a small i*" she says. She sat with her in the back of Donnacha O'Dulaing's Jaguar and had no idea of how famous her interviewee was. Leland then added "*Mea culpa*". She also didn't know that it was Bowen's first return to her former home since she left. She was there because she was part of a Symposium: 100 years of the Christian Brothers in Doneraile. There were also 100 school children who trooped with Bowen, O'Dulaing and Leland up the avenue to the site of where Bowen's Court stood. The field was now vacant. Leland does not say what Bowen said or did while looking at the empty field. So we are left to ponder on such imponderables.

Leland said that after her meeting with Bowen, she was so ashamed she went home to read the latter's novels and short stories which she thought to be great. But didn't it take her long enough though?

THE OTHER ADDRESS IN FARAHY IN 2011

As part of the Trevor/Bowen Summer School in Mitchelstown last Summer, the speaker at Farahy Church was an American academic who lectures in the Department of English at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Susan Osborn was her name and she lectures on such

diverse topics as British modern literature and literary theory, feminist theory, the Irish Gothic tradition, and pedagogical theory and practice. She is also the Editor of a handsome book, *Elizabeth Bowen—New Critical Perspectives*, published by Cork University Press, 2009. The title of her talk was *Elizabeth Bowen's Irelands*. It was obvious that being in the Church itself where Bowen once worshipped was a huge honour for her and she was so affected that it was quite easy to see. She talked about the air itself being "*thick here*", adding that "*this strange simple church has an inhabited feeling about it*".

Then she questioned whether it could be said whether "*Bowen was an Irish writer or an English one*". She used a lot of information from the book Bowen wrote in 1942, *Bowen's Court*, and it seemed to me that she took it to be a serious history book. Osborn also referred obliquely to the famous *North Cork Anthology* by Jack Lane, stating that:

"one recent Irish anthologist, alienated and upset by what might be construed as traitorish work for the English government, declared that she was not an Irish writer at all but that she was an English one. Though he ultimately included her in the anthology of North Cork writers, he expressed his frustration with her by drawing a line of cancellation through her name which appears at the top of the page of her entry. He stated: "we include her in this anthology in deleted form in order to explain why she does not belong to it"."

This to great delight from the audience.

Susan Osborn's essay in the book on Bowen she edited had reference to many linguistic critics—amongst them were Alain Badiou, Jacques Lacan, Fredric Jameson and others. So to posit her as being un-knowledgeable about Jacques Derrida seems unbelievable yet she does not recognise one of his critical devices when she is looking straight at it. Jack Lane and Brendan Clifford, as Editors of the *North Cork Anthology* used the Derridian form of deletion only because it seemed to be appropriate for Elizabeth Bowen. They are pointing at the obvious—which is that when the writer wrote about "*place*" so important to her, she situated it as only ever being in "*big house islands cut off from the outside world*", and she never made that clearer than in *The Last September*. Bowen was a realist and hadn't a romantic bone in her body when it came down to it. She was tough and no one does her any favours by vaporising her into a nostalgic old gal—she was the one who was all "*for damping things down*"—and she meant any *ráméis*[^]—which seems

now to be how the academics paint her.

I feel sympathy for Susan Osborn because, when she takes on *The Last September*, not having a history background, she is doubly-bound: because she is an outsider. To ask of her to understand the complexities of that period is quite simply too big an ask. One cannot talk as she does of 'The War of Independence' without as much as a reference to the General Election of 1918—how can Osborn infer that the democratic mandate given overwhelmingly to Sinn Féin by the Irish people and the creation of the First Dáil is not worth a mention in her essay? She declares that the law of the land was still British, when in truth Britain was making war on the Irish people. Of course the revisionists would be delighted with Osborn, but I sensed a sense of integrity about this American woman and I would advise her to be careful of her sources if she wants to give Bowen her dues. I would also counsel Osborn not to be so arrogant as to think she can take on the great Hermione Lee and Maud Ellmann, whose work on Elizabeth Bowen are *par excellence*.

The other writer of note who spoke at the Conference was Clair Wills—already known to the readers of the *Irish Political Review* for her controversial talk at UCC. Professor Clair Wills is Professor of Irish Literature at Queen Mary College, University of London. She spoke to the School of English on *Elizabeth Bowen: Visions and Revisions* at a Bowen Conference on 6th - 7th October 2009. This time a very warm Wills spoke well and with wit and style. She had the audience at the Firgrove Hotel eating out of her hand, so to speak. She had learned from her UCC appearance—perhaps from reading the account printed in this journal. She spoke about Bowen and her political activities and saw in her writings a continuing engagement with those elements of society. But there is WW2 and its dramatic imprint on her novels especially "*her 1949 masterpiece, 'The Heat of the Day'*". But for Wills, it is *The House in Paris*, though published in 1935 and set in Paris, which she admitted finding very "*heartbreaking*".

Wills, with her enthusiasm, connects with her audience in a way that I have never really seen before. She is open to questions afterwards and she gets them and answers them with all the good humour of someone at ease with her scholarship. It was a fine night with great *craic* and that *encomium* is more than enough.

Julianne Herlihy ©

ITEMS FROM 'THE IRISH BULLETIN' – 10

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 April 1920

WEEK ENDING APRIL 3rd, 1920

March	April					
	29th	30th	31st	1st	3rd	Total.
Date:-						
Raids:-	133	204	108	153	515	1113
Arrests:-	45	13	10	13	21	102
Sentences:-	1		7	4	7	19
Courtsmartial:-		1				1
Suppressions:-			1			1
Armed Assaults:-				1		1
Deportations:-		1		40		41
Sabotage:-	5	4			21	30
Murder:-	1	1				2
Daily Total:-	185	224	126	211	564	1310

WEEK ENDING APRIL 10th, 1920

Date:- April	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	Total.
Raids:-	216	24	10	125	210	132	717
Arrests:-	21	27	4	37	11	15	115
Sentences:-			1			3	4
Armed Assaults:-		1					1
Sabotage:-					1	2	3
Daily Total:-	237	52	15	162	222	152	840

WEEK ENDING APRIL 17th, 1920

Date:- April	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	Total.
Raids:-	301	24	2	102	256	450	1135
Arrests:-	42	19	26	1	166	6	260
Sentences:-						2	2
Proclamations & Suppressions:-			1	1			2
Courts-martial:-		2					2
Armed Assaults:-			4	3	6	3	16
Deportations:-	55	37					92
Murders:-					3	1	4
Daily Total:-	398	82	33	107	431	462	1513

WEEK ENDING APRIL 24th, 1920

Date:- April	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th	Total.
Raids:-	180	72	25	20	11	201	509
Arrests:-	58	6	5		34		103
Armed Assaults:-						2	2
Deportations:-	30	8	12		15		65
Daily Total:-	268	86	42	20	60	203	679

WEEK ENDING MAY 1st, 1920

Date:- April	26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	May 1st	Total.
Raids:-	170	244	104	258	31	77	884
Arrests:-	10	28	21	8	1		68
Sentences:-	5		9		2		16
Courtsmartials:-					1		1
Armed Assaults	1		2	3			6
Murder			1				1
Daily Total:-	186	272	137	269	35	77	976

Harris & Dunmanway

Eoghan Harris presented an RTE programme on 16th April, *An Tost Fada*, and RTE promoted it: "to tell the story of George Salter and his family, whose lives were forever changed by the murders in West Cork in April 1922". Harris also promoted it in his *Sunday Independent* column and gave the following reason for the Salter family leaving the country in April 1922:

"George's father Bill farmed at Kilronan outside Dunmanway. He bought cattle at marts all over Cork and Kerry, fattened them on his land, and sold them on to England. But in the fevered Civil War climate of April 1922 this English connection aroused the suspicion of the local IRA. In April 1922 Bill Salter was told to get out. He had to take the threat seriously in the bloody month that had seen the killing of 13 Protestants in the Bandon Valley. The threat was backed by shots fired near the farm at night. He fled with his family to England."

This is a typical piece of Harris's ongoing idiot's guide to the War of the Independence. If William Salter had to leave for selling cattle to England, then practically every farmer in the country would have had to consider leaving as well. But what have facts got to do with a Harris assertion? Neither in his column nor in the programme did he see any need to provide the actual background or the need to provide any real evidence about why the Salter family left—apart from the facile explanation that they were Protestants. This is extraordinary, as the evidence which indicates why they left the area has been publicly available for decades and is provided by William Salter himself. The background is available from the horse's mouth, but was determinedly ignored by Harris.

Harris made only made a passing to compensation received by William but no more. He makes no mention of the claim and the case which William Salter, George's father, made to the *Irish Grants Committee* in 1928. In fact, the information contained therein is one of the few contemporary and first-hand accounts of what happened. Furthermore, William's son, George, did not refer to the claim in the programme, though he must surely know of his father's testimony? Perhaps he does not: he makes it clear in the programme that this was his first visit to his father's original farm.

William Salter's evidence gives a more rounded view of the events than Harris's sectarian simplifications. A standard question in the application form for compensation was:

"Do you claim that the loss or injury was claimed in respect of, or on account of, your allegiance to the Government of the United Kingdom? If so give particulars on which you base this claim."

Answer: "Yes, I was well known to be a Protestant Loyalist, and as such I was marked down for persecution." (TNA, CO/762/182/8).

And Salter's solicitor in the covering letter said: "...there is no doubt as to Mr. Salter's loyalty and there is no question that it was owing to his loyalty that he suffered the persecution he went through" (14 May 1928). I.e., not his Protestantism. None of this was mentioned on the Harris programme as it spoils the neat little sectarian story somewhat.

William Salter went on to explain that the "persecution"

began on 12th July 1921 and boiled down to a demand by the Army of the legitimate Government of the day for him to accept the State's legitimacy and to play, and pay, his part in its upkeep. He objected to doing so. Neither, as he stated (or boasted) would he provide food or shelter for the Government's army, the IRA. He claimed that, as a result, he got threatening letters from the local Commandant of the IRA. However, he did not submit any copies of this crucial evidence to the Grants Committee—or the name of the Commandant. This could have been done in total confidence and would have been useful then, and now, to illustrate and confirm the facts of his case. But this failure to provide factual backing for alleged threats is very typical of those claims to the Grants Committee I have consulted.

In fact, this lack of chapter and verse is typical of the problem with the 'Dunmanway killings' themselves—all sorts of accusations but minimal verifiable evidence provided as to who exactly was responsible. In the programme George Salter presented yet another anonymous source who allegedly admitted to the killing of many of his co-religionists. Yet again all is left hanging in the air—who, when, where and why?

In the Grants application, William makes no mention of selling cattle to England (or spying) as a cause of his problems. If he had put that forward as the reason for requesting the substantial compensation—which he got and which was funded from Ireland, though disbursed by England—there is no doubt the claim would not have been accepted.

The *Irish Times* in its 'Choice' of programme on the day claimed the "*family were lucky to escape before the killings began*"—which is just plain wrong. William Salter's problems began a long time before the killings, but he left after he had sold his farm some time after the killings. But these are only facts.

There is no doubt that William Salter made a clear choice in his state allegiance and there is no doubt that this had adverse consequences for himself. However his son George did not follow his father's path: he did not object to the authority of the new State. He made his life in Ireland and he had no complaint whatever to make of being discriminated against in the new state during his very long life. On the contrary, he had a good life.

The world is made up of states and they all insist on the full allegiance of its citizens—or else!—especially when the states are

coming into being. In those situations, when there is a conflict, the result is not a pretty sight. Harris could make thousands of RTE programmes to illustrate this basic political fact of life, both in Ireland and throughout the modern world since nation states became the norm for political life. And in this respect the Irish War of Independence, on the Irish side, because of the overwhelming support of the people for it, was a mild affair compared to most others in its minimal dependence on force to make its case. That had to come from the other side.

Harris should try to be a little less parochial in these matters. He and his former wife, Anne, seem to have lived very sheltered lives and the more they get to know about the world the more it seems to them to be inhabited by Big Bad Wolves—monsters who always seem to be Irish—from the IRA to Denis O'Brien! The result is hysteria rather than history. They should consider creating an Irish version of the BBC's "*Horrible Histories*", but I suppose they could not supply the necessary humour.

Jack Lane

Letter In Reply To Jeff Dudgeon

The North And Dunmanway

It seems odd of Jeff Dudgeon to dip his toe into Southern waters by taking up the Dunmanway case which occurred ninety years ago. I would think most Northern Catholics are unaware of Dunmanway and if aware probably have no interest in the matter, considering their own tragic history not so long ago.

Most Northerners of my age (80) had parents and grandparents and uncles and aunts involved in the War of Independence. They, and we, saw that War as an honourable one fought by honourable men and women. It was too big an event on the world stage to be overshadowed by local issues. It was accepted by even the most mild-mannered Catholic that touts and informants of either hue died, and deserved to die during a nation and its people's fight for survival. The honourable Northern Protestant also follows this code.

Odd too of Jeff Dudgeon to seek a seat in the Irish Senate. Again, most Northern Catholics don't understand Dail Eireann and its composition. It is as strange to most of us as the French or Spanish parliaments.

Of course Dudgeon is to be commended on winning the Dudgeon V United Kingdom case before the European Court of Human Rights. Homosexuality was a criminal offence in Northern Ireland up until 1980. That is a major achievement and he can justifiably live off that for the rest of his life. But the people who kept that legislation in were those from his own community, the fundamental Protestant. Republicans, led by the modern young men and women of the Provisional IRA who fought the war, long ago accepted homosexuality as a fact of life.

Prominent homosexual Protestants around Belfast, during the old Stormont

rule, did what they wanted. Most people knew of their sexual orientation. It ran from senior members of the BBC to the Lord Mayor's office to what was left of Northern Ireland's aristocracy and to senior members of the Orange Order and the RUC. I knew the names of many of them during that time and I'm sure so did the rest of Northern Ireland. They were well-protected by the regime so it was wise to whisper and not blather it all over the place.

Around Belfast City Hall at night teenage boys had to run the gauntlet of predatory gays on their way home. You could be accosted by well-spoken men carrying sheaves of sacred music. Carrying such *ennobling* material I suppose might bring one's guard down if approached. Also, a curious police officer could be overawed. It was all quite open. Stormont protected its own. I can't remember anyone being brought to court in Northern Ireland for homosexual activities, whereas, when I came to London in the 1950s it was never out of the papers:

'I saw him look into the face of a man in a public toilet', says a detective at Bow Street court.

It is also ironical that, with the old Stormont regime gone, homophobia should emanate from a police force who in former times turned a blind eye.

Jeff Dudgeon can be seen on the internet holding up his MBE. Jeremy Paxman on the BBC *Newsnight* suggested the award had nothing to do with empire anymore but should be interpreted as a Member of British Excellence. I wonder if that still stands considering the manic blowing on the embers of British Empire past that is now taking place.

They have been dropping these baubles

on Northern Ireland like confetti recently. Charles Windsor visited the mainly Catholic Lyric Theatre in Belfast, after it had undergone a major rebuilding, and handed out a few. Liam Neeson, the Catholic international film star, got an OBE, though that still didn't influence the unionist-controlled Ballymena Borough Council to give him the Freedom of Ballymena where he once lived, though he didn't ask or suggest they do. They voted against it. Didn't even make him an honorary Protestant.

Dunmanway must be a calculated distraction away from what Dudgeon's community did to the Catholic community either on orders from the British *Intelligible* services or from pure sectarian hatred at the Catholic daring to get up from his/her knees: Here are few examples as a reminder:

The Shankill Road Butchers took random Catholics off the streets during the Seventies to what they called *romper rooms* to torture them with knives and pliers while hung upside-down. People living nearby heard the screams of the victims but were too scared to do anything about it. They tortured and killed in all thirty Catholics before the British State decided enough was enough. Much in the fashion of throwing-in-the-towel in a boxing match. 'He's had enough but that'll should teach him into thinking he's champ.'

The Miami Showband incident on the 31st of July, 1975 near the village of Buskhill, County Down, when three musicians were shot dead and two injured as the bus was returning to Dublin. Said to have been carried out by a combination of Protestant paramilitaries and members of the Ulster Defence Regiment, a British Army regiment.

The Kingsmill massacre, on the 5th of January, 1976, when ten Protestants were taken off a bus and shot dead in retaliation for the killing in Whitecross village of what became known as the Reavey and O'Dowd killings when five Catholics were shot dead by the Glenanne Gang said to consist of the UVF, British soldiers and members of the RUC, on the 4th of January, 1976, the night before.

The killing of the Protestants was carried out by the South Armagh Republican Action Group. They were involved in the killings of three Protestants at a Gospel Hall outside the village of Darkley in South Armagh, on Sunday the 20th of November, 1983. This was in retaliation for the murder of Catholics in the Border areas. In the grimmest times of the war some Protestant militants felt that only

they had the right to kill on what they thought was their own territory of Northern Ireland. Horrifying as it may sound now retaliation by those representing the Catholic community found it worked when the killing of Catholics stopped in the Border areas.

I am also aware of the Northern massacres during the War of Independence not only from what my mother told me when she herself was an eye witness to some occurrences in the town of Omagh but also from my Protestant father's perspective whose mother refused to lie on the floor of the tram in Belfast as it was fired on when coming from a Protestant area and passing Catholic Streets. It was a routine for the tram conductor to shout: 'All down!' when passing Catholic streets.

In war there is a great amount of murderous anger but you wouldn't know it was the same people when a ceasefire is agreed on. Why does Jeff Dudgeon con-

centrates on some incident ninety years ago in a part of the country he knows very little about? He is as ignorant of workings of the Republic of Ireland as most Northern Catholics are. If he were to probe into what happened in his own backyard then he might have to think about apologising for what his community did to the Catholic population over the years.

Just a quick thought—Northern Catholics, like the Northern Protestants, are very unlikely to fit into a united Ireland, even if it is united through joining the British commonwealth. Why not follow the Swiss and their Swiss Federation of Cantons. They have 26 Cantons for four different languages and peoples of different national backgrounds.

We could have three Cantons at least and like Switzerland we could be a whole free neutral and peaceful nation. Dream on?

Wilson John Haire
14th March, 2012

The Dunmanway Killings, *Curiouser And Curiouser*

Part Three

The most extraordinary aspect of these killings is the lack of information on who did it. Events which happened 90 years ago this month.

THE SHERLOCK HOLMES TEST

Any numbers of theories about the killings are plausible but they all run into the ground at a certain point. That point is when we come to the proverbial dog famously noted by Sherlock Holmes—the one that does not bark. Except in this case there is a whole kennel of dogs that did not bark.

If it was a sectarian pogrom, why did it begin and end so suddenly and why has nobody ever spilt the beans despite all the subsequent political and personal divisions and conflicts in the area? And if it was such surely someone or a relation of someone, involved would have had a crisis of conscience?

A single killing in rural Ireland used to be discussed and analysed in the greatest detail across generations as they were so unusual. I have listened to endless stories and songs about such events. Famous plays like *The Field* have been written about one such event. The community is the jury. And who else could be? Yet here we have a spectacular killing event and nothing firm is established about who did it. The Jury is still out—90 years this month!

At an official level, why did the then Free State Government not investigate to find out who had killed 10 people, apparently because of their pro-Free State sympathies? The Free State summarily killed people who were totally and absolutely innocent with no evidence against them except that they opposed the 'Treaty'. Here was an opportunity for the Government to tar its opponents with a sectarian brush by conducting an investigation into a 'hate-crime' allegedly committed by people opposed to the Treaty. Here we had a witnessed fact that 10 people were allegedly killed because they were Free Staters, killed in cold blood by anti-Treatyites and it seems that the Free State Government did nothing about it! The great law and order party stood idly by, then and since, in the face of this blatant lawlessness? Why did Britain not insist they take action as they did two months later over the 4 Courts?

During the later 'civil war', anti-Treatyite Republicans were regarded as roughly the equivalent of Al Qaeda today (also with an odd-looking leader and an odd-sounding name) and they could almost be shot on sight. They had allegedly committed this terrorist crime and yet.....

It has to be stressed that the IRA failed to identify and apprehend anyone for this alleged sectarian crime that was supposed-

ly done in its name—despite its efforts to do so. And it must be remembered that it stepped in to prevent further killings.

In fact both Free State and the IRA could have common ground on identifying the killers if it was sectarian atrocity but that did not happen!

If the victims were known spies, why was this not said to counter any sectarian accusations? Even if they were maverick members, the IRA surely knew all its members, mavericks and otherwise, and yet was helpless in identifying who did it. As with any army, at a purely military level, it could not and was unlikely to tolerate mavericks who are a most dangerous element in any army. And therefore, with a clear conscience, could be dealt with by army methods. Mavericks who get away with this sort of thing are not likely to just give up so quickly after about two and a half days of success. And yet ...

There was another spectacular crime committed a couple of years earlier when two banks in Millstreet were robbed of about £17,000—about half a million Euro in today's money. The RIC encouraged everyone to believe it was the work of the IRA and most people believed them. Who else could possibly have done it? It was almost the equivalent of the Northern Bank Robbery in the context of the time. But, again to note another of Mr. Holmes' conclusions—there can be nothing as misleading as an obvious fact.

After some months the IRA decided to find the 'mavericks'. Liam Lynch moved into the area, set up a court, made clear his determination to find the culprits and within days the community provided all the necessary evidence. The money was recovered and returned to the banks, the culprits tried and sentenced, and the standing of the IRA was enhanced nationally and internationally. The whole story, with the names and addresses of the robbers, was published immediately in the *Irish Bulletin*. The 'mavericks' naturally enough had bigger plans in mind but "*an end was put to their gallop*". There was an unusual twist in that the banks did not want the money back, as they had drawn the insurance money on it in the intervening period.

Is it not curious that nothing like this was done in the case of the Dunmanway crimes?

None of the many books and memoirs, posthumous or prehumous, identify anybody as being responsible for the Dunmanway killings. None of the revisionists have done so. Even the revisionists from West Cork itself like Emeritus Professor John

A. Murphy and Eoghan Harris have not done so. And it all happened almost literally in their own backyard. Murphy had decades of professorial patronage in University College Cork to utilise in establishing some facts—any facts—about the episode, but did not do so though he bemoaned the lack of this research on an RTE programme on the matter. His father was active in the IRA at the time in West Cork and he never seems to have asked him about it. Or is he not saying? Ditto for Harris and his grandfather. The over 1,770 Bureau of Military History *Witness Statements* appear to be of no help.

But most intriguingly and most curious of all, none of Hart's many anonymous sources (about 60) used this safe cover, which was alleged to be necessary for them, to tell him who did it and he surely asked them—more than once. And they were very knowledgeable and forthcoming on much more trivial matters. But not at all knowledgeable about this major event? How curious. And surely this would have been the real sensation of his work, as well as bringing some real added value to the history of the period. And surely if he was told he was safe and secure enough in the groves of academe to say so and not fear any repercussions?

(And the people he interviewed who had passed over to The West Cork Happy Hunting Ground did not use their very privileged position for this type of knowledge to inform him—even his omniscient interviewees did not know who did it!)

The silence on who did the killings becomes deafening and becomes thereby the *single most significant fact* about who carried out the killings. Did they disappear into thin air?

ENTER FRANK BUSTEED

Frank Busted has re-entered the picture (or is it the frame) as a suspect. Niall Meehan pointed out some time ago that the IRA leader had entered Hart's frame initially but was dropped because of his mixed Protestant/Catholic ancestry and his declared atheism. He clearly did not fit the sectarian picture so dear to Hart. Busted has reappeared as a very likely participant in the execution of the Intelligence Agents captured in Macroom. He admitted this, but his description conflicts with other facts about it. It is now suggested that they divulged the names of the spies they were reorganising and Frank 'did the business'.

He was Vice-Commandant of the 6th Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade and it is a great pity there is no biography of him. He had to leave the country after the 'civil

war' and did well in business in the US in a venture which meant competing with the Mafia—where he gave as good as he got: he appears to have always 'given' before he 'got'. He had the 'Willie John McBride approach' of getting his retaliation in first. He came back to Ireland when Fianna Fail came to power and acted as an unofficial bodyguard for de Valera. He served in the Irish Army during the Emergency. Please note—this is not the behaviour of a maverick.

There is no doubt whatever that he could have done the deed if what was required was the elimination of a spy ring—either an old one or a new one being reactivated. He had the necessary 'iron in the soul' to do so. He is held responsible for bungling the Dripsey Ambush, and because of that and he has been regarded as something of a 'maverick'. When people in Cork talk of mavericks in the IRA at the time, it is their code for Frank. But I think he has been given the maverick tag because his steely disposition made him quite different to the majority of IRA men of the time, who had to acquire this quality and many found it impossible to do so—or, when they did, afterwards to live with what they had been forced to do. Tom Barry had this military disposition in buckets from his experiences in the brutality and barbarity of WWI.

Busted's overall career belies the maverick description.

By the way, it's amazing how none of our revisionists hold anything against Barry for his four years of killing across two Continents, but castigate him for his relatively minor skirmish at Kilmichael. It's worth noting therefore that our revisionists are certainly not pacifists or anti-war. It seems they are just against little wars.

Frank seems to have had this stern quality naturally and he always remained something of a man apart from other Republicans because of this. He is not buried in Cork's Republican Plot. Maybe it was his Cromwellian heritage that gave him this quality. There is no Irish Clan Busted.

But there is one big flaw in the suggestion that Busted was responsible for Dunmanway: he would hardly have kept quiet about the operation all his life: he spoke of other executions he carried out—in detail—and gilded the lily somewhat. But one consistent element that appears in his execution accounts is that he made clear to those he executed why he was doing it—as befitted his personality, being frank by nature as well by name. If he executed the Dunmanway Protestants as

spies, he was very likely to have told them why rather than shouting at them about being Free Staters—which was about the most irrelevant fact about them in the circumstances. He would have justified the action, as he would have seen it as similar to what Collins had done to the Cairo Gang of British Intelligence operatives. Busted was not the kind of guy to hide his light under a bushel and he would have probably gloried in the exploit if it was a spy elimination exploit. But he never barked either.

Or have I gone deaf?

SOURCES AND PROFESSORS

Of course, all this begs the question, again, about Hart's sources and omissions. Why did 'A.G.', 'A.E.', "B.B", "B.V." and "B.Y." among the approximately 60—no less—anonymous people interviewed for his book all feel the need to remain anonymous, over six decades after the events? As Hart cannot help us further with this, then surely the eminent Professors should help us now, nearly three decades later again. The book is based on a doctoral thesis. When supervising him, did they not enquire as to who any or all of these people were and verify their existence? After all, these anonymous sources were, from their numbers alone, crucial to his work and conclusions?

Were his informants involved in the events or were they providing him with just more hearsay? Let's hope Professors Fitzpatrick and Townshend help us while still 'in harness' and before they become Emeritus Professors or go to the Great History Department in the sky. Otherwise this debate comes to a dead end, unresolved, and they surely have some sense of responsibility in not allowing that to happen.

After rereading some of Hart again I now find that hardly a sentence or note in his book is trustworthy when put in its actual, original context and sources checked. And all of it was passed as gospel by our eminent Professors.

John Regan in his recent writings on this subject has highlighted the situation in which these supervisors ignored their own published, contradictory, views on the issues raised by Hart and allowed him to indulge in what can only be described as a grotesque caricature of history writing — and of which they must have been aware. Regan is concerned that this has disgraced Irish academic history-writing. No doubt it has. He attributes it to the influence of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. He is being generous. What had Irish academic history-writing ever con-

tributed to the writing of modern Irish history by which this débâcle could be compared and judged? Was there a period of worthwhile Irish academic history-writing? There was nothing of the kind. The history of the Irish revolution was written by the participants. It did not come out of the Universities. We were fortunate to have so many 'historians by accident' to write it and make it real—and not, thank goodness—just another academic subject, and long may it remain free of that dead hand. They lived it and they made it live for their readers and it will outlast all academic work on the subject. The modern revisionists looked down their noses at these writings and assured us that they in their brave new world they would produce the proper history which they would get from ferreting around in the archives. And what we got was Peter Hart and his like. And neither did the critique and refutation of Hart come from where it originated: in Irish universities. Those institutions def-

ended him—and continue to defend him—to the bitter end.

Insofar as Irish academia produced anything on history, it was the Free State view that predominated and that, at best, could only be a truncated version of the revolution. After them we had the dominance of T.D. Williams and Nicholas Mansergh who, with their MI5 backgrounds, continued to emasculate the history-writing of the country. Williams must hold a world record for a non-publishing Professor. His successor, Mr. Ferriter, supplies historical tit-bits to the media on request.

I should probably declare an interest. I, like many others, trusted the undergraduate Hart and assisted him, glad that somebody new was taking an interest in the subjects he was dealing with. He betrayed this trust with his preconceived agenda and blatant abuse of facts. His supervisors by their silence are endorsing this betrayal.

Jack Lane

Naval Warfare

Now that we have reached the Great War again it is worth reviewing naval warfare during the period of the Hundred Years' Peace of 1815-14. During the Hundred Years Peace the only substantial war in Europe lasted for a year. This was the Franco-German conflict of 1870-71 (The Balkan Wars took place during 1911-12. However these were conducted on the periphery of Europe and, despite their devastating consequences for many of the Ottoman populations, they were effectively localised by the Great Powers).

Plenty of revolutions and possibilities of conflict occurred in Europe during the Hundred Years' Peace but the Balance of Power was maintained effectively. After the French Revolution, conservatives put down revolutions and suppressed minorities that created disorder within the Congress system. But the British State was content to see this happen in the cause of stability and being able to get on with its business elsewhere in the world.

It was possible to roll up the map of Europe for a generation.

England had become master of the seas and controller of the global economy after it won the Seven Years' War (1756-63) and seen off Napoleon in 1815. Trade grew within the area which the Royal Navy carved out for commerce as a consequence of this long peace. Trade depended upon international finance and

PART NINETEEN
both increasingly depended on peace between the major Powers in Europe. A peace interest grew which was represented by Manchester Capitalism and Liberalism in England. The new Nonconformist middle class, admitted to the franchise in 1832, was 'anti-war' for reasons of trade and morality. That is to say, it saw war as being bad for trade and state expenditure on war being hard on the pockets of the middle-class taxpayer. So warfare and colonial expansion was supported largely where it brought opportunity and possibilities of profit, as in the case of the Opium Wars.

The economic system began to achieve an ascendancy over the military war, or let us say that the economic interests that developed in the One Hundred Years' Peace began to subserviate the military interest to the economic system. The Declaration of Paris and the Crimean War (which Urquhart noted was waged in a half-cock fashion against Russia, without the full power of the Royal Navy, in order to establish Istanbul as a financial dependency) were examples of this.

Commerce and the economic system were allowed, for the first time, to continue during wars. Previously wars were used to expand the share of British commerce in relation to the other powers (Mercantilist theory was developed in England to support this, in which global trade was seen as a cake with anyone taking a bigger

slice ensuring that others had to get smaller portions). Now British commerce was dominant and the Royal Navy upheld the Free Trade system it had helped establish as the playing field which would continue England's dominance.

Wars continued in the parts of the world where the global market had not been established or was limited to local commercial relations. Where the global Free Market was developed, the interest was peace and where the Free Market had not developed, provision was made for war. And England fought numerous 'little wars' against 'lesser breeds' in this pursuit.

That is why the Royal Navy became an instrument of defending the peace in the free market area and only an instrument of war in the undeveloped regions of the world. And this was at the heart of the matter between the protagonists over naval warfare.

The Declaration of Paris had formalised the defence of the Free Market system by allowing trade during wartime carried by neutrals. Those who opposed this development felt it blunted the main weapon of war and expansion—the Royal Navy—in doing so.

The conflict between the navalists and the Free Traders intensified with the development of the new vigorous Imperialism of the 1870s on. This new swaggering Imperialism raised the prospect of conflict (particularly with the newly emerging German competitor) and the Royal Navy had always been the primary weapon of the British State in war.

It was the 1904 alliance that Britain established with France and the 1907 alliance with Russia that undermined the system that maintained the Hundred Years' Peace. It signalled hostile intent on Britain's part to intervene in Europe again and disrupt the system that had produced economic development on the Continent, after a long absence of British intervention. The problem for Britain was that the system had begun to be worked by an emerging power, Germany, too effectively. It was judged that the Balance of Power had become precarious again after a hundred years and something needed doing about it.

Germany during the late nineteenth century entered the world market to the extent that she could no longer feed herself. This made her commercial rise and prosperity vulnerable to the guns of the Royal Navy—which had then begun to constitute a kind of world policeman whose role it was to keep other nations from challenging England's commercial and military domination of the world.

Germany took two steps to deal with the problem of the Royal Navy and maintain her commercial growth. Firstly, she began building a navy capable of acting as a deterrent to Britain, so that England would think twice before entering into war with Germany and suffer such loss of blood and treasure that it would endanger her world-wide Empire and Imperial dominance. Secondly, she began to make provision for feeding herself and protecting her trade by developing trade routes across central Europe that would be not as vulnerable to the guns of the Royal Navy. This would make it more difficult for Britain to use its senior armed service in blockading Germany into submission through starvation of its civilian population—a thing that Royal Navy officers, like Admiral Fisher, had signalled their intention to do.

The Berlin-Baghdad Railway and the relationship with Ottoman Turkey were manifestations of this German commercial defence policy that Britain became obses-

sive about when it was realised that one day the British Empire and its navy might no longer be capable of destroying its emerging rival for the trade of the world.

The system that had curtailed the Royal Navy was now to give the Royal Navy another innings and a last hurrah.

NOTE ON FINAL PART OF NAVAL WARFARE

This is the final part of the Naval Warfare series. However, the issues that have been explored, and the subject of England's maritime control of the world, will be further developed within a larger work, provisionally called *The Siege Of Europe*. This will examine the geopolitical and strategic basis of Britain's Great War and will form the final part of a trilogy on the subject that has been preceded by *The Rise And Fall Of Imperial Ireland*, and *Britain's Great War On Turkey*.

Hopefully it will take the story through the Great War and the blockade of Germany up to the early 1920s and the Naval Agreement with Washington.

Pat Walsh

An Irish Anti-Fascist RAF Volunteer and some other soldiers

Part One

There were, of course, Irish anti-fascist volunteers in the British armed forces during the Second World War. In 1964, at the age of 15, I was bequeathed a mandolin by a dying Second World War veteran. No it was not *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. A passing thought: Was that romantic novel and the film's fictional character based on a real Italian officer who had started out as a fascist but ended up an anti-fascist? Who knows? My mandolin came from an Irish volunteer in Britain's RAF. It was primarily an expression of heartfelt gratitude to my mother who constantly visited him in hospital as cancer was bringing his life to an end. But the gift was also an expression of profound admiration and affection for my father. Regrettably, the son's response to the mandolin proved unworthy of that veteran's deep friendship with his parents. Having finally been successful in putting my foot down in resistance to any more compulsory violin lessons, I was damned if I was going to take up another instrument. A decade later, my mother and I agreed that it was only appropriate that the mandolin should be returned to the war veteran's family, where it would at least have a more immediate emotional—even if not an immediate musical—resonance, and our action was greatly appreciated.

I know for a fact that this RAF veteran had volunteered for sound anti-fascist reasons. While he never deserted from any regular armed force, I have little doubt that if his political principles had demanded it, he would have done so. In a subsequent land-based armed action he had been wounded, while his close comrade-in-arms was killed in action. This comrade had been decorated for bravery in action against Nazi German forces in Italy while serving as a commando with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. I do not, however, know if that particular war hero had volunteered for anti-fascist reasons. In fact, most Irish World War Two veterans of the British Army that I have personally known did not do so, even if in the course of that war they eventually underwent an anti-fascist and/or socialist political radicalisation. Most had joined the British armed forces from family tradition, or for economic reasons, or both.

There is no evidence that a single one of those who deserted the Irish Army in order to join the British Army was at all motivated by a commitment to anti-fascist struggle. There has been one half-hearted attempt to illustrate such a "case", which was so outlandish that it was instantly dropped. On January 26th last, under the

heading of *Pardon for deserters who joined the British army*, the *Irish Daily Mail* reported:

"Soldiers who deserted the Irish Army to fight the Axis powers during the Second World War are to receive an official pardon. The 4,983 servicemen who joined the fight against fascism were barred from jobs and State pensions on their return, a move that condemned many to poverty and stigma for the rest of their lives. Justice Minister Alan Shatter {who, more important in this case, is also the Minister for Defence—MOR} has said he believes the dishonourable discharge they received was wrong. 'Many who fought in British uniforms during that war returned to Ireland', he said. 'For too many years, their contribution in preserving European and Irish democracy was ignored. Some of those include members of our Defence Forces who left this island during that time to fight for freedom and who were subsequently dishonourably discharged from the Defence Forces.' ... Families of the men have welcomed the news of the pardon, after years of campaigning. Paddy Reid, whose father Paddy and uncle Freddie left the Irish Army to fight with the British, said: 'I'm very happy to hear of the pardon but there is also a deep sense of regret that it has taken so long for these men to be recognised for what they did.' Paddy Snr. joined the Allied Forces in 1941, when he was 17, and fought against the Japanese in Burma. He died in 1988, aged 64. He joined the British forces to make money because he wanted to start a family, his son said. However, he also felt he should stand up against the Nazis after hearing about the bombing of Guernica in northern Spain."

So, in 1937, a 13 year-old boy called Paddy Reid was so incensed by the bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War that he resolved to join the Irish Army, profit from its military training, desert to the British Army in 1941, avenge Guernica in Burma and, hopefully, ensure that the British Army would succeed in overthrowing fascism in Spain! Pull the other one! The story was so outlandish, that coverage of Paddy Jnr.'s remarks in every other newspaper of that same day carefully excluded any reference to Guernica, as it was also dropped from the *Irish Daily Mail's* continuing Reid campaign on the following day, under the heading of *The soldiers persecuted for daring to help Britain fight Hitler*.

As for Alan Shatter, well, if in any other self-respecting State where a Minister for Defence had celebrated desertion from the National Army for which he holds specific Ministerial responsibility, it would have led to his instant dismissal. But why on earth should the Fine Gael Taoiseach Enda Kenny take any such action? Has any Opposition politician demanded that he do so? I share the conclusions of the leading front page article in the April *Irish Political Review*, "Fianna Fáil on the road to nowhere?" For it was not left to this March's convoluted somersaults on the Mahon Tribunal to confirm the death of

'modern' Fianna Fáil. The death of all that the Party had ever stood for in the 20th century was made patently obvious in January, when not a single Fianna Fáil TD called for Shatter to be sacked.

At least in October 1976, when Fine Gael Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave was responsible for the resignation of President Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh on account of his refusal to sack his Minister for Defence Paddy Donegan after he had called the President "*a thundering disgrace*", Cosgrave had to face a fight on its hands. The *Irish Times* on 22nd October, 1976 reported on the previous day's Dáil proceedings, where a Fianna Fáil motion calling for the Minister for Defence's dismissal had been defeated by 63 votes to 58, but on which occasion all Fianna Fáil factions had spoken with a single voice.

"The President, under the Constitution, was the Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces, and the Minister their chief political administrator, and the fact that his remarks were made in the presence of those forces made the damaging effect all the worse", said Fianna Fáil leader Jack Lynch. "The situation was a basic Constitutional matter... Mr Cosgrave, as Taoiseach, had built up around himself an aura of overall inflexible rectitude and was regarded as being a passionate adherent of the idea of the supremacy of State institutions and their protection. But many of those who accepted that image were going to be seriously disturbed by the stand he was taking on the present matter... There was a very real danger that, in the public mind, the Taoiseach's attitude was going to be confused with support for and approval of what the Minister had said. It was inevitable that in not looking for the Minister's resignation, the Taoiseach was laying himself open to this", argued Charlie Haughey, Fianna Fáil spokesman on Health. "The Taoiseach was attempting to defend the indefensible and there was still time for him to demand Mr Donegan's resignation... Under the Constitution ... the Army, at all times, was there to defend all the people of the country... The Constitution clearly recognised the supremacy of the President so far as the Defence Forces were concerned. The Minister for Defence, who came lower down in the hierarchy, had made a serious reflection on the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces. If an Army officer had done the same thing, he would be dealt with", proclaimed Dessie O'Malley, Fianna Fáil spokesman on Industry and Commerce.

And who could envisage any member of the current—slimmed down but 'modern'—Fianna Fáil Oireachtas Party providing anything approaching the following gutsy contribution to that same October 1976 debate, from the Fianna Fáil spokesman on Defence, Joe Dowling:

"If an Army officer, an NCO, or a private made a statement like the one made by the Minister, he would be court-martialled and expelled from the armed services. But the Minister had got the pardon of the Taoiseach. Under present emergency legislation, if the ordinary man in the street made a similar

statement action might be taken against him."

Yet the current Minister Defence does not require any pardon from the present Taoiseach for celebrating those who had betrayed their oath of loyalty to the Irish Army by deserting it in its most perilous hour of need, because nobody in either Government or Opposition deems him to have committed any offence that might require such a pardon. His Labour partners in Government have tamely acquiesced in the Fine Gael Party's re-invigorated West British reflexes. Deputy Leader Joan Burton has been as silent on this issue as her Party Leader, Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore. Because she has crossed Gilmore on other issues, however, the *Sunday Business Post* reported on March 11th that "*Burton's refusal to back down from her comments prompted a rap on the knuckles from Labour handlers, delivered through their favourite house journal, the Irish Times*". Perhaps it is the *ex cathedra* pronouncement from that quarter on the deserters' issue that has silenced Labour. On January 26th an *Irish Times* editorial—entitled *A Time To Pardon*—pronounced:

"There are those who insist that desertion is always wrong and the offence cannot be pardoned. That is codology... In any event, an Emergency Powers Order stripped these soldiers of pensions and banned their employment in all State agencies for a period of seven years. The order was opposed by the Labour Party in the Dáil and described by Fine Gael's T F O'Higgins as '*brutal and inhumane ...stimulated by malice... and oozing with venom*'..."

If that *Irish Times* editorial is the basis for Labour's current silence, it is based on an outrageous historical lie. There are those who know this to be the case, but who cannot bring themselves to say that the Emperor has no clothes. On February 15th the *Irish Times* published an Opinion Piece—entitled "*Wrong to assume all Irish deserters were Allied veterans*"—penned by Dr. Michael Kennedy of the Royal Irish Academy. The article was not without its informative merits, but Kennedy was as much furtive as he was coy as he mentioned in passing:

"Under Emergency Powers Order 362, returning deserters were subject to swingeing penalties, including being denied State jobs for seven years. It was attacked in the Dáil in 1945, but deputies agreed that desertion warranted harsh measures. Fianna Fáil's Harry Colley explained that the order showed deserters '*that their duty was first to their own*'. Labour Party deputy Jim Larkin jnr amplified the point: '*Our own country claims our first duty*.'"

Why was no date or more specific reference given by Kennedy? More important, why no mention of the **fact** that **Larkin**, in speaking for the *Labour Party as a whole*, although voicing some concerns about the impact on deserters' wives and families, was speaking in support of the retention of

de Valera's Order and against O'Higgins's motion to annul it. To expect such clarity from Kennedy, however, would be to expect him to have had the courage to give the lie to the *Irish Times* editorial, and that would be too much to ask.

James Larkin Junior, son of Big Jim, had enough political background to take the measure of O'Higgins. Young Jim had presided over the inaugural conference of the Communist Party of Ireland in June 1933, having previously been most insistent that the Party should declare itself Communist ("Why a Communist Party?", *Irish Workers' Voice*, March 11, 1933). At precisely the same time, Dr. T.F. O'Higgins, a brother of Kevin O'Higgins, was a leader of Irish Fascism, as founding President of the Blueshirt Army Comrades' Association. On 19th April 1933, his friend and later poet-spy John Betjeman had sought to advance O'Higgins's fascist project by writing as follows to the Earl of Rosse:

"I have a friend who is one of the Big Three in the new White Army in Ireland. As you are an Irish Citizen and expect you have opinions about Dev's actions and politics at the moment, I thought you might be interested in the enclosed pamphlets about the Army Comrades' Association—the White Army... All people who have property and Trees in Ireland are bound to be a bit anxious now and it looks to me that their only hope lies in the ACA."

On 18th October 1945, Dr. T.F. O'Higgins moved the following motion in Dáil Éireann: "*That Emergency Powers (362) Order, 1945, be and is hereby annulled.*" Speaking on behalf of the Labour Party, James Larkin Junior TD responded:

"The question involved now is such that we in these benches are entitled to say at the moment that we are of the opinion that *the Order should stand.* There are certain points that merit discussion and on which the Minister might be able to enlighten us. It is unfortunate that, when Deputy O'Higgins started off, whatever his views may be, he started on a wrong basis, and if the discussion has taken a turn that is not helpful to his point of view, he has largely himself to blame... Possibly it is correct that many members of the National Defence Forces who deserted and went elsewhere did so because they were inspired with certain views as to where political and military activity should be carried on and they were interested in it; but that does not apply to all of them. We are quite well aware that many of them went elsewhere, not because of any political views, but because the financial attraction was much stronger than that which we were able to hold out to them. For a long time past, I have expressed the view in this House that the conditions we offered to serving members of the Defence Forces could not be justified. I still hold to that view, both in regard to direct pay given to the men and in regard to the allowances given to the dependents. While recognising that position and while knowing personally that many men did desert and go elsewhere

because of the undoubted hardships their dependents were undergoing during the war, countless other men bore equally great hardships on themselves and their families and did not desert. *Whatever may be said for the views held by individuals as regards the issues involved in the war—and I suppose we all have our own views—it is correct that our own country claims our first duty and responsibility. From that point of view, we must take the attitude that we support in principle the continuance of the Order and will vote against the motion.*" (My emphasis—MOR).

It is, however, primarily due to the fact that not a single member of any of the Opposition groupings in the Dáil saw fit to challenge the Minister for Defence's outrageous rubbishing of our Army that he got away with it. Fianna Fáil's moral collapse has already been noted. But what of the Shane Ross-Joe Higgins Technical Group? (Would it not be more politically informative—even if a trifle unkindly expressed—to describe them as the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites?)

Shane Ross would have been conditioned by his pedigree to see nothing questionable about deserting the Irish Army to join the British Army. Like Shane himself, before he switched Houses in the Oireachtas, his late father had been a particular type of Trinity College Senator. As this New Year's Day *Sunday Independent* obituary related:

"Christened John Nathaniel Ross, he was born in Cork in February 1919 into a local merchant family... {He had} an upbringing that was largely English. He went to Eastbourne College and Queen's College Cambridge before coming to Trinity to read history shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War. At Trinity he joined the college company of the LDF (Local Defence Force)... A keen debater, he was elected Auditor of the College Historical Society for the academic year 1942-43. Then, in November 1942, after a successful opening meeting, he caused a minor sensation by resigning to join the British army. He enlisted in the Irish Guards and saw service in France and Belgium during the final year of hostilities... His conviction that the religious minority must play a part in Irish public life if they were not to become a petty people led him to seek election to Seanad Éireann representing the university. On his third attempt in 1961, following a formidable canvass, he was elected at the top of the poll, unseating the strident outspoken liberal Owen Sheehy Skeffington. In his first speech John typecast himself unashamedly as a member of Anglo-Irish background."

And as for Joe Higgins, his ideological guru was Ted Grant, founder of the Militant Tendency, and wartime leader of the Workers' International League. Grant's perspective on the World War has been described by his followers:

"Despite Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, the WIL did not change its characterisation of the war as an imperial-

ist war, despite the fact that the USSR had allied itself with the 'democratic' imperialist powers." (International Marxist Tendency: "Introduction to Volume One of Ted Grant's Writings 1938-42")

For Joe Higgins it is obviously a matter of supreme indifference whether or not soldiers deserted from one "*bourgeois-democratic*" army to another. The position of Sinn Féin will be addressed in Part Two of this article.

I personally have known only three Irishmen, and know of a mere six others, where anti-fascist ardour had definitely driven them to enlist in the British armed forces at a certain stage of the Second World War. But, then, all nine of those Irish volunteers had been Communists. Most Irish World War Two veterans I have known joined up out of a family tradition of British Army enlistment, or for economic reasons, or a mixture of both. Take the case of Jack Harte. A retired Workers' Union of Ireland official and a *protégé* of Young Jim Larkin, Jack served as Chairman of the Big Jim Larkin Commemoration Committee and as a Labour Party Senator for almost two decades, following his first election to the Seanad in 1973. As a Second World War veteran, Jack still teams up with old comrades-in-arms from the British Army and wears his poppy each November to commemorate fallen friends. Jack's father had served in the British Army during the First World War, but during the Second World War it was in his National Army, that of an independent Ireland struggling to defend its neutrality against all comers, where the father next chose to serve. Jack's own war service, however, was in the British Army. But not even a speck of anti-fascist consciousness lay behind his enlistment, as is patently evident from his 2007 memoirs, *To The Limits Of Endurance: One Irishman's War*. His motivation was a mixture of economic incentives and a teenager's thirst for adventure. So, at the age of 17, he was to be blooded in a squalid imperialist war. No, not against Germany, for this was the phase of Britain's "*peace in our time*", except, of course, within the British Empire itself. Harte writes as follows of the victims of the British war he had been sent to wage:

"On 27 September 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and other international leaders met with Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, and signed an agreement which, Chamberlain claimed, secured peace with honour. The following day, the Nazi jackboot stamped itself all over Czechoslovakia... Our orders were to leave for Palestine on 10 October 1938... As far as I could see, our only purpose in Palestine was to put down the insurrection by the Palestinian Arabs. I knew nothing of the history or geography of the Middle East, or the reasons behind the rebellion, and it seemed that none of

my fellow soldiers were any wiser. As a soldier, I didn't need to know: I had to follow orders." (pp23-4).

Harte's narrative of his service with the "*Faugh-a-Ballaghs*", the Royal Irish Fusiliers, continues:

"In Palestine... we had no understanding of the historical, religious or ethnic divides, and the 'fighting' was not what we had expected. We had to go into alleyways and hideouts, right into the heart of the enemy's stronghold: it was guerrilla warfare, something that was then in its infancy. It was a steep learning curve for us... Just a few days into our posting... law and order broke down in Acre... We moved in to quell the disturbances, and were met with (armed) opposition from local rebels... We were prevented from going in hot pursuit by a large group of belligerent Arabs, bent on helping the gunmen escape. A curfew was imposed on Acre... The rest of the 2nd Faughs, backed up (by other regiments), put a cordon around the old city and rounded up all the male inhabitants... The battalion was... constantly being moved from one activity to another in an effort to quell the insurrection... (while also being sent) to check for illegal Jewish immigrants who were fleeing persecution in Germany and other countries" (pp26-8).

But it was what—as a 17 year old boy soldier—he had been required to do in suppressing the Palestinian Arab revolt that was to leave Harte with a permanent sense of guilt:

"Although the insurrectionists were referred to as 'bandits' by our officers, it was stressed that we were not to assume that we were dealing with trigger-happy hooligans. They were determined to destroy anything that stood between them and independence for Palestine. Although I knew little about the background to their fight, to me it felt not unlike the situation back home, where for hundreds of years rebels had been fighting for their independence. I couldn't say I was pursuing a noble cause: orders had to be obeyed, no more, no less... Back in the billets, and weary from acting as target practice for the snipers, many men's inclinations bordered on the Lynch Law philosophy—whereby summary justice, without the niceties of a fair trial, is the order of the day. Orders which led to us riding roughshod in the relentless pursuit and punishment of the so-called 'rebels', and those who were giving them shelter, resulted in some homes being demolished or burnt down, with little thought as to where the poor people were to find shelter... To my mind, our actions were high-handed and cruel... Back at our billets, the talk was of what would happen to these prisoners after we had handed them over to the local police, who transferred them to the medieval prison in Acre. Although we never had occasion to visit the prison, I later learned something of the horrendous conditions there at the time. With up to forty men to a cell, there was little room to move—never mind sleep. A bucket served as a communal toilet, which overflowed and stank in the hot fetid jail. Feeding time was like a zoo,

when a guard came around with a large steaming cauldron of watery soup, into which each prisoner was 'allowed' to put his bare hand to extract a small piece of meat to supplement his soup. Many were scalded and didn't try it again, preferring to go hungry" (pp28-33).

"Many years later, when I was a senator, I made the journey to Beirut together with a number of TDs from Dáil Éireann. While we were there, we met with Yasser Arafat, the then Palestinian leader, who was in hiding, wanted by the Israelis. He made us very welcome. As we talked, I told him of the time I had spent in Palestine during the Insurrection, and we chatted about it for a while. Eventually he said to me with a twinkle in his eye: '*You were probably shooting at my father.*' With an even bigger twinkle in my eye, I replied: '*Well, I must have missed, or you wouldn't be here, so look what I've done for Palestine!*' Arafat's slow smile quickly turned into a loud belly laugh, as the significance of my remark hit home. (The fact that his father had Egyptian origins was neither here nor there.) We remained friends and some years later, while we were at dinner in Jury's Hotel in Dublin, he made a point of telling my friends about the encounter, and didn't miss the opportunity of 'ribbing' me about how my 'bad aim' had helped the cause of Palestine" (pp36-7).

The integrity of Jack Harte's position demands that it be fully recorded. Jack has remained a PLO supporter ever since, and some years ago he passed on to me his collection of PLO publications, notwithstanding our known disagreements. Happily, Jack is still with us, and more than able to refute any fictional misrepresentation of his life. But pre-emptive action should nonetheless be taken lest, at some future date, Eoghan Harris's *Sunday Independent* column, or its John-Paul McCarthy reflection, should seek to misrepresent him as one of "*Ireland's British Army heroes*" who had set out—not just in 1941, not just in 1939, but in 1938—to "*fight against fascism*". But where? In Palestine! Jack related his January 1939 departure from that squalid imperialist posting on behalf of perfidious Albion. But the outbreak of World War Two in September 1939 is not at all recorded in his memoirs. The "*phony war*" had no practical significance for him. His first mention of the World War is of the German siege of Malta commencing in June 1940, and of how he and his mates came under attack from Stuka aircraft in January 1941. His courageous exploits in Greece in November 1943 are rightly recorded in great detail, but even at that stage of the War there is nothing to indicate that he had yet developed any anti-fascist political perspective. The military outcome for Jack himself in Greece was summed up by the chapter heading "FRIENDLY FIRE AND LOUSY LEADERS COST US LIFE AND LIBERTY". Jack's anti-fascist consciousness was, however, nurtured and fired by what he was to observe as a prisoner-of-war, especially after being moved to Germany itself in January 1944.

His profound humanity is evident in what follows:

"Escorted by German guards, we trundled along, shaking the louse-ridden bits of straw from what was left of our clothes as we went. After about three miles, we came to a barbed wire enclosure... a transit camp for POWs. Ushered through the huge gates, we got our first glimpse of the watchtowers spaced around the perimeter, and the many different nationalities in the camp... It was immediately clear that the Russians, who made up the largest group, were being badly treated—they were so stick-thin and haggard that they almost made the other prisoners look healthy. Although the nationalities were segregated into different compounds, we ventured close to the Russian compound, and were surprised that the guards made no attempt to stop us. We were shocked at the Russians' emaciated state. The camp medical staff, who had lost no time in cleaning us up, showed little concern for the poor Russians. After de-lousing and a wonderful shower—despite the fact that it was mid-December and temperatures were well below freezing—we settled into the wooden huts, with their triple-decked, rough-timbered bunks. It was sheer luxury after the last few weeks" (p183).

"Turning the corner, I heard grunts and groans coming from three Russian POWs. They were struggling to keep their feet in the muddy slime as they pulled a high-wheeled wagon over the toffee-like ground. The wagon was overflowing with the contents of the cesspit, which had been pumped out of it. The men looked exhausted and forlorn, their long, filthy coats hanging off their starved frames, and the bottoms of their coats dragging along the mud- and cess-stained ground. Their fur caps, worn on the Russian front, had seen better days, and offered little protection against the elements. Their precious mess tins were tied to their waists, or around their necks, with a piece of string. Despite all the horrors I'd witnessed in this terrible war, I was shocked by their plight. I was furious to think that they could be treated like dogs by the Germans because their government had not signed up to the Geneva Convention. My gestures, an attempt at commiseration and support, were met by angry shouts from their German guard, who was well toggled out in waterproof clothing. There was nothing I could do to help them. Drowned to the skin, I made my way back to what I now saw as the relative comfort of our prison hut. I later learned that the Russians looked on this job as a reasonably cushy one, given some of the other work they were expected to do!" (p201).

"If we thought the poor Russians were hard done by, the Poles weren't far behind. It had been raining for hours, and the camp was a quagmire, as we watched the Germans erect a makeshift tent, on the sea of mud that had been the sports pitch. We looked on as more than two hundred and fifty distressed, dirty and cold Polish civilians, including children, were herded into the tent, prisoners of the Reich. Some were emaciated, and all were soaked to the skin as they queued on weary legs for a ladle of skilly. On their second day, the rain stopped

This letter appeared in the *Irish Examiner* of 4th April

Which Portraits Should Be Removed?

Labour Senator James Heffernan ponders whether it was appropriate that the portraits of politicians who had been "*found culpable of corruption, of abuse of power, abuses of privilege and, indeed perjury*", should still hang in Leinster House.

He claimed these people "*have stained political life in Ireland and it's time they were wiped from our memory*" (*Irish Examiner*, Mar 28).

Does he include in his list of inappropriate images the portrait of former Taoiseach Dr. Garret FitzGerald?

Did not Dr. FitzGerald's Government bail out AIB to the painful tune of £400m in 1985 by agreeing to cover the losses of the Insurance Corporation of Ireland which was a subsidiary of AIB?

Six years later AIB wrote off debts of around £200,000 incurred by Dr. FitzGerald after the collapse of Guinness Peat Aviation.

The Chairman of AIB at the time was Peter Sutherland, who was later appointed as Ireland's member of the European Commission.

And what about Mr. W.T. Cosgrave who, as first President of the Executive Council 1922-1932, sanctioned the unlawful execution of 77 Republican prisoners?

Tom Cooper

and they drifted towards our fence in search of a friendly face... The Poles told us about the ghettos of Warsaw, from where they'd been snatched... When a few Red Cross parcels came through, most of us shared our food with these poor wretches. Unfortunately, man's inhumanity to man is ever present, and a very small minority of British POWs exploited them, by trading food in return for their jewellery, or treasured keepsakes, which they'd hidden from the Germans, at risk to their very lives. It was only after the Poles' departure that we learned the true extent of their hardships and bravery. They were part of an exceptionally heroic brethren that had stood up to, and frequently outwitted, the cruel SS. For this, they were now paying a terrible price. At that time, in late 1944, we, as POWs, were in complete ignorance of the extent of the cruelty and massive destruction that was being meted out to the Jewish people... It was only after my release, at the end of World War II, that I found out that our POW camp was less than twenty miles from the notorious Belsen, where many thousands of poor souls met a horrific end at the hands of the SS" (pp208-9,226).

Jack's end-of-war experiences made an anti-fascist out of him. And he also became an anti-Imperialist. In August 2006, in a series on RTÉ TV entitled *War Stories*, Jack Harte was interviewed by Cathal O'Shannon. Jack told me how he had gone on to draw on his experiences of war to denounce the British and American war in Iraq, but that all of that section in the O'Shannon interview had been deleted from the programme when it came to be broadcast. And Jack also came to a realisation that at the time that he had been fighting for British Imperialism in Palestine in 1938, during that very same year there had in fact been an anti-fascist war waged in Spain by those whom, during World War Two itself, the US and UK authorities would seek to smear as "premature" anti-fascists. In the *Sunday Independent* of 11th February 2007 Eoghan Harris was to denounce a Spanish War commemoration that I had organised:

"Let me remind O'Riordan of the widely circulated oration which he gave at a memorial to Frank Ryan in Glasnevin Cemetery on October 25, 2005, in the course of which ... he paid tribute to Mrs Budge Mulcahy Clissmann {who died this March 20—MOR}, whom {sic}, he told us, had 'attended to that final act upon Frank's death with the same loving care she had shown him in life, and who is present today in memory of that friendship'... Budge Clissmann is the widow of Helmut Clissmann who featured in Cathal O'Shannon's programme (*Ireland's Hidden Nazis*) as a Nazi intelligence agent."

Needless to say, my reply was denied publication in the *Sunday Independent* by the Harrises, including my following point of information:

"Eoghan's account omitted to record some other words of welcome that I had voiced: 'We also have a Second World War veteran

present, former Senator Jack Harte who, serving in the British army, fought against the Nazis in Greece. He subsequently became their prisoner-of-war... He is here today in order to pay his respects to the memory of Frank Ryan."

Indeed, Jack Harte was particularly pleased when I passed on to him the December 2005 issue of *Irish Political Review*, with its front page photo of him attending that Frank Ryan commemoration, taken by the late Conor Lynch.

But what of the mandolin-playing volunteer? Only a year younger than Harte, but in marked contrast to the circumstances of Jack's own enlistment, this Corkman had already developed a very definite anti-fascist perspective by the time he volunteered for the RAF at the age of 20. I am also convinced that—had the need arisen—not alone would he have deserted from the RAF, but that he would have turned his gun on them. There has been an avalanche of nonsense spoken in praise of those who deserted the Irish Army in its hour of wartime need. What is ignored is the real dilemma that all recruits to the British forces, whether *bona fide* Irish volunteers or Irish deserters, came so perilously close to having to confront. In *A Memoir* (2004), the late Terry de Valera, Dev's youngest son, confronted this challenge head on, for which he was upbraided by the late Garret FitzGerald in a review in the *Irish Times* on 17th July 2004. FitzGerald charged the younger de Valera:

"In the context of the War, he sees Churchill as having been concerned 'simply to satisfy his own selfish imperial aims and personal lust for power'— which seems an odd verdict on the man who saved Europe, including Ireland, from Nazism".

FitzGerald had torn Terry de Valera's

remark completely out of context—for it had nothing to do with Churchill confronting Nazism in Europe. Terry de Valera's own antipathy towards Nazism and Hitler's war from the very outset of his invasion of Poland was made patently manifest throughout the book. But the author refused to back off referring to the war crimes that Churchill was quite prepared to contemplate committing in Ireland itself. He wrote:

"The popular view today, and for some time past, is to create the impression that the only threat of invasion of Ireland during World War Two came from Germany. This is far from the truth. Invasion by the British was just as likely, if not more so, and it is now known that the British had drawn up detailed plans for this. What is so terrifying to realise, is that had Germany invaded, Churchill, on the advice of his air chiefs, was fully prepared to order and sanction the saturation of large portions of the Irish population using mustard and phosgene gases, calculated to cause maximum pain, suffering and lingering death to countless Irish people, both in the south and in the north. The consequences of such diabolical action would have been horrific. It appears that there was no such plans by the Germans to use gas against the Irish. It should not be forgotten that the British, and Churchill in particular, were quite prepared to wipe out large portions of the Irish population by using the most ghastly methods imaginable. This Churchill would do simply to satisfy his own selfish imperial aims and personal lust for power" (p176).

Perhaps FitzGerald did not wish to believe de Valera's home truths about Churchill. But the latter's source was impeccably accurate—John P. Duggan's 1985 book *Ireland And The Third Reich*, in which this retired Irish Army Lieutenant-Colonel brought to light a secret British War Cabinet memo of 8th October 1940.

continued on page 25

Does
It
Up

Stack
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PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Labour's Centenary Conference held at National University of Ireland, Galway on 14th April was a rambunctious affair. About 1000 protesters turned up and they were not all young unemployed or students. There were many pensioners and children and family groups—and more than a few mothers with babies in prams. And they were angry at election promises unfulfilled. Labour party posters and insignia were pulled down. And, inside the Hall, there were motions calling on Labour in Government to reverse the education cuts, to introduce a third higher rate of tax on high earners, to lift the recruitment moratoriums in the Health Service, and for radical action to "create jobs". A tight rein was kept on speakers inside so that there was no chance of a runaway revolution. Most of the attendees accepted the reality of Coalition Government. One Labour official said: "*Not every Labour Party policy is in the Programme for Government and not everything in the programme for Government is Labour Party policy*".

The speech of Tánaiste and Party Leader Eamon Gilmore TD was emotive and persuasive on the day but later, on cold analysis, it was clear that he said nothing new and gave no solid detail. There were references to a "*fair and just society*", and it was pointed out that the "*issue was complicated legally and financially*", with the promise that "*the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD and I have taken personal responsibility to drive this agenda forward*", but no details of how exactly he proposed to do anything.

And yet, at the end of his speech, the Tánaiste received a standing ovation. For what? Is every Party Conference a manifestation of the herd instinct? Well, of course it is, but where is the instinct leading the herd to in these cases? After all, the Annual Conference has been in preparation for months beforehand. Labour Branches throughout the land have met and deliberated on what resolutions and motions they will put forward at the Annual Conference. These motions are taken very seriously by those party members who put them forward. They work on these motions. They discuss them at meetings and send them off to Party Headquarters in Dublin for

inclusion on the Agenda of the Annual Conference. And they are included on the Agenda. The proposers and seconders have speeches prepared and the delegates sit all day and listen to the speeches. It has all been a load of hard work and long hours. Everybody involved feels, usually quite strongly, that they are helping democracy to work.

The motions are voted upon and some are passed and some are defeated. All well and good so far. But the culmination of every Conference is the Leader's Speech. In the course of which almost nothing substantive is said! Not only was nothing definite said by the Leader at the Labour Conference, as is the usual case with all Leader's speeches at all such conferences, but the Tánaiste went further and said with careful intonations that Labour Ministers would of course "*take very much into account and take seriously any of the motions that were passed*" at the Conference. And then he went on to say that Government policy was decided by the *Programme for Government* agreed between Labour and Fine Gael! In other words, he was stating clearly for all to hear that the party members could pass whatever motions they wished but the motions passed, if not in the *Programme for Government*, would be ignored by the Labour Ministers for Government purposes, because the Ministers and the Tánaiste want to stay in the power and in the money regardless of what the Annual Conference decides on Labour Policy. And the herd listens to this and gives it a standing ovation! It doesn't stack up!

And yet this is the experience of everyone who has attended Party Conferences for whatever Party with which they are involved. Intelligent, hardworking Party members go through all the idealistic hard slog and then on Saturday evening of the Conference, we listen to it all being, in effect, rubbish. Is it because the Leader does it? Would we give a standing ovation on the Saturday evening to any other orator who spoke the same words? Unlikely, but the conclusion we then have to draw is that, while the daytime activities of the Annual Conferences look like and feel like business sessions of a functioning democracy, when it comes to the evening session and the Leader's Speech we have all reverted to tribalism. The tribalism of *Una Duce, Una Voce*. Once the leader rises to speak all of us are prepared to ditch our personal convictions which we have forcefully expressed during the day and we each succumb to tribalism. It is no wonder that the Sunday sessions are lukewarm after this, and poorly attended.

Is it any wonder democracy does not appear to be working? We say we have democracy but we haven't really. It is really tribalism camouflaged.

DINGLE—DANGLE.

Daingean Uí Cúis otherwise known as Dingle in Co. Kerry was recently suffering from the rest of Ireland and the rest of the World being cut off from it for several hours. There were no telephone communications and no internet access for much of the day. ATM transactions and credit card transactions were impossible, bank branches had to close. Mobile phones and landlines were unusable. As well as Dingle, a vast area of the Dingle Peninsula was dangling out of touch with emergency services. A trawler in the port which had a Sat. Phone was able to communicate with the outside world via satellite. Why not have at least one Sat Phone in each centre of population and in each Garda Station, Ambulance Station and Fire Station as back-up to landlines? The cost would be very small compared with the overall communications expenditure.

The cause of the communication crash was damage to terrestrial radio-links by high winds. Communities are just as vulnerable to vandalism or to criminal damage. Not only radio links but also computer-controlled electricity grids are vulnerable. Very vulnerable. All a hacker has to do is to gain access to any power substation—there is one on almost every street—and hitch up the laptop. Tools needed are a hacksaw, a laptop, a short length of cable and a small screwdriver. A hacker could access and close down the whole electric grid system. It has happened elsewhere but has been hushed up. The mad rush to replace people by computers (miscalled "*efficiency*") has its limits and we are well beyond the limits now. It doesn't stack up and it needs to be thought out and re-planned at top Government level before a major crisis erupts. But, of course this would be unnatural. The crisis in Dingle is over and forgotten. It wasn't important enough to move the bureaucratic mountain. There will have to be an inevitable major crisis before anything is done. That's life in the Public Service.

GOVERNANCE

Once in a while we may get a Minister of Government, or better still a Taoiseach, who is forceful enough and intelligent enough and brave enough to change our society. Michael Collins did it from 1916 to 1921, Eamon de Valera did it from 1932 to 1938 and Charlie Haughey did it from 1960 to 1968. We need such a leader now. A leader who can unite the people—the

workers, the employers, the public service and the pensioners and the unemployed—into one powerful group who will follow the leader's vision into a future of economic well-being and peace.

Ireland is now stricken by an economic war, the ongoing severity of which is not yet acknowledged meaningfully by Ireland's present leaders. At present, the country is fractured—some going this way, some that way and more going another way. The news media reflect what is happening. So cynical have people become that neither politicians, Governments nor media are believed and they are all losing the support of the people. RTE's newsreaders have been so biased in favour of the Government that it has been compared, perhaps unjustly with Moscow's *Pravda*. A daily count, for example, was given by RTE of those who paid the Household Tax while more or less ignoring the real news which was the number of people who were NOT paying the tax. There is a similar approach to water metering and to a water tax.

RTE does not worry too much about its loss of viewers and listeners because it is supported out of taxation basically and bodies like RTE do not ever seem to have the foresight to judge where their path is leading to. The newspapers also are losing circulation. People are tired of reading lies and propaganda and being bullied by scare stories. Despite all the PR being generated by Ministers' and Government and political parties—all at our expense—no one great leader is emerging. Enda Kenny, Eamon Gilmore and Gerry Adams have been through it all before and each of them looks battle-weary. Micheál Martin looks energetic and fresh but has he enough leadership personality? Can he produce the spark to get the whole country—not just Fianna Fáil—moving forward together? The hope for Ireland is for another great leader to come forward with the altruism, the wisdom and the energy to motivate us all. The country is waiting for such a leader.

THE TITANIC

We are all a little tired of the Titanic. All the newspapers, radio, TV and magazine coverage. And the films, documentaries and books. One book is worth reading. It is called *The Sinking of the Titanic—The Mystery Solved* by Captain L. Marmaduke Collins. I had not realised there was any mystery, except the secrecy surrounding the British Admiralty altering the construction plans of the watertight bulkheads. Captain Collins, a very experienced shipmaster who worked on cargo and passenger ships and then thirty-five years

with the Ice Pilotage Service, shows in his book that there was no iceberg and that what the Titanic hit was a field of pack ice which was seen but ignored ten minutes before the impact. The two lookouts in the Crow's Nest saw the ice but they had no previous experience of ice at sea and they thought it was "haze". It was shown that haze was impossible in the weather conditions that night. Visibility was good—the lookouts said—and it was only when the ship's lights fell on the pack ice that an optical illusion, well known to ice pilots, appeared to show the ice getting higher in front of the ship and then, too late, the lookouts reported "iceberg ahead" to the bridge of the ship.

Incredibly, not only had the two lookouts no experience of navigating in ice, the Captain has no such experience either. Nor had the any of the officers on board. The three officers on duty at 11.30 pm that evening were all Master Mariners: they and Captain Smith did not survive the sinking. There were 2,208 people on board

and room in the 20 lifeboats for only 1,178 people. The British Board of Trade regulations did not provide for more lifeboats and did not provide for lifeboat drills. Only 652 people were loaded onto the lifeboats. The tragedy could have been much worse if the ship had been fully loaded. It was designed and licensed to carry 2,603 passengers and 944 crew, a total of 3,547 people. If the full licensed number of people had been on board the number of people lost would have been about 2,885. The ship was constructed by Harland & Wolff under supervision of the British Board of Trade. The London Enquiry into the sinking was conducted by The Wreck Commissioners Court assisted by the Attorney General. The report shows that the witnesses were asked "leading questions" throughout. The American Senate Hearings on the other hand were a marvel of fact finding and straight talk. If possible, get a copy of the book if only to see the difference between the British and American Enquiries.

Micheal Stack ©

RAF Volunteer continued

As Duggan elaborated:

"Churchill... had no time at all for de Valera. He concurred with the RAF plan to drench Ireland with poison-gas if the Germans invaded there. The British chiefs of staff were assuming that Germany would use gas bombs and chemical weapons in 'Sealion' (the blueprint for an invasion of Britain—MOR) and that they would have to reply in kind. A requirement was outlined, in the event of the Germans setting up a bridgehead in Ireland, of spraying their landing sites and axes of advance with poison gases, including mustard gas which would have caused incapacitating blistering of the lungs and respiratory tract. There was also a phosgene gas which would kill by choking. It would not separate Irish from German, and no thought seems to have been given as to the possible effects on the Irish civilian population, north or south. This could hardly have been termed assistance to repel the German invasion. A bomber squadron at Feltwell in Suffolk was equipped with gas spray containers for the contingency. Bases... were also alerted that ... should it be necessary to employ gas against an enemy force invading Éire, this work would be undertaken by bomber squadrons based in England. There was no indication that it would be necessary for the Germans to make the first move with chemical weapons before Britain would resort to these counter measures." (pp136-7).

A truly Orwellian scenario and horror story, for Orwell was also a Churchillian imperialist warmonger. As Sean O'Casey's biographer, Christopher Murray, put it in a letter to the *Irish Times* on 8th July 2003:

"Toby Joyce has the wrong end of the

stick in his comments on O'Casey and Orwell (July 2nd). O'Casey's 'waspy response' to Orwell's review of *Drums Under The Windows* was actually refused publication by the *Observer*, so it cannot have been a factor in Orwell's naming O'Casey on his list of 'crypto-Communists, fellow-travellers or inclined that way' sent to the Information Research Department of the Foreign Office in 1949. On the contrary, Orwell's review of O'Casey's book reveals his unacceptable attitude towards the Irish. What Orwell said was: 'It is not surprising that there should be Irishmen whose life-work is abusing England: what does call for remark is that they should be able to look to the English public for support and in some cases should even, like Mr O'Casey himself, prefer to live in the country which is the object of their hatred ... This book contains literally no reference to England which is not hostile or contemptuous.' The logic of this view is that the Irish living in England should keep their mouths shut. In 1945, when the review was published, the war was just over and a lot of English people, Orwell among them, still resented the Irish policy of neutrality. In February 1941 Orwell noted in his diary: 'The spectacle of our allowing a sham-independent country like Ireland to defy us simply makes all Europe laugh at us.' Thus a review of the kind handed out to O'Casey did not come out of the blue. All the brouhaha at present to elevate Orwell to some kind of sainthood ought not to blind us to his little-Englandism and his prejudice against the Irish."

As I've already said, I have no doubt whatsoever how the Cork RAF volunteer Kevin Neville would have responded to any RAF war crime against Ireland. He would have opened fire on any fellow RAF pilot about to embark on such a

continued on page 26

GUILDS continued

above rather than under 2,000,000 acres.

The mere change of ownership was little compared with the result to the poorer tenants of the estates, for the royal policy in parcelling the confiscated lands among his needy courtiers was to create a monopoly in land. As the new possessors had frequently paid large sums for their grants, their own interest prompted them to make the most of their purchases, which they did by raising the rents paid by the farmers and encroaching upon what had hitherto been regarded as common rights.

CUSTOM

The old monastic and religious corporations were easy landlords. Not being subject to demise, such bodies, continuing to dwell in the midst of their tenants, dealt with them according to immemorial custom. It is custom, as John Stuart Mill points out, especially in regard to rent, which "*is the most powerful protector of the weak against the strong, their sole protector where there are no laws or government adequate to the purpose*". In the change of ownership effected during the Reformation of the 16th century no respect whatsoever was paid to custom. That barrier "*which even in the most oppressed condition of mankind*", in the opinion of the philosopher, "*tyranny is forced in some degree to respect*" was thrown out the window, and the weak were left in the power of the strong.

Both in England and Germany the Protestant Reformation inflicted great injury on the Guilds, and through them upon the whole labouring class. There was no legislation during this period that was of any marked benefit to the labourer.

In France and Germany laws were passed restricting the activities of the Guilds. In England the *Statute of Labourers*, which had been re-enacted and amended at least ten times in the course of two centuries, was supplanted in 1563 by the famous statute of Elizabeth. It embrac-

ed all the most stringent provisions of the preceding laws with some clauses that were intended for the protection of the worker. But its principal fault lay in the stipulation that wages should be fixed and the law administered by the Justices of the Peace. The latter generally were keenly interested in keeping wages down, and in exploiting the labourer. So thoroughly did they enforce the law for their own benefit that by the beginning of the eighteenth century they had made low wages, famine wages; traditional, and these wages insufficient by themselves, were supplemented from the poor rate (Thorold Rogers, *The Economic Interpretation Of History*, T. Fisher Unwin, 1909).

This reference to the poor rate calls to mind the Elizabethan Poor Law, which had been rendered necessary through the confiscation of the Guild and monastic lands, and the destruction of the monastic system of poor relief.

The modern industrial era, the factory system, the age of machine production, began, properly speaking, with the industrial revolution. The latter phrase describes that series of changes which was effected by several notable inventions, chiefly the steam-engine, spinning machinery, and the power-loom, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Among their most important immediate results were: the grouping of workmen into factories where they tended machines instead of working in their homes with the old and simple tools; the ownership of the factories and machinery by capitalist employers, instead of by the labourers themselves; a great increase in the dependence of the labourer upon the employer; and congestion of the working population in the cities which grew up close to the factories and commercial establishments. The wage-earner was truly born.

"ENGLISH WAGE SLAVERY"

Simultaneously with the revolution in industrial processes and relations, there occurred a revolution, as thorough if not as sudden, in economic theory and legislation. The teaching of the physiocrats

and the eighteenth-century political writers in France, the economic-political theories of Smith and Ricardo in England, and the self-interest of the English capitalists, all combined to inaugurate a regime of complete freedom of contract, complete freedom of competition, and almost complete non-intervention of Government in industry. The old legislation fixing wages, and requiring a seven-years' period of apprenticeship, was abolished in 1813 and 1814, and nothing was substituted for the protection of the labourer. While every law that in any way restricted the freedom of the employer or regulated the conditions of employment was abolished, the old *Combination Acts*, which made labour organizations criminal, were re-enacted in 1799. This act prohibited even the contribution of money in furtherance of a strike. In fact, the prevailing theory of industrial liberty seemed to require that the individual employer should always deal with the individual worker, and to assume that this would be for the best interests of all. Undoubtedly, many of the old regulations, such as the law of apprenticeship, had outlived their usefulness and ought to have been repealed, but some of them were still valuable or could have been made so by amendment. What was needed was new and appropriate regulation, not the absence of all regulation. As a result of the policy of non-intervention, the working classes of England experienced during the first half of the nineteenth century a depth of misery and degradation which has obtained the name of "*English wage slavery*".

* Bishop William Morley Stubbs (1825-1901) was a scholar of history and a former Church of England Bishop of Chester (1884) and Bishop of Oxford 1889.

NOTE: For an in-depth study of this period see "*Catholic Wealth and the Making of Protestant Imperial England*" by Eamon Dyas in *Church & State*, *An Irish History Magazine*, No. 103 to 108.

See also the magazine "*Problems*", Spring/Summer 2011, *William Cobbett's Rural War*. Introduction by Joe Keenan.

RAF Volunteer continued

chemical warfare attack. A Communist, he was both an anti-fascist and an anti-Imperialist. Before his premature death at the age of 43, Kevin Neville related to my mother how he had been wounded in the same military engagement during which his Derry-born comrade-in-arms had been killed in action. Decorated for his valour in serving with the British Army against the German forces in Italy, the Derryman

not only became an anti-fascist, but also a committed socialist, according to another participant in the engagement in which he was to meet his death. A pedant might ask: But was he a Marxist, a 'scientific' socialist? The fact is that Connie Green returned to his native Derry to find that his own family, along with the rest of that City's Catholic majority, was still being subjected to oppression and humiliation at the hands of that City's minority Orange junta. 'Scientific' or not, he concluded that this

situation was more akin to the Fascism he was told he had been fighting against than the Democracy he was supposed to have been fighting for. Connie Green was killed in action in the opening shots of the Border Campaign—the Saor Uladh attack on Roslea RUC barracks on 26th November 1955—in which action his comrade-in-arms and O/C of Saor Uladh's Southern Command, Kevin Neville, was wounded.

(to be continued)

Manus O'Riordan

GUILDS continued

realm" (William Morley Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*).*

It is obvious that the various measures which formed integral portions of the great scheme of the Reformation, although not ostensibly aimed at breaking up the essential unity of a Christian kingdom governed on Catholic principles, in reality had that effect.

The dissolution of the monastic houses, the confiscations of the property of the Guilds, Hospitals and Alms-Houses, and even the introduction of a married clergy, were all calculated to injure the poor and deprive them of their inheritance, or what by immemorial custom they had come to regard as such. In particular the possessions of the monastic houses are popularly understood to be, as an old writer expresses it, "*oblations to the Lord*" and "*the patrimony of the poor, to be bestowed accordingly*". In them the monks "*made such provision daily for the people that stood in need thereof, as sick, sore, lame, or otherwise impotent, that none or very few lacked relief in one place or another*". And, although it may be questioned whether the time-honoured methods of dealing with poverty would have stood the test of greatly increased demands, still it is a matter of history the dissolution of the monastic houses did in fact immediately produce overwhelming poverty and distress, which at once necessitated legislation as novel as it was harsh, and further, that the condition of pauperism, as distinguished from that of poverty, may certainly be traced for its origin to that event.

CONFISCATING MONASTERIES

That it could not fail to impoverish a large portion of the people must be obvious to anyone acquainted with the circumstances of the case; and whatever view may be taken as to the utility of monastic observances or of the advisability of the extensive charities distributed by the religious houses, it is obvious that no benefit to the poorer part of the population of the country could possibly result from stopping the flow of charity altogether, by confiscating the revenues of the monasteries and dividing them among the favourites of the Crown, or lightening the burdens of the rich by applying them to the relief of general taxation. The old writer before quoted, speaking at the close of the sixteenth century, when the results of the policy of destruction were manifest, points

out how by means of property filched from the poor, the rich had mounted to place and power, whilst the former, deprived of their protectors and inheritance, had sunk deeper into the hopeless slough of pauperism. The suppressions "*made of yeomen and artificers gentlemen, and of gentlemen knights, and so forth upward, and of the poorest sort stark beggars*".

A still more glaring and, if possible, more unjustifiable instance of the way in which during the period of religious changes in England no respect was paid to the rights of the poor may be seen in the confiscation of the property of the Guilds, contemplated under Henry VIII and carried into effect in the first days of Edward VI. Whatever may have been the special objects to promote which those voluntary societies were founded, whether for trade, social or religious purposes, they all made the performance of the Christian duty of charity to the poor a necessary part of their regular work.

"In the frith-guild of London", writes Bishop Stubbs, "the remains of the feasts were dealt to the needy for the love of God; the maintenance of the poorer members of the craft was, as in the friendly societies of our own time, one main object in the institution of the craft guilds; and even those later religious guilds, in which the chief object seems at first sight, as in much of the charitable machinery of the present day, to have been the acting of mysteries and the exhibition of pageants, were organised for the relief of distress as well as for conjoint and mutual prayer. It was with this idea that men gave large estates in land to the guilds, which down to the Reformation formed an organised administration of relief."

Bishop Stubbs then goes on to declare that—

"the confiscation of the guild property, together with that of the hospitals, was one of the great wrongs which were perpetrated under Edward VI, and, whatever may have been the results of the stoppage of monastic charity, was one unquestionable cause of the growth of town pauperism" (Stubbs, *ibid*).

Whilst fully allowing that by the seizure of the property of the Guilds a grave injustice was perpetrated on those for whom the charities disbursed by them were intended, few writers have yet realised how deliberate that act of injustice really was. It is often stated that the charitable funds were not to be distinguished from the revenues appropriated for religious rites for masses for the dead, etc. which were, on the assured ascendancy of the Protestant principles of the Reform-

ation, declared to be superstitious practices; and unfortunately, whilst confiscating the property intended for the support of ceremonies now declared to be illegal, the state unwittingly swept into the public coffers that intended for the poor. However gladly one would believe this to have been the actual state of the case, original documents in the Record Office prove that the plunder of the poor by those in power was a deliberate and premeditated act. In many instances the report of the Commissioners sent to inquire into the possessions of the Guilds show that they fully noted and proposed to exempt from confiscation all portions of the corporate property of any Guild charged with payment in behalf of the poor. In every instance where such a proposal was made, the Crown official through whose hands the report has passed has drawn his pen through this humane recommendation, and intimated that the crown, not recognising any such right on the part of the poor, would take possession of the entire property.

Lujo Brentano (1844-1931), the German economist and social reformer who challenged both Marx and Weber, was the first to investigate the question of the origins of the Guilds thoroughly, associating these facts with the importance of family relationship among Teutonic nations, considers that the Guild in its earliest form was developed from the family, and that the spirit of association, being congenial to Christianity, was so fostered by the Church that the institution and development of the Guilds progressed rapidly.

From the Reformation until the industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, the history of labour for the most part records a decline from the conditions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The confiscation of the monastic and Guild lands in England under Henry VIII and Edward VI, the eviction of large numbers of the tenants from their holdings, the enclosures of these lands and a large part of the common lands into great estates, and the substitution of competitive for customary rents, caused immense hardships to the agricultural population.

The dissolution of the monasteries and the confiscation of the property of the chantries and Guilds resulted in the transfer of a large amount of land into the hands of the new proprietors. Possibly the extent of territory which thus changed hands was

continued on page 26



"My grandfather was a staunch member of the the Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers Trade Union and my uncle, Paddy, was the Chairman of the Cork branch. I was always steeped in it and masonry was always very prominent in the house. One of my uncles has six sons who are all stonemasons but my own sons Colin and Mark didn't show an interest in it.

"When I was younger and I went to work on a building site, it would have been all families, with four or five sons on the site doing different jobs. It's an area that just wasn't open to you unless your grandfather or father had been in it before you. I went with my father and stuck with it and never regretted it... My father never treated his work as a commodity and has rubbed off on me...

It's always down to the back pocket, unfortunately, and money seems to do the talking now... I am a descendant of one of the main Cork stonemasonry families, but the times of the Stonemasons' guild are dead and buried. I'd like if interest in the trade picked up and the old values could be brought back in."

(Joe O'Sullivan, Stonemason, *Evening Echo*, Cork, 8.3.2012).

The Protestant Reformation and the Guilds

When William Cobbett began writing *The Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* in 1824, proposals for Catholic emancipation were much in discussion, and it was in "*the heat of the contest and cry against the Catholics*" that Cobbett boldly stepped forth and called the Reformation "*a devastation*", and proclaimed "*the Protestant religion to have been established by gibbets, racks, and ripping knives*".

The genius of Cobbett instinctively realised that the religious changes in England in the sixteenth century, if not actually promoted by those in power for their own purposes, had certainly resulted in benefiting the rich to the detriment of their poorer brethren. In fact, wholly apart from the religious side of the question, or from advantages which may be thought to have been secured by the triumph of Protestantism, the price paid for the change by the lower classes must in fairness be estimated as very considerable. Viewed merely in its social aspect, the English Reformation was in reality the rising of the rich against the poor. In the general upheaval which accompanied the labours of the Reformers to root up Catholicism from the soil of England, most of those in place and power were enabled to grow greater in wealth and position, while those who had before but a small share in the good things of this world came in the

process to have less.

Their condition under the new order was visibly harder, till as a natural result of their misery there came forth many of the social sores which afflict society to the present day. What Cobbett's *History Of The Protestant Reformation* chiefly displays, then, is this aspect of the religious changes in the sixteenth century. His pages help us to realise the fact that the Reformation effected, besides a change in religious beliefs and practices, a wide and permanent division in the great body politic. The supposed purification of doctrine and practice was brought about only at the

cost of, as it were, driving a wedge well into the heart of the nation, which at once and for all divided the rich from the poor, and established the distinction which still exists between the classes and the masses.

"CLASS AND CLASS"

Speaking of the condition of the poor in the middle ages, Bishop Stubbs declares that—

"there is very little evidence to show that our forefathers, in the middle ranks of life, desired to set any impassable boundary between class and class. The great barons would probably at any period have shown disinclination to admit new men on terms of equality to their own order; but this disinclination was overborne by the royal policy of promoting useful servants, and the country knight was always regarded as a member of the noble class, and his position was continually strengthened by intermarriage with the baronage. The city magnate again formed a link between the country squire, and the tradesman and the yeoman were in position and in blood close akin. Even the villein {a peasant bound to his lord} might by learning a craft set his foot on the ladder of promotion; but the most certain way to rise was furnished by education, and by the law of the land 'every man or woman, of what state or condition that he be, shall be free to set their son or daughter to take learning at any school that pleaseth them within the

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