

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

September 2012

Vol.27, No.9 ISSN 0790-7672

and **Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.26 No.9 ISSN 954-5891

## Northern Ireland

### Proconsul Politics

In Northern Ireland the Government is under attack from the State. The State says it wants normal democratic politics. The governing system is in breach of the first rule of democracy, which is that the majority rules.

The representative of the State is the Secretary of State, Owen Paterson, a strongly nationalistic, or Imperialistic, English Tory.

In England nationalism and Imperialism have been the same thing for hundreds of years. When England asserted an absolute nationalism for itself it was not in support of a general principle of nationalism, which it recognised as applying to others too. Its declaration of absolute national independence, made in the course of the political event known as the English Reformation, took the form of an assertion that England was an Empire. Being an Empire meant, for it, that it was subject to no authority but its own will, and that it had the right to do as it pleased with others, subject only to the limits of its power.

The development of the European Union posed the most serious danger to this absolute independence that there has ever been. Its unexpected success threatened to end the policy of playing European States against each other. It was unable to break up the Union from the outside. That was work that could only be done from within. It eventually succeeded in becoming a member, and it has been outstandingly effective in weakening the Union by random expansion, globalist megalomania, and 'corruption' complaints against the Christian Democracy that founded the Union and made it functional for a generation.

But, when it seemed that the Union was in ruins, its core counties got themselves together for an effort to make the Euro currency functional by means of which England disapproved. On other issues in the past England has been granted 'exemption' from measures which it did not see being in its interest. The most substantial of these was exemption from the currency—an utterly stupid concession which built financial antagonism into the EU. The crisis which this led to stimulated the Eurozone to adopt fiscal measures to keep the currency viable. This was not in the English interest, but neither was it in the English interest to be granted an exemption. Consolidation of the Eurozone would necessarily be disadvantageous to England.

Since the Eurozone countries were determined to try to save the currency, it was in the English interest that this should be done within the structures of the EU, where it could continue its well-rehearsed role of being helpfully obstructive. But, instead of doing that, the Prime Minister vetoed the use of the EU structures in the effort to save the currency—with the result that the other twenty-six countries decided to go ahead without England, and outside the EU structure.

It is said that it was under ultimatum from Owen Paterson that Cameron exercised his veto, and isolated himself.

This is a gamble on the Eurozone failing quickly without English help, and on English power in the world being greatly enhanced as a result.

Having turned his attention from geopolitics to the backyard of Northern Ireland, Patterson was naturally horrified. Things were ticking over nicely under the agreement made between Sinn Fein and the DUP and it was horrible. It was a morass of appeasement. It was a travesty of all that England stood for, and it was happening at home.

*continued on page 2*

### Feeding The Sectarian Thesis

Martin Mansergh did a review of *Terror In Ireland 1916-1923*, edited by David Fitzpatrick, in the *Sunday Times* on 5th August. He says:

"The Irish revolution was not primarily directed against southern Protestants. In many places they were left alone or even protected by the IRA but in other places they suffered intimidation and occasionally worse, sometimes as a result of their own imprudent actions but more often not."

And then says:

"History is written by the victors, and fine distinctions between Protestant, unionist, loyalist, freemason, Orangeman, spy and informer that might be used to justify removing people from the community looked rather different to the rapidly thinning pews of a Church of Ireland congregation."

A minimum of logic would be useful here. If the revolution was not directed against Protestants and, if clear distinctions were made according to their differing political responses to the revolution, why did it lead to their "*thinning pews*"? And, if distinctions were made between the different attitudes taken up by Protestants, who exactly lumped all these categories of people into one undifferentiated mass? (These are said to be "*Imprudent actions*"—what a darling word, as Sean O Casey would say).

Successful wars need clear aims and methods and the Irish War of Independence, which followed the republican victory in the 1918 Election, could simply not have been successful if it was led by people with such a scattergun approach to a whole community. Such an approach was not taken at the time and I have not read any standard 'history of the victors' that did not acknowledge that such distinctions were made, i.e., these histories did not sectarianise the war.

*continued on page 7*

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Northern Ireland: Proconsul Politics.</b> Editorial	1
<b>Feeding The Sectarian Thesis.</b> Jack Lane	1
<b>Editorial Digest.</b> (Normal Politics?; SF & Prisoners; Challenges to SF; BICO)	4
<b>Bill Sharkey.</b> Keith Sharkey (Report of Appreciation)	6
<b>Dunmanway: Some New Information.</b> Barry Keane (Press Release)	8
<b>Shorts</b> from <i>the Long Fellow</i> (Battle Station; Bill O'Herlihy; Charles Haughey; Journalistic Independence; Olympic Games; All That Glitters; London 2012; Olympics & Politics)	9
<b>The Fiscal Treaty.</b> John Martin (Reply to Eamon Dyas)	10
<b>Friends Of The RIC?</b> Tom Cooper (Letter)	10
<b>On Certain Immutable Economic Laws.</b> Joe Keenan (Reply to August Editorial on the Economic Crisis)	11
<b>The Road To Recovery Is Through A New Social Compact.</b> John Martin and Philip O'Connor (Reply to Joe Keenan)	13
<b>How To Make Enemies And Appal People.</b> Wilson John Haire (Poem)	16
<b>Es Ahora.</b> Julianne Herlihy (Phoenix Park Concert; Diplomatic Errors; Marriage Foundation UK; The Academics; Abuse Memorial)	17
<b>Views Of Sinn Fein.</b> Pat Walsh (Reply to Stephen Richards)	19
<b>Items From The Irish Bulletin.</b> 10th August 1920 (Part 14)	21
<b>Biteback: Orange-Green Common Ground.</b> Roy Johnston (Unpublished Letter)	21
<b>Does It Stack Up?</b> Michael Stack (Public Service Ethic; Pensions; TDs' Liabilities)	22

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

Guilds And Communes

Mondragon, Part 11 (back page)

Trade Union Notes (Page 26)

Obituary, Cork Employment Resource Centre, 1988-2012

John Holford (Page 23)

Due to pressure of space, a number of articles have been held over, including  
**An Irish Anti-Fascist RAF Volunteer** by **Manus O'Riordan**, *Part 3*

'Political scientists' and historians have been churning out books to order for the past thirty years about "*the Northern Ireland state*". Paul Bew was one of the first—the Official IRA man who was adviser to Trimble's Unionists and is now in the House of Lords. He was followed by Professor Fitzpatrick of Trinity and Professor Keogh of Cork. The latest contributor is Brian Walker of the Institute of Irish Studies in Belfast.

The notion that Northern Ireland is a state was encouraged by Whitehall. If it wasn't, all these Professors would not be expounding it. It serves a propaganda purpose, but is not intended to be taken in earnest.

A short while ago Martin McGuinness put it to the test. He suggested that there was no longer any need for a Secretary of State in Northern Ireland. Things were working out fine.

And, indeed, if Northern Ireland was a state, and if it had a Government that was ticking over peacefully, what sense was there in having it under the supervising

authority of the Secretary of State from another state? It was anomalous. And there was nothing for this person to do.

Patterson responded promptly. He had many things to do as Secretary of the State. One of the things he did was order the internment of Marion Price. She had been jailed for the 1973 Old Bailey Bombing and released in 1980, suffering from ill-health following a hunger strike and prolonged force-feeding. A spurious charge was trumped up against her in 2011. When the Judge eventually ordered her release on bail, she was immediately re-arrested on foot of this forty-year-old conviction from the 1970s. She claims that her re-imprisonment was unlawful, as she was released from prison by Pardon, that is released with no strings, but Owen Paterson claims that she was released on licence—which would entitle the authorities to re-imprison her. Significantly, the Crown claims to have lost the document which sets out the terms of her 1980 release.

Not only was Price imprisoned, the Historical Enquiries Team is pursuing

other Republicans for ancient crimes, and Gerry Adams is thought to be the ultimate target in the Boston College sub-poenas. There have also been some Republicans who were released under the Good Friday Agreement who have been re-imprisoned for allegedly breaching the terms of their release. The Secretary of State said, in effect, that the mass release of prisoners under the GFA was not an amnesty. Prisoners were only released on licence.

Marion Price did not support the GFA. Or it might be that she did not support the Provos taking the Agreement in hand and making it work when the SDLP and the Official Unionist Party (advised by Lord Bew and Eoghan Harris of the Official IRA) were making a haimes of it. She became a leader of the Irish Sovereignty Movement. Paterson's position is that she broke the terms of her licence by demonstrating against the Provos. Her Internment, allegedly to discourage republican dissident activity, in fact is intended to show that the Secretary of State has power, power which is denied to the elected Executive.

He is intent on de-stabilising the Provisional Republicans.

Marion Price's health has deteriorated sharply during her lengthy confinement. There is an escalating campaign for her release in which *Concerned Clergy*, led by Fr. Joe McVeigh, are to the fore. With emotions on the rise, this impacts on the Republicans and increases dissatisfaction with the apparently quiescent attitude of the Provo leadership. The Gerry Adams strategy is to woo Protestants into a United Ireland, while building a base in the South. This is a tricky position to maintain without splitting the Republican base and demoralising supporters. The Paterson *Securocrat* strategy of embarrassing the Provos with arrests of republicans is directed towards dividing and ruling. To use a parallel from 1922: the modern de Valera and Collins share the leadership of the Republican movement. Having failed to win in war, the British are still intent on inflicting a defeat on Republicanism by splitting it.

Perhaps the most remarkable achievement of the Provos was to hold the Republican movement together, except for a small fringe, as they negotiated the Agreement and carried it through. They said at the outset that their great concern was to prevent a repetition in the North of what happened in the South in 1922. And they succeeded.

They did not dwell on the detail of what happened in the South, and were wise not to do so.

**COLLINS: THE EXAMPLE NOT TO BE FOLLOWED**  
Michael Collins, as a member of the

team of the Sinn Fein Government which was sent to London to negotiate on its behalf—that is, to see what the British Government was prepared to concede and to bring the offer back to his Government for consideration—decided to take matters into his own hands. He struck a deal with the British Government without the agreement of his own Government (which Britain did not recognise). He browbeat the other members of the negotiating team into putting their names to his deal. The first the Sinn Fein Government heard of the deal (which was called a Treaty, but wasn't) was in the British newspapers the following day.

Collins apparently relied on his charisma as the Strong Man and his secret network, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, to impose his will on the Army. The Dail supported him by a small minority, on the understanding that if it did not do so Britain would launch a war of re-conquest with all the resources of the Empire. But he failed to carry the Army with him. The Republican movement had outgrown the conspiratorial structure which had been necessary to its survival before 1916. A great part of the Army did not recognise the sovereignty of the IRB, or the legitimacy of a narrow Dail majority achieved by the threat of the kind of terror which Britain had successfully used against the Boers twenty years earlier.

Collins did not dare to call an Army Convention to support him. He was reduced to trying to break up the Army by individual approach to various elements of it, while he built up a paid Army with British support. Whatever scheme he had in mind at the outset, he became increasingly less capable of implementing it, as he became ever more dependent on British support. Eventually Whitehall gave him orders to make war on the Republican Army with the professionals which Britain supplied—or which he certainly would not have had but for active British support—or else the British Army proper (which had not left the country eight months after the signing of the 'Treaty') would go into action again.

That is the horror story which the Provo leaders were insistent would not be repeated in the North. They bound the movement into the deal they made by means of extensive discussion at every stage.

After Collins split Sinn Fein and the IRA by his arbitrary action, and became increasingly dependent on active British support, political elements which had been hostile to him before he made the 'Treaty' rallied around him. These elements were

not numerous but they were wealthy, and wealth always generates a degree of influence. Hard-line Redmondite, who had kept their distance from Sinn Fein in 1919-21, and the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, a very political publication representing the large residue of wealth that still remained from the monopoly times of the Protestant Ascendancy, became 'patriotic' Treatyites. There began to be a personality cult of Collins in circles that were against all that he had once stood for. This appears to have had an influence on him, so that he no longer knew where he stood.

If, in August 1922, he thought he was still on track to carry through whatever it was that he set out to do when he took matters into his own hands in November-December 1921, it was obvious that it all depended on himself as the power-centre of Treatyism. The wild foray into West Cork that he embarked on at that juncture suggests he had lost his bearings completely and no longer knew what he was doing.

The Provos, too, found themselves being supported after they made their deal by people who had not supported them before it. But they did not lose their core Republican support while gaining the support of the 'constitutional nationalists'.

The Constitutional Nationalists, the SDLP, said at the outset that the Good Friday Agreement was "*Sunningdale for slow learners*"—meaning that Sinn Fein had finally come to see that what the SDLP had got in 1974 was adequate, and that it was Sinn Fein that prevented it from being achieved in 1974. And this has now become the refrain of the Fianna Fail leader. But the Good Friday Agreement is different in kind from the Sunningdale Agreement—and it was not Sinn Fein that undermined Sunningdale—it was the chicanery of the Dublin Government, the intransigence of the SDLP over the Council of Ireland in the light of that chicanery, the consequent General Strike organised by Protestant shop-stewards (in those days before de-industrialisation), and the capriciousness of a Labour Secretary of State who didn't know whether he was coming or going.

(Fionnuala O'Connor, a People's Democracy revolutionary who, like so many, made a career in the bourgeois press—in the imperialist press, the *Irish Times*, in the first instance—has recently written of Bloody Friday as the greatest atrocity of the War. It's strange how they all manage to forget the co-ordinated Dublin-Monaghan Bombing, which there is now

no substantial doubt was organised by the British security forces using Loyalists. That was the outstanding terrorist act of the War. and it was done in May 1974 in the middle of the Strike—the "*Constitutional Stoppage*"—against the Council of Ireland dimension of the Sunningdale Agreement.)

The SDLP—the fast learners—had the framework for Constitutional Nationalist action laid on for it by the Good Friday Agreement. But it withered under the GFA because it did not know how to act. Protest was its *metier*. And, because the opportunity for Constitutional nationalist action was not brought about by its own efforts, but was gifted to it by the unconstitutional action of the Provos, it was unable to avail of the opportunity. It was displaced in the sphere of constitutional action by the unconstitutional force which had created the opportunity. And there is nothing strange or paradoxical in that.

The physical force party has become the effective Constitutional party under the equalising arrangement it brought about. And that makes the Secretary of State unhappy. He yearns for normal democratic politics, which the GFA certainly does not provide for.

It would be Owen Paterson's dearest wish to achieve the wreck of the GFA and its replacement by a Sunningdale-type majority-rule Government. Even a weighted majority-rule administration is majority rule. Restoration of Assembly authority over the Government would be in the logic of a system of weight-majority role government. And in the Assembly the simple majority would try to reassert itself.

Democracy needs Opposition. But the GFA includes everybody above a certain low minimum in the Government.

The SDLP under Margaret Ritchie flirted with the notion of becoming virtually Unionist, forming an alliance with the Official Unionists on the other side, and constituting an Opposition to the DUP and Sinn Fein. But that is against the GFA. Ritchie therefore hinted at ditching the GFA and reverting to majority rule. But it was Ritchie herself that was ditched. There is no way that the Catholic minority is going down that road.

Of course there is a kind of Opposition to the GFA. And Marion Price is part of it. And she gets herself interned because of that.

Condemnation of Provos for operating the GFA has a tendency to gravitate towards support for the 'Dissident' Republican fringe, which condemns the Provos

for calling off the War too soon—even when the denouncer is on the opposite extreme to the Dissidents.

The Fianna Fail leader, Micheál Martin, even buys into the whole revisionist condemnation of the War of Independence (1919-21), a war which was found necessary for the establishment of the state of which he hopes to become Taoiseach, after the British resorted to force to override the 1918 Election. But, when he wants to condemn the Provos, he relies on the Dissident Republican rejection of the GFA. At the same time he rakes up particular atrocities of the Northern War in order to discredit the Provos. And it is a reasonable expectation that, if the Provos were undermined by Martin's denunciation, the War would resume. Fortunately, Martin's influence is negligible.

The action of the Secretary of State has another purpose. He is on record as desiring "normal politics" in Northern Ireland—he wants there to be an Opposition.

His interning of Marion Price, if it has any coherent purpose, can only have the purpose of strengthening the Dissidents by demonstrating that British State power in the North is undiluted.

And Patterson's demand for a return to normal politics means effectively the adoption of a system of weighted majority rule, supervised by the Secretary of State.

To 'return' to the normal politics—the politics normal for the state—one has to go back past the 1885 Election, when the British parties contested Elections in the North-East, although they had been ousted in the rest of the country by Daniel O'Connell, George Moore, and Isaac Butt. In 1921, when the country was Partitioned, normal politics might have resumed in the Six Counties, but the parties of the state decided instead to exclude Northern Ireland from the party-politics of the state. The normality of Unionist majority rule, 1921-1972, is something that not even Patterson thinks can be returned to. What he wants is something like the Sunningdale system, with the Secretary of State forming Governments representing something more than fifty per cent of the electorate, and supervising their conduct. And that would also seem to require that the Parliament should have some authority over the Government, which at present the Assembly has not got.

The *Irish News*—which is now the only self-confidently Irish daily newspaper—sometimes makes a gesture in support for 'normal politics'. But we imagine it would back away quickly from any definite

move to restore majority rule. And, in any case, given the situation as it has developed since 1998, it is not easy to see how there could be a weighted majority without Sinn Fein.

**PS.** The only Southern politician who has expressed concern about the destabilising influence, on the working arrangements in the North, of the internment of Marion Price, is Eamon Ó Cuív. His leader, Micheál Martin, doesn't know what day it is. Foreign Minister Eamon Gilmore remains locked into his Stickie feud with the Provos at home, while he gallivants around the world getting ready to cheer on the USA and Britain if they try to do to Syria and/or Iran what they did to Iraq. And Alan Shatter, the Minister for Justice, is too busy establishing a right of desertion in the Army to bother his head about justice in the North.

## Editorial Digest

**Normal Politics?** NI Secretary Owen Paterson told the Institute of International and European Affairs (Dublin) of a Consultation Paper he would be publishing, which would raise the size of the Assembly, the length of terms, and an end to dual mandates, enabling MLAs to also be Westminster MPs. "We will also be asking whether it is desirable in principle for the institutions to move to a more normal system of government and opposition and, if so, how this might be achieved" (IT 20..7.12).

**Sinn Fein** members were picketing the event, and chanted "Shame on you" and "justice for political prisoners" in support of Marion Price and others. SF MLA Raymond McCartney, Vice-Chair of the Stormont Justice Committee, has said: "Owen Paterson's negative interference in the due process is an affront to the justice system in the north..." [IN 12.7.12].

**Jim Gibney**, a Provo from the Short Strand, who has been outspoken in condemning Dissidents, recently wrote an *Irish News* column *Price And Corey Prisoners Of MI5-Spun Web Of Deceit*, in which he said:

"The fingerprints of MI5 are all over the detention of Marian Price and Martin Corey, two former prisoners who served life sentences through the 1970s, eighties and nineties and are continuing to serve life sentences following their forcible return to prison at the direction of the British secretary of state Owen Paterson.

"Ms Price and Mr Corey are at the centre of a power struggle for control over the quality of justice and its dispensation between Britain's intelligence agencies and those inside the north's justice and prison system and the courts

who seek to administer justice based on the facts they see before them and not concocted stories woven in the minds of those inhabiting the murky world of MI5. A carefully planned campaign of intimidation orchestrated by MI5 is directed at David Ford, the north's justice minister, the life sentence parole board inside the prison and the north's judiciary.

"The basis of this intimidation is vacuous testimony secretly sourced and provided by members of the intelligence agencies alleging that Ms Price and Mr Corey are a danger to the public because of their association with dissident republican groupings.

"On Monday [9th July] MI5's interference in the justice process received a temporary and very public setback when Mr Justice Treacy ordered Mr Corey's release on the grounds that there had been a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights and that his detention was unacceptable because it relied on "closed material" and that this was unsafe. Within minutes of Mr Justice Treacy's judgement directing Mr Corey's release Paterson moved to block it...

"At the time of writing Mr Corey is appealing the British secretary of state's attempts to block his release...

"And Paterson is facing additional pressure to release his grip over the north's justice system by the solicitor representing Ms Price... Peter Corrigan...

"There has been concern for quite some time about Ms Price's mental and physical health due to the prolonged period of isolation she has experienced since her arrest in May 2011...

"...The minister for justice in the north's executive, David Ford, has been lobbied to release Ms Price on humanitarian grounds... while Mr Ford is not responsible for detailing Ms Price he has the power to release her...

"But it is not just the treatment of Ms Price in prison which is a travesty of justice, it is also her continued detention.

"On two occasions Ms Price was granted bail and on both occasions Owen Paterson personally intervened to block her release.

"When she was hours away from being released he revoked the pardon she was granted in 1980 and reimposed the life sentence she was given for bombing the Old Bailey in London 1973.

"Her solicitor pursued Paterson to hand over a copy of the pardon which triggered her release in 1981... Conveniently for Paterson, the pardon search ran cold. He claimed it was either lost or shredded..." (IN 12.7.12).

**Challenges To SF.** *Martin Galvin*, writing from New York, referred to the H-Block campaign, when "*republicans repeatedly charged that staying within the British administration made the SDLP accomplices to the crown's H-Block brutality. Was Sinn Fein right? The British believe Sinn Fein is so tightly wedded to its offices that the party will never divorce itself from*

*the regime, no matter what tender mercies the British mete out to republican prisoners...*" [IN letter, 2.7.12].

**Francis Mackey**, on behalf of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, wrote that there has been speculation that—

"the IRA will apologise for their part in the conflict and the war for the independence of Ireland. The reality is Martin McGuinness has in effect already done so when he shook the Queen of England's hand. Indeed the Provisional leadership admitted their war was wrong when they recognised the legitimacy of the British presence here as outlined in the Good Friday Agreement...

"Now we have a clearer sense of Provisional revisionism in trying to rewrite the struggle as one concerned with securing civil rights within a British framework. But an apology is warranted from those who, on the one hand, led an armed campaign while on the other were secretly negotiating away the legitimacy upon which that campaign was founded. The meeting and greeting of the British monarch and the handshake is indeed the public persona of an apology given to those who held and hold the British view during the conflict. But he must also apologise to republicans." (IN letter, 16.7.12.)

**BICO** made a curious appearance in the Letters Columns of the *Irish News*. It was in a letter from Joseph O'Dowd, replying to a letter by **Martin Mansergh** (IN May 16) in which he described traditional Irish nationalism as "*coercive nationalism*" because it "*told unionists that they were Irish... who had to accept the putative will of the nationalist majority... whether they consented or not*". O'Dowd commented that since 1920 nationalists have been coerced to be a minority, and continued:

"When the British and Irish Communist Organisation (BICO) infected the so-called Workers Party who infected RTE and Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour only to happily join the 'two nations' chorus, the word 'irredentism' was used to describe articles two and three... this ignores British irredentism or imperialism..." [5.6.12]

O'Dowd went on to ask "*how will nationalists achieve a united Ireland now*"? and concludes: "*Depressingly sectarian demographics seems to be the only realistic avenue. Unionists are not going to be convinced to become republicans just as nationalists won't become unionists... Still sectarian demographics is better than bombs and bullets.*"

On 16th June, J. O'Hagan replied to O'Dowd wrote opposing coercing people into a republic, adding "*The Workers' Party believes that levels of unemployment, poverty and despair on this island are proof that only system-wide change can bring an end to these social evils*", with "*the unity of Catholic Protestant and Dissenter*".

O'Dowd responded on 25th June:

"J. O'Hagan... misunderstood me... I know that the Workers' Party claims to favour a 32-county republic... I claimed the party had been 'infected by the British and Irish Communist Organisation (BICO). Perhaps 'influenced' would be more acceptable. The evidence of this influence was the change in the party line from the 1970s to the 1980s when the word 'irredentist' was used to describe any claim to reunification other than by consent of unionists for as comrade O'Hagan states "we do not believe anyone can be coerced into a republic". So the party accepted partition de jure as well as de facto. I merely pointed out that the status quo from 1920 onwards hadn't the consent of northern nationalists who were coerced into remaining in this kingdom... for the sake of peace nationalists have accepted partition de facto and accepted that they have to overcome the unionist veto by persuading unionists to become nationalists and so consent to unity. I merely questioned how likely this was even if the word 'nationalist' is replaced with 'socialist' and the republic is described as a 'workers' republic'... I am not myself a nationalist. That is why I wrote that 'depressingly' sectarian demographics are the only likely avenue for nationalists to achieve territorial state unity.

"I am not in the business of deepening lethal sectarian differences... I have no plan for sectarian demographic change. That is the reality we find ourselves in..."

**To Whom It May Concern:** BICO described Articles 2 & 3 of the 26 County Constitution as irredentist because they claimed a right of sovereignty over an area that lay outside the borders of the state. It did so because that claim of sovereignty would have stood in the way of any attempt at *rapprochement* between North and South made by the South. No credible effort of that kind was ever made by Government or Opposition in the South. They condemned the use of force (having flirted with it in 1969-70) while retaining the irredentist Articles, and they never tried to understand what made the Ulster Protestant community tick so that they might engage with it culturally.

The influence of the irredentist claim on the Northern Catholic community was not what prevented them from participating in the democratic politics of the British state, in which they were required to live. The irredentist speech by the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, in mid-August 1969, did exert some influence, but the following year Lynch betrayed those who had been stirred up by that speech when he launched a mischievous prosecution of John Kelly of the Defence Associations. After that, the posturing of Dublin politicians was widely regarded with scepticism.

The Northern Catholics did not participate in the democratic politics of the state in which they lived because those politics were closed against them.

The condition that brought about the War in the North was not the irredentist clauses of the Southern Constitution, but the governing arrangements made by the British State for its Six County region. Those governing arrangements were sectarian *de facto*. And, when the State is sectarian—as the British State in Ireland has been since the Reformation—the subject is under necessity to adapt himself to that fact.

'Irredentism' began to be used critically by some members of the Southern Establishment during the 1970s, but they made no attempt to delete the irredentist Articles of the Constitution.

The Dublin Establishment has during the past decade been promoting active participation in World War I celebrations. That War was Irredentist as well as Imperialist. Britain organised it diplomatically in order to ruin German trade and add the Middle East to its Empire. In order to get the War going, it took advantage of the French Irredentist claim on the Alsace and Lorraine regions of Germany. Then it funded Mussolini in his Irredentist agitation so as to add Austrian territory South of the Alps to the Italian state, in order to bring Italy into the War. And then Britain urged the Greek Government to make an Irredentist claim on the Asia Minor region of Turkey, which had been Greek many centuries previously. When the Greek Government refused, Britain invaded Greece, overthrew the Government, and installed a Government which did its bidding and declared war on Turkey. But, when the Greeks went to claim the Irredenta offered to them by Britain, they suffered a catastrophe at the hands of the Turkish resistance, and were abandoned by the British Empire.

And, of course, the greatest Irredentism of all is that set in motion by Britain in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, and the setting up of the Jewish Agency as a kind of state power in Palestine a couple of years later. The irredentist Jewish claim on Palestine was then recognised by the League of Nations, and confirmed by the United Nations a generation later, two thousand years after the fall of the last Jewish state.

If Irredentism is to be discussed, it is as well to understand how respectable Britain made it in the Great War, which we are now exhorted to regard as *Our War*.

If the Officials picked up the term from BICO, it was not in discussion. There was a profound hostility between the Officials and BICO right from the start, and the Officials were the only military group which threatened to stop the freedom of speech which BICO asserted.

**Look Up the Athol Books  
archive on the Internet  
[www.atholbooks.org](http://www.atholbooks.org)**

Keith Sharkey, Bill's son, posted the following appreciation on the *Irish Times Blog* on 23rd July

## Bill Sharkey *Returning the emigrant after death*

*Bringing my father back to Ireland to be buried brought his emigration journey full circle.*

In emigration there is the preparing, the going, the visiting, sometimes the returning, but always the passing. Death is the final act in the emigration drama and in many ways as poignant as the going. For those that said *"one day maybe I'll get home"*, which emigrants from the 40s onwards probably had some chance of achieving, it means their longing and their sense of belonging to home would forever remain a Will-O-the-Wisp.

For the family there is the decision whether the last act for your father, mother, son or daughter is bringing them home and burying them with their own. It is hard, for home is not all hearth and handshakes for all that left. However in death there is belonging, there is blood, there is ancestry and there is allowing those that understand your place in the world the opportunity to mourn in your townland.

For the deceased there is their wishes. My father left two instructions: throw me in a ditch by the side of the road and bury me standing up looking out to sea from the top of Dunaff. I am not sure which was his last request, but you don't get a really good ditch on the mainland.

It is not that burying or cremating your father in some foreign field is wrong, but there is a sadness about municipal graveyards where the names Byrne or Doherty are nestled in amongst the Smiths, Thwaites and Sutcliffes, names that belong to a different people from a different heritage who sing a different tune. It matters perhaps not to the deceased who will never know, but to those left behind. For some at least there is the irrational sense that the deceased would be lonely. While in life we are not always able to keep our kin close perhaps in death we can be more persuasive.

My dad emigrated to London in the 60s, a married 22-year-old with a wife and me, the baby. I remember him now as a man full of revelations, facts and fictions which he passed as truths. Some probably were, I had trouble separating out what happened from the imagined, the politics from the banter and hyperbole. His head was a cocktail of Celtic Ireland, of 60s London, of spoiled priests, of 50s Bogside Derry, of 40s Donegal, of westerns, of

thousands of books, of supporting America in the war and ambivalence about England, of communism, of Michelin star restaurants.

In work he was a social worker, maths teacher, roofer, managing director of an advertising firm, kitchen porter and poet. In between, there were visits to pubs from Cis Farrants in Leenan to the Spaniards on Hampstead Heath. And on the way? Encounters with Behan, Hughes, Geoffrey Bernard and Robert Kennedy to name but a few, which I mention more as vignettes in a life rather than something he held as matters of any significance beyond the anecdotes they allowed over the dinner table or on the bar stool.

When he died, just before climbing into the ambulance in the heart of Glasgow, a fox walked by. My sister called: *"look dad there's a fox"*. He turned and for a few seconds wasn't dying. I think the cunning fox took him. I hope so, he worried about evil spirits, about what was in the dark, a mixture of his own demons and ghosts that the scapula round his neck kept at bay. For an Irishman the city fox would be the best spirit guide as it possesses the traits that Joyce believed the emigrant needed to survive *"silence, exile and cunning"*.

The journey from Glasgow to Donegal was a long one, nearly two weeks with autopsies and a Christmas backlog. Then the arrangements, the funeral director so pale and hands so soft, all the better to bury you with Mr Sharkey. You knew speaking to him that it was a familiar road, Stranrear to Larne, a well trodden path, the Ayrshire coast, the dark clouds of

February, the slate grey sea, small towns waiting for the better times of summer, the spitting rain.

When you meet your dead father at the boat, you know this is it, the start of the final journey that would reach its crescendo with the wake and then more quietly at the headstone. Each mile was a mile never to be travelled again.

Can you wake someone 10 days dead in an open coffin? The answer is yes and it is remarkable how good they can still look, a testament to the art of funeral directing. He was waked in my mother's house in Derry, my dad's ex-wife.

My dad had lived and worked in Derry in the 70s so besides the friends from his youth, he had the four strands of the Sharkey clan, Derby bar friends, the Carrowmena 4, politicians and poets, 6 priests and 4 spoiled priests, some political enemies, and ex lovers who discreetly entered and exited to avoid distress to the ex wife. Drink was taken, chat was lively, and tears were shed for my father, for other deaths, for loves lost, for lives with regrets. A ton of sandwiches and a gallon of soup, everyone saying how well he looked with his full head of hair and pony tail tucked away (*"I won't cut it till Ireland's free"*).

Would he have liked it? He would have loved it, revelled in the attention, charmed mostly but insulted where he thought appropriate. He would have confided and whispered to his son and daughter and the Maynooth triumvirate about past tales, jokes and slights real and imagined. There might have been more singing, he enjoyed the sound of unaccompanied singers, in Gaelic preferably, keening, that sort of nasal twang was his favourite sound, songs of past generations and love won and lost.

We stood him up to leave the house for the last time, he would not be coming back. Out the door, down the stairs into



the car. Through the Brandywell past Free Derry corner, the Lecky road, out onto the Buncrana road, where dad would have ridden his green Hornet bike escaping the back to backs of the Bogside for the open road and Urris hills. Across the border and past the shell of a once vibrant hotel, a last view of Grianan Fort, the strand at Fahan, Bridie Sharkey's house and onward. Dad liked to go on drives giving the history of names and land ownership. Past his friend Paidric O'Flaherty's pub where music was heard, lock-ins engineered and assaults on Fleadhs planned.

Once out and across the Crana River, the funeral cortège snaking its way passed Slieve Snacht which had a dusting of white on its brown and gold surface. This was the last leg and the weather knew it, from black clouds and heavy rain to clear sharp winter sun, a wind to shift any hairdo, shadows dancing across the mountains. Up and down this road my father had driven in the 70s when we were last a family, each on our own journey. Once he saved a baby's life when the only other car on the road had crashed and the baby been thrown into a stream, he had seen the bundle and investigated, finding the bairn.

And then Clonmany. Not long now, and the lump in your throat is harder to manage. Past Noon's, Comiskey's (the undertakers and pub), the cursed landlord's grave, the halfway house, the Englishman's garden, Tullagh, close to Micky Boyle's and where he lost his shoes (never to be found) on the first day at school, and up to the church.

Once in my youth I remember him putting on a purple bed spread and a Mitre he had made in a sort of Catholic origami fit. Armed with a crosier cut from a piece of Hazelwood, he had paraded round the drive, blessing and cursing the McGonigles and Dunagheys, cackling, while my mother laughed but also worried he would be seen. He was adamant that he would have made a great bishop and it was true that in the short period we lived in Urris in the 70s when we ran away from London. He took great pleasure in taking over the church, reading from the alter with my sister, confining the priest to only reading the words of Jesus while he narrated and read the rest of the gospel. Here he was back once again.

What of the funeral service? Fr Bill is a rare priest, a man who might make you believe. "We can do whatever you want Keith", he told me. James, a dear friend whose life weaved with my father's, another exile returned, and whose own

had been blighted by the murder of his wife, spoke of my father's humanity and friendship. Then I spoke, trying in part to explain why we had brought him here. In Urris chapel he was amongst his own, third and fourth cousins, "Our Tribe" as he called them. His brother's tribute was to read the gospel in Gaelic, probably the first time in this church, where in living memory Fr. Maurice told the men at the back of the chapel to come in and sit down because "there is no need to keep look out, the Redcoats aren't coming today". After the Eucharist a lone singer Padraigin Ni Uallachain sang also in Gaelic and unaccompanied and filled the church with the sound of loss.

And then we carried him out, stopping in the porch to place the flag on the coffin, a nod to a part played in keeping a dream alive in the 50s when many wished it forgotten. The wind blew hard rain stinging the eyes, some hugged the church wall looking down on the graveyard below.

At the grave four of us lowered him down, at his head Leenan and the Gap of Mamore, at his feet in the distance Sluiden, the North Atlantic shore awash with whitecap, and below him the Boyle family, his granny from whom he learnt his sacred Irish. Buried in the soil of Ireland yards from where he had first attended school, where he carried the sod of turf for the schoolroom fire, just yards from where the dreams of youth were formed. A circle of sorts was complete. The boy became a man, the man became an old man, and the old man became an ancestor. So it is... it was right, right and proper to return.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2012/07/23/returning-the-emigrant-after-death/>

## Feeding The Sectarian Thesis *continued*

It has been the approach of British propaganda, and the distinctive contribution of the modern revisionists to our history, to sectarianise that War and to demand that we only see Catholics and Protestants fighting each other.

### SEAN MOYLAN—ETHNIC CLEANSER?

Mr. Mansergh says:

"Hart was wrong to have ever used the term "ethnic cleansing", borrowed from a later and infinitely more brutal conflict. Yet Sean Moylan threatened in the Treaty debate that if war resumed "no loyalist in North Cork will see it finish", and in early April 1922 that "they would give a call to the fine fat unionists with fine fat cows"."

What does Mansergh mean? It seems to mean that Hart simply used the wrong words; that what Moylan said he would do is tantamount to ethnic cleansing by another—unstated—name.

Mansergh was a great admirer of Moylan up to very recently, i.e. while Fianna Fáil ruled the roost. He was pleased to give the annual oration in Kiskeam a few years ago. There was then no hint of such a critique of Moylan. But that was all for show apparently, or perhaps it was something to say while it served his career within Fianna Fáil. But maybe one's career in Fianna Fáil is now helped by denigrating Moylan?

The fact is that it did not occur to Moylan to mention *Protestants* in any speech of his. Loyalists and Unionists were his terms and he knew enough Catholic Loyalists and Catholic Unionists not to equate the two. He was a soldier at the time and he stated clearly what he would do to his military enemies if the War with Britain resumed—and what they would do to him. Can he be condemned for a calling a spade a spade and giving plenty notice of what his enemies could expect in the field of battle? Imperial strategy in a renewed War, as Lloyd George warned, would have been conducted on Boer War tactical lines.

Moylan of course went on to become a politician and, rather than persecuting Protestants, provided the funding to save TCD from falling down (quite literally) when Minister for Education. This was acknowledged in great detail by its then Provost, A.J. McConnell in a series of articles in the *Irish Press* in August 1984 (as has been recalled in *The Trinity College Estates*, in *Church & State*, 104, 2nd quarter 2011). Maybe the promoter of 'ethnic flourishing' would be the appropriate words to describe Moylan.

### KILMICHAEL

Martin Mansergh refers to Eve Morrison's Chapter on Kilmichael and the allegedly non-existent 'false surrender': "Eve Morrison's revisit of Tom Barry and the controversy over whether there was a 'false surrender' by the Auxiliaries justifying their massacre at Kilmichael suggests that the main dispute was between Tom Barry and his comrades" Mansergh stays silent on the false surrender issue itself. Ms Morrison does indeed try her best to create a divide between Barry and others on the issue but does not succeed. Her failure is because she inadvertently makes a most convincing and original case for a false surrender, one that has nothing to do with anything Barry said or wrote. She has had privileged access to Fr.

Chisholm's taped interviews with Ambush survivors, to material which is not yet publicly available and she summarises the relevant part of the account by a participant, Ned Young: "*Young told Chisholm that he had seen Lordan bayonet an Auxiliary, and that after the ambush members of the column had informed him that the Auxiliary had surrendered falsely*" (page 168).

What this means is that a false surrender was described and discussed by Ambush participants themselves, immediately after the Ambush. This then is the first recorded account of a false surrender, and it is one made 'on the spot' by people who should know and to explain their actions to a comrade-in-arms who was 'otherwise engaged' at the time. Young had been trying to deal with the notorious Auxiliary, Guthrie, who initially escaped from the Ambush.

In these circumstances, I very much doubt if Young's comrades, who all had just faced death together and were to do so again, immediately concocted a pack of lies for his benefit. Moreover, a pack of lies that was then accepted by all and sundry on *both* sides for the next 70 odd years until Peter Hart queried the matter.

We should all be most grateful to Ms Morrison for providing this unique insight into the most original account of the false surrender at the Kilmichael Ambush. It's a pity that her devotion to Hart's thesis blinds her to appreciating the value of her own work. And Mansergh appears to have missed the significance of it as well.

#### DUNMANWAY

Mr. Mansergh says: "*It is beyond me why anyone today should seek to relativise the Bandon Valley murders of late April 1922, quite obviously carried out by individual members of the anti-treaty IRA, and resoundingly repudiated on that basis to the credit of the entire Dail and even Belfast republicans at the time.*" He seems to be suggesting here that the killings were repudiated on the basis that they were an anti-Treaty action, carried out by anti-Treatyites. But the killings were repudiated at the time on the basis that they were sectarian and would fuel sectarianism. He is suggesting, in effect, that anti-Treatyites were prepared to kill groups of Protestants to further their cause. This is simply relying on prejudice against anti-Treatyites rather than providing evidence or objectively considering such evidence as exists.

Were anti-Treaty Republicans in some way predisposed to killing Protestants for any reason? These were people who took

their Republicanism very seriously and who knew full well that Republicanism in Ireland was a Protestant invention, and who gloried in that fact. They were nicknamed the 'excommunicated party', and anyone who knew such people would realise that, when they brought religion into their politics, it was to denounce the Catholic Church for its behaviour in failing to recognise the Republic and excommunicating Republicans when they stood by it. Were these the type of people predisposed to kill Protestants? In Cork, Republicans were the direct inheritors of the mantle of William O'Brien and the All-for-Ireland League, which went Republican in the 1918 Election. I don't think this inheritance predisposed them to kill Protestants for their political ends. It simply does not add up. Mr. Mansergh is a leading and longstanding member of the party that grew out of the anti-Treaty side. Has he now suddenly realised that, among the founders of his party, were the type of people who were predisposed to kill his co-religionists over the Treaty?

At the meeting in Cork on the Dunmanway killings on 28th April this year, Emeritus Professor John A. Murphy claimed the perpetrators were Hibernian-influenced elements, i.e., suggesting that the event was sectarian (see *Irish Political Review*, June 2012). Hibernians, being Redmondites, would have been very pro-Treaty and a backbone of the Free State. Mansergh should have a word with John A. when they next meet (both are members of the 1916 Centenary Commemoration Advisory Group) and try to get their story straight as to which of the totally opposed political tendencies was responsible for this killing— pro-Treatyites or anti-Treatyites—and what the motive was.

**Jack Lane**

**Press Release:** Former GAA President's statement to the Bureau of military history ends 1922 West Cork Protestant killings controversy

## Dunmanway: *Some New Information*

Since the late Peter Hart claimed that the motive for the 1922 killings of 13 West Cork Protestants in April 1922 was sectarian in *The IRA and their enemies* (1998) war has broken out in Irish History. Other historians such as Meda Ryan and Brian Murphy strongly rejected the sectarian motive, while Dr. John Regan of the University of Dundee has recently attacked Hart's selective use of sources to bolster his argument. The late Peter Hart's thesis supervisor Professor David Fitzpatrick of Trinity College Dublin described the

criticism of Hart "*as suggestions and innuendos circulated by bloggers, and republican apologists*". Now both sides will be able to claim victory as the real story is revealed. A newly available witness statement from Michael O Donoghue, *President of the GAA between 1952 and 1955*, shows that Hart got the sequence of events right, but directly contradicts his thesis that the murders were sectarian.

#### THE NEW EVIDENCE:

The 1,773 Irish War of Independence Witness Statements were released online by the Bureau of Military History in Dublin on Tuesday 7th August were expected to end in December 1921, four months before the Dunmanway killings. However Waterford's Michael O'Donoghue's hugely detailed statement shows the murders were sparked by the killing of Kilbrittain IRA Commandant Michael O'Neill and were reprisals for his death.

O'Donoghue's 'matter of fact' statement shows that O'Neill called to Ballygroman House in Ovens and was shot without warning. The IRA at Bandon captured the residents of the house, Thomas Hornibrook, his son Samuel, and Captain Herbert Woods who fired the shot.

Over the next three nights members of the Anti Sinn Fein League were killed until Tom Hales the local IRA commander restored order on the 30th of April. As an amnesty had been granted by the Truce, DeValera, Collins and Griffith condemned the murders outright.

O'Donoghue states:

"Several prominent loyalists- all active members of the anti-Sinn Féin Society in West Cork, and blacklisted as such in I.R.A. Intelligence Records—in Bandon, Clonakilty, Ballineen and Dunmanway, were seized at night by armed men, taken out and killed. Some were hung, most were shot. All were Protestants. This gave the slaughter a sectarian appearance. Religious animosity had nothing whatever to do with it. These people were done to death as a savage, wholesale, murderous reprisal for the murder of Mick O'Neill."

Hart's thesis has been used by journalists Eoghan Harris, and Kevin Myers, along with Northern Irish Social Affairs Minister Nelson McCausland of the DUP, to claim that Protestants in the South were subjected to systematic ethnic cleansing similar to that which happened to Catholics in the North. O'Donoghue's evidence proves that this was not the case and that the Dunmanway killings were a unique "*stain on the reputation of the IRA*", according to DeValera's official biography.

The full witness statement is available on the Bureau of Military Website WS Ref #: 1741, Witness: Michael V O'Donoghue, Engineer Cork 1 Brigade IRA, 1921; President GAA, 1952—1955 <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS1741%20PART%202.pdf#page=43>

Barry Keane is currently researching these killings, and is the author of *The Bard: North Cork's leader in the Land War*



# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## BATTLE STATION

As part of its 50th anniversary celebrations RTE television screened a two part series (23.7.12 and 24.7.12) on the station's relationship with the rest of society. The "*Battle Station*" title suggested the relationship has been fraught. In its last 50 years the station has been subject to Church, State and Commercial pressure. The unstated assumption of the first part of the series was that RTE was an oasis of objective truth in a desert of obscurantism and vested interests. However, the second part hinted—perhaps unintentionally—that the issues involved in the relationship between a State Broadcasting Service and the wider society are more complicated.

The series covered such a broad area that it is hardly surprising that it lacked depth. Many of its themes could have filled a separate programme in their own right.

## BILL O'HERLIHY

One *cause célèbre* in RTE's struggle against the forces of darkness was the case of Bill O'Herlihy who did a documentary on Money-lending in the late 1960s. The Justice Minister, Micheál Ó Móráin, was incensed by this television investigation and set up a Tribunal of Enquiry which cost a massive £250,000 and lasted 6 months (those were the days!).

Was this a case of heavy handed political interference? Perhaps! But the Tribunal of Enquiry found in favour of the Minister and even O'Herlihy admitted that there were phrases in the documentary which he should not have used. It seems that Ó Móráin objected to the suggestion in the documentary that money lending was pervasive and was symptomatic of a *malaise* within the society. O'Herlihy's career as an RTE journalist was finished, but he was hardly expelled to outer darkness, as anyone with even a passing interest in RTE's coverage of football or the Olympics will know.

## CHARLES HAUGHEY

The documentary also dealt with RTE's coverage of the standoff between the Irish Farmers' Association and the Government in the mid 1960s. Charlie Haughey objected to debating the issue with the leader of the Irish Farmers' Association, Rickard Deasy, on the grounds that he was a democratically-elected politician, whereas Deasy was just the leader of an interest group. Whatever about the merits of Haughey's position, it would not be accepted now. Deasy was at least the representative of a

substantial force within the society. These days journalists are routinely given free rein to pontificate on any subject which happens to pop into their heads.

## JOURNALISTIC INDEPENDENCE

The viewer was given an insight into what journalistic independence looked like in the 1980s, when current affairs staff pursued a pro Workers' Party line. Michael Heaney commented that a nasty atmosphere developed in current affairs. Mary McAleese was hounded out because of her alleged Provo sympathies.

There was brief mention of the *Mission to Prey* documentary, in which Father Reynolds was libelled. The affair was described as a "*mistake*". But it would be more accurate to say that the journalists had an ideological agenda and overreached themselves.

There are some stories that are of no interest to RTE and others that are. It is no accident that there has not been an RTE documentary on Brother Colm O'Connell, the coach to Olympic 800m Champion David Rudisha (among numerous other Kenyan champions). That kind of story just does not fit RTE's current affairs narrative.

## OLYMPIC GAMES

The Olympic Games was a morale boost to the country, but was it our most successful Olympics since 1956 as the national broadcaster claimed? In London we won 5 medals (1 Gold, 1 Silver and three bronze). This was identical to the medal haul in the Melbourne Olympics of 1956. But no medal table ignores the colour of the medal: gold, silver and bronze are not of equal value.

On any normal reckoning, it would be more accurate to say that this year's Olympics was the most successful since the Atlanta Olympics of 1996. In that year we won 3 gold and one bronze, which surely trumps the London and Melbourne haul.

The Atlanta medals were all won by Michelle Smith, who eclipsed the golden girl of US swimming, Janet Evans. Two years later Smith was found guilty of tampering with her urine sample, which could be interpreted as evidence of guilt. But she was not stripped of her Atlanta medals.

Is RTE right to take such a precious attitude? Do other countries deny their Olympic medals in such a manner?

## ALL THAT GLITTERS...

One of the enduring memories the Long Fellow has of Olympics down the years is the 100m sprint at the Seoul Olympics of 1988. Ben Johnson smashed the world record in a time of 9.79 seconds and would have had a faster time if he had not raised a clenched fist before the finishing line. But within a few days the world was told that a fraud had been perpetrated. The Jamaican-born Canadian athlete had tested positive for Stanozolol and was disqualified.

Carl Lewis was awarded gold and the Jamaican-born British athlete Linford Christie's bronze was upgraded to Silver.

In 2003 it was revealed that Lewis tested positive three times before the 1988 Olympics for pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, and phenylpropanolamine, banned stimulants and bronchodilators. The US Olympic Committee did not sanction the athlete.

Linford Christie was tested positive for pseudoephedrine at the 1988 Olympics but was not stripped of his upgraded silver. In 1999 Christie tested positive for nandrolone and was banned for two years. According to Wikipedia, Christie acted as a senior mentor for the British Athletics team in 2006. So unlike Michelle Smith all his past demeanours were forgotten.

## LONDON 2012

The London Olympics was notable for the success of the Jamaican-born Jamaican athletes in the sprints. The remarkable Usain Bolt ran 9.63 in the 100m without breaking sweat, which came close to his world record of 9.58, which in turn was over a fifth of a second faster than Ben Johnson's effort in 1988.

Recent Olympics have taken on a predictable pattern in the Athletics events: Afro Caribbean/Afro American domination of the sprint events; East African domination of the endurance events. The quotation of the tournament came from Brendan Foster who, within seconds of the Somali born "British" Mo Farah winning gold in the 10,000 metres, screamed "*He's taken on the Africans and beaten them*".

In fairness the British found many successful home-grown athletes. The Irish sprinter David Gillick remarked on RTE that, while in Ireland athletes have to find the relevant sports body, the British Olympic Committee finds the athlete. A Radio 4 interview with a British Gold medallist in rowing revealed that she was told by the Committee what sport to take up after doing various tests. This was the basis on which State funding was given.

## THE OLYMPICS AND POLITICS

The Olympics is a means of projecting political power. That was true of Nazi Germany in 1936 when it won more medals than any other country (including the USA). It was true of the Soviet Union, when it topped the medals table from 1972 to 1988 (with the exception of 1984 when it didn't compete). The Long Fellow has read in *Russia Today* that, if the medal tally for Russia and the ex Soviet Republics were combined it would top the medal table in 2012: an indication that the Soviet sporting legacy has not diminished.

Since 2004 China has rivalled the US for top spot (in Beijing the Chinese were number 1).

But when it comes to Athletics—particularly the track events—no amount of politics can prevail over natural ability!

## The Fiscal Treaty

Eamon Dyas accuses me (*Irish Political Review*, August 2012) of not dealing with the main thrust of his article (*Irish Political Review*, June 2012). The main thrust appears to be that the Treaty is inspired by an ideology called Ordo-liberalism which might have benign effects within Germany, but taken outside this context is no better than Anglo-American finance capitalism. The problem I have with this is that there is no evidence within the Treaty of this Ordo-liberalism and in my opinion Eamon has not established its relevance.

Eamon responds by saying that an ideology and a Treaty are different animals and that it would be unrealistic to expect evidence of the former to be revealed in the latter! We should forget about the "nitty gritty" and look at the context.

I agree that context is very important. But there must be some evidence for placing something in a context. Instead of evidence Eamon has this rhetorical statement:

"So, when John draws attention to the obvious fact that I fail to give an example of a clause within the Treaty that reflects this Ordo-Liberal doctrine, is he seriously claiming that the Treaty has nothing to do with the current crisis or that the terms of the austerity being imposed as part of the solution to the crisis are not consistent with Ordo-Liberal economic doctrine?"

Of course, the Treaty should be seen in the context of the present economic crisis. It has been presented as—if not a panacea—a necessary contribution to resolving the crisis. However, it is silent on the question of privatisation, which Eamon says is a key element of Ordo-Liberalism.

He states that I don't look at the Treaty in isolation either but also place it in a context when I say that "*the Treaty will bind us closer to Continental Europe and diminish British influence*". He goes on to imply that his context is at least as valid as mine. But there is a basis for my context. The contracting parties as stated in the Treaty include Ireland and do not include the UK. David Cameron has explicitly excluded the UK from the Treaty.

Eamon, along with other opponents of the Treaty, disparages the "yes" vote. He says it emanated from fear. In my view there is nothing shameful about being afraid as long as that fear has a rational basis. The objective facts are that the State is spending more than it is collecting in tax revenue (leading to an accumulated State debt approaching 110% of GDP). The

international markets were not willing to continue lending to the Irish State. The Government Parties and Fianna Fáil felt that we needed the backstop of the EU bailout fund in case funding from the international markets remained closed to us after the expiration of the IMF/EU programme.

Sinn Féin among others argued that the EU would not leave us in the lurch, even if we refused to accept the reasonable (in my view) conditions of access to the bailout fund contained in the Treaty. The Irish electorate either didn't believe Sinn Féin or decided that there was no benefit in gambling that Sinn Féin was right. That does not seem to be an irrational or unreasonable position to take.

The "Yes" side argued that the "No" side's position would lead to greater austerity since the latter's cavalier approach to the bail-out fund would require a balanced budget strategy. And indeed there were elements on the right that looked forward to a policy of draconian cuts in public expenditure as a precursor to a euro exit.

Eamon wonders whether I think "*German Finance Capitalism is better than Anglo-American finance capitalism within the wider world*". Finance capitalism "*within the wider world*" or global finance capitalism has no flag. Released from its domestic ties "*German*" finance capitalism is no different from "*American*" finance capitalism.

However, global finance capitalism's relationship with the German State is completely different from its relationship with the UK or American State. The German economy continues to produce a large balance of payments surplus on its current account. The US and UK economies on the other hand run large deficits. The US and UK economies need access to surpluses generated elsewhere in order to sell them on and take their cut. The Germans by contrast generate surpluses from their strong manufacturing sector.

The proof of the contrasting relationship with global finance capitalism is that the Germans want to control it (e.g. transactions tax) whereas the UK and US are opposed to all limitations on its operation.

A necessary, but not sufficient condition for controlling global finance capitalism is enhanced cooperation between states. That is what the Fiscal Treaty is attempting to achieve: and it is doing so without the disruptive influence of the UK.

In conclusion, since joining the EEC, Ireland has run with the hare and hunted with the hound. It has embraced both the

Anglo-American model (low corporation tax, light touch financial regulation, expansion of private credit) and the European social model (social partnership and very significant increases in social welfare). That dual position is no longer sustainable. Rejection of the Treaty would have pulled us towards the Anglo-American pole. Notwithstanding Kenny's overtures to Cameron, acceptance of the Treaty is a tentative step towards closer cooperation with Continental Europe independently of the UK. I welcome the possibilities opened up by this development.

John Martin

Letter of 20th August 2012

## Friends Of The RIC ?

As we approach a number of centenary commemorations over the next few years, most especially the 1916 Easter Rising, the 1918 General Election, the First Dáil Éireann in 1919 and the Battle of the Somme, calls have been made to be as inclusive as possible as we remember these, and other events in which Irish people died. I agree. I believe in the political ecumenism which has been generated following the Good Friday Agreement. However, the decision by the Retired Garda Síochána Members Association, (RGSMA) to erect a monument in Glasnevin cemetery to those members of the RIC, including the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, who were killed during the Irish War of Independence is an affront to all who suffered appalling abuses from this group of uniformed thugs in the service of the Crown.

It should not be forgotten that it was the Royal Irish Constabulary who fired indiscriminately into the crowd in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday in 1920 killing 13 innocent spectators and the Tipperary team captain. They were the armed colonial police force tasked with enforcing British rule in Ireland despite their massive rejection by the electorate in the 1918 General Election, an event which subsequently rendered this force unlawful. Why would the Retired Garda Síochána Members Association wish to stand in slavish obsequiousness to those members of the RIC and Black and Tans who sacked and burned more than three hundred buildings in Cork City in an act of reprisal for the killing of one 'Tan' in 1921, the burning of Balbriggan and Trim towns, and numerous other atrocities? This unruly mob displayed an absolute indifference to civilised policing. Even the commander of this undisciplined group of ferocious

thugs, General Frank Crozier, resigned in protest at the deployment of these men.

Could it be that post-colonial revisionists have now even infiltrated the RGSMA? These revisionists may be small in number but are in positions of influence in the media and elsewhere to spread their agenda. They are active in pursuing a policy of incrementally re-Britishing this State. The bestowing of titles of nobility and baubles on selected Irish citizens by the Queen of England, despite being repugnant to the republican ethos of the Irish State, is now firmly established in the social calendar of Ireland's 'Uria Heeps'. I know we have lost our financial

sovereignty to the EU, ECB and the IMF troika, but surely we must hold on to our collective sense of national pride, dignity and respect for those who made the ultimate sacrifice in securing our Independence. To erect a memorial to the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries is tantamount to the people of Warsaw commemorating the SS. Shame on those who proposed the erection of such a memorial and on those who champion their cause, and further shame on those of us who allow it to prosper.

**Tom Cooper**

*Cathaoirleach*

Irish National Congress

creditors have historically been their dependents!

What kind of an immutable economic law is it, that is so famously, flagrantly, flouted? No law at all!

It is, in any event, difficult to see the "immutable economic law", as stated in the *Irish Political Review* being a matter of economics at all. It reads much more like a principle of accountancy. Put bluntly, it is an immutable law of double entry book keeping.

It is not at all difficult to see why the *Irish Political Review* prefers to talk of an "immutable economic law", rather than the prosaic Micawber Principle of double entry book keeping. The "immutable economic law" carries an implication of determined social inevitability which is simply lacking in the Dickensian *nostrum*.

Look at it: "*Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.*" That is clear and simple, and simply true. As such it can be thought through and absorbed into a working class strategy to deal with the crisis of Finance Capital in a way that will advantage the working class. But for some reason, that, a working class strategy to deal with the crisis of Finance Capital in a way that will advantage the working class, is anathema to recent editorials of the *Irish Political Review*.

I'll return to that shortly. In the meantime, I'd like to examine what the editorial takes to be on the credit side of the balance sheet, how obedience to the immutable law of double entry book keeping works out in practice:

"Despite popular perceptions, the Troika does not 'impose' any conditions, except to insist on adherence to already agreed European policies."

Which is just to say, the Troika only imposes the conditions it imposes. Which raises the question, what are those conditions? The editorial doesn't go into details, it just says

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

## A Reply to last months editorial on the Euro Crisis, *Politics of Recovery vs Politics of Illusion*

### On Certain Immutable Economic Laws

*(and how to break them).*

There is no great secret to life, the universe and the politics of it all.

And what is not the secret of all that is its clear, unvarnished, clean and un-tarnished simplicity.

Just that.

Which is one of the reasons, perhaps the fundamental reason, the front page editorial in last month's issue of the *Irish Political Review* (August, 2012) disturbed me very much.

It took clarity and blurred and tarnished it. Unforgivably, it took simplicity and made immutable law of it.

Goethe wrote of theory: Theory, my friend, is grey; but green is the eternal tree of life.

And Lenin, that most creatively theoretical of politicians (albeit with an immense core of practical sense), in the course of making revolution in Russia, quoted Goethe to illustrate this more prosaic formulation of the broad case:

"...it is essential to grasp the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of reality, and not cling to a theory of yesterday, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, only comes near to embracing life in all its complexity" (*Letters on Tactics*, 1917).

What Lenin would have made of the theory currently on offer from the *Irish Political Review* I dread to think; but nothing good, of that I am sure.

Though the *Irish Political Review* and the people associated with it long ago ceased to move in Marxist circles, old

habits, it seems, die hard, and a species of economic determinism remains to sometimes disable its capacity to think.

Thus, the first paragraph in the editorial, which sets the didactic tone for the rest, says:

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

Isn't that wonderfully stark and compelling. "*There are certain immutable economic laws...*" Doesn't that just make your blood run cold and your flesh creep? "*Immutable*"; what's to be done in the face of immutable but give up, lie down and prepare to be steamrollered by an inexorable fate?

Or perhaps we should simply examine the proposition.

Immutable means permanent and unchangeable. So it is a permanent, unchangeable, characteristic of the economic life of a country that it cannot consume more than it, itself, produces. But what then of the countries whose most prominent economic characteristic, the core of their political economy, is that they have, in at least one case for centuries, consumed more than they produce? When last did England obey the *Irish Political Review's* immutable economic law? When last did the USA?

And have they, historically, developed a dependent relationship with their creditors? Not at all; on the contrary, their

Irish government itself. What is clear is that the choices made in terms of tax policy, service cuts, welfare and minimum wage rates etc., are all determined by the political forces within a programme state."

Really, the editorial should have gone into those details.

However it chose not to, and so we are left with this as the programmatic working out of the immutable law of double entry book keeping:—The Troika, that Holy Trinity of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, prefers to rely on compliant and ambitious political forces already based in the "*programme state*" to implement the necessary measures of the Ameranglian political economy which is long established EU policy.

Well then, it may not be polite to quote one editorial against another editorial behind that editorial's back, but honestly someone has to, and so...

From another editorial in the same issue of the *Irish Political Review* (August, 2012)...

"The EU in its internal affairs is Britain..."

Absolutely so, and the "*long established EU policy*", the previously-agreed EU Competition Policy and the Services Directive, is the still-unchallenged neo-liberalism with which Britain "*subverted*" Europe and which remains the political economy of the Eurozone.

And yet this editorial opposing the politics of illusion, in all its blind adherence to "*immutable economic laws*", takes it to be a good thing that the Holy Trinity relies on local politicians to implement its ordinances. It makes a big deal of the elementary point of power politics that power does not commit itself on foreign ground unless it absolutely has to.

And it won't have to. As with the Referendum, all the established political parties and all of the local media, weighed in in support of the power, if not necessarily the sanctity, of the Troika. The *Irish Political Review* was not at that moment entirely a part of that crude consensus of fear and ambition. Since the Referendum it acts as though it wishes it had been. Why?

And while we're at it: the immutable law of Double Entry Book Keeping is just one of "*certain immutable economic laws*"; is Globalisation another of those unchangeable laws? It is certainly at the heart of EU competition policy and the Services Directive. Labour Flexibility, the

absolute right to hire and fire at low wages with no welfare 'safety net', is that one of those laws? It again is at the heart of EU competition policy and the Services Directive. Free movement of capital is part of EU competition policy and the Services Directive, is that another of the *Irish Political Review's* "immutable economic laws"? Do tell me, please. If, as you say, I am irrevocably subject to the operation of such laws, I must surely have a right to know just what they are.

I need to know just what they are, in order to break them properly; that is to say, with malice aforethought and a good conscience.

On the other side of "*immutable economic laws*" is the simple, not at all secret, answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe and the politics of it all. It is the working class interest. Just that and nothing more.

Fair enough we are on a stalking ground between necessity and freedom. Some things, unpalatable things, must be done of necessity. It is necessary that debts, having been incurred, be paid back. So, let's explain the necessary needs of this moment, and that moment, and the next ten years, if needs be. But let us also make the best of the working class interest in all of that. Let's deal with necessity by promoting the freedoms in which all of the needful is resolved and overcome.

Two fundamental matters are of constitutive importance in establishing the working class interest on the high ground of this financial crisis. The integrity and independence of the Irish State must be restored; not defended, for, at present, neither exists in any fit fashion that it might be defended at all; but rebuilt, tended to and restored. In pursuit of that then is the absolute requirement for government to be re-established on the understandings and in the agreements of a new social partnership.

In the general run of things, by way of the least of them, Irish Trade Unions may immediately fall short of such a partnership, may well indeed fall far short. But, by way of the best of them, there is Connolly's Union.

SIPTU may very well be the last surviving institution of the independent Irish state that Connolly formulated and de Valera founded. It is certainly the one and only and the last good hope for its survival.

The *Irish Political Review* has made, to my mind, far too much of the debating point of going into alliance with our gallant

ally of 1916. Germany is today a client state of the USA; the German airforce bombed Belgrade for the USA and now stands poised to bomb Damascus for the USA, or Teheran for the USA, let the dice fall as they might. It is a member of NATO which is not about to leave NATO to join Ireland. Much, much more likely, is it that Ireland, degraded, as the editorial has it, by debt, will join its gallant ally in its gallant ally's current alliance. What becomes of the debating point then?

Leaving such an alliance with the past to one side, the *Irish Political Review* would do well to consider the only practical way in which it might forge an alliance with the future. Let it think of allying itself with SIPTU. Let it, in Lenin's words, "*take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of reality, and not cling to a theory of yesterday*". There is a lot of work to be done in the working class interest, in formulating a policy of social partnership, in selling that policy and implementing that partnership. Seriously now, does the *Irish Political Review* have some cogent reason for not taking on the role it is fully capable of playing in that work, in that interest? Does it?

I know full well that people who have persuaded themselves of the power of "*certain immutable economic laws*" will dismiss this position as "*Utopian*". And, yes! it is Utopian.

Principled action at a point of crisis by such as ourselves almost always is Utopian. It wasn't an economic determinist, convinced of the immutable laws of double entry book keeping, who walked off the train and strode out of the Finland Station. No, that was the man who quoted Goethe a few months later.

And anyway, since when was the *Irish Political Review* afraid of being Utopian? Much of the *Irish Political Review's* best work over many years now, done for the most part by David Morrison and Philip O'Connor, has been its work for the rights of the Palestinian People. That has been work of the greatest human value and every bit of it in denial of balance sheets and in defiance of profit and loss accounts. Of course it is Utopian to expect that the Palestinian People will survive, let alone succeed; no theory would give them so much as a bed for the night, or a cup of tea against the cold.

For theory, my friend, is grey; but green is the eternal tree of life!

**Joe Keenan**

## The Road To Recovery Is Through A New Social Compact, *not a war against 'Europe'*

The issue in the current crisis as it affects Ireland is whether the axis of political conflict in the current situation is primarily

a) between the Irish State and Irish social interest on the one hand and a hostile, "neo-liberal" world, represented by 'Europe' and the Troika, on the other, or

b) between domestic Irish forces in determining budgetary and fiscal policy, remaining at the core of the Eurozone and negotiating with external creditors.

It is one or the other, and whichever of the two is decided to be the reality of things will determine the strategy that should be pursued: a national front to face down the Eurozone/Troika or a national recovery strategy in concert with the Eurozone. The writers of this article define it as the latter, and advocate a way forward through a Social Compact—on the model of the historic Social Partnership Agreement of 1987 (Programme for National Recovery)—to oversee national recovery in concert with the development of a strong Eurozone. Joe Keenan, in his article in this issue of *Irish Political Review*, appears to define it as the former.

### DEBT, IMMUTABILITY & REAL WORLD

Joe attacks the "didactic" editorial of the August *Irish Political Review* on the Euro crisis—which, entitled *The Politics Of Reality vs The Politics Of Illusion*, presented the above case—for its craven capitulation to the forces of neo-liberal globalism and its lack of utopianism. For him the Irish state consists of nothing more than local "compliant and ambitious political forces" on whom the Troika can rely "to implement the... measures of the Ameranglian political economy which is long established EU policy".

He wonders what Lenin or Goethe might have thought of the analysis presented by the editorial—"nothing good, of that I am sure", he writes.

Joe dwells on the opening statement of the editorial: "There are certain immutable economic laws that cannot be wished away by fine words or good intentions. If a country continues to consume more than it produces, it will develop a dependent relationship with its creditors."

The choice of the word "immutable" may be unfortunate, but it is not the

substance of the matter. Joe ridicules the idea that there are any such things as "immutable economic laws" or indeed "immutable" anything else, and also dismisses the notion that countries in debt become dependent on their creditors, claiming the opposite in fact to have been the case, taking the US and Britain as his reference.

Joe's critique is strewn with admiring references to Lenin as the great utopian breaker of immutable laws of all kinds. But was it not Lenin himself who eventually bowed to "immutable laws of economics" with the NEP [New Economic Policy] to kick-start a ruined Russian economy? Lenin certainly acted on a belief that human action could transform a political economy. But the laws of economics were not changed by him. Marx before him had invested his life in producing his multiple-volume *Capital* precisely to lay bare the laws of capitalist economics and political economy so as better to enable effective working class action on a basis of reality. Even Lenin could not make one and one equal three.

In modern Western states the operations of markets have been considerably constrained to a greater or lesser extent in the working class interest (and often indeed in the capitalist interest). While markets might be restrained and the laws of the market 'bucked', as it used to be said, the laws themselves remain the same. The law of gravity does not determine human action, but it does set its parameters. Ignoring or denying the law of gravity, let alone claiming it can be overthrown, does not eliminate or even extend those parameters by the slightest degree. In fact the opposite would tend to be the case. By understanding the law and utilising it, the scope of human action is increased.

As regards the dependence of countries/states on their creditors, it is certainly true that Imperialist countries have extracted surplus value from production in their colonies, but is it true, as Joe says, that they made their creditors dependent on them? The USA became anything but a dependent creditor of the UK in the twentieth century. The UK's indebtedness to the USA presaged the rapid decline of British world power and there was an inexorable—perhaps we might suggest even immutable—logic to that.

In the current, immediate political situation, is it true that China is a dependent creditor of the USA; or that Germany is a dependent creditor of Ireland or Greece? What is called the current world economic crisis is not experienced as such by ordinary people in China, or even Germany. It is difficult to believe that those countries will not be affected by it, but, whatever else, their relationship with their debtors cannot be described as one of dependence.

The editorial, while using the term "immutable laws of economics", far from fatalistically claims that such laws are all-determining, arguing instead for a politics based simply on recognition of their reality.

It is the contention of the editorial that the reality of Irish private and public debt cannot be ignored. Simply calling for the flooding of debtor states with cheap money by the European Central Bank—the remedy of the currently self-styled "Keynesians"—without putting in place the necessary political control and accountability, is a free market solution that would completely undermine the Euro (which the editorial suggested is the actual purpose behind the recent sudden conversion to "Keynesianism" for the Eurozone of the *Financial Times*, the organ of global finance capital). By failing—or rather refusing—to address the debt issue, the NO campaign in the Irish Fiscal Compact referendum (the Left, Sinn Féin etc.) disqualified itself from being part of the political solution.

### "DETERMINISM"

There are absolutely no grounds for Joe's claim that the editorial is "economic determinist". On the contrary, the editorial emphasises the political choices which are available, albeit within the parameters of economic necessity. It explicitly points to the non-monetarist, non-Keynesian solution implemented in the working class interest by Harold Wilson's British socialist Government in a somewhat analogous situation in the 1960s—"austerity" taxes on unearned income, wage restraint, and restrictions on credit, to re-assert political control of the currency, along with increased productivity, investment in industrial training, and social partnership.

The editorial refers to the social partnership solution that Ireland—substantially through the concerted action of Fianna Fáil and the ICTU—implemented in response to the economic crisis of the 1980s and which resulted in the productive growth of the following 20 years. It defends the elements of social partnership that have survived, even in a context of tactical retreat (the Croke Park Agreement),

despite unrelenting attacks on it from those who advocate a free market solution to the current crisis (e.g. the *Sunday Independent* and indeed, many Fine Gael Ministers, such as Leo Varadkar, when free to speak their mind).

The editorial also denies the "*determinism*" of the Troika on Irish affairs. Notwithstanding what members of the Government might say, the editorial states that Ireland has political choices. It might be argued that the editorial is optimistic regarding the room for manoeuvre of the Government, given that it is tied into a programme its predecessor already agreed, but it is difficult to see how it could be described as "*determinist*", let alone an injunction to "*give up, lie down and prepare to be steamrollered by an inexorable fate*", as Joe puts it.

Pretending that the international credit market can be ignored is not realistic. The issue for Ireland is to pursue a credible deficit reduction policy that will make it possible to again secure international credit at a favourable rate to fund future deficit spending.

#### DICTATORSHIP OF THE TROIKA?

The notion of a global Troika imposing its will on a compliant and corrupted local political elite goes to the heart of whether the focus of politics should be on domestic conflicts and a negotiating position within a positive orientation in the Eurozone, on the one hand, or a conflict between the Irish national interest and predatory globalist forces represented by the Troika and the Eurozone leadership on the other.

The fact of the matter is that, beyond achieving the deficit targets, the state itself can—within the parameters of agreements it has previously entered into, e.g. the Maastricht Treaty—decide how that is to be achieved. Fianna Fáil, in its last act of state, crafted such an agreement with the Troika, proposing public spending reductions, property taxes etc. Does Joe think the Maastricht Treaty should be renegotiated too, and that this is practical politics?

We would contend that what we are witnessing with the conflict over the Property Tax and the previous (failed) attempt to dismantle the wage-setting mechanisms of the Joint Labour Committees are issues of the *Irish* political economy, of intense *Irish* political conflict, because they are issues of class conflict. The working class interest is being served by the introduction of a progressive property tax and certainly was well served by the impressive SIPTU campaign, supported by Fianna Fáil, which led to the restoration of the JLC system which

determined pay in certain labour markets, much to the chagrin of Richard Bruton and many of the other bright new sparks on the Fine Gael Front Bench. The "*neoliberal*" Troika made no objection to the restoration of the JLCs, or indeed of the minimum wage rate, and the IMF even attacked commentary in Ireland which implied that it had sought the break up of Croke Park, adding for good measure its view that socially-agreed solutions were always preferable.

Like Eoghan Harris's charlatan dismissal of Paddy Heaney for his historical account of what happened 90 years ago at Coolacrease because he did not produce "*documentary evidence*" for his statements—though Paddy was of course subsequently vindicated by the documentary record—Joe demands "*details*" for statements such as that above concerning the position of the Troika. Well, the best source we have on the Troika's view of the JLC issue comes from an impeccable source, the editorial of SIPTU's newspaper ('Troika did not seek cut in wages', *Liberty*, July 2011). The source for the IMF view of the Croke Park deal is the July edition of the magazine of the IMPACT trade union (*Work and Life*).

#### SIPTU AND AN IRISH SOCIAL PACT

Joe advocates a political response in Ireland of "*formulating a policy of social partnership*", driven on the working class side by SIPTU acting on the basis of the legacy of Connolly's position. In this he calls for the *Irish Political Review* to seek an "*alliance*" with SIPTU instead of continuing to make "*far too much of the debating point of going into alliance with our gallant ally of 1916*". But what—apart from the "*gallant ally*" bit to which we will return—did the editorial say to the contrary? The *Irish Political Review* has in fact been consistently promoting such a course of development since the very start of the financial crisis in 2008, and has always held SIPTU to be the key political force of the working class interest in Ireland, a role which the Labour Party ago decided to discard. This is what the disputed editorial actually said on this question:

"...an inclusive Pact across the social interests to deliver a programme of adjustment and recovery, as was achieved by the Haughey Government in 1987, would offer the most socially progressive means to achieve this {*a national strategy to overcome the crisis—JM, PO'C*}. But, unlike 1987, the prospects for a social solution to the crisis do not seem to be on offer, or to be an option any element in this Government would choose to pursue."

The system of Social Partnership was jettisoned by Brian Cowen very soon after replacing Ahern as Taoiseach, well before the real scale of the crisis had emerged. The *Irish Political Review* at the time criticised Cowen's destructive policy towards Social Partnership and his restoration of the dominion of the Department of Finance over all aspects of government. What the disputed editorial says is that a social compact such as the one that lifted the national economy out of the 1980s recession is precisely what is needed again now—including from the working class perspective—but pointed out the unfortunate fact that no element in the current Government had any interest in embracing such a course.

The *refusniks* very much include the Labour Party. Ruairi Quinn was an implacable opponent of the 1987 deal, which he described at the time as a "*cave in*" by the Trade Unions and as a threat to the sovereignty of the Dáil, and has maintained this reactionary attitude ever since, describing Social Partnership just a few years ago as a "*blaquemalange*", i.e. a gooey, messy, clingy substance. Since becoming Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore has reduced Government engagement with the "*social partners*" to a schedule of quarterly informal chats, organised separately with ICTU and IBEC. And the *National Economic and Social Council*—the Senate of Social Partnership—has been utterly marginalised.

Given that there is no element in this Government inclined to go down the road of a social pact, the only possibility for a new compact would be a major initiative from the Unions, such as indeed preceded the historic 1987 Haughey deal, and which then too, from the ICTU perspective, combined the restoration of national economic sovereignty with the advancement of the working class interest in the state and economy. The history of all of this was set out in considerable detail by one of the authors of this article in a long article, *Partnership And Progress In Tiger Ireland* in the online *Dublin Review of Books* (No. 4, Winter 2007), which, updated and expanded, was re-published in 2009 by the Bevin Society in its pamphlet, *The Road to Reality*. This article was widely read in Irish Trade Union circles. The pamphlet—available still through Google books, though absent from the Athol website—demonstrated clearly the class perspective of the Irish Unions operating at the time, imbued with Connolly's vision of working class politics in an Irish state. Pat Murphy—who had regarded that drb article as ground-

breaking—interpreted Connolly's views in the modern context as the "*proprietary interest of the working class in the [Irish] State*". The 1987 ICTU leaders also conceived of Social Partnership in a very Connollyite way as a vehicle to advance working class interests within the reality of an Ireland in a globalised capitalist world, utilising in an intelligent manner what Joe himself, paraphrasing Engels, correctly calls the "*stalking ground between necessity and freedom*".

But the social partnership that Joe advocates has little to do with anything of this actually existing history of Irish social partnership. Rather it is an ideal, pristine and "*new*". He does not defend any actual elements of social partnership and sees the State as something already lost, a mere compliant local appendage of the forces of Globalism. That is the only conclusion that we can draw from these statements:

"The integrity and independence of the Irish State must be restored; not defended, for, at present, neither exists in any fit fashion that it might be defended at all; but rebuilt, tended to and restored. In pursuit of that then is the absolute requirement for government to be re-established on the understandings and in the agreements of a new social partnership... SIPTU may very well be the last surviving institution of the independent Irish state that Connolly formulated and de Valera founded."

We could not agree less.

#### UTOPIA LOST

On the basis of his own statements, Joe is right to anticipate the criticism of "*utopianism*". But he is completely wrong to refer to the work of David Morrison and one of the current authors on the Palestine question in support of his philosophical idealism. That work has been the very opposite of utopian. Those concerned resigned from an organisation which refused to work with or engage with the Irish State, which it had come to view—to use Joe's words—as lacking any "*integrity and independence*". Instead they continue to engage with the State on the assumption of practical, feasible and possible Irish Foreign Policy which, despite its current debilitating indebtedness, can and does have scope to take initiatives on issues such as Palestine, as even Éamon Gilmore has commendably demonstrated.

#### CLASS ENEMY EUROPE?

In his castigation of the EU, Joe seizes on a fragment from another editorial in the same August 2012 issue of the *Irish Political Review* (titled *Europe Subverted*): "... the EU in its internal affairs is Britain".

We can assure him that we don't con-

sider it impolite for him to quote this editorial fragment, which he presents with dramatic effect as contradicting the editorial he is criticising, and possibly embarrassing to us, the writers, as a result. We hope that he in turn will not consider it impolite of us to quote the two sentences that immediately followed that disembodied quotation:

"...the EU in its internal affairs is Britain. For the purposes of protecting the Eurozone, the EU is Germany, with France as a seconder. There is a possibility that financial events will force the Eurozone to push Britain and the EU out of the picture."

The three sentences taken together are consistent with previous editorials and not at all inconsistent with the editorial which Joe takes such exception to. The *Irish Political Review* does not need to be told, as Joe quotes Lenin, to "*take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of reality, and not cling to a theory of yesterday*". That has been its approach to Europe since the early 1970s. It supported an active Irish engagement with it then, arguing among other things that the European political economy was a developmental form of capitalism that had much to offer in the working class interest.

In the early 1990s the *Irish Political Review* observed that the EU was in danger of political disintegration following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, as the defeat of the Federalists in the EU led to the "*deepening*" of the union being sacrificed to its "*widening*" (eastwards expansion), to the great approval of Britain. Germany—a leading driver, behind France, of "*deeper integration*"—reacted by considering refocusing to the East and away from the EU. This process, at the height of British influence in Europe, was accompanied by the social dimension of the EU being undermined in favour of market forces. By the end of the decade the EU had indeed become something of a Britain in its internal make-up and a USA in its foreign policy, from which point its coherence and its credibility with its member states and their populations went into sharp decline.

However, by the time Mitterrand and Kohl had left office the project for a single currency had been set in train. They adopted this strategy on the urging of the great architect of Social Europe, the former Catholic Socialist Trade Union official and then Commission President Jacques Delors. His aim was to create some facts on the ground to reverse the disastrous hollowing out of the European Union that had been caused by British influence. The

creation of a single currency, he believed, would tend to have institutional and political consequences that would revive the development towards political union. He convinced Mitterrand, who then convinced Kohl.

The contradiction between a single currency in a region where there is no political union is now being addressed and—despite the constant hostile agitation against it by the powerful media industry of Anglo-Saxon finance capital—being resolved. This resolution will take the form either of the collapse of the currency or greater political integration. Since we are not economic determinists we cannot say in which way it will be resolved, but do believe there is a substantial will to achieve the political integration needed. The *Irish Political Review* supports this development and advocates a proactive Irish engagement with it, as in the interests of Ireland, and of the Irish working class. If it turns out that there is indeed greater political integration, however, it will be without Britain.

The *Irish Political Review* supports this development precisely as a workable framework for what Joe calls "*a working class strategy to deal with the crisis of Finance Capital in a way that will advantage the working class*". The alternative to Irish engagement with the Eurozone can of course only be a fall back towards the Sterling zone which Joe surely must see is very much a less favourable framework for what he is advocating.

#### CONNOLLY'S "GALLANT ALLY"

While Joe sees the integrity and independence of the Irish state as having been utterly destroyed, and its only hope a new and pure Connollyism, led by SIPTU, he seems to wish to dispense with another aspect of Connolly, his advocacy of an Irish alliance with Germany, saying the *Irish Political Review* has been making "*far too much of the debating point of going into alliance with our gallant ally of 1916*". He denounces what he calls the "*Ameranglian political economy which is long established EU policy*" and "*the still-unchallenged neo-liberalism with which Britain 'subverted' Europe and which remains the political economy of the Eurozone*".

Well, we simply take Connolly at his word. Connolly it was who organised the Citizen Army and convinced the Irish Republican Brotherhood into taking action at Easter Week 1916. And he did this in conscious alliance with Germany. In August 1914 he witnessed the evaporation of the Socialist International and its holy vow to halt war-plans in their tracks by

united European working class action. From the moment that great class front was revealed as an illusion, Connolly called the war as he saw it—an assault by Britain on Europe, driven by a calculated intent to take out the state which had come to rival it economically, industrially and socially. But between August 1914 and his execution in May 1916 any newspapers he managed to publish extolled the socialist aspects of the German state and the position the working class had achieved within it, which he regarded as far in advance from a socialist perspective to the conditions prevailing in Britain, and a model for the European future. Connolly's perspective in this regard has a particular resonance and parallel to conditions today. So, let us look briefly at the German political economy of today.

The editorial rejects the notion of Chancellor Merkel as either a neoliberal or a Keynesian, and portrays her as rather surprisingly similar in mode to Harold Wilson, trying to create a system of monetary and fiscal rules to ensure a solid European currency to enable the continued development of the European "social market economy" and to secure it against the forces of global finance capital of which Joe implies her to be a creature. The notion of Germany leading a charge for the re-making of Europe along neo-liberal lines just defies the realities of the situation. Thatcher was a Thatcherite first and foremost within Britain, remoulding British society to that model, before she and her New Labour successors began to export her revolution to Europe. Is there a shred of evidence that Merkel is implementing any such counter-revolution in Germany?

Merkel is in fact something of an outspoken proponent of the "social market economy" and has defended the extensive German system of industrial democracy and of welfare, education and health provision against the liberal party and capitalist interest at home. She certainly favours greater "labour market flexibility" to increase the competitiveness of the economy, but in a context of an extremely highly regulated labour market, in no way comparable to the yellow-pack one that has developed in the UK as the legacy of Thatcher-Blair-Brown.

Merkel is a Christian Democrat leader—albeit unusual in being a Prussian protestant one. The labour market policies of her Government bear no relation to Joe's definition of "the absolute right to hire and fire at low wages with no welfare 'safety net'". Under her Governments, the apprenticeship system of vocational training has been strengthened, the power of

collective bargaining restored, cuts to childcare and healthcare implemented in the Schroeder era partially rescinded, and welfare rates maintained and even improved, and she herself—as reported by John Minahane in the August *Irish Political Review*—has spoken of the applicability of the German model of industrial democracy and "social market economics" to other countries around the world, as an alternative model and antidote to the dominance of finance capitalism that has wrought such destruction in recent years. How very neoliberal of her!

But, whatever else, how could a state with the political and social economy of Merkel's Germany lead a neo-liberal makeover of anything?

But no, for Joe there are no saving graces. He makes some throw-away remarks about German actions in the world to back up his argument for disengaging with the programme of the 1916 Proclamation. "Germany is today a client state of the USA", he says, "whose airforce bombed Belgrade for the USA and now stands poised to bomb Damascus for the USA, or Teheran for the USA." Really? Germany, at the behest of the Green Party humanitarian interventionists, contributed a few reconnaissance planes to the NATO bombing of Belgrade. It did not join the later crusade to destroy Iraq, it supported the French resistance at the Security Council to a UN-sanctioned invasion, and recently refused to participate in the overthrow of the Libyan state (despite a domestic clamour by liberals and the wretched *Der Spiegel* to join the latest great cause of the West). When Germany initiated the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in 1991, it did so in a solo run that departed from the position of the Western Alliance. While it is claimed that the consequences of that move were the horrific wars that ensued, Germany had calculated that Serbian action was leading to the same effect anyway, and so it acted to restore old areas of the Habsburg world at least to 'Europe'. Wrong it may have been, but acting as a "client state of the USA" it was not.

#### KEY CONFLICT: NOT V. EUROPE

The working out and resolution of the Euro crisis, which we see as very much in hand through the new departure of the Eurozone, has as its major centre of political conflict not the constructive interaction of Ireland with Europe (which has been approved, however grumpily, by the Irish electorate) but the clash of political and social forces at home in determining the shape of things in Ireland. This distinction is essential, as the perspective Joe advances is very much in line with that of the NO campaign—that the primary

conflict is with 'Europe'. While there is something of a negotiating relationship with 'Europe', the actual conflict is on the home front, where the proponents of market freedoms and a market solution to the crisis have tended to line up against the Eurozone leadership and to incline to a realignment with or even re-absorption back into Britain, while the forces of socialisation, including SIPTU itself, have agitated for the Euro Compact to be made work in the working class interest by expanding it with debt resolution and expansionary economic measures.

The *Irish Political Review* can be of some service in helping to inform the initiative for a new Social Compact in Ireland advocated by ICTU, assisting the struggle for it by contributing practically to a constructive dialogue with forces interested in such a solution, and identifying elements of such a Social Compact for a resolution of the crisis in the working class interest. Promoting a national front against Europe is a reactionary alternative.

In such circumstances of rapidly changing power relations and conflicts, we do not see the need to "cling to a theory of yesterday".

Philip O'Connor  
John Martin

#### HOW TO MAKE ENEMIES AND APPAL PEOPLE

You don't like sport, he jeers,  
what are you  
queer?  
No, it's all that kissing and hugging  
on the field  
that puts me off  
as they dance the winner's reel.  
Man, back then did we  
scoff!  
Well, it's goodbye to macho days  
when we made some athletes afraid  
to come out.  
But they who wanted too did, so, human rights  
we no longer flout.  
Except,  
you still don't like sport.  
Surface-to-air missiles,  
council blocks a fort,  
sand-bagged London  
roofs,  
naval ships on the Thames,  
the Olympian spirit bomb-proofed?  
Now you are out,  
out there,  
out there without doubt,  
with that imperial obsession  
Afghanistan  
but now aware  
there could be  
a reprimand.

Wilson John Haire  
26th July, 2012



## es ahora \*

### THE PHOENIX PARK CONCERT

In the context of modern Ireland, the concert at which the group, 'Swedish House Mafia', performed was very telling about the current values of some of our youth. The pictures that made it into the media were few enough and only did so because of the facts that the gardai established: two young men dead from stabbings and several in hospital due to multiple stabbings, every type of drug being taken and shopping trolleys full of booze that allowed the crowd to get totally drunk which led to behaviour that was so out of bounds that even the liberal media balked at the antics momentarily and then sure enough blamed our "*drinking culture*".

Alan Shatter, Fine Gael TD and Minister(s) for Justice and Defence, in his response to the fiasco called on organisers MCD "*to apologise*", therefore glossing over entirely his blame and those of the present and former Government/media/*et al*, who have been pushing the liberal agenda and then backing off when its attendant consequences manifest themselves in the kind of behaviour that occurred in the Phoenix Park. Even when the music group played at Milton Keynes Bowl on the following Saturday, the UK police authorities stated "*that they were very pleased at how the event passed off*" there. So, officially, our crowd's ugly behaviour completely capped anything even in old 'permissive London'. What a *coup* for our commentariat who have long sought the breaking down of family ties, communal ties and finally societal ties. The Labour party whose political policies seem to triumph that of Fine Gael in government—though one wonders how much the latter really actually differentiate their policies from the former—are now in full-on mode.

I suppose the *bit* of a surprise is Michael Martín's recent statement that Fianna Fail, his party, is now a "*liberal, progressive party*". But the Fianna Fail that I signed up for, as did many throughout the country, is the party of "*conservatism, republicanism and modern pragmatism*". Martín can gad about the media all he wants saying he is for gay marriage, the rewriting of our constitution, children's rights etc., but we all know that whoring can be seen for what it truly is. In my opinion, *party pimping* never works precisely because it

is what it is. And ultimately Micheál carries with him the stain of being a gung-ho co-partner in previous Governments with the Progressive Democrats who sabotaged internally the Soldiers of Destiny. We still hear Mary Harney's mantra "*Boston or Berlin?*" and her ferocious favouring of the former. And then cometh the Celtic Tiger—and then goeth the Celtic Tiger, leaving the carcasses of our banking and so many other institutions all pilling up into unimaginable debt for which the ordinary citizen is now paying hugely and unfairly. And there is our leader Micheál conspiring with Jim O'Callaghan SC, Fianna Fail's legal advisor, ("?) and brother of both Miriam and Dr. Margaret O'Callaghan (RTE broadcaster and revisionist historian respectively) to get him a seat in the new Dublin Bay South constituency, thus kicking the hard-working Chris Andrews, grandson of Todd, out to grass.

### DIPLOMATIC ERRORS

Of course the present Government with Enda Kenny TD of Fine Gael as Taoiseach has done more to harm our long-term ties of diplomacy than has that of any other Taoiseach in history. In that, he had been well aided and abetted by the Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore TD of Labour. So when word comes from Mary Kenny writing in *The Irish Catholic*, 12th July 2012, that our Ambassador to the Court of St. James, London, Mr. Bobby McDonagh (and his wife Mary) have much enhanced Anglo-Irish relations in recent years—it is not earth shattering news. Except for what follows which had me reeling. In a speech the week before the article appeared, Ambassador McDonagh stated that Ireland can "*calm British doubts about the European Union. Increasingly, perhaps Britain and Ireland should see each other as partners in the European Union as much as partners in the peace process and in business.*" Mary Kenny went on to comment that—

"Britain and Ireland do see one another as partners in the European Union and in Brussels, I know that Irish civil servants have helped the British, and vice-versa."

"However, I also think that the Tudor historian, Dr. David Starkey, makes a shrewd point when he says that the real figure who separated Britain from Europe was Henry VIII. Henry remained at heart a Catholic, except for his determination to "break with Rome" politically. To be sure, Henry also wanted to loot the monasteries. But England sought separation from continental Europe, a policy amply continued under Elizabeth 1. It's that deep history which underpins the relationship between Britain today and continental Europe. The British will not

quit the European Union, but they will always be at arm's length from it, because it's in their historical DNA. If Ambassador McDonagh can change minds in this, he will have reversed the influence of Henry Tudor."

What Kenny doesn't say of course is how our Ambassador McDonagh found himself giving a highly politicised speech, unless it was on the orders of our Government. And to what intent? Because Ireland is in the Eurozone, we are *competitors not partners* with Britain, as our competing currencies clearly indicate.

### THE MARRIAGE FOUNDATION UK

As Ireland loses its way in every sense of the word, it is amazing to see Britain do such a turnabout as *Alive* of June 2012 reported. Sir Paul Coleridge, a senior judge in the UK, has described family breakdown as "*one of the most destructive scourges of our time*". The judge declared that: "*Anyone who has ever witnessed the goings-on inside today's family courts will be aware of the consequences. They are a never-ending carnival of human misery.*" And he numbers divorce as the primary cause. "*What makes this ceaseless river of distress all the more tragic is that in many of the cases there seems to be no solid reason for the divorce to be going ahead*". Now the judge is backed by a number of prominent figures in the law, the Church, and politics, and Sir Paul has launched '*The Marriage Foundation*' to champion the advantages of marriage. He rejected the "*fashionable*" notion that marriage is just one of many possible templates for a successful relationship. He says:

"Examine the background of almost every child in care or the youth justice system and you will discover a broken home. Children from such backgrounds are, on every measure of success, less likely to achieve their proper potential and, as their life chances ebb away, the wellbeing of our whole society suffers".

The judge backs up his statements by statistics that simply can't be ignored.

"Today one in three UK marriages have ended in divorce by the 15th wedding anniversary, compared to one in 5 in 1970. A baby born to co-habiting parents is ten times more likely to see its parents separate than one born to married parents. Yet cohabiting in Britain has increased from a million couples ten years ago to 2.9 million in 2010 and it is expected to rise further. And in fact the evidence suggests that the decision to settle for cohabitation rather than marriage is often influenced by fear of the horrors of divorce."

The Foundation "aims to create a more

favourable attitude to marriage from the top to the bottom of society". It will promote marriage as the "gold standard" for relationships that are meant to benefit couples, children and wider society. Unfortunately, Sir Paul Coleridge acknowledges that "this view of marriage is regarded as judgemental and is therefore unpopular with many of the middle-class intelligentsia". He also accepted that the law and the courts have contributed to the problem and of course the policies of the political class. The judge also criticised the *Hello* magazine attitude. "Marriage is not something that falls out of the sky readymade on to beautiful people in white linen suits." Instead "it involves endless hard work, compromises, forgiveness and love". Couples need to learn that—

"for a relationship to last, you have to hang in there and adjust and change and alter and understand. Long, stable marriages are carved out of the rock of human stubbornness and selfishness and difficulties."

But people who are prepared to put in the effort, he argued, will find "the right person for you is right there in front of you".

In Ireland, we have the Catholic Church arguing for a similar purpose, but it is now up against the ferocious commentariat and a political class that has lost all right to rule by virtue of its craven attitudes and even more craven policies determined by the very elite of our day. So the Government and Micheál Martin espouse causes like "gay marriage" while our country sinks ever further into anarchy and bankruptcy.

**IRISH BULLETIN**

a full reprint of the  
official newspaper of  
Dáil Éireann  
giving news  
and war reports

Volume 1

12<sup>th</sup> July 1917 - 17<sup>th</sup> May 1920

Athens  
Historical  
Society

**512pp**

**Fully Index: Look up your relatives!**

**€36, £30 paperback,**  
**€55, £45 hardback**

**POSTFREE IN IRELAND & UK**

**athol-st@atholbooks.org**

#### THE ACADEMICS

In *The Irish Times*, 10th April 2012, under a heading *Academics Fight Back*, there is a reference to the fact that UCD President Hugh Brady (due to step down soon)—

"looms large in an interesting new book 'Degree of Nonsense' where Tom Garvin, professor emeritus of politics at UCD continues to rail against the Brady era. Garvin concludes that "university reform" has proven to be an existential threat to the country."

He also writes:

"It is open season lately on Irish academics. The spin is we are lazy, work only five hours a week, are no good and are widely believed, quite inaccurately to have huge pay packets. In my experience, most Irish academics are enthusiastic, love their subjects, enjoy teaching and strive to increase their research and understanding."

This is in response particularly to an article by Paul Mooney, the former head of the National College of Ireland, on the "light workload" of lecturers, a view which continues to dominate discussion. Ruairí Quinn described the article as "provocative ... with some interesting views". Mooney's lengthy response to his many critics is at [tandemconsulting.wordpress.com](http://tandemconsulting.wordpress.com). TCD's Brian Lucey—one of Mooney's most trenchant critics—has published this response on his own blog on [brianlucey.wordpress.com](http://brianlucey.wordpress.com).

#### ABUSE MEMORIAL

In the *Irish Daily Mail*, 21st July 2012, there was a beautiful picture of the design of the new national monument for victims of institutional abuse which has just been unveiled.

"Entitled 'Journey of Light', the new monument was designed by Studio Negri and Hennessy & Associates and will form part of the Garden of Remembrance. The outdoor monument will cost €500,000 and will have cascading water features on either side of a walkway. The walls on either side of the walkway will be engraved with the wording of the government's 1999 apology to those who were abused in its care. It will be written in English and Irish at child's eye level and

### The Irish Bulletin

The *Irish Bulletin* was the official newspaper of the Irish Government during the War of Independence.

It was produced with minimal resources, and was unadorned. This is what made its reputation and because of that it became one of the most powerful weapons in the War that eventually proved successful.

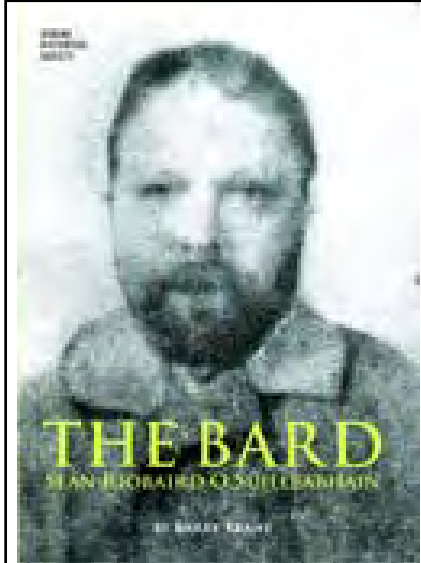
The first volume of the paper is reproduced as faithfully as possible to the original. Other volumes will follow.

will also feature in Braille on a bronze plaque at the base of the waterfall. Unveiling the plans, Education Minister Ruairí Quinn said: "As a strong advocate for the memorial to the victims of institutional abuse, I am pleased to announce the winning entry. The Jury's recommendation follows months of deliberation and consultation, including with representatives of the survivors of institutional abuse and a public consultation process. I believe 'Journey of Light' will act as a testament to one of the darkest chapters in our State's history and what we collectively as a society allowed to happen to vulnerable children. I hope it will serve as a constant reminder that we must never let such horrendous crimes against children happen again and we must strive to protect all of our children"..."

The winning design was chosen by a ten-strong jury that included two survivors of abuse. The Irish Survivors of Child Abuse has criticised the project as premature, saying the religious have not paid their fair share of the State's *€1.3 billion redress bill*.

I cannot but reflect on my last column in the July *Irish Political Review*, where I wrote about the HSE [Health Services Executive] and their partners who finally produced the 'Report of the Independent Child Death Review Group'. What will be their little memorial and where? Minister Quinn is laughing at these children with his "we must never let this happen again" when far worse is going on today. *€1.3 billion*—what looting went on there and when can we get a full and accurate account of how much was spent and where it went? The Tudor King Henry VIII—taught us well, even if it took us a long time to catch up on how to harvest such cash from our Catholic Church considering how little time we had to build it finally after the Famine and Penal Laws.

**Julianne Herlihy ©**



**THE BARD**

SEAN BUIORÁIN DÁIL ÉIREANN

120pp.    €15, £12

**Post-free in Ireland and the UK.**

## Views Of Sinn Fein

Stephen Richards's criticism of Athol Street and the *Irish Political Review* seems to centre on three main issues: Firstly, we do not criticise the Provos enough for what they did or for what they are doing now; Secondly, we do not admit that the Provos were beaten; Thirdly, we have changed our political position over the years from a hostility to the Provos to a position of not criticising them.

On the issue of condemnations: if there was anything I agreed with Gerry Adams on it was his view that politics should not be conducted on the basis of the "*politics of the last atrocity*". If Martin McGuinness now feels events like the Bloody Friday attacks in Belfast and the Claudy bombs were "*undefensible and appalling*", well who are we to argue with him?

The view that politics should not be about the last atrocity was an Athol Street view, even before Adams expressed it. And I remember a great ridiculing of the ritual condemnations made by 'constitutional' politicians and British Government Ministers in the *Northern Star*, forerunner to the *Irish Political Review*. That was called "*I condemn...*" and it was written, as far as I can recall, by Davy Gordon around 1988-89. It contained all the standard and stock phrases like "*evil men of violence*" etc., with many more suggestions by Davy thrown in, that went on for about a page. It was such a momentous piece of ridicule it is still being talked about today and should be memorable to Stephen if was an avid follower of Athol Street at all.

That was at the height of the Campaign for Equal Citizenship period, when we were trying to democratise the entity called Northern Ireland. Davy Gordon was involved in that project. Interestingly, I am currently updating a book I wrote back at that time called *From Civil Rights to National War*. That book contained an introduction by Davy Gordon—and I provided an introduction to Davy's book called *The O'Neill Years*—both Athol Street publications.

In the course of updating this book for a new edition, I read many of the articles I wrote during the 1990s and into 2000. I was amazed to find that in the year 2000 I wrote a dozen articles for the *Irish Political Review* explaining what the Provos were doing and why they were doing it. These will feature in the new edition of the book.

If anything, these articles are more supportive of what the Provos were doing back then than what is published in the

*Irish Political Review* today. And yet, Stephen only notices now that "*in recent years Irish Political Review has become a criticism-free zone for Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA*".

On what basis does Stephen suggest that we should have criticised the Provos, apart from the fact that they killed people? If we were to criticise everyone who killed people, we would never be finished criticising and we would have to write volumes criticising the British State and the United States for the killing that they do. That killing, which, of course, is called "*collateral damage*" is on a much larger scale, both geographically and numerically, than anything the Provos ever did, and seems to be grossly more irresponsible in its effects on the world. (On the categorisation of this killing I recently noticed that the US describes any male victim, between 15 and 60 years of age, of its attacks around the world, as an 'enemy combatant' or 'terrorist'. It seems that the US and UK have much wider understandings of the notion of a 'legitimate target' in warfare than the Provos ever had. On this point also I don't understand how aerial bombing, or the large-scale use of drone attacks, which seem to be the manifestation of liberal warfare by the Obama administration, are more discriminating form of waging war than what the Provos did. Quite the opposite, in fact)

The Provos had taken the Protestants of the North to be deluded, or 'colon' elements in Ireland. When the Provos began to treat the Protestant people of the North as a distinct national entity within Ireland and enter into a process whereby an historic compromise arrangement could be concluded with them, should we have condemned that? Did that political project not lie at the heart of what Athol Street had been urging on nationalism for the last 40 years or so? That was the project of Canon Sheehan, D.D. Sheehan and William O'Brien, after all, and it was the approach that Athol Street suggested taking when all shades of nationalism were antagonising the Protestants and trying to break their resistance. It was what we suggested might work to bring about an all-Ireland state when the other approach was just running up against a brick wall. And I noticed an explicit recognition of this new development, which has been going on for over a decade, in a radio interview with Martin McGuinness, at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, which has gone completely unnoticed by the Northern press:

"I recognise that there are one million people on this island who are British and let me state here and now that as a proud Irish Republican I not only recognise the unionist and British identity, I respect it.

People who think that a new Ireland, a united Ireland can be built without unionist participation, involvement and leadership are deluded... The war is over and we are in the process of building a new Republic" (Irish Indep. 23 June 2012).

Stephen may have missed the criticisms the *Irish Political Review* has made of Sinn Fein in recent years. There have been criticisms of its participation in Great War Remembrance events which seem to us to be the antithesis of the reasons for and objective of the independence movement that established the State in the South.

On the question of Sinn Fein's attitude to the Southern State a number of criticisms appeared in articles only last month, which suggested that Sinn Fein needed to stop seeing the 26 Counties as a kind of 'failed entity', akin to the 6 counties.

However, there is evidence at this moment that Sinn Fein are starting to grasp this particular nettle—in relation to the Sean Quinn business. In recent weeks the partitionist interests in the Six Counties—Unionists, the SDLP and its *Irish News* mouthpiece—have been trying to exploit a conflict of interests between local Border Sinn Fein members, who support Sean Quinn, and those in the Irish Republic who wish to see the Quinn Empire before its courts.

Fermanagh and Tyrone were great beneficiaries of the commercial development produced by Sean Quinn and there is a groundswell of support for the Quinns, and their productive enterprises that provided substantial employment for people in areas that had been wastelands previously, due to neglect in the Stormont era and a devastation wrought on the textile industry by British globalising free trade policies in the 1980s. (Quinn unfortunately widened his scope in conjunction with the banks to less productive and more speculative enterprise and this seems to have been his downfall.)

The Quinns have received the support of the local GAA and high profile and respected figures like Micky Harte, the Tyrone Football Manager. There is also hostility to the banks that have attempted to recoup their investments and have brought Sean Quinn and his family to the courts. Local Sinn Fein figures like Michelle Gildernew expressed support for the Quinns in recent weeks saying they had been "*treated disgracefully by the Irish Government*".

But it appears that national Sinn Fein (and it is the only truly national party in Ireland) have started to rein this support in on the basis that it compromises support for the Irish courts and the State in its

pursuance of justice. Recently, Sinn Fein deputy leader, Mary Lou Mc Donald said that there were "*strong emotions in support of the Quinns*", but they should not get in the way of justice. Sinn Fein's Phil Flanagan, MLA for Fermanagh/South Tyrone, backed this view:

"I completely agree with my party's deputy leader when she says that justice must be done before the courts; that is the only place this matter can now be resolved. In my view, it is imperative that the court case determining the liability for this loan is heard in a prompt manner and that no further side issues are dealt with until a decision on the legitimacy of this loan is made by a judge. All other outstanding issues are conditional on the outcome of that case and as such, they should be put on hold until that decision is made. It is not up to the media, to politicians or to anyone else to determine the outcome of this case. That decision needs to be made by a judge and the sooner that happens and a clear outcome is decided, the better it will be for all concerned."

If Sinn Fein keeps up this course, it may well take a hit in electoral terms in the Border counties but it is perhaps significant of a movement toward a full recognition of the State within which it aims to take political power. And that is an essential element of it acting purposely and effectively in government if that eventuality comes to pass.

Stephen may have missed these criticisms because they are not the sort of criticisms he would prefer to hear. They appear to be outside his horizons.

As to the Provos losing the war: Ed Moloney, who had previously been of the opinion that the Provos lost the war—and who had published the most substantial argument in favour of this view, *The Secret History of the IRA*—now seems to have changed his mind.

War is not over, he now suggests, as he has become personally embroiled in a war situation himself, as the British Government continues to pursue victory. And the logic must therefore be that, if it continues to pursue victory, then it surely did not win.

In an article in the *Belfast Telegraph* of 4th August entitled, *Peace Process Could Unravel Over Taped Fight* and sub-titled, *Legal moves to seize taped IRA interviews from Boston College are nothing less than the Government tearing up the peace process*, Moloney argues:

"Traditional wars usually conclude with one side winning and the other surrendering. Victorious troops parade through their

enemy's cities, the population at home celebrates and the enemy leadership pays the penalty for losing, sometimes the ultimate one, while many of their supporters end up in jail.

The 'war' in Northern Ireland didn't end that way at all. In fact, the best word to describe what happened is probably 'a draw'.

The IRA didn't achieve its goal of a united Ireland, but did get into government, while the British and unionists failed to inflict a military defeat on the IRA in the conventional sense; for example, combatants were let out of jail, not imprisoned, while the IRA's leaders were invested with a new respectability and political power.

People may quibble about what 'victory' and 'defeat' in such circumstances really mean, but it is undeniable that our 'war' did not end in the way such things normally do.

That puts a focus on another important difference with conventional wars; the arrangement which ended our conflict was agreed to in negotiations between the major forces involved in the conflict.

It is no exaggeration to say that, without it, our 'war' may never have ended, but that agreement carried the obligation that the deal would and should be honoured.

There was no doubt, however, that our 'war' did end and the evidence was unmistakable, because what had happened during the 'war' stopped...

Not an easy course for either side, but the necessary price of peace. In spite of reservations about true IRA intentions, for example over the extent of arms decommissioning, or the continued existence of an army council, there is little doubt that it has kept to its side of the 'peace' by ending its warlike activities.

But can the same now be said of the British side of this equation? Recently, the Historical Enquiries Team (HET), in conjunction with the PSNI's criminal investigations branch, has delved into the past to frame criminal charges against people who were active as combatants when the 'war' that has now ended was still raging.

The subpoenas served against the Belfast Project archive at Boston College, which I was involved in establishing, is a potential example of that type of activity, but it is not, by any means, the only one.

How and why the political blessing was given for this to happen is a question that so far seems not to have been even asked much less answered, but *prima facie* it looks very much as if someone on the British side, at some level, has decided to resume the 'war' that was supposed to have ended, by agreement, in a draw, by trying to put people who fought against them in that 'war' into prison.

It might be a different matter if this course was being pursued with vigorous impartiality, but it is not.

There is no possibility, for example, of MI5 and Force Research Unit (FRU) agents, or members of the old RUC Special Branch, facing charges for the murder of Pat Finucane—to highlight just one case—while the research of academics like Dr Patricia Lundy of the University of Ulster has underlined the many imperfections that flow from the police investigating a past which the police themselves helped to

create. Absent the necessary even-handedness, the HET/PSNI approach will inevitably have bad consequences.

You cannot unilaterally renew a war that ended in a draw, by agreement and with considerable compromise, without there being negative repercussions. A move like this amounts to a *de facto* abrogation of the peace deal by one side.

It would be foolish to attempt to predict when, or what form, such a backlash might take, but our knowledge of Irish history tells us that there will be harmful ramifications at some point."

I think this a pretty fair analysis of the outcome of the War and it requires little further comment. Anthony McIntyre, as an ideological Republican, believes that the final objective of Irish Republicanism was not obtained before the Provos laid down their arms—so they were defeated. Athol Street does not see it that way because we are not ideological Republicans and did not see the conflict in the same terms as Republicans did. However, it was always pointed out, down the years, that the Provo view was logical and consistent and was the only functional alternative to the Athol Street view.

And now there seems to be something of a confluence developing between the two.

It should, however, be clear to Stephen that people in Northern Ireland do not "*live in a Republican nirvana*", and Republicans have never claimed that we do. (There seems to be an argument appearing recently in anti-Sinn Fein accounts that the party has dressed the IRA campaign up in a civil rights guise with the objective, all along, to have been equal rights within the Union. I don't think that such a view has ever been expressed and it would be ridiculous if it was. However, the feeling that the Catholics were "*second class in their own land*" certainly was the driving force behind the Provo campaign and its subsequent political expression and the rectifying of this has proved to be the basis of a transitional settlement.)

Stephen might have noticed that we are not like a Biblical people in our reverence for sacred texts. We have always had a disrespectful attitude to them whether on the Left or in other parts of the political spectrum. If we hadn't we would not be what we are.

But what Stephen seems to want is an Athol Street, frozen in time at the point of Equal Citizenship, when some Unionists met at a momentary confluence with us and they were able to gaze out at the evil that was beyond, believing it to be the same for us all.

Like rivers, politics and nations are not eternal, however.

Pat Walsh

**THE UNIMPORTANCE OF  
KILLING IRISHMEN  
BRITISH GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIFTEEN  
MURDERS IN FIVE WEEKS.**

Letter sent to *Irish Times*, 4th July, but not published

## Orange-Green Common Ground

Mr. Bonar Law, Member of the British Cabinet and Leader of the House of Commons, speaking on August 5th 1920 in that House gave an official return of the civilians killed in Ireland during the five weeks ending 31st July, stating the number to be three. The facts are that eighteen civilians were killed in that period. Fifteen of these were murdered by British military and police. Mr. Bonar Law in omitting to refer to these murdered men tacitly accepts the British Government's responsibility for their murder. As these men were not supporters of the British Government apparently their deaths are not considered worthy of mention in the House of Commons.

The following are the names of the fifteen civilians murdered by British troops and police in the period mentioned by Mr. Bonar Law, and to whose deaths the Leader of the House of Commons saw no necessity to make reference:

- July 31st James, Mulcahy, Nicker, Co. Limerick. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 30th John O'Sullivan, Limerick City. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 29th Patrick Duggan, Bruree, Co. Limerick. (MURDERED BY MILITARY). (Aged 10).  
July 29th Thomas Harris, Bruree, Co. Limerick. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 24th Wm. McGrath, Cork City. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 21st James Cogan, Oldcastle, Co. Meath. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 21st Daniel McGrath, Coracunna Cross, Cork. (MURDERED BY MILITARY). (Aged 18).  
July 21st Thos. MacDonnell ,, ,, Co. Cork. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 19th John O'Breen, Cork City. (Aged 18). (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 18th James Burke, Cork City. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 13th Miss. M. Counihane, Limerick City. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
July 6th Thomas Feerey, Ballycommon, Kings Co. (MURDERED BY MILITARY). (Aged 70).  
July 4th Richard Lumley, Rearcross, Co. Tipp. (MURDERED BY MILITARY). (Aged 60).  
July 4th Michael Small, Upperchurch, Co. Tipperary. (MURDERED BY MILITARY).  
June 25th Cornelius Crowley, Bantry, Co. Cork. (MURDERED BY MILITARY). (Bedridden).

**A CONTRAST IN PRISON TREATMENT.  
HOW A BRITISH GENERAL WAS  
TREATED AND AN IRISH REPUBLICAN.**

Brigadier General Lucas was taken prisoner by the Irish Volunteers on Saturday June 26th 1920. He escaped on July 26th. The London "Daily Mail" of August 9th 1920 describing the treatment of General Lucas in Captivity says:-

"Many of these young men (Irish Volunteers) are keen sportsmen, and to this fact must be attributed the considerate treatment accorded to General Lucas during his captivity. When in Limerick (sic) he obtained everything he asked for. For

The visit of Orange leader Drew Nelson to Leinster House opens up a need to search for unrecognised common ground. Over a decade ago I reviewed historian Cecil Kirkpatrick's *Life of William of Orange for Books Ireland*. This work recognised William's popular role as the leading defender of the Dutch Republic (where he represented Zeeland on the Council of State) and drew attention to his use of Dutch republican experience in the subsequent imposition of constitutional control over the monarchy in Britain. He also reminded the brethren that in the European war of which the Boyne battle was an episode, the Pope was William's ally, and the victory was celebrated by a mass in the Vatican. Thus William deserves the title 'Republican Monarch' and, and some credit from Sinn Fein for his pioneering role in the evolution of European democracy.

There is however another episode less worthy of credit, and perhaps needing an apology: the deal done in 1914 with a German arms supplier, which led, in collusion with the British Tories in opposition, to the Larne gun-running in April of that year. This, and the subsequent Howth gun-running, also from Germany in June 1914, was interpreted by the Germans as implying that the British would be too much occupied with civil war on their home ground to be concerned about war on the continent, so they attacked France via Belgium, thereby avoiding the French defences on their common frontier. The implications of this need to be teased out by WW1 historians, and this is another story.

The implications in the current context of the Drew Nelson visit are equally complex: should they be thanked by the republican militarist traditionalists for introducing the gun into Irish politics, or should they be offering an apology for subverting the democratic Home Rule process by what in effect, when combined with the Curragh mutiny, was a Tory *coup d'etat* over the Liberal government?

The way forward surely in the current situation, arising perhaps from a critical look at history as suggested above, is to develop an all-Ireland Constitution, adapting appropriately the power-sharing principle to local, regional and national government structures. If the Orange Order were to be prepared to participate in this, could it perhaps be a model for the peaceful resolution of the Israel/Palestine problem, and other problems, in Europe and elsewhere, arising from apparently conflicting tribal cultural backgrounds?

**Roy H.W. Johnston**

instance, when he suggested a game of tennis, racquets, balls, lawn-mower, roller, and nets were immediately commandeered, and a tennis-court was manufactured by some means or other by members of the Irish Republican Army. He had some salmon fishing by day and some quite amusing poaching by night, and he was promised some grouse shooting in August, when he was to be the guest of a prominent member of the Irish Republican Army." (Seán Moylan, editor).

Mr. Lawrence Breen of Donohill, Co. Tipperary, was arrested on Friday, June 25th 1920 by British police. Mr. Breen has made the following statement:-

"I was arrested by District Inspector Williamson, G. Man (a detective), and four policemen. I was taken to the R.I.C. and put in the lock-up. While I was in the lock-up the police were tormenting me night and day. About ten o'clock that night I was taken out of the cell to an outside house by five peelers (policemen), and I was told I was going to be shot and I thought my time had come. I would not make any answer to them so they started knocking me around the place. They then took me back to the

cell and told me I had but an hour to live. About 12 o'clock they came into my cell and asked me was I ready. I said I was. So they blindfolded and handcuffed me. When they had done that they took me out again and put me on my knees. I may tell you I prayed then if I never prayed before. They asked me if I had any statement to make. I told them I had no statement to make to them but that I would like to see a priest. I was told that I could not see a priest and that I must die. They then told the firing party to line up. O, God! It was Hell, and they kept me that way for a half hour. I was then told that they would not shoot me until I had seen a priest. They took me back to cells again and I got fairly good treatment from them for the rest of the time.

Hoping this will find you and the boys as well as I would wish you to be.

(signed)Lar Breen."

Mr. Breen was tried by Courtmartial on July 27th on a charge of having in his possession "seditious" documents and of having at his residence a revolver and six rounds of ammunition and other seditious documents. On these charges he was sentenced to two years Imprisonment with hard labour. ■

Does  
It  
Up

Stack  
?

#### PUBLIC SERVICE ETHICS

The 'Croke Park Agreement' is well known to everybody in Ireland. I mean as a phrase, as something to say. But what is it really? Is it something to do with Public Service pay perhaps? There was a great deal written about it and broadcast about it at the time when it was negotiated but that is all a long time ago. It seems like a fairytale almost. Or "history" as they say. The ordinary citizen has much more to think about as he or she goes on day by day to live a "life of quiet desperation". And so the average person will say the Croke Park Agreement is something to do with the Public Service and politicians. Why was it—the agreement—entered into? Well, something to do with Government overspending—wasn't it?

It was indeed presented to the public as an agreement to cope with the public perception of a top-heavy Public Service which was costing the people too much for too little work. In reality, the politicians saw it as something else altogether and their view coincided with the view of the Public Service unions and this was the enrichment of higher paid public servants including the arch-public-servants such as the TDs, Senators, Ministers, Councillors and their advisor friends at the expense of the private sector.

It is the private sector which pays for all when all is said and done. Yes, the private sector is enabled to do its business by the security and court system provided by the Public Service in the Department of Justice but those services are provided in a very inefficient and costly manner. The private sector has had to provide itself with its own security, its own mail services, its own messaging services and so on. Private road and sea and air transport services now take the place of inefficient and expensive rail and air services formerly provided by the State. The State is doing its best to sell or contract out the services formerly provided to the private sector and unfortunately for Ireland, the buyers or contractors are mostly outside the State. That is, 'outside' in the sense of taking wealth out of the economy.

It might be said that the Public Service is contributing to the economy. Their contribution is not apparent. They consume the product of the private sector and, in the case of most public servants they are paid

excessively, with the result that the excess is spent on luxury goods imports and holidays abroad which do nothing for improving the Irish economy.

At the time the Croke Park Agreement was negotiated, it was said there were 320,000 public servants. If we accept that figure (it seems on the low side) and, if we accept that all of them work for 40 years (many of them take early retirement), it means that apart from deaths in service, 8,000 retire from the public service each year. Eight thousand public service jobs could be abolished each year. Not only the salaries and expenses would be saved but think of the office space which would be released into the property market and available for private sector jobs to occupy profitably. But no! The Croke Park Agreement gets in the way.

The Government is still borrowing to finance current expenditure, such as salaries and allowances and rent of offices. There is no justification for this borrowing. It is unethical to carry on borrowing in the present economic circumstances. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has not, despite its name, reformed anything much yet.

Take for example, the 796 soldiers who are paid the "Border Allowance" of €96 per week for enlisted personnel and €112 per week for officers, even though they have done no Border duties for years. It has been decided by an adjudicator that the allowance cannot be stopped because it had become a "permanent payment". The allowance has been retained for those who were in receipt of it on 3rd February 2009. There are at least two issues here: Who was managing the payroll at the times these 796 soldiers ceased to do Border duties and ceased to be eligible for the allowance? The Managers should have been dismissed, court-marshalled or otherwise severely disciplined for depriving the State and the tax-payers of €4.6 million a year, and secondly why is it that overpayments of Social Welfare allowances are routinely claimed back from recipients and the soldiers' allowances were not only not clawed back out of their pay but were, quite illegally, continued to be paid. The soldiers knew they were no longer on Border duty and were getting away with the allowance.

There are over eight hundred allowances in the Public Service which in addition to the generous pay is costing the tax-payers One Thousand Five Hundred Millions of Euro each year. Minister Howlin TD, Labour, is drawing €170,000 a year to preside over all this and he's there 15 months now. What has he done so far? At the very least, some of the managers should have been fired, as they would have been if they were in the private sector. And he could start with Personnel Managers who tolerate "sick days" which are beyond twice the rate of sick days

among private sector employees. This may appear to be rough stuff but what is going on in the Public Service is very rough on the ordinary tax-payers and on the 14% unemployed. If the necessity does arise to take on new personnel in the Public Service, there should be a new contract at half of the present rates of pay. Many school leavers would be delighted to take on such a cushy job rather than emigrate. A job with heavily subsidised meals, parking, nice warm desks in the Winter and more than comfortable pensions.

#### PENSIONS

And, talking of pensions, how much is left in the National Pension Fund? It was first raided years ago by Charlie McCreevy for Five Hundred Millions of Euros and it has been raided a few times since. The latest proposal to again raid the Pension Fund is in the Stimulus Package announced by the Government on 25th July 2012. The proposals include schools, health facilities and new roads. The schools and health facilities will be welcome but the new roads are something we cannot afford just now. Minister Howlin needs the new roads, many of which are in his constituency by coincidence, as he hopes to get enough votes to be reselected next time out.

#### TDs' LIABILITIES

All TDs have to declare their assets on being elected. Their "interests". It has now emerged from Minister of Health, Dr. James Reilly's appearance in Stubbs Gazette that a Register of Liabilities might be just as important, or even more important than their assets. Who are they beholden to? Minister Phil Hogan of the Environment received a "soft loan" of €900,000 from Irish Nationwide Building Society which was, it seems, personally approved by Michael Fingleton the CEO of the Building Society when Mr. Hogan TD was in Opposition. A "soft loan" is one on which no interest has to be paid and therefore does not follow normal banking criteria. Can anyone reading this suggest why a TD would get such an enormous sum of almost €1 million? It does not stack up! No wonder Fine Gael was so uncomplaining in Opposition. How many more members of the Oireachtas owe overwhelming sums of money? How many of them may be insolvent? A TD who is bankrupt must resign his/her seat. How much is being concealed from us?

Michael Stack ©

On-line sales of books, pamphlets  
and magazines:  
[https://www.atholbooks-  
sales.org](https://www.atholbooks-sales.org)

# Obituary

## Cork Employment Resource Centre 1988 to 2012

### Part Two

#### IMMIGRANTS

Apart from the foreign languages taught to Irish customers, the centre provided classes in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to the many immigrants who flooded into Cork in the early 2000s. EFL classes had been taught at the Centre since about 1990, but the Celtic Tiger caused the classes to expand exponentially. This, of course, was a huge benefit for the students, many of whom had high skills but lacked the command of English to exploit them in Ireland. The surge of immigrants also gave rise to a specialist adviser being appointed to deal with immigration issues.

The Centre also supported immigrants who were having difficulty with the asylum process. One case involved a young woman of Nigerian antecedents but British citizenship, who was arrested on charges of having a false passport and incarcerated, with her asylum-seeker partner. It transpired that her British passport was genuine. She came to Ireland to join her partner and went to the Department of Social Welfare to inquire about procedures incident to getting employment. An official at the Department became suspicious, called Gardaí, and the lady was arrested. She was charged but her name was cleared, somewhat grudgingly, some weeks later, when her case was called and the State offered no evidence. The Centre supported the lady throughout what was a frightening ordeal and directed her to a solicitor who took successful proceedings against the State on her behalf. She got a job cleaning at UCC, and the staff of the Centre were invited to her wedding.

Among the Centre's most important features, from its inception, was the social welfare and employment rights advice and advocacy service. The immigrant advice service grew out of this, but it never lacked Irish customers. Over the years it built up considerable expertise. All customer information was treated as absolutely confidential and clients learned to trust the advisors. There was always a core of advisors employed on CE, but the department was fortunate in receiving generous support from post-graduate social science students from UCC and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), several of whom worked as volunteers during their college vacations.

#### NEWSPAPER

From 2002 to 2006, the Centre produced its own monthly newspaper, *Centre Focus*. Run on a shoestring, *Centre Focus* grew from eight to twenty pages of news, comment features, sports news, poems and stories, mostly written by customers

and staff of the Centre, and a few professional outside contributors. Unfortunately, issues of censorship arose between the Editor and the CCTU [Cork Council of Trade Unions], which ultimately resulted in the paper's closure.

#### FREE CANTEEN

If the kitchen is the heart of a house, the free canteen was, in many ways, the heart of the Centre. It was a convenient 'waiting room' for those arriving early to classes, but it also developed a regular clientele of its own. Its customers ranged from young continental students waiting for their English classes to elderly Corkonians, there for a chat and to avoid the rain, but there was really no stereotype. The canteen was one place where someone with no money could expect a warm welcome, a cup of tea and a friendly chat.

Taken together, the classes, both work-related and leisure, advice and advocacy service, canteen, Job Club and Local Employment Service provided a very successful one-stop-shop for unemployed, disabled and retired people. In the early 2000s, the Centre served more than 40,000 customers a year. Even after the savage cuts in establishment of 2003, customer numbers fell little.

#### COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

The Centre both gained and lost by the Community Employment system. Without CE, the Centre would not have existed at all. It provided personnel, at the expense of the State, and with them a *per capita* grant to cover the cost of the materials they used in doing their jobs, and a further sum for participant training. Apart from the rental of the building, very little cost fell on the sponsor body, the CCTU. Most of this was covered in practice by other contributions, until the Centre's establishment was slashed under the Mary Harney regime in 2003.

It cannot be denied that the CE system in general benefitted the Centre and its customers to a very great extent. It also benefitted the larger Irish society, in that it gave unemployed people constructive activity and training, and provided services through projects like the Centre to the public at large. In the case of the Centre, it enabled the services already described, and gave a sense of purpose to the staff. It was, by the bye, a great boon to single parents, by providing viable part-time employment. A lone parent on CE could keep her or his benefit as well as drawing the wages from the project. There was a similar, though less generous, concession for the disabled.

The disadvantages were several. Though probably more than offset by the

benefits, it could be said that CE discouraged "volunteerism", since jobs formerly done by volunteers were now often done by CE participants. More seriously, it was something of a political football, introduced in the first place to reduce the published unemployment figures. It created services which had not previously existed, or greatly improved some which did exist, but when unemployment fell, as it did in the 2000s, it lost much of its original *raison d'être*. Consequently, Government had an excuse in 2003 to drastically prune CE numbers, regardless of the effect the cuts would have on services. Also, from the beginning of CE, the intention was that an unemployed person would do a year on CE, during which they would receive training and work experience and then return to the live register with better chances of obtaining mainstream employment.

In exceptional cases, they might be allowed an extra year on CE. Later, older participants were allowed to remain on CE for longer periods. While this was done with the good intention of helping people to become employed, it did not take account of what the participants actually did while on CE. In the Centre's case, it meant that useful employees were quickly lost and continuity of service was hard to achieve. The Centre's staff were giving a real service to the public, and this obviously suffered from a high staff turnover. In practice, up to 2011, FAS officials did their best with the rules to allow good staff to remain in post, or to return as soon as possible if they could not remain beyond two years, but, with best will in the world, they were hamstrung by their own regulations.

#### MARY HARNEY

During the 1997 to 2002 Fianna Fáil Government, CE schemes were allowed to expand, but in 2003, having won a second term of office, with Mary Harney of the Progressive Democrats as the Minister responsible, things changed suddenly and dramatically. Numbers were cut by half. The Centre, having expanded its range of services, suddenly found that, with the cut in numbers came a cut in funding which brought it to the brink of closure. Centre Manager, Willie Fitzpatrick, appointed in 1998, took the bull by the horns. FAS decisions were appealed and a publicity campaign mounted to save the Centre. Meetings were held with politicians and FAS and Union officials in an attempt to achieve a compromise to keep the Centre alive. A fund-raising campaign was started, with considerable success. Great credit must go to fund-raisers Josephine Frayne, Martha Cullinane and Audrey Maguire for raising €23,000. Perhaps even greater credit should go to the business community of North Main Street and elsewhere in the city who provided the money, as well as many of

the Centre's own customers who, though their individual contribution were but a drop in the bucket, they were greater in proportion to their means. Apart from cash raised, there were some contributions in kind. Barry's Tea, for example, supplied tea for the canteen until the day the Centre finally closed.

At the same time, approaches were made to the CCTU to extend the member contribution system initiated by Billy O' Donovan. Billy who remained, in retirement, Honorary Life President of the CCTU, and Centre trustee, enthusiastically supported the project. A proposal was put to the CCTU Executive that a new appeal be made to Union members to contribute €1.00 per week, instead of the former contribution of 10 pence. The Centre's own fundraisers undertook to make contact with the members if the CCTU would endorse the appeal and provide contact information for the shop stewards concerned. The CCTU Executive agreed to this, but it was not long before the Centre discovered that this did not mean that the appeal would happen any time soon. In order for the appeal to be made, paperwork had to be prepared and approved by CCTU officials. A letter outlining the appeal itself had to be drafted and a mandate drawn up for signature by the contributors to allow their contributions to be collected. Over the next three years, many drafts were prepared and submitted to the CCTU, and always sent back for amendment. The contact details for shop stewards were never forthcoming. Billy O'Donovan became seriously ill, and the impetus for the proposal was lost. Billy died in 2005, much regretted by the Centre and his older Union colleagues, and with him died the proposal. Had it come to fruition, and had even as few as 5% of the 50,000 Union members within the aegis of the CCTU signed up, the Centre would have been financially independent of CE and FAS.

In spite of this, the Centre managed to survive. It adjusted to the new conditions, intensified the stringency of its financial management, and accepted that it could not provide every service as fully as it previously had. Some classes ceased to exist, and, for example, the number of social welfare and employment rights advisors was halved from four to two. This meant that the hours the service was available were reduced, which meant that, on occasion, distraught people had to wait to be seen. Then it was decided to charge a fee for computer classes and for classes in English as a Foreign Language. This was very much against the ethos of the Centre, and charges were kept very low, but every little that could help was called into play.

Up to this point, relations with FAS had generally been good. The Centre was subject to fairly frequent monitoring visits from FAS, and during these visits, the finances, in particular, were closely examined, even as late as

2010, the Centre's accounting systems drew compliments from the inspecting official. Occasional procedural issues were raised, but these were quickly addressed to the satisfaction of FAS. The CCTU helped by funding the financial controller who had replaced the assistant supervisor, who was a casualty of the cuts, and her assistant, and the manager's secretary. All these posts were part time. Relations with the CCTU were holding up well too, despite its executive taking exception to two articles in *Centre Focus*, and insisting on censoring every issue. This so delayed publication that it ultimately ceased publication in 2006.

#### FAS CHANGES

In the same year, the CCTU decided to place the Centre under the management of a company limited by guarantee. This seems to have been done primarily to have been done in order for the Centre to become a registered charity. At this time the centre's name was changed from the CCTU Centre for the Unemployed to the CCTU Employment Resource Centre. The directors of the company included one representative each of the Centre's staff and of its customers. The remaining majority was appointed by the CCTU. The Centre manager was appointed Company Secretary, though later he was required by FAS to resign. The directors replaced the former board of management whose constitution had been similar. From 1988 until 2011, the Centre Manager had always been secretary to the board of management, with no objection from FAS. This arrangement meant that he was a vital link between the Centre itself and the CCTU nominees on the board. He did not have a vote, but did have a voice, and from his position could always expect to have a full understanding of the reasons behind the directions of the board.

In late 2010 or early 2011, the FAS management changed. The new faces did not smile upon the Centre. The Assistant Manager, Community Services and the Community Services Officer found fault with the Centre's procedures and accounting systems at every turn. Procedures were constantly changed, and then, as often as not, changed back again, and good-will between the Centre and FAS rapidly evaporated. Two audits were carried out by FAS's audit team. So far as the Centre's manager could gather in conversation with the audit team leader, they found few and minor problems, though this was cast in doubt by later events. The Centre's CE staff was cut further, from 20 to 15, causing, if anything, a greater crisis than that caused by the cuts of 2003. This led to the formation of a group, calling itself the Friends of the Employment Resource Centre, which pledged itself to supporting the Centre in the troubles which were now becoming evident. From mid-2011 on, all negotiation with FAS were carried out, at his own insistence, by managing director Tom Bogue. This led to the resignations from the board of the Centre staff and customers' representatives. Manager

Willie Fitzpatrick had already resigned as secretary, on orders from FAS.

In November, the Centre Manager was told that the Centre's funding from FAS would continue into the following year, but on 15th December 2011, it was announced that funding would cease on 30th December 2011 and that when the Centre closed for the Christmas holiday, it would not reopen. FAS told the press that the Centre had poor administration systems, breaches of programme procedures, failure to prepare financial statements and no accounts had been filed since 2009. In addition, FAS said, the company operating the Centre was insolvent and had not filed accounts for two years. However, the report on which these allegations were made were not released. It took a request under the Freedom of Information Act four months later to prise them out of FAS.

The CCTU issued a press release setting out their side of the story, which is quoted in full, as follows:

"The Board of Directors and Management deplore the decision of FAS not to provide schemes for the Centre in 2012. The effect of this decision is that the Centre cannot re-open after Christmas and it represents a grave disservice to the unemployed of Cork at a time when their needs were never greater.

The last year has been a difficult one for the Centre in its relationship with FAS.

During that time FAS have raised numerous issues about the Centre's management and financial arrangements which had, since the Centre's inception in 1998, been generally acceptable to FAS.

The Directors, Management and staff of the Centre have devoted considerable time and effort to addressing the issues raised by FAS and were prepared to continue to do so.

In a statement issued on the 6th December last the Directors indicated their intention to seek new Community Employment, Job Initiative and Job Club schemes for 2012 from FAS and "the putting in place of arrangements (at the Centre) which would be mutually acceptable to both organisations" and the contents of this statement were communicated to FAS. In making it the Directors noted that in a press statement issued as recently as 28th November FAS had referred to "working with CCTU to achieve substantial improvements in administration and performance" as an option for the future.

However, when the Directors met FAS on the 10th December, 2011, they were bluntly told that, for the reasons which they have set out in their statement, FAS would not provide schemes for the Centre 2012, and that this decision was irreversible. FAS were not prepared to consider, nor indeed listen to, any alternative proposals or enter into any dialogue on the matter."

The Friends of the Centre called a public meeting on 15th December 2011 in support of the Centre which was attended by 135 people. As a result of this meeting, the Friends decided that they would not accept



the closure of the Centre lying down. They invited Tom Bogue to meet them on the 3rd January to discuss possibilities, and to reopen the Centre themselves on that day.

Between this meeting and the beginning of January, Manager Willie Fitzpatrick and a Job Club employee received their redundancy packages directly from FAS. The two-woman finance team and the manager's secretary, employed directly by the CCTU had not received theirs at the time the Centre finally closed on 18th May. The reader may bear in mind that this occurred at the time that the Vita Cortex workers, with the support of SIPTU, were fighting for redundancy payments in excess of their statutory rights.

In fact, representatives of the Friends, including Manager Willie Fitzpatrick, met Tom Bogue on the 5th January. He agreed to be quoted as follows:

"We had a meeting with the Friends of the Centre. We share a common interest in maintaining services to the unemployed of Cork. Arising from the meeting, we will be consulting with the Officers of the CCTU and our legal advisers and we envisage a further meeting with the Friends of the Centre, subsequent to these consultations."

Nothing further was heard from him until February.

#### **RE-OPENED**

The Friends opened the Centre to the public on 3rd January, 2012. Four volunteers worked at the Centre full-time from that date until it closed on 18th May. They included Willie Fitzpatrick, and Claire Clifford, who continued where they left off, Willie as manager and Claire running the canteen. Others gave their time as tutors or social welfare and employment rights advisors. Former Job Club facilitator Jo Frayne took charge of reception and the writer resumed what had been his office six years previously, as PRO, and, later as financial controller.

Inevitably, financing the running of the Centre was a huge, and ultimately insoluble, problem. Funds came from donations from members of the public, customers and volunteers themselves. The Friends agreed that they must meet all expenses incurred by the Centre as they arose, and that they would not allow it to close in debt. This they did, but in practice, they also had to meet the CCTU's company's debts for telephone services, electricity and water charges, in order to keep these services connected. In the first month or so, donations were sufficiently generous to keep the Centre's head above water, with even a little to spare. This was eked out by donations from customers attending classes. These were kept low, at €5.00 for computer classes and €3.00 for all others. The canteen continued to be supplied with Barry's tea, and biscuits were donated, so the canteen continued to give free service, as did the social welfare advisors.

The major problem was staff. All the CE and JI staff had been drafted elsewhere by Fas, so the Centre had to rely on former staff and other volunteers. High praise is due to these people who generously gave their time without pay to the service of the unemployed, but, for reasons which were usually beyond their control, few of them could adequately fulfil all duties. If they were themselves unemployed, they had to have regard to the legal requirement to be available for employment. Some were self-employed, and had to give precedence to paid work, which could clash with undertakings to the Centre. On the whole, the volunteers did their best, but there were also one or two who could not accept the discipline of work when they were not being paid. Also, UCC began to offer English as a Foreign Language classes which were cheaper than the Centre's. This led to a fall-off in attendance at those classes, though the Centre was particularly blessed in the quality of its EFL tutors.

The Friends approached the CCTU in January with a revived and revised version of the Euro-per-member proposal, first raised in 2003. Copies of the proposal were handed to all CCTU members attending a meeting on 26th January, but no reply was ever received. Though the Friends continued to press the CCTU, it appears to have simply 'dropped the reins'. The Friends were very conscious that the building was owned by Cork City Council, and were aware that there were arrears of rent owed by the CCTU. They approached the City Council and were surprised and gratified to get a very sympathetic hearing from Valerie O'Sullivan, Director of Corporate Affairs. She gave the Friends to understand that the Council was sympathetic to their aims and objectives, and would be willing to consider offering them the lease of the building if they were able to operate the Centre successfully. However, this could not be seriously discussed until the CCTU had discharged its responsibilities in regard to the outstanding rent.

The CCTU, indeed, seemed to be doing little to help itself. It was owed in the region of €60,000 by FAS, which it could claim once it presented audited accounts, but they had not paid their accountants, who, naturally, refused to release the accounts. The Centre continued to receive demands for the CCTU's debts in respect of Centre, including demands from the Revenue Commissioners for tax deducted from participants' wages.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the Friends obtained the FAS audit reports which had led to the withdrawal of funding. These laid blame for such faults as they found at the door of the CCTU and its nominee company. Unfortunately, the reputational damage suffered by Willie Fitzpatrick, as manager of the Centre, remains in the public domain while the reports remain effectively unavailable.

By mid-May, it was clear to the Friends of the Centre that their financial situation was becoming menacing, and a decision was made to close while funds remained to pay the bills. The Centre closed to the public on Friday 18th May. The core staff planned to return on the following Monday, to pay the last bills and tidy up, leaving the Centre as they would wish to find it, and finally hand over the keys and alarm codes to the CCTU. However, after the staff had left on Friday evening, CCTU Secretary Sharon Cregan broke into the Centre, with the aid of a locksmith, and changed the lock. In doing so, she set off the alarm to which she did not have the disarming code. Unbelievably, she simply locked up and went home, leaving the alarm sounding. The security company, monitoring the alarm, called Willie, the keyholder. He went to the Centre and was, naturally, unable to open the door. He called a locksmith and a Garda also attended the scene. The locksmith examined the lock and Willie's key and told Willie that the lock had been changed.

This led Willie to call Tom Bogue, from whom he learned what Ms Cregan had done. She, at first, refused to return until the Garda applied pressure. When she arrived, it required considerable pressure from the Garda before she would allow Willie to disarm and reset the alarm. The terms finally agreed were that Willie would reset the alarm if she would assure him that the key would be produced on Monday morning so that the staff could remove their personal effects, and the Friends' funds and books of account. She agreed to these terms, but on Monday morning it appeared that she had renegeed on the agreement.

The next four days were a standoff, where the CCTU refused to allow Friends to enter the building, and the Friends refused to give the CCTU the alarm code. Finally, on Friday morning, the Friends lost patience and entered the building through an open upstairs window, disarmed the alarm and did what they had to do, leaving the building clean, tidy and secure, with the alarm reset. Word having reached the CCTU, Tom Bogue appeared but refused to approach the Friends who were intending to hand him the alarm code—until he was persuaded by Gardaí, whom he had called. The Gardaí declined to take any action against the Friends.

This was the sad end of what had been a noble endeavour. It was enacted simultaneously with the end of the Union-promoted Vita Cortex 'siege'. It seems surprising that Cork Council of Trade Unions, proud heirs of Connolly and Larkin, should have closed down the only centre for unemployed people in Cork City and County, and locked out their own staff in a manner reminiscent of William Martin Murphy in the Great Dublin Lockout, 99 years before.

## COMMUNES continued

This doctrine of society involves the principle of hierarchical subordination at every stage, but unlike the Aristotelian theory it does not involve total subordination or the institution of slavery. For every individual member of the whole is an end in himself, and his particular *officium* or *ministerium* is not merely a compulsory social task but a way of the service of God through which he shares in the common life of the whole body. No doubt in practice a man's place in the social hierarchy may be determined by heredity or social competition, but in principle the theory favours the conception of vocation and the internal autonomy of each particular organ.

Now, as we have seen, there was already a tendency in the feudal order to recognise the organic nature of society and the reciprocity of rights and duties in the social hierarchy. But the feudal system rested in the last resort on a foundation of serfdom and on the power and privilege that were won and maintained by the sword, so that the feudal state could never entirely escape from the condition of anarchy and disunity out of which it had arisen. The medieval city, on the other hand, was essentially a unity—a visible and tangible unity, sharply defined by the circle of its wall and towers and centred in the cathedral, the visible embodiment of the faith and spiritual purpose of the community. And within the city, the autonomous corporate organisation of the different economic activities in the economic and social life of the community, by means of the gild system, corresponds perfectly with the doctrine of the organic differentiation and mutual interdependence of the members of the Christian society."

### "COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES"

"Thus the medieval city was a community of communities in which the same principles of corporate right and chartered liberties applied equally to the whole and to the parts. For the medieval idea of liberty, which finds its highest expression in the life of free cities, was not the right of the individual to follow his own will, but the privilege of sharing in a highly organised form of corporate life which possessed its own constitution and rights of self-government. In many cases this constitution was hierarchical and authoritarian, but as every corporation had its

own rights in the life of the city, so every individual had his place and his rights in the life of the gild.

These rights were not purely economic or even political, for one of the most remarkable features of medieval gild life was the way in which it combined secular and religious activities in the same social complex. The gild chantry, the provision of prayers and masses for deceased brethren, and the performance of pageants and mystery plays on the great feasts were no less functions of the gild than the common banquet, the regulation of work and wages, the giving of assistance to fellow gildmen in sickness or misfortune and the right to participate in the government of the city. For it was in the life of the Church and in the extension of the liturgy into common life by art and pageantry that the community-life of the medieval city found its fullest expression, so that the material poverty of the individual man was compensated by a wider development of communal activity and artistic and symbolic

expression than anything that the more materially wealthy societies of modern Europe have known.

In this, the medieval city was more completely a *commonwealth*—a full communion and communication of social goods—than any society that has ever existed with the exception of the Greek polis, and it was superior even to the latter, inasmuch as it was not the society of a leisured class supported by a foundation of servile labour. Erasmus {Dutch priest and scholar, 1469-1536}, who saw at Strasburg one of the last examples of the full gild constitution of the Middle Ages that still survived in the age of the Renaissance, was conscious of this when he wrote:

"I saw monarchy without tyranny, aristocracy without factions, democracy without tumult, wealth without luxury... Would that it had been your lot, divine Plato, to come upon such a republic"... (Dawson's *Religion And The Rise of Western Culture*, p.169-173).

## TRADE UNION NOTES

### Rebuilding?

"Our requirements are changing due to the fact that we are in the middle of a five-year process restructuring SIPTU into an organising union. What does this mean? SIPTU is now engaging with thousands of workplace representatives with a view to organising the hundreds of thousands of workers who are not union members and do not enjoy the benefits of union support on issues such as job protection/preservation, pay and conditions of employment.

In addition, the union has moved from the old geographic branch structure to a divisional one focused on different economic sectors which requires more space for interaction among our staff and activists. Indeed, the wider trade union movement is also reviewing its operations and the net result of this is that SIPTU's space need is likely to be greater than it now is. If the union is to prudently prepare for the future it cannot simply restrict itself to 10 or 11 floors." (Joe O'Flynn, Gen. Secretary, SIPTU, *Ir. Times*, 6.8.12, Redevelopment of Liberty Hall, Dublin)

### Overtime

The amount of unpaid overtime being done by Irish workers is on the increase.

A survey by Peninsula Ireland has revealed that 67% of workers say they occasionally spend time working evenings and weekends without pay to cope with their workload.

It has also shown that many employees are using mobile phones to keep up-to-date with work while they are technically off.

In a survey of 934 Irish employees it found 76% of them work an average of up to 65 minutes extra on a monthly basis.

But 43% feel that their overtime is not acknowledged by their boss.

### Outs and Ins

"The leader of union responsible for the strike at the Passport Office in 2010 has retired.

"Blair Horan stepped down from his 120,000-year-role as General Secretary of the Civil Public and Services Union having reached the union's mandatory retirement age of 60.

"In one of his last statements, he criticised those calling for the withholding of pay increments to public sector workers. He said it was protected under the Croke Park deal" (*Irish Independent*, 3.3.2012).

Former RTE journalist, Eoin Ronayne, has taken over as General Secretary of the country's largest civil service Trade Union, the Civil Public and Services Union (CPSU). Mr. Ronayne was the Union's outgoing Deputy General Secretary.

Mr. Ronayne joined the CPSU in 2002 after working for eight years as the Irish Secretary of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

## COMMUNES continued

all sorts of different social origins, that a ground was prepared on which the higher qualities of medieval society could be purified from the crudity and violence of feudalism. The very condition of existence of the city as an essentially economic association of peace, the freedom and the common interest of all the citizens, together with freedom to work and the basing of property on personal effort and industry.

"In all these respects the city corresponded to a great extent with the demands of Christian ethics. As a non-military peaceful community of work, using the military element only for its defence and still devoid of capitalistic urban features, the medieval city was a pattern of Christian society as we find it in Thomist theory. From the political and economic point of view the period of civic culture which begins in the eleventh century may be regarded as a preparation and foundation of the modern world. But for the historian of ethics and the religious life it also appears, with its cathedrals and its intensive church life, its religious confraternities and guilds, its care for the spiritual and material welfare of its inhabitants and its educational and charitable institutions, as the highest point of development of the medieval spirit" (E. Troeltsch, *Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, pp. 250-251)."

### COMMUNES

"It was in this atmosphere of economic renaissance, the expansion of commercial life, and increasing opportunities of personal freedom, that the great flowering of the religious culture of medieval Christendom took place; a flowering which finds its artistic expression in the new Gothic style of architecture and sculpture which had its origin in Northern France in the twelfth century and spread from one end of Western Europe to the other during the next hundred and fifty year" (Dawson's *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* p.169-173).

"No doubt Viollet le Duc {French architect, 1814-1879} went too far when he defined Gothic architecture as the architecture of the communes—a lay art inspired by the new spirit of popular liberty—since the monks also, above all those of the Cistercian order, had an important share in its early development. Nevertheless, there is a close relation between the two movements, since the new art originated in the regions of Northern France in which the communal movement was strongest, and the great

cathedrals which were the supreme achievements of the new style were the centres of the civic life of the new cities, like the city temple in antiquity.

"For the new city produced a new people and a new art, and although both were conditioned by economic forces and depended materially on the revival of commercial and industrial activity, they were also inspired by new spiritual forces which to a considerable extent preceded the economic revival. Thus the way of pilgrimage are older than the trade routes. St. Gilles was a centre of pilgrims before its famous fair developed and before Marseilles and Montpelier became centres of merchants."

### POLITICAL POWER OF GUILDS

"Finally, and above all, it was the religious confraternity or "charity"—the free association of individuals under the patronage of a saint for mutual aid, spiritual and material—which was the seed of the great flowering of communal life in the merchant and craft guilds which were the most striking feature of medieval urban society.

The life of the medieval guild was a microcosm of that of the commune, and its intense solidarity made its membership more important in the life of the individual than that of the city itself, since it was primarily through the guild that the ordinary man exercised and realized his citizenship. The constitution of the craft guilds was essentially the same throughout Western Europe; and in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it came to play the leading part in the life of every medieval town, from great cities like Florence and Paris and Ghent down to little towns with only a few hundred inhabitants.

There was, however, a great difference between the part played by the guilds in the life of the free cities of Italy and Flanders and Germany and the more modest functions that they performed in countries like England and the France of the later Middle Ages which possessed a strong royal government. The position in Italy was unique, inasmuch as the nobles—at least the lesser nobles—from the first took a leading part in the common life of the city, and the guilds to which they belonged—such as the bankers, the merchants and the lawyers—inevitably possessed a much greater social prestige and political influence than the guilds of the craftsmen and shopkeepers. Hence it was in Italy that the guilds first succeeded in dominating and practically absorbing the government of the commune and concentrated its authority in the hands of their own

representatives—the Priors of the Greater and Lesser Arts.

It is, however, in Northern Europe, in the cities of Flanders, that we find the most remarkable development of the craft guilds as a political force. Here in the fourteenth century the guilds of the less privileged workers, above all, the weavers who were the largest element in the population, rose against the merchant aristocracy and set up a kind of medieval dictatorship of the proletariat. Under the rule of the guilds of the clothiers the three great cities of Flanders—Ghent, Bruges and Ypres—reached their highest point of development and for a short time played an important part in European politics. But this was a unique achievement, due to the exceptional condition of the Flemish industrial cities which possessed a great international market. In more normal cases the craft guilds were subject to the control of the civic authorities and formed a hierarchy of corporations through which the economic and social life of the town was regulated in the most minute detail. In this way the medieval city succeeded in reconciling the interests of the consumer with the corporate freedom and responsibility of the producer. As the late Henri Pirenne {Belgian historian, 1862-1935} wrote:

"The medieval urban economy is worthy of the Gothic architecture with which it is contemporary. It created in every detail, and one might say ex nihilo, a system of social legislation more complete than that of any other period of history, including our own" (H. Pirenne, *Les Villes du Moyen Age*, p.182).

### "IDEAL OF UNITY"

It was this integration of corporate organisation, economic function and civil freedom which makes the medieval city, as Troeltsch remarks, the most complete embodiment of the social ideals of the Middle Ages, as we see them in their most highly developed form in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and his contemporaries. Mediaeval political philosophy was dominated by the ideal of unity. Mankind was one great society, and above all the regenerated human race, that portion of mankind which was incorporated in the Church was united in its membership of Christ, its Head, by its allegiance to the divine law and by its dedication to one transcendent end. This unity formed a complex hierarchical organism, a body with many members, each having a vital function to fulfil, each with its own office and ministry for the service of the whole.

continued on page 26



**LABOUR**

# Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 30 No. 9

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

Mondragon,  
Part 11

## Guilds and Communes

**"Christopher H. Dawson has been called 'the greatest English-speaking Catholic historian of the twentieth century.' Despite this, most of his books have been out of print for decades now, and graduate students today are ignorant of his work"**

*(Catholic Resource Centre, UK).*

Dawson (1889-1970) rejected the blanket assumption that the Middle Ages in Europe failed to contribute any essential characteristics. He argued that the mediaeval Catholic Church was an essential factor in the rise of European civilization, and wrote extensively in support of that thesis.

Indeed, Dawson believed the best historians were those who used their imaginations to understand the world and man's place within it. Counter to the progressive thinking of the beginning of the twentieth century, Dawson believed one knew the highest things from the faculty of the soul.

The true historian, Dawson argued, will recognize that *"something more is necessary—intuitive understanding, creative imagination, and finally a universal vision transcending the relative limitation of the particular field of historical study..."*

"Dawson, in particular, was one of the first scholars to incorporate the insights of cultural social anthropology into historical interpretation and to see culture rather than nature as the basic building block of civilization. Unlike many of {his} distinguished predecessors and contemporaries, including Hegel, Marx, Comte, Spencer, Freud, Spengler, and Toynbee, {he} was skeptical about evolutionary paradigms in historical study.

"The idea of social and historical "evolution" adapted metaphorically from Darwinian biology, had made a deep impression on two generations of historical scholars but seemed to Dawson fatally compromised by its materialist premises

and deterministic implications.

"{Dawson} also rejected many of the commonplaces of late Victorian historiography, such as the Teutonic theory, which held that Anglo-Saxons were a distinctive race singled out by biology for world dominance... {He} was equally critical of the theory of progress as an innate force in history and criticized such advocates of rational planned progress as H.G. Wells" (*Catholic Converts—British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome*, Patrick Allitt, Cornell University Press, 1997).

Dawson seems to have disappeared completely from Catholic scholarship following Vatican II. For the purpose of our articles on the history of Guilds, we turn to his 1958 publication *"Religion and the Rise of Western Culture"* from which the extract below is taken. Dawson lays great emphasis on the role of the Guilds, a subject that the more liberal academics choose to ignore. Certainly in the English-speaking world, such study would cast further bad light on the Protestant Reformation.

### MEDIAEVAL CITIES

"The development of the feudal society and the institutions related to it represents

only one aspect of the revival of Western culture in the Middle Ages. No less important was the rebirth of the city which transformed the economic and social life of Western Europe. During the Dark Ages, and especially in the Carolingian and post-Carolingian age, Western Europe had become an almost entirely agrarian society, in which the life of the city played a smaller part than perhaps in any society that has reached a similar stage of civilization..." (*Religion And The Rise of Western Culture*, Christopher Dawson-Doubleday, Image Books, New York, 1960, p.161-162).

But from the twelfth century onwards the medieval world was once more a world of cities in which the life of the city and the civic spirit were hardly less intense than in the classical age of Greece and Rome. Nor was the medieval city a repetition of anything that had gone before. It was a new creation, unlike the cities of antiquity or those of modern times and differing also, though in a lesser degree, from the types of city which were to be found in the East at the same period.

This new type of European city had a considerable influence on the religious development of Western Europe during these formative centuries. The late Ernst Troeltsch {German Protestant theologian, 1865-1923}, following Max Weber, went so far as to maintain that it was the medieval city which first provided the favorable conditions for a thorough-going Christianization of social life such as had existed neither in the city culture of the ancient world, which was based upon slavery, nor in the feudal agrarian society which had been built up so largely by the strong at the expense of the weak.

"It was", he writes, "only when the city which arose out of the disintegration and surplus of feudal landownership had united its varied population, drawn from

*Irish Political Review* is published by the IPR Group: write to—

33 Athol Street, Belfast BT12 4GX or

### Subscription by Post:

12 issues: Euro-zone & World Surface: €40;  
Sterling-zone: £25

### Electronic Subscription:

€ 15 / £12 for 12 issues  
(or € 1.30 / £1.10 per issue)

You can also order from:

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

continued on page 27