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## Special Victims

In June Jim Allister, the one-man opposition at Stormont, scored a rare political success for the Unionist ethnic bloc over the Nationalist ethnic bloc in the passing of his Special Advisers (SPADS) Bill.

And in landing a blow on Sinn Féin he succeeded in knocking out the SDLP.

The 'Northern Ireland' Assembly voted to bar anyone with a "serious" (i.e. 5 year) conviction from being a Special Political Adviser (SPAD) at Stormont. The Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill was passed after a long debate in the Assembly. The vote was 56 in favour of the bill and 28 against.

It succeeded with the support of Unionist and Alliance MLAs. Sinn Féin and the Green Party voted against the Bill, while the SDLP abstained.

Patrick Murphy, in his *Irish News* column headlined 'SDLP has dug hole in a moral minefield' (1.6.13), noted after the SDLP humiliation:

"The party's difficulty is that it does not appear to know why it exists... Many believe that the party is heading for extinction. But on the evidence of recent weeks, the SDLP appears to have sufficient reserves of ability to inflict a lot more self-harm before that happens. It has much more to offer students of political decision-making before it dies."

The *Irish News* editorial the previous day had bemoaned the SDLP's quandary over the SPADS Bill, blaming the Provos for their being boxed into the position from which they self-destructed. But this was surely sour grapes. It was clear that the SDLP humiliation at the hands of the one-man opposition was entirely self-inflicted.

The main reason for the SDLP problems over the SPADS Bill was that it had often indulged itself by using the Special Victims ploy against Sinn Féin—a developing feature of the parallel 'Get Adams' campaign in the South, referred to in last month's *Irish Political Review*. This ploy involved picking out particular casualties in the War to suit a particular agenda.

There is, of course, nothing new in the use of Special Victims against Republicans and they are well used to dealing with the stoking up of emotions through their use. But the SDLP *après* John Hume is vulnerable to collateral damage around them, it seems.

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## The State Of The EU?

*The Irish Times* editorialised on the EU decision to abandon its arms embargo on Syrian rebels as:

"A regrettable step on Syria... This is a regrettable outcome of the intense talks. It may jeopardise the forthcoming peace conference in Geneva convened by the United States and Russia, notwithstanding the British and French intention to weaken the regime in those negotiations by threatening to arm its mainstream opponents. Most EU states including Ireland argue against such a further militarisation of the already highly internationalised conflict" (31 May).

This decision was a lot more significant and 'regrettable' for the EU than it was for Syria. It showed what the EU has become—a body that has lost its way. It is clearly absurd that a body of 27 states which wants to be a force in the world can be hijacked by two of its members on such a crucial issue as the civil war in Syria.

The EU is now like the UN on a bad day. It can be ignored with impunity on the most important issues by those who have the will and desire to do so. And the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

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## Obituary

### Ruairi O Bradaigh

Ruairi O Bradaigh kept Anti-Treaty Republicanism alive within mainstream political opinion in the 26 Counties for forty years after a majority at the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis of January 1970 voted to dissolve it. He kept it alive by being a public figure who gave it a voice that was heard.

The Sinn Féin majority at that Ard Fheis, Official Sinn Féin, went on to become part of the 26 County Establish-

ment. It fought a war in the North for a couple of years in a medium of ideological fantasy, it robbed banks in the South, it killed its dissidents and threatened others, and it became an agency of the Kremlin in Catholic Ireland, but everything was forgiven it because of its lethal enmity towards the Provos—that enmity at least did its best to be lethal. It is now in government in Dublin as the Labour Party.

O Bradaigh founded the Provisional Republican movement when the Sinn Féin majority made its peace with the Treaty. That is to say, he gave the provoked

nationalist insurrection of 1969 in the North its direction in the course of 1970. That insurrection was not Republican in origin. It came about through defensive action by Catholic communities against Protestant forces connected with the State which attacked them. Successful defence by a community against the State is tantamount to insurrection.

The insurrection found itself in being before it knew what it was. All it knew was that it had happened and that it would not stand itself down. And it stood in need

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"The perception of the public at large is that in this instance—the Mary McArdle instance—the young girl, coming from Mass on a Sunday morning with her family, was shot dead. To put those people, who have that type of record, into the top of the administration in Stormont is to actually negate any of the really basic philosophies of the Good Friday Agreement in terms of reconciliation. It is actually giving the two fingers to the unionist community and the community at large."

But, if "*reconciliation*" was a purpose of the Good Friday Agreement, it was not about reconciling within communities. So, unless Mary Travers is regarded as a kind of honorary Unionist by virtue of her father being a judge, what Mallon was saying was nonsensical.

According to the *Ulster Newsletter* (8.6.13):

"The Bill's author, TUV leader Jim Allister, amended it to take into account the SDLP's request for an appeal mechanism for those rejected as Spads—provided they showed contrition for their crimes. However, Mr Mallon adopted a tougher position, saying that he did not believe contrition was enough and said that there seemed to be 'a malign policy of Sinn Fein' to antagonise IRA victims... Asked if the party would change its mind on blocking the Bill, he said: 'I hope so and I will do my best to ensure that they do'."

Mallon then made this thinly-veiled attack on the current SDLP Leadership:

"I don't have much influence nowadays but I know the mood and the feeling in this community and if they are trying to get away with it by explaining to people what happens in Stormont, let them remember that in politics when you're explaining, you're losing."

Mallon, when he was Deputy First Minister in 1999, tried to put clear blue water between the SDLP and SF when he made an offer to David Trimble that would have meant the exclusion of Sinn Fein from the Executive. It was an offer that Trimble couldn't refuse—if he was serious about the positivity of the Agreement for Unionism. But refuse it he did, and then proceeded to drag the SDLP and Mallon down with his UUP.

That offer had the potential of dis-establishing the Nationalist *continuum* and establishing a *continuum* of 'moderation' in its place—but Trimble funk'd it.

Mallon is a very '*slow-learner*' about these things, it seems.

As the *Ulster Newsletter* noted, the SDLP attempted to escape the hook by

Catholics are of little consequence to Unionists in the Northern Ireland system.

Although the Census has declared them to be not all Fenians, and semi-Brit in 'identity', when it comes to the bit they have never developed the habit of voting for Unionists. So the Unionist ethnic bloc is only interested in Catholics in the use they have in furthering the interests of that bloc against the Nationalist ethnicism.

So the non-Fenian Taigs may play a part as a kind of filler for the Union, to replace the declining Prods in mystifying Government polls on 'identity', and other such sociological nonsense. Or they can be of use as Special Victims employed against the wider interests of their community.

But they must be victims of a particular sort—victims of the Provos, accidental or not.

A Catholic victim of the State or Loyalism is of little interest to Unionism, even when the killing was a deliberate massacre. There may have been the ritual condemnations uttered by all right-thinking people about such bad business, but such condemnations were devalued and rendered

meaningless by the mandatory character of said rituals—with the result that the only condemnations that had any significant meaning and political effect were those of Sinn Fein—whose leaders did not indulge in the condemnation fanfare.

The SDLP worked up great odium against Sinn Fein for making an Adviser of someone convicted of the killing of a Catholic woman, Mary Travers in 1984, when the Provos tried to assassinate her father, a judge. But it then tried to side-step the implications of this position when Jim Allister's Political Advisers Bill was introduced and it said it would back a Petition of Concern against it, potentially blocking the legislation through the activation of a cross-community vote that requires the consent of the majority of MLAs from each ethnic bloc to support it.

This would have given Sinn Fein a veto on it.

Seamus Mallon, who led the SDLP after Hume, was not happy with this stance and told BBC Radio Ulster's *Good Morning Ulster* programme:

tabling a number of amendments to Allister's Bill—which was now being called "Anne's Law" after the victim's sister.

What hoisted Mallon's successor (plus two), Alasdair McDonnell, on his own petard was the demographic of the victim in this case—a middle-class Catholic. She had the potential to snare the SDLP much more than a Protestant victim.

The victim's sister, Anne Travers, met with the SDLP and, after the party showed no sign of bowing to the power of the Victim, she accused the SDLP of "putting two fingers up to victims".

The SDLP Leader, Alasdair McDonnell, despite calling the Bill "bad law", then backtracked and announced:

"We will not be supporting a petition of concern. While we are deeply concerned about the flaws in the bill and our amendments have not been accepted, nevertheless we feel the victims' issue takes priority."

One was tempted to comment: 'He who lives by the Victim, dies by the Victim'. But that would be in awfully bad taste wouldn't it?

One of the more interesting parts of the debate occurred when the squirming SDLP sought to put down amendments to Allister's Bill. In one change to the Bill—Amendment No. 8—the SDLP sought to replace the word "contrition" with "regret".

This seemed to relate to the feeling that Allister was attempting to force a very Catholic form of repentance on Special Advisers if they wished to save their jobs. The implication being that it was the Catholics who were the only real sinners.

Replying to Alex Attwood's suggestion that the word 'regret' was sufficient to achieve personal contrition for offences, here is how the Assembly debate went:

*Mr Allister:* "The Member makes the point that, in amendment No 8, there is a personal relationship to the offence committed. That may be, but, in the globalised context, which he has not disputed, someone could say, 'I regret all the deaths of the Troubles. All the criminality of the Troubles was wrong, and, in that context, I have regret for and acknowledgement of etc, etc, my crime'. It can be sanitised by putting it in that context. If, however, the requirement is for contrition, there is no wriggle room whatsoever. The problem with the SDLP amendments is that the SDLP wants to maximise the wriggle room, for whatever reason, and, in doing that, it diminishes the respect and rights for the victim.

"Mr D. Bradley (SDLP): ... The Member argues that amendment No 8 is globalised, but, in fact, that is far from the case. It is directed purely and solely at the offence that the person has committed,

## The Sulán: In The Swim?

Regarding Seán McGouran's article "Ó Riada's Receipt". (*Irish Political Review*, June 2013): He refers to the music of "The Banks of Sulán" and states; "apparently there isn't a river or even stream called Sulán".

Is he serious?.

What would the people of Baile Bhuirne and Macroom say to this piece of ignorance!

With all the Cork people associated with the *Irish Political Review* how did this get through?

**Pádraig Ó Horgan**

as is the wording of the amendment: 'regret for', 'acknowledgement' and 'accepts the gravity and consequences' of the offence that the person committed. So, rather than the amendment being globalised, our belief is that it is very clearly directed at the individual and the offence that the individual has committed.

*"Mr Allister:* The problem with the Member's contention is this: all those fine words can be ditched and rendered meaningless by the applicant setting them in the globalised context and saying, 'I regret all the deaths of the Troubles etc, and, in that context, I have regret for, acknowledgement of and acceptance of the gravity and consequences of the offence of which I was convicted'. The fact that it could be done in that way renders it meaningless.

*"Mr D. Bradley:* ... He makes the point that the proposed appointee can globalise the offences and place his or her offence in that global situation, but it is the job of the adjudicating panel to judge whether a proposed appointee accepts the individuality of his or her offence or is globalising it. I suggest that any member of an adjudicating panel who is worth his or her salt would see through that and would adjudge on that basis.

*"Mr Allister:* If the criterion was personal contrition, there would be no wriggle room whatsoever for an applicant or panel member to try to find a way through. They would require a context that was personalised contrition. Therefore, the opportunity to have regret in a globalised, sanitised context would be removed. Fundamental is this: no matter how much the SDLP might like to massage those words and say that they mean something that they do not, the reality is that, as drafted, they merely require regret. That can be regret couched in language that utterly undermines any suggestion of remorse, contrition or anything else.

*"Mr D. Bradley:* I thank the Member for giving way. He would have to admit that 'contrition' has to be interpreted. I realise that 'contrition' is a very Catholic word. Perhaps the panel would have to draw on the services of an eminent Catholic theologian to define contrition and decide whether an applicant is contrite. Obviously, the panel will not go to that extent, but the point that I am making is

that, at the end of the day, the interpretation of someone's contrition is objective. One person may decide that, yes, that person is fully and totally contrite. Another person might think the total opposite. So, Mr Allister's argument is not as nailed down and firm as he might think. All these things are open to interpretation, and, at the end of the day, all these things are objective.

*"Mr Allister:* I do not accept that Catholicism has a monopoly on contrition. I certainly think that contrition is something that we all can and, in appropriate circumstances, should experience and express. I do not think that it is sectarianised or anything else in its presentation.

"The one thing about 'contrition' is that it will not admit to a sanitising, globalised context; 'regret' will. That is the real weakness in the SDLP amendment: it admits to that sanitising, globalised context of saying, 'I am sorry, I regret, because all that happened was wrong'. Contrition does not admit that; it admits that it is wrong. They personally know and feel that it is wrong, and they want to express that, No matter what else happened in the wider context, they are contrite for what they did. 'Contrite' is an ordinary English word, and the panel will be able to grapple with it. It will know when it is being presented with contrition and when it is being presented with phoney regret. I think that it will know the difference all right."

Jim Allister is a 'sack cloth and ashes' man. The DUP left him behind when the Big Man moved away from this religious position into practical politics in 2007 and concluded a functional settlement with SF.

He inserted the qualification of 'contrition' into his Bill to allow Special Advisers to humiliate themselves so that they could save their jobs. If this was done at the suggestion of the SDLP, they are more disorientated that we would ever have imagined.

And so Allister could lecture the spoiled priest about what 'contrition' means!

Allister is regarded as an effective parli-

amentarian. It is a pity on him that he hasn't got a real parliament to operate within. But, during the passage of his Bill, the SDLP made-believe that they were legislating in a real parliament and they were found wanting when they came up against a real parliamentarian.

There is a lesson here but '*constitutional nationalism*' refuses to learn it.

The SPAD episode proves once again that an SDLP leadership of Catholics after the Agreement of 1998 would have been disastrous for the Catholic community. And it therefore shows why there has been so much discontent with the functional arrangement that Sinn Fein has established with the DUP recently, in various quarters.

The settlement made with Republicans in 1998 has not worked out as intended.

The objective of it was to establish a harmless middle-ground UUP/SDLP coalition with a marginalised Sinn Fein and DUP trailing the real *locus* of power. The 'consociational' principle on which the political structures are based envisaged the establishment of a moderate political elite managing the 'extremes' and any activist members of society. The Executive Ministries were from the start allocated considerable independent power. Also, the Assembly was rendered weak by placing nearly all the parties within it in government.

That is why there is no opposition, aside from one MLA, Jim Allister of the TUV—a remnant of the DUP from its semi-oppositional phase when it attempted to oppose the system from within.

(Of course, Trimble was the most significant opposition to the Agreement, even as First Minister. But Trimble's attempt at turning the orderly Republican withdrawal from the battlefield into a rout failed and instead resulted in Sinn Fein going from strength to strength and establishing a very functional arrangement with the other and more honest Unionist 'opposition' in the DUP.)

Sinn Fein has taken to referring to the SDLP as "*the party of John Hume*" lately. This is to point out the contrast in the party since the architect of 1998 stepped aside and let the devolutionists get on with running (ruining?) his achievement. To Catholics it is clear that their enhanced position was and is all due to the Provos plus Hume. The rest were superfluous and have proved themselves to be incompetent since.

All 'right-thinking' Catholics support Anne's Law, of course, because it is the

'right thing' to do! But there are mutterings among the right-thinkers about what a *hames* McDonnell and his clueless crew have made of the greater battle against the traditional enemy. And that is the battle that counts after all!

It is not good that a one-man Unionist assault team made such a fool of the SDLP. And, from the contributions of some of the DUP MLAs, it was clear that they were quite enjoying the consequent weakening of the Catholic block by the discomforting of Sinn Fein, and moving back toward their instinctive position—after being forced into more accommodationist position by Sinn Fein in the aftermath of the Flags Dispute of the turn of the year.

For 50 years constitutional nationalism presided over a situation in which Taigs were kept firmly in their place by Prods. Unionists gave the Nationalist Party the run-around. Then came the events of August 1969 and Provo War has put them into a very different place.

However, the gains made by War would have been squandered if the SDLP had been left to reap its harvest. That was made clear by the way in which Allister, in trying to damage SF, ended up with the SDLP in a pickle.

It was what Trimble accomplished years ago and Allister has done it again.

**Pat Walsh**

## The State Of The EU? continued

Baroness Ashton, who with her merry men all over the world is supposed to oversee and direct its foreign affairs, was nowhere to be seen. This makes a joke of the concept of it being a Union. And the more futile and impotent it becomes in these areas the more voluble and sanctimonious it can sound about the very issues it claims to be able to deal with. It will be merely the whinge of the impotent. When the chips are down it is now a talking shop.

How has the EU come to this? That can only be understood when the original purpose of the European project is acknowledged. The popular concept was expounded recently by Brendan Halligan when he explained that the European project—

"... presented a world in which nations undertook to be permanent friends and allies for, after all, the Rome Treaty, on which it was founded, declared itself to be a treaty in perpetuity. It was neither limited in time nor, for that matter, in ambition. Its first aim was to create an

ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, an ambition that was undefined and unbounded" (quoting from The Garret Fitzgerald Memorial Lecture, "*Strategies for a Small State in a Large Union*" to the Institute of International and European Affairs, 9 May 2013).

It was a wonderful idea, was it not? But why did nobody think of it before? And, if it is all a case of 'presenting' great new worlds, then all solutions to its problems should be as simple as that—if that solved its own centuries of conflicts—simply 'presenting' new worlds! This is all make-believe when the context of the original European project is ignored.

After two World Wars which were also European civil wars, orchestrated in each case by Britain, that led to the destruction of much that could be called European civilisation, the main victims, Germany and France, decided to form an alliance that excluded Britain from their affairs and those of Europe.

Also, in the era of the Cold War, European states had very little room for manoeuvre in the world and saw that such an alliance was needed to preserve whatever influence was left to them. The success of national liberation movements also encouraged the European Imperialist Powers to look to their own affairs, 'draw in their horns', and give up Imperialist notions for the good of all concerned. In other words it was hard realities—and survival—that necessitated a European project.

These two fundamentals of the context that necessitated the European project no longer exist. The USSR is no more; therefore the imperative to cohere in the face of it is no more. Also, the UK was allowed to join and within a few years began to undermine the basis of the project. Under its influence European states began to have plans for the world again, expansion Eastwards. The impetus for deeper internal integration was consequently diminished and dismissed as building a "*fortress Europe*". The 'community approach' was abandoned and desperate superficial attempts were engaged in to put a brave face on the change, with the concept of an EU Constitution to give the impression of a continuing integration—but that was a paper exercise. And it failed.

When the EU faced the reality of the banking crisis after 2008, its institutions could not cope and a new inter-Governmental approach had to be adopted, with a completely new Treaty base, the Fiscal Treaty. That is now the only binding force. It is confined to Euro-zone Member States, present and to come. This means that the

Fiscal Treaty is the only Treaty that needs developing and implementation. This is the only glue in the European project today. It should be the only focus, if anything that can be called a realistic European project is ever to develop...

The UK is seeking to focus on EU Treaties and, insofar as it can succeed, it will undermine the essence of both Treaties.

The EU Treaties should be left strictly alone to wither on the vine. The debacle on Syria showed—as with many other international crises—that the EU's contribution is to exacerbate difficulties, as it has become either a simple-minded apologist for the USUK view of the world, or has failed to assert its disagreement with it. The EU only adds fuel to the flames of any conflict it engages with. Its decline is a positive gain in world affairs.

But naivety about the UK's role in Europe continues unabated. John Bruton is a most thoroughgoing EUophile. He was shocked to the core by what Cameron did in December 2011 to prevent the EU dealing with the development and consolidation of the Euro. He referred to the UK behaviour in terms akin to *perfidious Albion* at work. You could hear scales falling from eyes.

The UK counterposed the EU structures to the Euro and was using the former to undermine the latter. That was as clear as daylight. But the Euro is developing despite the UK. The UK will never join the Euro and cannot but see it as a threat to Sterling. Indeed, Cameron's later proposals would undermine the EU as well. But 18 months on what does Bruton want the UK to do now?

"Although the UK is not a euro zone member, its co-operation is crucial if EU institutions are to be used to solve the euro crisis. But, rather than offer the support that its European partners need, Britain is pursuing its own agenda" (Examiner, 9/5/2013).

This is cockeyed. Does Bruton not realise that the EU intuitions have failed to deal with the Euro and the acceptance of that fact is why we have a Fiscal Treaty in the first place? Bruton never mentions the words *Fiscal Treaty*, much less describe the significance of that development. The UK prevented the EU from dealing with the Euro issues. It caused this new Fiscal Treaty development and now he wants to invite the UK in by the backdoor to solve the problem it created! Even though the problems are being solved by the Eurozone states!

What has changed? Is there any evidence that the UK has developed any

closer concern or commitment to the EU or the Euro? The very opposite is clearly the case. What has changed is that Bruton's naivety has re-emerged after the shock of December 2011. He is asserting in effect that the Euro cannot stand on its own two feet and is dependent on the UK.

Some people just as naively hope that the UK will simply fade from the scene, talk itself out of the EU and become part (maybe the only part) of some sort of non-attached, undefined, something else besides the EU or Eurozone. That was Halligan's view in the talk referred to above. While Britain is Britain that benign scenario will not happen. While any kind of European entity is succeeding, as the Euro is doing, the UK has unfinished business in Europe and, after 500 years of success in this theatre, it is not likely to pack in further opportunities to fish in any troubled waters that arise. It will continue its natural role of disrupting any such successes in Europe.

And John Bruton's naivety shows why they can be so confident of continuing their natural role in Europe.

**Jack Lane**

## Ruairi O Bradaigh continued

of a purpose in order to maintain itself.

The whole thing grew out of a very modest 'civil rights' demand for reform, which the Orange apparatus in which the British State chose to present itself in the 6 Counties could not cope with. The response of the State to the demand carried the Civil Rights leaders out of their depth. All sorts of radicals and revolutionaries had associated themselves with the movement as it caught the headlines but none of them knew what to do next when the situation was changed abruptly by the effective resistance of the Catholic or Nationalist communities to the assaults launched against them by the forces of the State.

The Official IRA, largely disarmed and in ideological transition, had lost its bearings. The People's Democracy had run out of perspective. The New Left Marxists, who had come over from Britain for the revolution, went back home when it happened. Jack Lynch had urged on the insurrection with an inflammatory speech in mid-August 1969, and had followed this up with measures apparently intended to hold the insurrection in a stance or organised Catholic defence officially backed by Dublin, but he backed down under British diplomatic pressure, and

discredited his own policy by criminal prosecutions of those who had served him. And Ruairi O Bradaigh shaped the insurrection into the Provisional IRA and made war on Britain in the medium of Anti-Partitionism and Anti-Treaty Republicanism.

There was, however, a twist in the Treaty arrangement which Anti-Treatyism had not taken account of. The Treaty did not just Partition Ireland and hold part of it within the British state. If it had done that, it is unlikely that Anti-Partitionism would have remained an active force.

Catholic or Nationalist discontent in the North did not derive from resentment at the memory of its exclusion from the Irish state. It was not a form of nostalgia. It arose daily from current experience. When Partitioning the country, Britain placed the Six County Nationalists or Catholics under the dominance of the Six County Protestant community outside the political democracy of the British state—and the British state was the only state there ever was in Northern Ireland.

Democratic politics was not possible within the Northern Ireland variant of the British state. Most of the services of state were supplied by the British State proper. All that was devolved to Northern Ireland—i.e. to the Six County Protestants—was policing and local government. The role of the Catholics was to be policed by Protestants and to have planning decisions made against them. British reforms, such as free education and the National Health Service, came to Northern Ireland from the political system of the state proper. They could therefore have no effect on alleviating the antagonism of two communities in the North. And that antagonism was aggravated daily by the devolved power. The ruling Protestants were in the grip of a Papist phobia. They could not distinguish between politics and religion. And their permanent preoccupation was with the need to curb Papism in all its manifestations.

The British State undoubtedly had a purpose for taking on this perverse form in its Northern Ireland region, but it has chosen not to reveal it, and its apologists maintain a studied silence about it.

It was this twist in the Treaty arrangement that maintained the antagonism of the communities in the North, and that gave the Provisional IRA its mass support in the War. But it also meant that the War could have a substantial secondary objective—which could be seen as a stepping-stone

on the way to the ultimate objective. And that was the cause of the split in the Provisional movement between O Bradaigh and Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. Adams pursued the secondary objective of overcoming the Treaty arrangement as it applied specifically within the North. He did not explain that that is what he was doing—nor should he have done so. The actual conduct of politics in an intricate situation is not the same thing as historical explanation.

The split was bitter. O Bradaigh saw Adams as giving away one of the major strengths of the Anti-Treaty position. But what Adams did was a necessity of development in the North.

**Book Review: *Empire* by Jeremy Paxman**

## Story Of Empire

I bought this hardback, remaindered for £2.99 at W H Smith and I'd urge you acquire it while stocks last.

It is amazing, considering its provenance, being honest and informed, a rare combination in Britain's best known commentators. It is throughout enlivened by its author's dry wit.

Its subtitle is '*What Ruling the World Did to the British*', and it explores its enduring effect on the British Psyche. It does not shirk describing what the world endured physically.

It is not hyperbole to describe the British Empire from its origins to its decline, as nasty, brutish and long. Paxman acknowledges the idealism of Imperialists who built schools and hospitals and gave their lives serving peoples of other lands, but describes the rogues and chancers, opportunists and fanatics and gruesome monsters who made the Empire.

Paxman introduces us to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who persuaded Elizabeth I to let him cross the Atlantic to found the first English colony in North America.

"The characteristics of this founder of empire—visionary enthusiasm and slippery opportunism - occur time and again in the people who brought so much of the world under British rule."

"Gilbert was certainly a hard enough nut for this voyage into the unknown, having shown utter ruthlessness during the campaign to put down a rising in England's first (and perhaps its last) major colony, Ireland. As a military governor he gave no quarter and accounts of the war there talk of supplicants being made to approach him through an avenue of severed heads. It was in the Irish colony too that Gilbert had learned the practice of 'planting' settler communities."

Gilbert, a Devon man, was the half-brother of Walter Raleigh.

Nearly three hundred years after the death of Queen Elizabeth I, the Diamond

After the Good Friday Agreement, Martin Mansergh, adviser to Fianna Fail Taoiseachs, published a tirade against O Bradaigh in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Mansergh could not tolerate Anti-Treaty dissidents having a public voice in the state. But Mansergh did not say that the War, as diverted towards a secondary objective by Adams, had been legitimate. And, at the same time, Mansergh was covering over the Anti-Treaty origins of Fianna Fail and tracing the legitimacy of the 26 Co. state to the Treaty.

In the presence of such chicanery, one could only applaud Ruairi O Bradaigh for his stubbornness in presenting a clear Anti-Treaty record of events monthly in *Saoirse*.

Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated in 1897. During the first sixty years of her reign "*there had been no fewer than seventy wars, expeditionary campaigns or punitive raids fought in her name*".

"In August the previous year" continues Paxman, "the Royal Navy had fought the shortest war in history when the Sultan of Zanzibar died and his twenty-nine-year-old nephew had the temerity to declare himself successor without seeking the approval of the British Consul on the island. When the young man refused a British ultimatum to quit the palace, the three British warships opened fire. It was two minutes past nine in the morning. By 9.40 it was all over. The British had fired 500 shells and about 5,000 rounds from their machine guns. Five hundred Zanzibaris were dead or wounded, for one wounded petty officer. As *Small Wars, Their Principles and Practice* had explained the year before the Jubilee, in campaigns against savages 'mere victory is not enough. The enemy must not only be beaten. He must be beaten thoroughly ... What is wanted is a big casualty list... they must feel what battle against disciplined army means'..."

"Once the enemy started to run, they were to be pursued by cavalry, their villages burned and their crops destroyed. An example had to be made."

When Lieutenant Colonel Derek Wilford was earning his Order of the British Empire, an "Order of Chivalry", in Derry in January 1972, there were many people still alive who had been alive in 1896, perhaps even veterans of that shortest war waged in Victoria's Terrorist Empire.

The sixty-one year reign of the current monarch has seen sufficient horrors inflicted in her name on various peoples.

It is to the great credit of Jeremy Paxman that he eschews the Poppycock and Tommyrot school of history—

"A British trade delegation to China in November 2010 triggered a minor diplomatic spat when they wore red poppies in memory of British war dead, without realising that poppies on British lapels were unlikely to inspire affection."

**Donal Kennedy**

## A WHITEHALL DINER ORDERS BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

Sunday the 12th of February, 1989, a blustery evening in Belfast.

Pat Finucane, his wife Geraldine, and their three children sit down to dine.

The kitchen darkens but on the decanter a bloody red is cast.

Maybe the conversation was of Douglas Hogg, Home Office minister, who said in the British Parliament, on the 17th of January, 1989, that some Northern Ireland solicitors, agog, were: 'unduly sympathetic to the cause of the IRA.' Sinister?

Deplorable, those who charge him, their names will not fall on this page as filth. Accused of having IRA brothers John and Dermot, and Seamus engaged to Mairead Farrell. Why not be British and have his family trimmed. No? So they wish him shackled on his own soil and designated not of the right tilth.

In the UK with its constant child, woman and serial killers, where animal abusers are severely dealt with, all have the right to be defended, all have a lawyer in an instant except those British-by-coercion whose deaths are planned in a London lair.

The sledge on the door, the wild eyes of the gun bores, fourteen shots, twelve in the head to destroy the feared brain. They kill the body but the legend will not die. Screeching, the end of children's joy, the frozen wife, the spreading gore.

Their emotions are in stone, you can see it lining Whitehall, cold blood on tap for every soldier, against the warm blood of resistance. The army wife, when her husband doesn't come home, says in clichés: 'He died for his country.' No in someone else's country, doll.

The flags flutter today as if London has become Belfast. A decrepit monarchy squeaks up another notch. Veterans from the losing battle of Afghanistan march the streets, for them the Archbishop prays. The brutal machine blatantly displays itself again. The people celebrate. The past is now and it lasts.

They put him underground with the evidence of doing so later buried with him, the gravedigger being The Inquiries Act, 2005.

To p7,col 1

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## OPINION POLLS

The Long Fellow rarely comments on opinion polls. Most people don't think too much about politics between elections and a preference given to a pollster has no political consequences. So any interpretation of the results must be tentative.

The Ipsos/MRBI poll published in *The Irish Times* (14.6.13) shows FF at 26%; FG 24%; SF 21%; Labour 9%; the Greens 2%; and Independents 18%. Since about a year after the last General Election the Government parties have been on a downward trajectory and both the two main opposition parties have benefitted from the general level of disaffection.

The general mood of disaffection is reflected in the satisfaction ratings of the party leaders. In every case more people are dissatisfied than satisfied with our political leaders. However, it is interesting to note that Gerry Adams has passed out Micheál Martin as the most popular (or least unpopular) leader. His satisfaction rating jumped 6 points to 33%, while Martin's rating rose by 2 points to 31%. How can this rise in satisfaction for Adams be explained? The only explanation the

## WHITEHALL DINER

continued

It restricts public access to information.  
Downed  
by government control. Alice-in-Wonderland now  
has an axe but down that burrow we must go.

Though:

A militarist nation that wants to stay militarist is hardly likely to open up its archives or consider guilt over its past colonies or wish to become an Iceland or a Bhutan or become peaceful should you insist for the populace cries blood on all except their own.

So, like Pat Finucane, an unusual lawyer must arise.

Don't let weariness wear you down,  
let those many years gone flow again,  
where there are survivors there is a spring.  
Start there though water floats or sinks you.  
Let the weight of evidence them drown  
as they shred their top secrets  
and their democracy gets harder to defend.

**Wilson John Haire**  
6th June, 2013

Long Fellow can think of is the Miriam O'Callaghan interview with the Sinn Féin Leader. Micheál Martin should take note: criticising Sinn Féin's record on the North only enhances its popularity. Journalists and politicians in the South only show their ignorance of Northern Ireland when they attempt to tackle Sinn Féin on this issue.

## GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL PROSPECTS?

While the opinion poll does not augur well for the Government parties, their electoral prospects may not be quite so gloomy. The narrative of both parties before the last General Election was that the Fianna Fáil-led Government had lost Irish sovereignty with the arrival of the Troika. If the State can exit from this programme, they can claim that sovereignty has been restored.

While it is not certain that the State will emerge from the programme by 2014, at present it looks likely. The budget deficit is better than target. The Troika target was 8.2% for 2012, the actual figure was 7.6%. It is projected that the budget deficit will be 4.3% for 2014 compared to a Troika target of 5.1%. The Fiscal Advisory Council predicted last April that the deficit could be as low as 2% by 2015.

Employment has stabilised and has begun to increase again (1.1% or 20,500 in 12 months to the first quarter of 2013). Unemployment is down by 29,900. The unemployment rate is currently at 13.7%.

Recent projections by the ESRI are for GDP growth of 1.8% this year and over 2.7% next year (*RTE News*, 16.5.13).

However, there remains a doubt about the banks. Recently Fiona Muldoon—a possible successor to Matthew Elderfield as Financial Regulator—has suggested that, of the 50 billion owed by small business, 50% may be bad. Although the Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan, does not consider it likely, there is a widespread view that there may be a need for further re-capitalisation of the banks. The 'stress test' for the banks will take place at the end of this year.

The current Government has been lucky. Other Eurozone countries such as Germany wished to make a punitive example of Ireland under the previous Government in order to stem the flow of cheap European Central Bank money. But now the feeling is that the current Government should be rewarded. The Eurozone badly needs Ireland to emerge from the Troika programme in order to instil confidence in the currency.

If the Government does emerge from the programme, both parties—particularly Fine Gael—will receive an electoral boost.

## PENT UP DEMAND

The State continues to have significant balance of payments (BOP) surpluses. This can only mean that the economic growth is export-driven. More money is coming in to the country than leaving it. As has been pointed out in this column, if total foreign debt is diminishing at a significant rate (as BOP figures suggest) and given public debt is only stabilising, it follows that the bulk of the BOP surpluses are being used to pay down private debt. This view has recently received some confirmation from a survey by the Credit Unions showing that Irish people are saving more (*RTE News*, 31.5.13). If this analysis is correct, it is possible that domestic spending will resume in a couple of years, giving a boost to the economy and therefore the electoral fortunes of the Government.

## A DIFFERENT COALITION?

In the past the role of Fine Gael and Labour coalitions has been to give Fianna Fáil a break from government. Since 1932 FF has never been out of power for more than one term. Although predictions of the demise of that party have proved to be premature, it is unlikely that it will be able to form a Government after the next election. As things stand, one of the strong selling points of the current Government is that there is no alternative Government waiting in the wings. The possibility of a FF/Sinn Féin coalition appears remote, even if Gerry Adams did not absolutely rule it out.

The Long Fellow did not vote for either of the two Government parties at the last election and may not vote for them in the next election. But he must concede that they have not been quite as bad as he feared. Enda Kenny appears to have grown in his job. It was a stroke of luck that there was a failed *coup* against his leadership before the last General Election. It enabled Michael Noonan to be recalled from the wilderness. More than anyone, Noonan won the last election for Fine Gael and has proved to be a competent negotiator in Europe.

Fine Gael and Labour have followed through on practically all of the policies of the previous Government. In particular, they have implemented the Property Tax. There is widespread social acceptance of this tax, notwithstanding the reactionary campaign of the so-called left.

Unfortunately the Government parties have fudged water metering. But they are hardly going to be castigated by the Opposition for that.

It also appears that the Government has continued the policy of Social Partnership. It looks like Haddington Road 1 will succeed where Croke Park 2 failed. In a

recent interview by Marian Finucane with Kieran Mulvey (head of the Labour Relations Commission), the latter made the point that, while the FitzGerald Government of the mid-eighties was anti-Union, the same could not be said of the current Government. It may be the case that this Labour/Fine Gael coalition is qualitatively different from previous ones.

#### PIERRE MAUROY

The Long Fellow was saddened to hear of the death of Pierre Mauroy, the Prime Minister of France in Mitterrand's first socialist Government. Mauroy convinced Mitterrand to take a pro-European line against the "sovereignists" within the Socialist Party. He believed there was nothing incompatible with Socialism and the budgetary discipline imposed by Maastricht.

His political base was in the mining town of Lille. Like Jacques Delors, who came from the same part of the country, his Socialism was influenced by his Catholicism. Delors' daughter, Martine Aubry, succeeded Mauroy as Mayor of Lille. One of the most surprising aspects of his career was that he resigned over the issue of State subsidies to Catholic schools. The secularists within the Socialist Party wanted the subsidies withdrawn, which was Socialist Party policy. Mitterrand wanted to retain the subsidy, whereas Mauroy sought a compromise solution. Mitterrand explained to Mauroy that there was no compromise possible. The President ended the debate by announcing in public that the subsidy would remain. Mauroy felt that he had to resign.

Mitterrand reflected that Mauroy could have been President, but he preferred to be Mayor of Lille.

**Book Review:** *"The Dynamics of War and Revolution: Cork City, 1916-1918"* by John Borgonovo, published by Cork University Press

## Missing The Point

The publisher's press release that launched this book claimed among other things that:

"It is the first work to explicitly argue that the Irish Revolution was directly caused by the First World War."

This is indeed the theme of the book. Its concluding sentences are:

"In one part of the city of Cork residents rejoiced at the end of the First World War. In another part, a new war began. These two conflicts were intrinsically linked. Each war a separate act of the same play. In Cork city the final curtain of that drama lowered four years later with the death of what came to be called the Munster Republic..." (p234).

Far from explaining the reasons for the War of Independence, this misses the point of why there was such an event. There is a missing link: a major act of the 'play' is ignored—the response of the British Government to the result of the 1918 Election. That is what caused the War in the traditional and correct assessment. The alternative view is that the War of Independence must have been caused by some militant Republicans who were activated during WWI and suddenly began getting mass support in every corner of the country for another War after WWI was over. This does not make sense.

Borgonovo describes the changing attitudes that arose during the Great War, but that did not mean that everywhere

assumed that Britain would completely ignore the exercise by the people of 'the freedom of small nations' that they had fought the war for in their hundreds of thousands. The vast majority of the people including many Sinn Fein TDs expected some recognition of the election result.

The Dail also appealed to the victors at Versailles, who told them to get lost despite Woodrow Wilson's reason for entering the war being his 14 points which boiled down to accepting the right to national self determination. Were these responses to be expected in the context of the time?

Borgonovo says nothing at all to explain the reaction to the 1918 Election, and makes nothing of the rejection at Versailles either, only saying that Sinn Fein "failed to explain their fallback position" to the electorate. Were they just naive to expect anything but rejection?

Sinn Fein reasonably expected, as did the vast majority of people, that, in the brave new world promised by the Allied Powers, the aim for which the British Empire said it had gone to war would have been adhered to when it won.

The responses to the 1918 Election and Versailles are issues that are glossed over, as if they were incidental and inevitable, but these were the real turning points for the mass of the people. Borgonovo glosses over them as well.

Consider the newly elected Mother of Parliaments on almost a full adult franchise for the first time. It favours the total reject-

ion of an election result and sanctions war instead.

The fact is that the more democratic the Mother of Parliaments became, the worse it became as regards dealing with Ireland. There was a precedent for this. Catholic Emancipation was passed by an unreformed Parliament and there is little doubt if it had not been passed in 1829 it would not be passed by the reformed Parliament three years later.

Only a small minority was not surprised by the British response: their assumptions turned out to be right. But this view was not what caused the people's war that followed. The War of Independence did not start and was not caused by the chaos of WWI, nor by incidents such as that at Soloheadbeg, despite Dan Breen's brave efforts to claim that accolade.

The great unwritten book of Irish History is an explanation of the remarkable fact of the reaction to the 1918 Election. What is even more remarkable is that none of our historians seem to realise that it needs writing—never mind writing it themselves. It is accepted as in some way inevitable and natural that the Mother of Parliaments should reject an overwhelming election result.

Was this result discussed by the Government "of all the talents" led by Lloyd George—whose ingenuity in dealing with tricky situations was legendary? How and why did the Cabinet decide on what was considered the best course of action? The Government surely discussed the issue behind closed doors and took decisions that Ministers knew could lead to war. Did nobody among them suggest that an overwhelming election result should be taken note of? That another course might be considered?

It was not that Britain did not support the formation of new states. It created several of them in eastern Europe and the Middle East at the time, and these were certainly not based on overwhelming electoral support. So why the totally high-handed treatment in Ireland's case?

Borgonovo should have added this act of his play and explained what happened. If he had done so, he would have done something really original. Instead he seems blessed with the foresight of hindsight, considering that all that happened was inevitable because it happened.

One could argue in the same fashion that WWI caused the Russian Revolution, caused Fascism to emerge, caused the national liberation movements all over the world, caused the current problems in the Middle East, etc. etc. But that would clearly be an entirely insufficient explan-

ation for these events.

It is what the victors led by the UK did with their victory after the Great War that caused the subsequent horrors. And without an explanation and assessment of all the factors and their interplay all that is provided is one-dimensional teleology parading as history suitable for simpletons—or for passing exams. Such is the case with this book.

#### THE CORK 'ANOMALY'

The most distinctive thing about Cork politics in the era in question was the All for Ireland League (AFIL). This made Cork different and the existence of such a party made all the difference to political debate and developments in the city and county and Munster generally. A historian of Cork should begin by satisfactorily explaining this phenomenon. But Borgonovo explains all this away with a host of loaded terms that seek to make what happened just an oddity and something a bit weird.

He introduces his account of it by saying: "*A political anomaly, Cork city was one of the few areas of Ireland not fully controlled by John Redmond's Irish Party*" (p8). Why not just say it was different? An anomaly is something out of place, somewhat abnormal, not quite right. But one person's anomaly can be the norm for somebody else. The politics of O'Brien, the Healys, D.D. Sheehan and like-minded politicians was the norm in Cork for about three decades. These leaders—and O'Brien in particular, being from Mallow—saw themselves as the conscious inheritors of the inclusive national politics of Thomas Davis, Young Ireland and the Fenians. (Perhaps Davis was an anomaly as well!)

This type of wording is indicative of the negative terms that Borgonovo constantly uses when mentioning William O'Brien and the AFIL. In this he follows the fashion of today's historians. There must a thesaurus of such words available to them for this purpose and he uses them all and more. Why?

We are told that: "*O'Brien fell short of political greatness, betrayed by a brittle personality and faulty political judgement*" (p8). Greatness is relative and who was 'greater' than him in the decades during and after the Land War? In the Land War he was up there with Davitt as an agitator and strategist—but O'Brien was the man who also orchestrated the solution to the land problem, acting with Balfour via the Land Acts. He did this in opposition the Irish Party leaders who feared the solution of the land grievance, believing it would

undermine the demand for Home Rule and spell the end of the national movement. O'Brien, on the other hand, saw land reform as a new beginning.

William O'Brien had effectively remade the Party after the fiasco caused by Parnell's arrogance. Later he tried to prevent the Party becoming dominated by the militantly sectarian Ancient Order of Hibernians, which he saw as inevitably divisive as regards the Northern Protestants. He foresaw Hibernianism leading to partition as it meant there would be a distinct possibility of Home Rule being Rome Rule. He understood the Unionist case. Is he to be considered lacking in greatness because he saw and tried to prevent the future divisions, which he correctly predicted would follow if his opponents won out?

When it comes to "*faulty political judgement*", Redmond wins hands down—and he admitted it—whereas O'Brien was always able to say 'I told you so'. He was defeated and so was unable to prevent the disasters he predicted. But what a magnificent 'failure'!

The "brittle personality" is another classic in the lexicon. O'Brien. He was a workaholic and ran himself into the ground at times and had to recuperate. So what? He is also described by Borgonovo as suffering from "*hubris*" (p51), which does seem contradictory and a most odd way to describe him, given any knowledge of his hectic career.

We are told: "*the AFIL lacked a coherent ideology and ultimately lost a war of attrition with the Irish Party*" (p9). The AFIL wanted to ensure that the nation

incorporated the Protestant heritage in its development when the land issue was solved, because otherwise it would be sectarian, divided and maimed. It would be a case of a Catholic Ascendancy replacing a Protested Ascendancy. This whole approach was summed up in its slogan of the 'three C's'—"Conference, Conciliation and Consent"—towards Protestant Unionists.

The AFIL saw the Irish Party, dominated by the sectarian AOH, as inciting the reaction by the Unionists. It understood that the type of Home Rule on offer was confirming their fears of a Rome Rule Ireland—hence their opposition to Home Rule. The AFIL strategy is perfectly coherent to any objective historian and O'Brien and the AFIL should be the historical heroes of those who now prattle on about conciliation—100 years too late! I just cannot understand the denigration that Borgonovo rehashes so thoroughly.

He goes on at some length about the regular confrontations between the AFIL and the Redmondites, the approach being that one was as bad as the other. This conflict is dismissed as simply being the nature of Cork politics: the substance of the issues involved is totally ignored. The infighting was just part of a "*feud*" (p13). What the two sides were so militant about is the question that is begged but never answered.

A source he uses for evidence of this pointless violence is from *The Amazing Philanthropists*, by Susanne Day, which is a downmarket piece of stage Irishness of the Somerville and Ross genre, with violence, corruption, ignorance and bigotry to the fore instead of the genteel atmosphere of the latter's novels. The

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approach taken here is one long paean of contempt for all Irish party politics—without one redeeming feature and with a total lack of understanding of the issue between the parties. But this source is used to prove the violent nature of Cork politics by Borgonovo because it suits his approach perfectly.

But there is one outstanding, notorious and clear example of this violence which puts it in its true perspective and shows the undisputable source of the violence. It is impossible to ignore by anyone who takes an interest in the issue. This was the infamous 'Baton Convention' of the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1909. It was the violent suppression of criticism at this Convention which actually led to the AFIL being created. The Convention was marshalled by AOH members of the Irish Party from Ulster. They had instructions to prevent anyone with a Cork accent from addressing the Conference. Batons were the instruments used to enforce the rule.

O'Brien retaliated with the 'violence' of setting up a newspaper called the *The Cork Accent*, that became the *The Cork Free Press*—which became the main instrument in the formation the AFIL.

None of this is even mentioned by Borgonovo. This great formative event is ignored and one could be left wondering where the AFIL came from. It could be just a fad of O'Brien's 'brittle personality'! The *Accent* does not even feature as a source in his bibliography of sources. But he sees no real need for such sources and facts when a novel will do. Anyway, there is no real need for him to deal with such facts at all because he says that: "*Street fighting certainly remained a key strand in Cork's political DNA*" (p60).

Thanks John, for such a brilliant insight. It goes one better than Peter Hart, who sought to make sectarianism the essential DNA of Cork's politics—though he never thought of explaining his thesis as scientifically and comprehensively as this.

How is Cork's history to be saved from its historians?

After introducing us to the AFIL as above, Borgonovo introduces his readers to the Irish Party and the AOH as: "*the national fraternal order run by Redmond's lieutenant*" (p9). How benign an organisation! I must confess this concept of the AOH being described as a 'fraternal order' gave me a belly laugh. The AOH was the mirror image of the Orange Order which was no doubt just as fraternal an order, provided you were a 'frater'.

Belonging to the AOH was an understandable reaction in areas where Orangeism was blatantly dominant, politically and socially. But Orangeism did not dominate Cork life and adherence to it was by comparison with Belfast a private matter between consenting adults. Therefore there was no place for politically-based Catholic bigotry. That was the instinctive reaction of O'Brien and those who formed the AFIL in response to this intrusion of sectarianism into Southern politics. The AOH-dominated Irish Party was the real anomaly in Cork and Munster.

Borgonovo adds what I think may be a new indictment of the AFIL. He says: "*Cork resentment of the the Irish Party's Dublin orientation likely contributed to the AFIL's success*" (p8). The Irish Party had many faults but, with its main leaders representing Waterford, Mayo and Belfast, domination by Dublin was certainly not one of them. But then, any piece of old crap will do to throw at the AFIL.

The long-lasting significance of the AFIL was that it established Irish party politics in Ireland for the first time and, through various permutations and transformations, it established an elemental divide, creating fault lines that still resonate. It destroyed Redmondite/AOH politics in Cork in 1910, freeing the area psychologically from that legacy 8 years before the rest of the country freed itself of that straitjacket.

This is what put Cork in the forefront of the fight for Independence when that became necessary. The AFIL absorbed itself into a base for Sinn Fein before the 1918 Election. Borgonovo feels obliged to describe the organisation as being "*buried*" by Sinn Fein, in case by any chance the positive decision by AFIL to disband, join and openly support Sinn Fein at the Election could be correctly described for the clear, honest and principled decision it was.

Sinn Fein had no electoral base worthy of the name and the AFIL, with its long battle-hardened electoral base, made all the difference for the success of Sinn Fein in 1918. They provided the soil on which Sinn Fein grew and flourished. The AFIL became Sinn Fein for all practical purposes at that time

AFIL's Labour element, based on the Land and Labour League, became support for the Labour Party in rural Munster that lasts to the present day. It was also later to become a base for Fianna Fail. In fact, O'Brien was asked to stand for

the party in 1927. The Editor of AFIL's *Cork Free Press*, David Hogan (Frank Gallagher) became the first Editor of the *Irish Press*.

The AOH/Redmondite lineage is Free State, Cumann na Gaedhal, Blueshirt and Fine Gael.

Take your pick as to which has the more admirable legacy and, it is by that criteria, that all Borgonovo's efforts to belittle O'Brien and the AFIL can be judged.

In conclusion, Borgonovo misses the point about what actually caused the War of Independence and misses the point of what O'Brien and the AFIL were all about. That is to say, the real dynamic of Cork's politics of that era are not in this book.

## PS

Borgonovo began his historical work with a very early and useful piece of demolition work on an aspect of Peter Hart's argument, and he illustrated the best features of an American academic on such issues. He took an upfront, no-nonsense, well-researched, approach that was convincing and compelling. But he has decided to go native among the current revisionist *coterie* here, and the rest is history—not.

Reviews in the *Irish Political Review* of his last book on Cork (*Irish Political Review*, December 2011) drew a response from a very, very angry author when I last met him in Cork and he promised/threatened to write to this magazine with a response. However, that response seems to have got lost in the post. Let's hope that does not happen again

Jack Lane

**Six Days Of The Irish Republic** (eyewitness account of 1916), by L.G. Redmond-Howard. Describes the hopes of the Irish people in regard to the Versailles Conference; a profile of Roger Casement, written during his trial; the Irish Case for the League of Nations; and a play written jointly with Harry Carson (the Ulster leader's son).

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## The Politics Of Redmondism

The academic consensus surrounding the decline and fall of the Irish Parliamentary Party is designed very much to hide the decline in order to emphasise a supposedly sudden fall.

This sudden fall then is characterised as in some way the result of an apolitical, almost atavistic, outburst of typically Irish sentimentality.

Even Eamon Phoenix, whose book on Northern Nationalism contains a stimulating narrative of the facts of the IPP's decline, felt it necessary to begin that book with rather more of a genuflection than a nod to the consensus.

So he wrote, in his Introduction:

"The example of the U.V.F. had acted as a catalyst to physical force Republicanism and it required only the 'blood sacrifice' of the 1916 Rising to seal the Home Rule Party's fate" (page, XV).

(The full publication details for Phoenix's grand book are these: Northern Nationalism. Nationalist Politics, Partition and the Catholic Minority in Northern Ireland 1890—1940. Ulster Historical Foundation. Belfast. 1994.)

But it is The Lord Bew (back in his commoner days, when he was commonly known as plain Paul Bew) who has set the modern academic tone of the matter.

In an article entitled *The Easter Rising: Lost Leaders And Lost Opportunities* plain Paul Bew wrote:

"...no matter how much northern Catholic nationalists might regret it—and some of their greatest leaders (Joe Devlin and Cahir Healy) certainly did—one of the undisputed effects of the Easter Rising was the destruction of the Irish Party" (*The Irish Review* (1986–), no. 11 (Winter, 1991-1992), pp. 9-13).

(I can't imagine what Bew means by claiming that Cahir Healy regretted the destruction of the IPP. In an article in the *Clogher Record* (Vol. 18, No. 1 (2003), pp. 32-52) ) Eamon Phoenix quotes a letter from Healy to Rory O'Connor in 1954 to give a snapshot of Healy's early political life "...I was never connected with the Irish Party or any of its organisations. ... I was opposed to them. I represented Fermanagh at the convention in the Rotunda at which Sinn Féin was born...". That was the convention in November 1905. So, now then, in what political context would Cahir Healy have

regretted the destruction of Redmond's Irish Party? It's a mystery to me.)

Some years later Bew put it like this:

"The home rule issue dominated Irish nationalist politics from 1874 to 1916. Home rule was the policy of seeking the creation of an autonomous Irish parliament, subordinate to Britain, through the maintenance at Westminster of an independent Irish Parliamentary Party, led with considerable flair by C.S. Parnell in the 1880s and by John Redmond after 1900. After the Easter Rising of 1916 both the policy and its principal instrument, the Parliamentary Party, were destroyed by the rise of the separatist Sinn Féin movement" (Moderate Nationalism And the Irish Revolution, 1916-1923, in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Sep., 1999), pp. 729-749).

In this article I hope to show that the decline of the Irish Parliamentary Party was so built in to its version of the politics of Home Rule, that the closer it apparently came to success, the more completely it encompassed its own fall. I hope to make it clear that the events of Easter 1916 were not materially responsible for the Party's demise and that the rise of Sinn Féin was a consequence and not a cause of it.

Plain Paul's description of Home Rule is, at the very least, disingenuous. It ignores the essential principle of the thing, which was rooted in the *Myth of the Historic Irish Nation*. The politics of Home Rule were from the outset inadequate to the reality of two nations in Ireland and, ultimately, the party of Home Rule was destroyed by that reality.

The proof of this view requires nothing more than a tour along some of the turning ways and twisting by-ways of the Irish Parliamentary Party's responses to the working out in practice of its core political principle.

In what follows, names can be a confounded nuisance. The Irish Parliamentary Party in the country was called the United Irish League, which had been founded by William O'Brien in 1898 with the support of Michael Davitt and John Dillon. A couple of years later the UIL merged with other survivals of Parnell's fractured party under the leadership of John Redmond. Redmond and Dillon, along with Joe Devlin, reorganised the UIL; using Devlin's army of sectarian bully-boys, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, to drive O'Brien, and

its branches in County Cork, out of the League, in 1909. The history of the All For Ireland League which O'Brien then formed and which dominated nationalist politics in Cork before merging into Sinn Féin from 1915 on, before Easter 1916 and the subsequent remaking of Sinn Féin by Volunteers who had themselves been remade in Frongoch, is told in Brendan Clifford's *Cork Free Press*.

O'Brien's All for Ireland League was a very different creature from Redmond's Party. It was a non-sectarian movement, which was utterly opposed to attempts to coerce Protestant Ulster and abstained in the vote on the Third Home Rule Bill in 1914; Redmond's great triumph, following which he and his Party plotted and prepared to coerce Protestant Ulster. Pat Walsh's *The Rise & Fall Of Imperial Ireland* contains the definitive account of Redmond and his Party's deluded plans for a Catholic-nationalist conquest of Ulster.

Had the United Irish League remained under O'Brien's leadership to become ever more like the All For Ireland League, the prospects for a conciliationist Home Rule agitation may well have been bright. But that might-have-been cannot be known. The United Irish League, the Home Rule Party, the Irish Parliamentary Party, call it what you will, Redmondite by any other name, was what it was. It was what the Nationalists of Northern Ireland had to deal with in the years between the Liberal landslide of 1906 and Redmond's death in March 1918. It was all they had to rely on, and be utterly disappointed by.

The cause of the Home Rule Party's rapid decline and ultimate fall was the great opportunity that the providential vagaries of the English two-party system presented it with by way of the results of the General Elections of January and December 1910, which left Redmond holding the balance of power at Westminster. Redmond's position was particularly strong as, following the House of Lords' rejection of Lloyd George's 1909 budget, which led to the Elections of 1910, the Liberal Government went on to force through the Parliament Act of 1911, which meant that the Lords, though they could still delay legislation, could no longer veto it. Home Rule here we come!

Except . . .

The Third Home Rule Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in April 1912. In June, the Liberal MP, Thomas Agar-Robartes (who may have been one of the Liberal-Unionists, I don't know

about that at this time), moved an amendment for the permanent exclusion from Home Rule arrangements of Antrim, Armagh, Down and Derry.

Redmond's official biographer, Denis Gwynn (he was the son of the Protestant Redmondite MP, Stephen Gwynn, and had himself served as one of Redmond's Fusiliers), wrote in 1956:

"...What Bonar Law and Carson had confidently intended was to kill all plans for Irish self-government, by intimidating the Liberal government with threats of armed resistance in Ulster. They had no thought, at first, of partition; and even when the main conflict was inexorably narrowed down to that much smaller issue, Carson himself was intensely reluctant even to consider partition. But he had been so outmanoeuvred, by Redmond's relentless pressure, that he had to acquiesce in the principle of self-government for Ireland, and concentrate upon excluding whatever parts of Ulster he could retain.

"Who can wonder that Redmond, no less than Carson, was taken unawares by this sudden emergence of a new demand for dividing Ireland to placate the Ulster agitation. To Redmond the very idea was abhorrent, and the brief remainder of his life was spent in ceaseless efforts to avert it" (*John Redmond*, by D. Gwynn, page 398. in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 45, No. 180 (Winter, 1956), pp. 389-402).

At least from this point on, it had to have been clear to Redmond and his Party that Home Rule depended on either the coercion of, or negotiation with, Protestant Ulster. They never showed the slightest interest in negotiation. Their preparations for coercion were half-hearted and constantly undermined by a blind insistence that the Ulster Unionists were bluffers who, when pushing came to shoving, would fold without a fight.

Despite Joe Devlin's assurances (see below), Northern nationalists were not so sure the Unionists were bluffing. Even Patrick O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, future Cardinal and, according to D. Gwynn, "...one of Redmond's oldest and most trusted colleagues" (op. cit. page 399), was not convinced the IPP strategy was working to plan. On 9th October 1913 he wrote to Redmond:

"...There is no length to which any of us would refuse to go to satisfy the Orangemen at the starting of our new government, provided Ireland did not suffer seriously, and provided also the Nationalist minority in the N.E. did not suffer badly. But it is not hard for Mr Churchill to realize that, under the bill as

it stands, the set of Protestants who patently need no protection are the Ulster Unionists, and that, with the home rule of the bill, the Catholic and Nationalist minority in the N.E. remain under the domination in all local things which they have endured so long, until the spirit of freedom sets things right, as it would in a few years. But he may not see the point that nothing could justify cutting this minority off from their claims under the bill, and deliberately leaving them under a harrow that might be worse than what they have endured.

"Autonomy in education, etc., for the N.E. corner would be queer autonomy for them.

"On matters of this kind there is a good deal of feeling that the Nationalists of Ulster should form a special committee, organize, and speak out, and insist on being represented as fully as the Orangemen at any conference. My own view has been that we in the interests of home rule should avoid forming a second camp in Ulster..." (quoted in A.C. Hepburn, *The Conflict Of Nationality In Modern Ireland*, London, 1980, page 77f).

Whether in response to his friend the Bishop, or not, I can't say, but three days later in a speech at Limerick on 12th October 1913, Redmond said:

"Irish Nationalists can never be assenting parties to the mutilation of the Irish nation: Ireland is a unit. It is true that within the bosom of a nation there is room for diversities in the treatment of government and of administration, but a unit Ireland is and a unit Ireland must remain...The two-nation theory is to us an abomination and a blasphemy..." (quoted, Hepburn, *ibid.* page 78).

Oh well, there were in fact two nations and soon these were militarily organised into two armies. The Ulster Volunteer Force had been founded in Belfast in September 1912. Then, in November, 1913, the Irish Volunteers were formed. The initial impulse for that came from the Irish Republican Brotherhood (from Bulmer Hobson), but when it was clear that the movement was a success, Redmond moved in and took it over. In no time at all, very soon after World War was declared, the Irish Volunteers split, with the great majority becoming Redmond's National Volunteers.

From the outset nationalist enrolment in the Volunteers in Ulster was brisk. Then, after March 1914, it increased at (in Eamon Phoenix's words, op. cit., page 14) "a phenomenal rate".

What had happened that month was that, as a matter of negotiation with the English Government, Redmond had

accepted partition. This is Stephen Gwynn's account of the proceeding:

"...on March 9th, ...Mr. Asquith, introducing the Home Rule Bill for its passage in the third consecutive session (as required by the Parliament Act), outlined the proposed modifications in it. They involved partition. But the exclusion was to be optional by areas and limited in time.

"The proposal to take a vote by counties had, it will be remembered, been originally suggested by Mr. Bonar Law, and in following the Prime Minister he could not well repudiate it. The test, however, which he now put forward was whether or not the proposals satisfied Ulster: and he fixed upon the time-limit of six years as being wholly unacceptable. Redmond, on the other hand, while declaring that the Government had gone to "the extremest limits of concession", said that the proposals had one merit: they would "elicit beyond doubt or question by a free ballot the real opinion of the people of Ulster". This indicated his conviction that if Home Rule really came the majority in Ulster would prefer to take their chances under it; the proposal of exclusion being merely a tactical manoeuvre to defeat Home Rule by splitting the Nationalists.

"...Opposition from Mr. O'Brien and from Mr. Healy was no new thing. But by acceptance of these proposals the Nationalist leader made their opposition for the first time really formidable. Telegrams rained in that March afternoon—above all on Mr. Devlin, from his supporters in Belfast, who felt themselves betrayed and shut out from a national triumph which they had been the most zealous to promote. From this time onward the position of Redmond personally and of his party as a whole was perceptibly weakened. Especially an alienation began between him and the Catholic hierarchy" (*John Redmond's Last Years*, London, 1919, pp 99—100. (Stephen Gwynn was the father of Denis, grandson of William Smith O'Brien, Protestant Redmondite MP, and, like his son, one of Redmond's First World War Fusiliers).

Whatever decline there had been in the fortunes of Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party, that was now over. The Fall had begun. It would not take long before the Home Rule Party was a dead party walking.

Just one thing saved Redmond's bacon at that precise point: Carson saw no value in the modifications to the Bill and, describing it all as a "sentence of death with stay of execution for six years", he rejected the lot.

However, that ant-climactic note to one side, the Nationalists of Northern Ireland were very quick to identify the serious threat to their most intimate interests.

Rumours of the partition proposals at Westminster had led to plans for a protest march by the Irish Volunteers in Derry City. Redmond wrote to Bishop Charles McHugh and pressed very strongly for him to have the march cancelled. With great difficulty the Bishop did so, but, as Phoenix points out:

"The bishop's reply... was far from reassuring, and epitomised the growing fear of a section of northern Nationalists, particularly in their west Ulster stronghold, that the party might sacrifice them to the Carsonites in the interests of political expediency. He wrote:

"The Orange faction is never done crying out intolerance and publishing what they might suffer under Home Rule, but there is not a word about what Catholics and Nationalists would suffer if the Orangemen got control, and what they have already suffered at their hands ... the Nationalists of the North have their rights as well as the Orangemen and while agreeable to make concessions, they are not prepared to accept a state of things that would be worse than if they had never stood up for Home Rule."

"The Derry demonstration, added McHugh, had been designed to show Asquith that "there were two sides to the Ulster question". (Phoenix, op.cit., pp. 11—12).

And, I very much suspect, to show Redmond what side his bread was buttered on, and who by. But to no avail.

On 20th February 1914, Devlin had delivered a report to the British Cabinet which concluded:

"We have exceptional sources of information in regard to the Ulster Volunteer movement, and we are convinced that its danger is grossly exaggerated. The main ground for this conviction is the fact that, in Belfast, the headquarters of the Carsonite movement, where the Catholic and Protestant Home Rulers would be among the first victims of any outbreak among the Orangemen, the Home Rulers regard the whole thing with absolute contempt, and are astonished that anybody outside Belfast should take it seriously" (quoted in Phoenix, *ibid.* page 10).

This was just an indication that plots and plans, that had become too unwieldy as an apparently inevitable victory approached, were even then beginning to unravel.

G.F.H. Berkeley, who was organiser of Redmond's National Volunteers in Belfast in 1914, said in a manuscript account (cited by Phoenix, op. cit page 18) of his "*Experience In Belfast, 1914*" that the Home Rule Party leadership wanted the Volunteer movement in the North to "*wither*". Rather than have northern

Nationalists take the fight over "*county exclusion*" to the UVF, and so ruin everything. According to Berkeley, at the beginning of the World War, Devlin was forced by his followers to distribute 800 rifles. But, cute boy that he was, he held back the ammunition.

The consequence of this chicanery was the swift decline and even swifter fall of the Redmondite Volunteers in the North. Where, at the beginning in 1914 the force had progressed at "*a phenomenal rate*", by the middle of 1915, the National Volunteer movement was dead in Tyrone.

Then, on 3rd June 1915, the Bishop of Killaloe, Michael Fogarty, wrote to Redmond:

"The English have got all they wanted from Ireland, and don't care two pence about her feelings. Such is our reward for her profuse loyalism and recruiting. The people are full of indignation, but are powerless..."

"As far as Ireland is concerned, there is little to choose between Carsonism and Kaiserism, of the two the latter is the lesser evil: and it almost makes me cry to think of the Irish Brigade fighting not for Ireland but for Carson and what he stands for—Orange ascendancy here.

"Home Rule is dead and buried and Ireland is without a national party or national press. The Freeman is but a government organ and the national party but an imperial instrument. What the future holds in store for us God knows—I suppose conscription with a bloody feud between people and soldiers. I never thought that Asquith would have consented to this humiliation and ruin of Irish feeling. There is a great revulsion of feeling in Ireland" (A.C. Hepburn, op. cit., pp. 91ff).

Even more to the point of the politics of this...

"...a number of senior clergy and 'representative Nationalists' met in conference in Omagh, County Tyrone, in the heart of the predominantly Catholic portion of the territory proposed for exclusion, in a calculated effort to pre-empt any attempt by the Party to impose an exclusion scheme on nationalist Ulster... This conference was highly significant in the subsequent transformation of nationalist politics within the six-county area: it provided a focus for the amorphous feelings of antipathy towards the compromising policy of the Redmondites, and the impromptu counter-leadership was to become, within the next year or so, the local leadership of the reconstituted Sinn Féin movement in the north" (Phoenix, op.cit., page 24).

All this was occurring before Easter 1916, simply as a consequence of the

working out of the core political principles of the Home Rule Party. Its rigid and dogmatic one nation view made it impossible for Redmond's Party to countenance any attempt to conciliate the Protestant North, let alone accept its right to go its own way. Redmond, Dillon and Devlin, who had no problems whatsoever about plotting complicated partitionist schemes with English politicians, could not bring themselves to so much as contemplate entering into negotiations with those they professed to cherish as "*fellow-Irishmen*". This left them at the mercy of English politics and English politicians.

The British elections of 1910 gave the Party its chance. The European War took its chance away. Home Rule was on the Statute Book, but suspended for the duration of the War, and with the threat of a partitionist amending Bill hanging over it. The British elections of 1910 handed Redmond's Party the balance of power. The Coalition Government which was formed after the Gallipoli disaster in 1915 took that away.

Its acceptance of Partition in 1915 was the finish of the Home Rule Party. From then on it was a dead thing, just waiting for the grave to be dug for it to fall into.

Here is Denis Gwynn's explanation of this (in "John Redmond and English Politicians", *Studies* Vol. 21, No. 81 (Mar., 1932), pp. 20-36), and his account of how Easter Week in fact appeared to hand an unexpected life-line to Redmond:

"The parliamentary methods which Parnell had evolved in the early eighties were never designed for dealing with a Coalition Government in England. They had assumed always that the party system would continue in English politics, and that the strength of the Nationalist Party would depend upon playing off one party against the other. Once they combined, the power of the Nationalists vanished..."

"His {Redmond's, JK} chance came quite unexpectedly as a result of the Dublin rising in Easter Week 1916, when the war—which had done so much to defeat his hopes suddenly produced new and powerful factors in favour of an immediate settlement. It had seemed inevitable until then that the Home Rule Act could not possibly become operative until the war was over. But the revulsion of feeling which followed upon General Maxwell's military administration in Ireland created an overwhelming pressure from the United States in support of an immediate settlement. America was still neutral, and more sympathetic towards Germany than towards the Allies. The

sanguinary suppression of the Dublin rising had produced a new wave of fierce anti-English feeling in the United States, after several years during which Irish-American influences had virtually ceased to count. Demands for an immediate settlement poured into Whitehall, and Asquith undertook a personal visit to Dublin to explore the possibilities."

Lloyd George refused the post of Chief-Secretary but took charge of a new series of negotiations.

"Long experience had convinced the Nationalist leaders that Lloyd George required the closest watching in negotiation. His quick enthusiasms, and his equally quick changes of attitude, were well known; but his personal ambition counted for much. In the situation which had arisen he had the strongest reasons for accomplishing a settlement by consent, and the presence of so many Unionists in the Coalition was a guarantee that there would be no serious resistance if the Ulster question could be settled. That Carson and his friends might go into opposition was always probable, but they would be subjected to great pressure to give their assent. Discussions took place in which Redmond made his position absolutely clear. He was willing to accept a strictly temporary exclusion of the six counties, on the clear understanding that the whole settlement would be reviewed by an Imperial Conference when the war ended. As a guarantee that the exclusion of six counties would be only temporary, he insisted that the Irish members must be retained at Westminster in full numbers until the final settlement after the war. These terms were put before Lloyd George by Redmond, Dillon and Devlin, and accepted by him as the absolute basis of future discussions. Redmond's papers include a memorandum made by him at the time, in which he records that Lloyd George not only accepted the terms but declared that he would stake his own political life upon pushing the agreement through, if the Nationalists could obtain the assent of their own followers in the six counties. On that basis Devlin went to Ulster to explain the position, and at a fully representative Nationalist conference in Belfast, Redmond and Devlin both announced that they would retire from public life at once if the proposals were not accepted.

"...Signs of trouble arose quickly when the consent of the Ulster Nationalists had been obtained, and when Carson also had got the consent of the Ulster Unionist Council to the proposals. What the Nationalist leaders did not know was that Lloyd George had discussed different terms with them and with the Orangemen. The Orangemen's consent had been obtained on a basis of permanent exclusion, while the Nationalists had stipulated absolutely that the exclusion must be temporary. After weeks of delay

Redmond was informed that the basis to which he had agreed could not be adopted, and Lloyd George threw in his lot with the majority of the Cabinet. The whole negotiation broke down..."

That "*fully representative Nationalist conference in Belfast*" was held in St. Mary's Hall in Belfast, on the 23rd June, 1916. By threatening to resign Redmond and Devlin secured a majority (475 to 265) for a highly qualified version of temporary Six-County exclusion from Home Rule. Those Six Counties were to remain as an integral part of the United Kingdom, with Ireland as a whole continuing to be represented at Westminster. Had it been a real possibility, it might have formed the basis of a worthwhile All For Ireland League type settlement. But the AFIL was in a continuing process of merger with Sinn Féin. And Redmond's Party was not capable of following through on the negotiation of such a politically-nuanced thing. It was locked in the rigid dogmas of the myth of the Historic Irish Nation. And anyway it had been pretty much dead since June 1915. These proceedings were simply a grave digging exercise.

On July 22nd., Lloyd George told Redmond that the terms of the deal had changed: exclusion would be permanent and Irish representation at Westminster would be altered to take account of the fact of partition. According to Eamon Phoenix, in rejecting this, Redmond pledged himself to oppose the amended Bill "*all the way*", or words to that effect.

My notes on Phoenix's *Northern Nationalism* don't contain any reference for that last statement, but it is very adequately attested to by the Gwynns, father and son.

Denis has this to say in *John Redmond & English Politicians*:

"It was the most bitter disappointment of Redmond's life, and when the Asquith Ministry collapsed a few months later, to give place to a new Coalition under Lloyd George, he had lost all faith in further parliamentary negotiations. Information continued to reach him that America was pressing hard for an Irish settlement, and he still hoped that Lloyd George would be compelled by personal ambition to accede to the American demands. But he refused absolutely to be drawn into any further negotiations, and when he learned early in 1917 that Lloyd George was about to push through a Home Rule Bill with permanent partition, he prepared to resist it to the utmost" (op. cit. page 34).

And according to Stephen, in *John Redmond's Last Years*:

"That day really finished the constitutional party and overthrew Redmond's power. We had incurred the very great odium of accepting even temporary partition—and a partition which, owing to this arbitrary extension of area, could not be justified on any ground of principle; we had involved with us many men who voted for that acceptance on the faith of Redmond's assurance that the Government were bound by their written word; and now we were thrown over" (op.cit page 239).

In the course of the years of commemorations we are now entering into, I fully expect we will hear a great deal of how Redmond's Party was overthrown by the physical force men in the Easter Rising, of how, if only the Home Rule Party had not been overthrown by the men of violence, the 1918 Elections would have afforded a different result, of how the War of Independence would have been avoided and all the peace and love in the world showered on the Government of Ireland Act that might or would or should have been.

Oh well...

I just hope the material in this article is some help in countering all that nonsense.

**Joe Keenan**

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## Germany's Conservative Socialist Consensus

Victor Grossman is a former communist of Jewish German-American background who lived from the 1950s in East Germany where he contributed in a very substantial way for many decades to its social and cultural life. From his home in Berlin today he continues to circulate his *Berlin Bulletin*, which consists of short commentaries on life and politics in Germany today from a general traditional left perspective. In his most recent *Bulletin* (No. 58, June 2013) he commented on the Conference of the German Left Party. For members and supporters of that Party, who had watched in dismay for years as it pulled itself apart in public in interminable faction fights, the Conference this year displayed a strong unity of purpose, he reports, with the attendees electrified by fiery speeches from leaders imbued with a new sense of purpose. They enthusiastically and overwhelmingly endorsed the party's election programme. Grossman believes that on the strength of it the Left Party might very well achieve its aim of returning a double-digit result in September's national elections to the *Bundestag*. It is also conceivable that no alternative to Angela Merkel's Christian Democrat Government could be formed without their participation, though the Social Democrats and Greens continue to discount the very idea.

The Left Party stands for State Socialism in the Federal Republic. It was formed some years ago by an amalgamation of somewhat marginal left-wing West German groupings with the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which in turn had been generated from the remnants of the old State party of East Germany. At its high point the PDS achieved over 10% in Federal Elections and regularly won over 30% of the vote in the areas of the former East Germany. It is a party which from a Western point of view never should have been. But, during the Western take-over of the East in the 1990s, it rapidly took shape as a force to be reckoned with, building on opposition to the dismantling of many of the popular day-to-day social services and employment structures inherited from the communist era, as well as the defence of Eastern public officials' rights and pensioners' entitlements which were being cast aside wholesale. I attended a PDS conference in the mid-1990s and remember well being most struck and surprised at the time by these people's

sheer sense of pride. The party embodied a pride in the "*socialist achievements*" of the East for all its other faults, and represented a defiant rejection of the Western rubbishing of them.

Despite inroads into some Western industrial constituencies, the Left Party still garners most of its support in the East, where it has a strong presence in many local, regional and *Land* Governments. The party opposes privatisations, the welfarist "Hartz-IV" reforms of the social security system introduced by the Schröder Government, German participation in foreign military campaigns, the arming of Syrian 'rebels', and punitive attitudes to the crisis countries of 'southern Europe'. It defends elements of the socialist legacy of the East, while rejecting the totalitarian State.

Like Socialism generally in the world today, it is a conservative force, defending social institutions, economic structures, and traditions threatened by the march of capitalism, and as such has a major impact on German public opinion far beyond its actual electoral achievements. I was on a visit in May to the Ruhr in western Germany to discuss the Eurozone crisis at a Trade Union seminar. What most struck me about the people I met—who were mostly social democrats—was that their attitudes were largely indistinguishable from those of the Left Party. And they were equally on the defensive against what they saw as the erosion of public employment, the "*social state*", Trade Union power, and so forth.

In the May issue of *Irish Political Review* I contributed an article on the social capitalism of the Christian Democrats, showing how under Angela Merkel's leadership they were now advocating the "*social market economy*" as a model for a post-Crisis Europe. In the English-speaking world Germany is probably still most associated with Nazism. But that extreme nationalist and racist distortion of German Socialism is only comprehensible in the fracture of culture that resulted from the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles. The real and enduring German Socialism is essentially a conservative force, combining elements of feudalism, Catholic social solidarity, and modern materialist social democracy, and in large measure is a shared heritage of the two major German political forces, Christian and Social Democrat alike.

In the reality of daily politics in Germany today, the Left Party for its part is not an outside, alien force, but very much a wing of that same shared culture. And all of these three elements also share a conservative hostility to the neo-liberalism of the international New Right. The basis of Merkel's overwhelming popular appeal is that people believe she will successfully and effectively defend the German social economic system against the Wild West values of international capitalism. The party in Germany that espouses global liberal capitalist values unapologetically is the Liberals (FDP) who score around 8% in the polls.

In the decade and a half before the crisis, international commentators—including their many acolytes in the Irish media—wrote off Germany's "*sluggish*" and "*stagnant*" social market economy with its paltry average 1.5% annual growth—compared with our "*thrusting*" one.

There was a general consensus in these circles that what Germany needed was a sound shaking up and opening to real entrepreneurship, 'yellow pack' education, and less bureaucratic economic regulation. Their silence today is only matched by the renewed sense of confidence in Germany that its model has paid off and has been the basis of its surviving and thriving through the Crisis.

Part of that model was the massive joint Industry-Union management of a system of subsidised three-day working across industry during the trough of the 2009 Crash to avoid lay-offs. Capitalism, the Americanised Austrian liberal, Joseph Schumpeter, once remarked, is a process of ongoing "creative destruction". And capitalism has certainly seen the decline of many heavy industries in Germany too. But declining and growth sectors in Germany are managed through a system of Social Partnership that still prevails despite the liberal fashions of the times. Disparities in wealth and incomes between regions bear no comparison with the patterns that exist, say, between London and the North in modern England.

Average incomes in Germany are modest though rising (by 3.5% this year), and higher than those in either Britain or post-Crisis Ireland. While, as Grossman reports in his *Bulletin*, there is a fairly large minority of people on low wages of just 5-7 Euros an hour, there is still very broad social provision of housing, education, health services, vocational training, childcare, family supports, leisure amenities, and public transport that mean that the cost of living is very much lower and

more socially equitable than for ordinary people in Ireland.

Germans remain savers and cautious spenders—a recent survey showed that a mere 5.3% of purchases last year were made using the widely distrusted credit card, with 55.6% being paid for in actual cash and a further 34.9% by debit card (i.e. from cash on account).

The social control exercised over prices was reflected in the recent proposal by Merkel for a statutory ceiling on rent increases of over 15% above average local values on new lettings of apartments (24 million of 40 million households in Germany live in rented accommodation, and rent increases for sitting tenants are tied to the local cost-of-living index). Merkel proposed this for reasons of "social justice" as well as to forestall a boom-driven property bubble, and was opposed only by the Liberals (FAZ, 4 June).

Another illustration of popular distrust of capitalism was when Germans were badly burned by their dabbling in "people's capitalism", with the launch of popular stock market offerings in Digitals and Telecoms in the late 1990s. By 2000, when the "new markets" collapsed, over 10% of Germans had become owners of some shares. But after the 'trauma' of the crash the numbers of Germans with shares contracted to 5% and has never recovered (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5 June).

In pure numerical terms it would appear that Trade Unionism in Germany—which organises about 20% of workers (a decline of 5% since 2000)—has suffered a catastrophic contraction, comparable to anywhere else in the West during the era of globalisation. But Trade Unionism in these terms was never exceptionally high, and the norm has been maintained of collective agreements being extended by employers to workers in small businesses. In the 1970s, at the peak of the state economies of the West, Irish Trade Union membership stood at 65% compared to 43% in Germany. Today the comparative figures are about 33% to 20%. Even where workers are not organised, however, Tripartite Councils and Guilds oversee the regulation of apprenticeship and vocational training in all companies. As regards regulated wages, the big wage rounds are settled in the engineering industry and the general services sector and the rates and conditions achieved are applied widely. A recent report showed that two-thirds of companies of all sizes were not formally covered by collective agreements, but that those that were

accounted for 53% of all workers. In addition, a further 20% of workers are in companies not formally covered by collective agreements but which implement the terms of those agreements anyway. In addition both major parties have committed to introducing a Statutory Minimum Wage for the minority of workers not covered by collective agreement (FAZ, 4 June).

To return to Victor Grossman. His latest Bulletin carried another interesting piece related to the Left Party Conference: the defeat of a proposal from former co-leader Oskar Lafontaine that the party should campaign for an end to the Euro. The absence of any support for the proposal showed how much the Left Party, for all its robust opposition to austerity policies and to the alleged unequal treatment of weaker EU member states, remains squarely within the German consensus.

I was always an admirer of Lafontaine. He was a tough and principled socialist (a Social Democrat of Catholic background) who represented a quite unique area—the Saarland. That was one of those places that could conceivably have gone either way, like a German Alsace-Lorraine (it almost became one after WW2 when France sought to annex it). It also always has had a strong Labour movement (steel industry-based). In the 1920s the Saarland was "demilitarised" under Versailles and the SPD proved incapable of preventing mass enthusiasm for its integration into the German State in 1936 (the referendum was passed by over 90% in a rig-free League of Nations supervised poll).

Lafontaine proved his principled politics when he abandoned the powerful position of Federal Minister of Finance in 1999 in opposition to the adoption by the SPD—of which he was also Chairman—of Blairite 'modernisation' policies. When he re-entered the political field in 2005 as leader of the west German Independent Left, his stature made possible a real base for the "Left Party" in the western states of Germany which, as Grossman's report shows, has endured. His position on the Euro is logical, given the Left Party's tendency to old-style anti-EECism, but the charismatic party leader, Gregor Gysi, a former East German Jewish communist, convincingly led the party away from adopting such a position.

The anti-Euro constituency in Germany is reactionary and—not unlike Ireland—has its strongest base among effectively pro-British Free Market ideologues. The German economist Hans Werner Sinn,

who became something of a celebrity German in the *Financial Times* after announcing his Euro-scepticism and advocating the expulsion of debtor-states from the Eurozone, is the hero of Deutschmark nostalgists and Bundesbank fans. But he recently had to publicly distance himself from assumptions that he was secretly connected with the new right-wing anti-Euro party "Alternative for Germany" (which is scoring about 2% in opinion polls).

Germany's consensus conservative socialism with its Christian, Social Democratic, Green and ex-Marxist factions, it seems, will be with us for some time yet.

**Philip O'Connor**

## Irish Electoral Politics

Those who remember Fawlty Towers, the TV comedy on the Guesthouse from Hell, will remember the rule when receiving German guests—"Don't Mention the War".

The TV series was some decades ago but was long predated by British commentaries on Anglo/Irish politics whose guiding principle was "Don't Mention the Elections". That principle still persists and has been adopted by Irish academics, media commentators, and political chancers.

Ever since the Ballot Act of 1872, which, for the first time, removed the threat of evictions from the electors, UK General Elections resulted in most Irish seats at Westminster being won by candidates seeking to loosen or sever control by London. Between 1874 and 1918 most Irish MPs campaigned in vain for Home Rule. In 1918 Sinn Fein won 73 of Ireland's 105 Westminster seats, with a Republican manifesto for complete separation from British Rule. In 1920 Sinn Fein consolidated its mandate by winning victories in municipal and county council elections. And in 1921 Parliamentary Elections removed any remaining doubts there might have been about the will of Irish democracy.

Perhaps not one British student in a hundred is aware of these easily checkable facts. Consequently they are at a loss to understand why intermittent violence has characterised Anglo/Irish relations in what they imagine to be an age of democracy. I have seen numerous schoolbooks used in England over many decades. Ireland presents as a problem, not a country. Violence is mentioned but without a context which might find violence in defence of democracy morally defensible. Students are being short-changed and, while the likes of Conservative Education Minister Michael Gove have any influence,

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## Geoffrey Roberts And Stalin

One hears sad stories about the condition to which the staff of Cork University have been reduced by the battering they have received from a handful of peasants beyond Musher Mountain. They regard each other suspiciously, wondering which face, presenting a bland facade of innocent orthodoxy, harbours a lurking spirit of Aubaneism. It must therefore have been a great relief to the University to turn its attention for a while to a subject which can have nothing to do with Aubane, such as a Conference about Stalin which it held some years ago, and which has escaped our notice until now.

The Conference gave rise to a volume of essays, *Stalin: His Time And Ours*, edited by Professor Geoffrey Roberts, of the British nationalist tendency in the former Communist Party of Great Britain, who has for many years been the scourge of Irish nationalism in Cork.

As well as editing the collection, Roberts contributes an article justifying the Katyn Massacre—the liquidation in the Spring of 1940 of 20,000 Polish soldiers taken prisoner by the Red Army during the occupation of eastern Poland in late September 1939, following the defeat of the Polish Army and the collapse of the Police State in confrontation with Germany.

It seems that for Professor Roberts the war on Germany is a moral absolute and everything that contributed to the defeat of Germany was justified. And I suppose that must also be the official view of the Irish State now, after the honouring of deserters from the Irish Army to the British

will continue to be. He is on record as describing the Irish insurgents of 1916 as "*squalid gangs who betrayed Ireland*".

Many, perhaps even most, young and middle-aged people in Ireland are little better informed than their British contemporaries. Nearly a generation has passed since Patrick Cooney, a Fine Gael Minister for Education, decreed that Irish teachers should tell their pupils that the IRA was the root cause of all violence in Ireland.

The decommissioning of IRA weapons and Sinn Fein's adoption of electoral politics, with conspicuous success, has done nothing to distance Irish academic and media commentators and political chancers from Michael Gove's stance.

**Donal Kennedy**

during the War by the Minister for Defence (Alan Shatter), and the acceptance by the Government of his condemnation of the Irish State for not making itself available to Britain for the War on Germany. (All it could have done was make itself available to Britain, as Britain had ensured that it did not have an Army capable of fighting its own war.)

Anti-fascist motivation is ascribed to all who left Ireland to join the British Army, at a moment when the British Government was denying the lawfulness of Irish Neutrality and asserting its right to take Ireland in hand again if the need arose.

It is a fairly conventional thing for a State to confer a presumption of virtue on those who are doing what it wants them to do. But the presumption of moral anti-fascist motivation on the part of all who left Ireland to join the British Army while Britain was threatening Irish Neutrality was overdone by Roberts and his colleagues in the campaign to damn Ireland for its Neutrality. And it provoked Manus O'Riordan, who is a very serious anti-fascist, into probing the actual motives of those who joined the British Army. And he turned up the fact that some of the authentic anti-fascists who fought for Britain against Germany came home to fight against British fascism in Northern Ireland in 1956.

That fact has its subjective moral integrity. I have not seen any comment on it by the Anti-Neutrality lobby.

I do not see the complex of wars set off by Britain, and given spurious unity by being called the Second World War, as a moral event at all.

Britain started it with the intention that others should fight it. Because it stood idly by during the first battle—the first War—in September 1939—many tens of millions were killed during the next six years.

It was the Soviet Union that defeated Germany. And the indications are that Churchill would, if he could, have made war on the Soviet Union to snatch its victory from it.

British foreign policy in the 1930s is whitewashed with the false concept, Appeasement, which suggests that Nazi Germany had somehow become a great military Power while Britain was disarmed, and that Britain, being unable to

confront it as a Power, appeased (conciliated) it in the hope of charming it into better ways. But Britain never disarmed. And Nazi Germany was in 1933 a weak military state which became a strong European Power only with active British collaboration.

Why Britain, having collaborated with Nazi Germany for five years, decided to precipitate war in 1939 remains a mystery. The thought that it may have intended to manipulate a German/Polish War into a German/Soviet war is not allowed, and it is hard to think of anything else.

After the militarisation of the Rhineland, the Naval Agreement, the introduction of military conscription, the merger with Austria, and the transfer of the Sudetenland to Germany—all of which were done with British connivance or active British support—the only sore point remaining from the dictated Versailles Treaty was the German city of Danzig, which had a resonance with German opinion beyond Nazism. The position of Danzig was utterly anomalous. It was nominally within the new Polish state but not under Polish sovereignty. It was a League of Nations city state. The Poles were not allowed to Polonise it. Rather than co-operate with the Danzig city authorities to use it as a port, Poland built a new port nearby in its own territory, at Gdynia.

The transfer of Danzig to adjacent East Prussia, proposed by Hitler in 1939, would have made little alteration to the balance of power. Instead of encouraging that, and closing the Versailles account, Britain encouraged the Poles to refuse a settlement by offering them a Military Guarantee. France gave a similar Guarantee. This brought about a military encirclement of Germany. The British and French Empires had strong armies, and the Polish Army had won the last war in Europe, the Polish/Russian War of 1920. By accepting the Guarantee, the Poles broke the Treaty made with Germany in 1934.

If Hitler backed down in the face of the encirclement, his position would be weakened. If he acted he would lose. He chose to act. Britain and France did not act on their Guarantees. The Poles were left to fight alone. They were defeated in a couple of weeks.

The Soviets took pre-emptive action in late August 1939. They had tried and failed to make a hard agreement with Britain against Germany. Failing that, and seeing Britain apparently intent on bringing about war on its doorstep, it took pre-emptive diplomatic action. It made a

Non-Aggression Treaty with Germany, which included a secret arrangement to come into effect in the event of the collapse of the Polish State. It was not an agreement to make war on Poland in alliance with Germany. It was put into effect after the Polish collapse. The Red army occupied territory which had been conquered from Russia by Poland in 1920.

Six months later, says Roberts—

"Stalin's security chief reported that NKVD prisons held a large number of Polish army, police and intelligence officers who were unremittingly hostile to the Soviet system, engaged in anti-Soviet agitation within the camps, and were eager to escape and participate in counterrevolutionary activities. Beria recommended that 14,700 Polish POWs, together with another 11,000 Polish counterrevolutionaries, spies, saboteurs, government officials and former land and factory owners should be tried by the NKVD and then shot" (p191).

"...there was an important contingency that sealed the fate of the Polish POWs: the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-40... In February-March 1940—the time of the crucial Katyn decision—the Soviet-Finnish war was still being waged, although the Red Army was expected to prevail in the near future. However, reports had been reaching Moscow that Britain and France were preparing an expeditionary force to aid the Finns. Such an action threatened to precipitate not only a Soviet-Western war over Finland but German intervention in the conflict to protect its supplies of iron ore from northern Sweden... In this catastrophic scenario the threat represented by Polish POWs was magnified tenfold. NKVD reports from the camps indicated that the Poles had taken heart from Soviet difficulties in the Finnish war and anticipated with relish the Anglo-French intervention that they could then try to link up with..." (p194).

This kind of matter-of-fact reasoning is very different from the state of mind one encounters in Roberts' *The Unholy Alliance: Stalin's Pact With Hitler*, published in 1989, "in the *glasnost* era". Gorbachev subverted his State with his childish notion of "*glasnost*", and Roberts seems to have been disillusioned by the consequences into a more robust sense of reality. But the Communist Party mentality is not easy to leave behind. This was evident in an argument Roberts had on *Russia Today* a couple of years ago with Stephen Cohen, author of the major biography of Bukharin in the days of the Cold War. What Bukharin proposed in the late 1920s was not implementable in the circumstances of those times, but what Putin has constructed out of the ruin brought about by Gorbachev is similar to

what Bukharin proposed then. So Cohen could reflect on things with an ease that was still beyond Roberts—and he was free of the anti-nationalist fixations that were basic to Roberts' outlook as a revisionist in Cork University.

When Pat Murphy and myself were figuring out the world in the mid-1960s, we had many discussions with CP intellectuals of the "Stalin-critical" tendency. They were starry-eyed about Lenin and were therefore obliged to try to understand Stalin in a false context. And they were in denial about Katyn. They wrote about the opening phase of the War in terms that would have been appropriate only if Russia had lost. Roberts' chapter on the War in *Unholy Alliance* is titled *The Road To Disaster*—to the extension of Soviet power into Central Europe!

Stalin should have known in June 1941 that a German invasion was imminent. Roberts concedes that definite intelligence was lacking—but "*there was just enough of it to draw the right conclusions, provided it was placed in the correct framework*" (p212). And there was much more than 'just enough', long before *glasnost*, for one to be sure about Katyn.

The main article about Soviet politics in the UCC *Stalin* collection is by Judith Devlin of UCD: *Beria And The Development Of The Stalin Cult*. No information is given about the author's political orientation. The subject needs context. The context is Lenin. The title implies deviation from Leninism but nothing is said about the practice of the Lenin era—except this:

"Unlike Lenin, Stalin in the propaganda of the late 1930s, was a potent, almost magic, persona in the present: like the prince in the fairytale... he transformed the destiny of individuals and society, as well as the basis of life itself; he transcended history, untrammelled as it is in contingency and compromise, to enter the realm of myth and legend... His persona enveloped the world around him..." (p28).

But surely that was not "*unlike Lenin*". That was Lenin. It was Lenin who acted in defiance of the rules, stood Marxism on its head, and swept even Trotsky off his feet by the magical force of will and personality.

We are told that—

"Stalin was infamously concerned with his historical legend. In October 1931 he indicated to historians that there were axioms (such as the infallibility of Lenin) whose truth "cannot be made the subject of discussion"... (p29).

Stalin certainly made Leninism "*axiomatic*" for the Soviet intelligentsia. Lenin had broken the rules as understood by European Marxism. He established a Socialist State as a "*superstructure*", although the "*foundation*" for such a State was lacking. The superstructure then had the task of creating social structures to be its foundation. He made that superstructure functional and gave it its dynamic. The role of the intelligentsia was to be agencies of the State in organising society into a "*foundation*" for the State, That was Leninism.

Mike Milotte, in *Communism In Modern Ireland*, says that it was Trotsky who first had the idea of having socialist revolution in pre-capitalist society. That was in 1905. Lenin plodded along until 1917 with the idea that capitalism was a necessary stage on the way to socialism. But in 1917 Lenin went over to Trotsky's view that socialist revolution was possible in pre-capitalist society, so Trotsky joined him. But the socialist revolution in pre-capitalist society could only succeed in the context of international socialist revolution. This, however, was inevitable because capitalism was now international.

But the international revolution did not happen. So what then?

Trotsky was a journalist. He made a striking journalistic prediction which partly worked out.

Lenin constructed a disciplined party to be a revolutionary lever. From 1905 to 1917 Trotsky berated him as a bureaucratic dictator who was killing the spirit of socialist revolution. The second revolution of 1917 happened because of Lenin's party and not because of Trotsky's journalistic prediction. Trotsky then fell under Lenin's spell and did things as an agent of Lenin's party which were at variance with the spirit of his pre-1917 journalism. Lenin died. The international revolution had failed. So what was to be done? Hand over power to the bourgeoisie? Try to find them in order to give them power! Or continue using the socialist state (in effect the party) in an attempt to build socialist foundations.

Trotsky evaded the issue. He did not propose that the revolution be given up. Neither did he (as Lenin's "*co-equal*") attempt to gain administrative control of the party as the instrument which would enable the revolutionary attempt to continue. He orated. And he revived his pre-1917 criticism of Lenin and directed it at Stalin, who was taking control of the party in order to continue the revolution.

In 1917, before Lenin's return, Stalin

was briefly in control of the party in Russia. His policy was to develop the party as a strong opposition in the bourgeois state that emerged from the fall of the Tsar in February. That was Stalin's first mistake, according to Trotsky post-Lenin. The most recent Soviet Stalin-criticism I read was General Volkogonov's, who had the Soviet archives open to him. As his biography proceeds backwards from Stalin, through Trotsky, to Lenin, I seem to recall that he began to doubt that Stalin's first mistake had been a mistake at all.

Anyhow, it is evident that Stalin had a more realistic understanding than the others of what was implied in Lenin's 1917 project, and Stalin Criticism, to be worthwhile, should be set in an understanding of what it was that Lenin set in motion.

As to Katyn, Roberts observes: "*The massacre of 20,000 Polish POWs... was not a particularly heinous crime by the standards of the Stalin era*" (p191)—not to mention other standards. The thousands killed in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Dresden etc., etc., etc. were not soldiers eager for

battle. Bomber Command, for many months before the end of the War, seems to have been killing German civilians just for the sake of killing. The British were systematically working their way through a list of 60 German towns with negligible defences and no option of surrendering—refusal to surrender having been, before that time, the justification for the destruction of towns and their inhabitants.

"British air strategists considered taking the war to small German municipalities, but concluded that they could obliterate only "thirty towns a month at the maximum"—destroying one hundred Dörfer would account for only 3% of the population..." (*The Guns At Last Light* by Rick Atkinson, New York, 2013, p534).

The Dresden raid:

"Chimney stacks fell down just from the echo of my voice", a schoolgirl later reported. "I saw a pile of ashes in the shape of a person... It was my mother". Asked to assess the raid Bomber Harris replied, "Dresden? There is no such place as Dresden..." (Ibid, p535).

**Brendan Clifford**

*his lifted arms waving to the air"*, Deasy shows no more respect for Ireland's 'honour' than he does for Jews, as he answers his own rhetorical question: "*Ireland, they say, has the honour of being the only country which never persecuted the Jews... And do you know why? ... Because she never let them in ... She never let them in, he cried again through his laughter ... That's why.*" And when Deasy addresses Joyce's own *persona* of Stephen Dedalus as "*you Fenians*", a race memory is triggered in Joyce, no less painful than that triggered in Bloom by the 'Citizen' in the later "Cyclops" episode: "*Glorious, pious and immortal memory. The lodge of Diamond in Armagh the splendid behung with corpses of papishes. Hoarse, masked and armed, the planter's covenant. The black north and true blue bible. Croppies lie down.*"

The exception that proves the rule is to be found in perhaps the most scholarly examination that has yet been written of Joyce's treatment of anti-Semitism, a paper for the Joyce centenary—"*Ireland is the only country...*": Joyce and the Jewish Dimension", *The Crane Bag*, 1982—by Gerald Y. Goldberg, who subsequently became the first and only Jewish Lord Mayor of Cork. Goldberg had made a particular point of firmly locating Deasy's set of prejudices: "*Mr. Deasy, Orangeman, and Christian gentlemen, mounts the back of his favourite horse and flogs it*".

In addition to his identification of Deasy as an across-the-board Unionist bigot, there was yet another invaluable contribution by Goldberg's scholarship that is, unfortunately, all too often overlooked to this very day, the ongoing character-assassination of the founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Michael Cusack. This erroneous identification of the 'Citizen' had its source in the work of Joyce's principal biographer, Richard Ellmann (*James Joyce*, 1959). He had written of Cusack that "*Joyce liked him little enough to make him the model for the narrow-minded and rhetorical Cyclops*"; and again, "*Cusack ... the militant nationalist whom Joyce called 'the Citizen...*" But Goldberg confronted Ellmann's errors head-on:

"Those who regard Michael Cusack as the prototype of the character travel a road that leads to nowhere: the 'Citizen' is a composite re-construction by Joyce, of thoughts and sentiments expressed from time to time by Griffith and Gogarty, through their respective writings... The voice may be the voice of Cusack but the hands and the heads and the thoughts are those of Griffith and Gogarty."

## Joyce And The British Brothers Who Would Not Let The Jews In, And Expelled A Few More Out Of Belfast

In writing in the May issue about the Communist Party of Great Britain's cultural policy during the 1950s, Wilson John Haire recalls:

"The work of James Joyce wasn't considered to have any nuggets suggesting he could have been *progressive*. Unity Theatre, under CPGB control, did do Allan McClelland's one half of *Ulysses* as *Bloomsday*. It turned out to be a portrayal of Ireland as anti-Semitic. Brendan Clifford points out a line in *Ulysses* in which one of the characters states: '*Because we didn't let them in*'—{commenting that} Ireland, being under British occupation, would have had no say in the matter."

Quite right! This was an issue I addressed in April 2007 on the "*An Fear Rua—GAA Unplugged*" website, in an essay entitled *GAA Founder No Blooming Anti-Semite!—reflections on some aspects of Irish Jewish History in the Age of Joyce*. (See also [www.drb.ie/essays/citizens-of-the-republic](http://www.drb.ie/essays/citizens-of-the-republic) for a shorter version, "*Citizens of the Republic*", published in the second issue of *Dublin Review of Books*, Summer 2007). I criticised some of my own earlier writings, among others, in analysing the

ant-Semitic character of Mr. Deasy in *Ulysses*, with whom Stephen Dedalus (Joyce himself) had the exchange in question. In my article "*A National Question on Bloomsday*" (*Communist Review*, July 1974, monthly publication of the Dublin Branch of the British and Irish Communist Organisation), like almost everybody else, I had quoted Mr. Deasy as gleefully declaring that the only reason why Ireland had the honour of never persecuting the Jews was that she never let them in. But, to the best of my knowledge, with only one exception, all commentators who have quoted these Deasy lines, from my own 1974 Bloomsday article, right down to the present, have totally ignored the fundamental—and, indeed, fundamentalist—character of Deasy's particular set of prejudices. For Deasy was anything but a Catholic Nationalist. He was in fact a self-proclaimed Tory and bigoted Orangeman, which should be obvious to anybody who cares to read the actual narrative.

As "*a coughball of laughter leaped from his throat dragging after it a rattling chain of phlegm*" and "*coughing, laughing,*

Joyce's *Ulysses* is set in the year 1904, the same year as the anti-Semitic agitation in Limerick instigated by the Redemptorist priest Father Creagh, to which, however, Joyce makes no reference. This has erroneously been called the Limerick "pogrom", but the term is misplaced, since nobody was killed, unlike the anti-Catholic pogroms of British Ulster. The 'Limerick boycott' is the more appropriate term to use. Moreover, "pogrom" was a description which Goldberg resolutely refused to apply to Limerick, notwithstanding the fact that, during Creagh's anti-Semitic campaign, Goldberg's own father had not only been boycotted, but physically beaten as well, before being driven out of Limerick to Cork. It should not be forgotten that the great defenders of Limerick's Jewish community were from that same "you Fenians" community, so loathed with parity of esteem by "Mr Deasy, Orangeman" as the Jewish immigrants he wished to turn back. I am referring both to Michael Davitt and the veteran Limerick Fenian John Daly, the father and father-in-law, respectively, of the executed 1916 Rising leaders, Ned Daly and Tom Daly. And what happened in Limerick should also be set in the context of the contemporary UK agitation being conducted by Deasy's British brethren. As I wrote in 2007:

"Which brings me back to a major flaw in my own 1974 reflections on Bloomsday. I had highlighted the connection between the 'Citizen' and the anti-Semitic agitation in Limerick. But in ignoring the fact of Deasy's Orange Tory politics, I had failed to further set the Limerick of 1904 in the context of the wider UK agitation that had been gathering force against additional Jewish immigration into any part of that unitary State. For, of course, it had not at all been in the gift of the subject nation of Ireland itself to 'let them in'. The principal driving force of mass agitation against Jewish immigration into the UK, the British Brothers' League, was an extremely successful political lobby that had been carefully indulged by Britain's Tory Government and finally rewarded with the 1905 Aliens Act. Indeed the British Brothers had made a particular point of writing to Fr. Creagh in order to congratulate and personally thank him for making their case for them."

There had also been a British Protestant missionary attempt to make political capital out of the issue in 1905, by seeking to involve the outgoing Unionist Lord Mayor of Belfast, Sir Otto Jaffe, a member of that city's Jewish community. This could only have been for the purpose of fuelling the bitterness still further, in spite of the expressed wishes of the Limerick Jewish community itself that the issue should

now be dropped. And, a century later, Unionist exploitation of the issue for anything but philo-Semitic reasons continued unabated. On 14th March 2002, under the heading of "Settler Solidarity Rules OK", the *Irish Times* was to publish a gratuitously offensive "opinion piece" by Steven King, advisor to Unionist Party leader David Trimble, in which he boasted: "At the same time as the Limerick 'pogrom' of 1904, Belfast had a Jewish Lord Mayor, after all". And the same *Irish Times* refused to publish a letter from myself that pointed out just how incomplete King's 'story' had been. For vicious Unionist war hysteria during 1916 was to force Jaffe to flee for his life from Ulster, as in August 1914 there had already been 'true Brit' anti-Semitic assaults in the Bessbrook-Newry area on the Russian Jewish immigrant David Abrahamson.

The facts of the Jaffe case are as follows. In 1871 a synagogue had been opened in

Belfast's Great Victoria Street to cater for a Jewish community of about fifty, primarily German in origin. Its founding father was Daniel Joseph Jaffe, who originally hailed from Mecklenburg-Schwerin. His son, Sir Otto Jaffe, in turn became the congregation's Life President, and also went on to serve as Lord Mayor of Belfast on two occasions, 1899 and 1904. Notwithstanding his generous, philanthropic services to the city, including the funding of a physiology laboratory in Queen's University, and despite the fact that his own son was serving in the British Army, Empire Loyalist war hysteria seized on Otto's own Hamburg birth seventy years previously in 1846, and his subsequent service as German consul in Belfast, to force his resignation from Belfast City Council in 1916, while also forcing the Jaffe family to flee for their lives from the province. Not a story the *Irish Times* wished to hear!

**Manus O'Riordan**

## McIntyre's Thesis

I noticed Brendan Clifford (*Irish Political Review*, April 2013) had difficulty gaining access to the Queen's Library recently. The Library, which used to hold the post-graduate theses up in Stranmillis, has been closed and the theses have been put in the new general Library next to the gates to Botanic Gardens.

As part of this development it has been made hard for ordinary members of the public to access the theses. I turned up in the same week as Brendan, only to find that a big rigmarole of credit cards, references etc. had to be produced in advance to gain entry.

Having nearly given up myself I was luckily spotted by someone who knew me and I managed to circumvent the regulations.

The objective of my visit was to have a look at Anthony McIntyre's PhD thesis on Republicanism.

I was intrigued, nearly a decade ago, when I saw that McIntyre had written in his publication/website, *The Blanket* (23.8.04):

"Those seeking an insight into the origins and development of the Provisional IRA campaign need look no further than 1969 and subsequent state policy. British indifference created the organisation; British repression sustained it.

Its volunteers did not carry some genetic code dating back to 1916 predisposing them towards physical force. How otherwise can it be explained that the settlement of Good Friday 1998, so readily embraced and celebrated by those volunteers, does not vaguely resemble the objectives of Easter Sunday 1916?"

Anthony McIntyre is important because he has put up the most sustained argument against the Provos since the 1994 ceasefire and has subsequently been the greatest thorn in their side. Many of his arguments form the basis of what journalists and political elements with little in common with his political position, have used to take pot-shots at Sinn Fein and at Gerry Adams, in particular.

So it was important to go to his PhD thesis at Queens, *Modern Irish Republicanism: the product of British state strategies*, which was signed off by Adrian Guelke but which the *Guardian* (3.9.94) states was supervised by Professor Bew, to get the gist of his thinking.

The first chapter of McIntyre's thesis is written heavily in 'political science' or sociological jargon. This seems to be the language one has to adopt for academic recognition. The bulk of the thesis then develops into an easily understandable narrative as if the author is speaking himself. That is before the final chapter reverts to

the gobbledegook of the 'conceptual framework of political science' again.

Early in the thesis McIntyre says:

"The implicit contention in this thesis is that the dynamics of Provisional Irish republicanism are to be primarily found in the post-1969 relationship between large elements of the nationalist working class and the British state." (p.7)

So from this we can presumably take it that the fortunes of the Provos were largely determined by what the British State chose to do and the effects its policy had on working-class Catholics.

That sounds very like saying that the British State both created and destroyed the Provos or perhaps that it was fighting itself all along!

Later on McIntyre makes the point that the Provos represented a distinct break with the old Anti-Treaty Republicanism:

"The material representation of the ideology of traditional republicanism, the Republican Movement, was a vehicle swept aside in the popular upsurge generated in the wake of August 1969. A new body filled the vacuum – the Provisionals" (p.342).

Something entirely new was created therefore in West Belfast after August 1969 that only *appeared* to be the old Republicanism. And McIntyre makes the observation that:

"The Northern nationalist tradition impacted more on the development of Provisional republicanism that did the physical force influence of 1916." (p.66)

This, presumably, means that the Provos were much more in spirit and character a product of the experiences of Northern Catholics within the Six Counties than of traditional Republicanism.

McIntyre says that the Provos were about "*improvisation rather than tradition*" (p.7) and:

"A methodological tracing out of the detail of Provisional republicanism shall demonstrate that there is no reason to see traditional Republican ideology as a determinant of primary significance" (p.37).

McIntyre argues that the Provo character, shaped by the practical experience of life of Northern Catholics in the Six Counties, rather than Anti-Treaty ideology, was also its weakness and made it liable to compromise before its formal objectives were achieved:

"Provisional republicanism would

always be vulnerable to outcomes that did not specifically address the question of the British presence nor the indefinite continuation of partition. In other words there always existed the structural potential for an outcome that would constitute the outworking of structural processes of grievances regardless of how the latter might be ideologically defined" (p.67)

And so, since the driving-force of the Provo campaign was the grievances held by Northern Catholics, it began to falter when the British began to address these same grievances:

"Provisionalism was republicanism in a mass form. In order to sustain that form it had to be fed with material needs rather than vaporous ideology. Provisional republicanism went into serious decline as a result of those material needs being addressed from late 1972 to 1974" (p.347).

In an earlier chapter McIntyre addresses all the previous writing done on Irish Republicanism during the period. He says of the present writer's book/thesis, *Irish Republicanism And Socialism* (in relation to Professor Henry Patterson's work, *The Politics Of Illusion*):

"Pat Walsh at least does not make the mistake of Patterson in ignoring the politics of the era being researched. However, his account is much too conspiratorial and ascribes to the Provisionals much greater strategic foresight and capability than is merited" (p.60).

And later on he clarifies this point in relation to the Provos: "*That they had a design is not in dispute here. The evidence suggests that such a design simply did not matter*" (p.101).

This point seems to suggest, as the title of the thesis does, that the Provos were fundamentally a result of what the British did in 'Northern Ireland' between August 1969 and 1973. The Provos grew largely due to the military response of the British Government in events like the Falls Road Curfew, Internment, and Bloody Sunday. And they declined as Britain took a new 'political' approach and took the wind out of their sails.

McIntyre suggests that the Provos were—

"thrown up at a *particular* juncture *primarily* by conditions *within* the northern state, rather than because of the mere existence *per se* of that state, and because the republican tradition was more of an 'enabling surface' factor than a dynamic or primary structural determinant." (In a footnote McIntyre says that this was also Danny Morrison's view, p. 67.)

But if McIntyre saw the Provos as being—"thrown up at a *particular juncture primarily* by conditions *within* the northern state, rather than because of the mere existence *per se* of that state"—then surely he should not have been surprised that the Provos called a halt to their campaign short of the achievement of their Republican objectives? And there can be no basis for criticism of them. But McIntyre seems to have wanted them to act like Anti-Treatyite Republicanism whilst conceding that they were nothing of the sort.

To argue the thesis of McIntyre's title, it really would be necessary to go into the mode of existence of the British State in general, and its relation to the anomalous 'Northern

Ireland' part of it in particular. But he does not do that at all. Whilst his title suggests that the Provos were a pure product of British strategy, he says little about Britain except that it tried a military solution which helped generate and develop the Provos and then instituted a political and economic strategy that contained and ultimately defeated them. In other words, Dr. Frankenstein, having created his monster, then destroyed it.

But McIntyre concentrates almost exclusively on the character of the monster and says very little about the intentions and motivations of its creator, despite viewing the monster as very much the creation of its creator.

Lord Bew was—if we take the word of the *Guardian*—in some degree a mentor of McIntyre. Bew and Patterson certainly take a similar view to McIntyre's, if from a different perspective. They maintain this view of the innocence of Whitehall with regard to the Six County part of its State and from the beginning describe 'Northern Ireland' as a state within itself, within which political activity could be effectively conducted.

Perhaps that is why McIntyre steers clear of analysing events before 1969 or examining the political context in which the events from August of that year took place – namely the nature of the 'Northern Ireland' façade and its relationship to Britain.

What emerges, therefore, is Hamlet without the Prince - an analysis that views the Provos as the central issue in the 'Northern Ireland' conflict whilst seeing them as primarily a manifestation of short-term British policy.

In an article entitled *Patton—A Republican Dissident Perspective*, posted on *The Blanket* in 1999, McIntyre argued that:

"The Good Friday Agreement... amounted to the British state aided by Dublin reducing the options available to republicanism to the grand total of two: A Stormont government administering British rule which includes Sinn Fein; a Stormont government administering British rule which excludes Sinn Fein. There is nothing else on offer. This type of arrangement was always the political objective of the SDLP... But this is not what republicanism was about, for which it inflicted and endured so much suffering... the very existence per se of the Northern Ireland state makes it hostile to republicanism. But even if republicans are forced to put up with its existence it has by no means been proven that administering that state is the optimum strategy for enhancing the position of Northern nationalists ... If, as some contend, dysfunctioning is essential for functioning, then for the northern state to function more inclusively of its nationalists it is essential that the necessary element of dysfunctioning is ever present... With the re-emergence, in seeming strength, of armed dissident republicanism there will invariably be those who feel that the only response to the unmitigated collapse of the republican philosophical, strategic and political ensemble is to wage war. If so they should think again. Has it not been demonstrated time and again that army council secret sevens only ever offer us the option of being bombed or betrayed—Omagh or Stormont?"

Britain, or England, to be more accurate, always believed in the primacy of power politics over ideology. For centuries England was an anti-Catholic state which was largely held together internally by anti-Catholicism. It persecuted Catholicism in Ireland with the Penal Laws but it still made alliances with Catholic Powers in the interest of power politics.

Ideology, therefore, was always the servant of power in the secret of England's success.

This is the aspect of what the Republican Leadership have done that seems to most bother McIntyre.

Now it must be said that there is little of traditional republican ideology in McIntyre's position. He is a Northerner and has nothing of the Living Dáil Republicanism of Ruari O'Bradaigh in his thesis. He largely defines Republicanism on its rejection of the 'consent principle' with regard to Ulster Protestants. That is what, for McIntyre, set the IRA and Sinn Fein

## What Caused the Irish Crisis?

I disagree with Donal Donovan and Antoin Murphy ("Blinkered thinking at heart of Irish economic crash", Opinion, June 24th) that the "blame" for our current woes lie uniquely in failures of Irish governance arising from fatal group-think among policy elites.

Almost identical errors of governance could be identified as the "explanation" for the crisis in any number of countries, from Spain to Portugal, Italy to Greece. Even much larger economies, such as the UK, the US and France, suffered banking failure, explosion of sovereign debt and economic contraction of a systemic quality different to Ireland's only in relative scale. "Governance failure" was not a uniquely Irish phenomenon.

In their great book, *Manias, Panics and Crashes*, Kindleberger and Aliber showed how all financial crises in western history had been caused by sudden expansions in the credit system combined with technical innovation in its form. The decade following the collapse of communism saw a euphoria in the west that globalisation had abolished the cycle of boom and bust, an attitude summed up in the title of the book by Reinhart and Rogoff, *This Time is Different—Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*.

The explosion of world credit from 2000, combined with the "technical innovation" of electronic transfer and newly invented debt-trading "instruments", overwhelmed the world with "unsound" money against which institutional defences nearly everywhere proved inadequate. As Avellaneda and Hardiman put it in 2010 in relation to the EU: "The under-institutionalisation of the normal policy restraints at European level imposed the need for heroic levels of self-constraint on the part of the peripheral economies."

The only economies left standing as the tsunami of the global credit crisis passed were the manufacturing economies of northern Europe which had long resisted the blandishments of Keynesian financial expansionism. The actual instrument in Ireland's case for protecting against the anarchy of international credit lies in speedy consolidation of the euro zone and acceptance of its monetary and banking disciplines. As Brendan Halligan recently told the Institute of International and European Affairs, Ireland must align itself unequivocally with the countries driving this process, and this can allow for no special pleading such as in relation to the IFSC.

**Philip O'Connor**

**This letter appeared in the *Irish Times* on 26th June. The author adds—**

It goes without saying that structural reforms agreed by the Government with the Troika in the *Programme of Financial Assistance* and long known to be needed anyway (e.g. legal services, procurement and spend policies in the health services etc.) should be implemented as social goods in their own right while we have this opportunity. Improvements of governance structures are also all to the good. But their weaknesses were not the real cause of the crisis except in a very general sense.

Notions of a uniquely "Irish cause" of the crisis are not only parochial and wrong headed, but do little more than sap national morale and undermine any sense of purpose in righting things.

Onwards to eurozone consolidation.

apart from the SDLP.

Of course, the rejection of the 'consent principle' was not purely a Republican thing. Up until quite recently it was a characteristic of the entire Nationalist movement, North and South of the Border, from Fianna Fail to Fine Gael and Labour to the Nationalist Party and Sinn Fein. The general breaking down of its rejection was largely a result of August 1969 and after.

But there is another ideological influence in McIntyre and one he shares with Professors Bew and Patterson and that is Marxism.

Marxism has tended to see ideology as a bourgeois/ruling class phenomenon, something that creates 'false consciousness' in the proletariat. Those who become republican socialists find a neat complementarity in this idea of 'false consciousness' as it helps to explain Protestant Unionist opposition to a United Ireland and to see them as 'deluded' and under some Orange-bourgeois spell.

The Professors rejected this crudity long ago and retreated into their Althusserian discourse—before re-emerging as reconstructed (or is that unreconstructed?) unionists.

**To p24, col 1**

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#### THE STATE AND THE FAMILY

There has been a recent very ominous development with regards to what the State intends to do if parents are found wanting with regards to the care of their children. A recent judgement by Judge Patrick Durcan at two separate District Court sittings in Ennis, Co. Clare, last week ordered that *"notice of serious alcohol abuse and drug convictions be forwarded to the Health Service Executive (HSE) if those convicted have young children"*. One case related to a married father convicted of dealing heroin from the family home and the other related to a mother of two, described as *"a serial drunk"*—both cases were ordered to be sent on the HSE. Judge Durcan said:

"The message must go out loudly and clearly that if parents commit serious crime and involve themselves in activities, particularly in activities of this nature, then this court will put the obligation on the HSE, as the carer of children, to ensure those children are protected."

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) welcomed the initiative in Clare. A spokesman said:

"Any information that would lead to a concern about a child's safety and welfare needs to be passed on to the relative authorities to ensure intervention and support... We all have a duty to care when it comes to the protection and welfare of children and such concerns should not go unreported."

I find this extremely worrying. Because as far as I know the Children Rights Amendment, while barely passed by the electorate, is undergoing a challenge to its constitutional legality and in fact has never been signed into law by the President. So why would a District Court Judge think it legally proper for him to refer these two cases to the HSE, which is so underfunded that to put children into its care almost certainly means their descent into alcohol/drug abuse and prostitution and—according to the statistics—a young death. The lack of compassion in the judge's description of the mother as a *"serial drunk"* has connotations that are chilling. Alcoholism is a disease and is treatable so why not ensure the mother be treated and then be supported in looking after her children instead of whipping them off her in this profoundly contemptible way?

#### BANKERS AND OTHERS IN CRISES

It used to be said that newspapers were a poor man's university. Newspapers, and indeed the rest of the media, are not an education these days in anything—except in propaganda and prevarication. Take the banks, for example: what is the truth about their Balance Sheets? What is meant by *"stress testing"*? What amount of stress is considered to be acceptable? Banks should not be under any stress—they should be risk-free. And why wait until next year? Is it not the job of the Central Bank to constantly monitor the banks and why is it not being done now?

Once upon a time, each bank had to make a report to the Central Bank once every two weeks and the Central Bank monitored the solvency of each bank. Fortnightly. The last previous big bank insolvency was, I think, about 150 years ago and out of its ashes arose the Munster & Leinster Bank Limited which was later amalgamated into Allied Irish Banks Limited, now Allied Irish Banks plc or AIB as it is commonly called.

So the fortnightly monitoring worked well. But when Anglo-Irish Bank in the 1980s and 1990s began to borrow heavily from abroad and recklessly lent out the money at a profit to Irish and UK speculators, Bank of Ireland and AIB were pushed by their shareholders (mostly Pension Funds) to make more profit. The Bank of Ireland and AIB started to break the rules and ignored the risks—which as *"Banking Experts"* they must have been well aware of. The shareholders probably knew nothing about banking and, on the evidence they did not care. What the shareholders wanted was increasing share prices. What the executive bankers personally wanted was increasing share prices because of their share option schemes. And so for personal advantage the bankers ignored the banking risks and boosted the share prices and made personal fortunes. Any inquiry into the Banking Crisis must examine the share dealings of Bank Directors—it could well be very revealing—but unlikely to happen.

It is obvious that the senior bankers and their auditors and accountants have been faking the quality of their assets (i.e. their loans to customers) by rescheduling loans, refinancing bad and defective loans, and by putting off year by year the time when irrecoverable loans should have been written off. It is equally clear that, if all the bad and irrecoverable loans had been written off in 2008, the banks would have been seen to be insolvent. They were insolvent in fact. But it was covered up. Too many (virtually all?) the seemingly

wealthy and powerful people in Ireland were deeply in trouble and they ruthlessly used their power to, so to speak, hold up the roof of the collapsing structure long enough to get out from under it.

The hidden wiring of the State's power structures was being pulled by the powerful—the bankers, the politicians, the senior civil servants, the auditors, the lawyers, and the developers and speculators. This group included virtually all the top people in the media and so the panic was covered up and concealed from the plebeians, the ordinary people who are intended to be made to pay for it all.

A truly enormous criminal fraud has been perpetrated on the tax-payers of Ireland—and that is every one of us. And, not only will we have to pay, but future yet unborn generations will have to pay. The State is *still borrowing* millions each week to pay for current excess of expenditure over income. Minister for Finance Michael Noonan, Fine Gael is not believable when he says we're coming out of trouble. We are not! He knows we are not. In each of the past months he has on behalf of the State borrowed €500 million and there is no sign this *extra borrowing* will stop anytime soon. Do we get it yet? He has no intention of stopping borrowing because it is for themselves. We're sinking deeper into debt but it is under control—i.e. those on top now have some ideas about how to stick it to us and, in the five years since 2008, they have stabilised their own personal finances. Some have got richer in the past five years. A few of the wealthy—about 1 in 5 of them who had over €10 million have now *"only"* €5 million according to a Barclay's Bank survey. (Do we believe in bankers anymore?)

We would like to think we are coming out of trouble and so we are pleased when we are told we are by Minister Noonan. Of course he means a different *"trouble"* to what we are thinking. That is the art of politics. The excessive expenditure for which the State is borrowing did not happen in 2008. It had been going on for all of the Celtic Tiger years. Minister of Finance Charlie McCreevy, Fine Fail told us *"if I have it I spend it"*. He did not have it of course because at no stage was our National Debt paid off. Under the cloak of all that spending we now know there was a huge amount of feather-bedding and outright fraud going on. The light regulation and lack of oversight has been going on for thirty years and not five years. It is not today nor yesterday that the Lord Mayor of Cork, for example, gets a salary of well over €100,000 plus expenses for acting as Chairman of Cork City Council—a position that once was an honorary one. The Prime Minister of Spain's salary is lower. These excessive payouts could be stopped by Executive

Order at any time. We are borrowing to pay them. We have not got the money! But these excessive payouts are all across the senior bankers, politicians, senior civil servants, auditors, lawyers and developers. The people in power are behaving like Emperors and Senators in ancient Rome who kept at it until all the resources were used up and the Roman Empire collapsed.

In the meantime we are kept docile or reasonably docile by circuses of one sort or another while the powerful people rob us as we have never been robbed before.

They could stop it but they have no intention of doing so.

Most economists and financial commentators are well-meaning, reasonable sorts of people but you can see they are waffling around trying to make economic sense of what is happening and they cannot. Because the Economic Theory which they learnt at college does not explain what is going on now. C. Northcote Parkinson back in 1957 explained the start of what is happening and John Kenneth Galbraith in his later writings was beginning to explain it and perhaps their writings should be

read again. But an economist who wants to comment intelligently on what is happening around us now will have to ignore Adam Smith, Ricardo, Henry Clay, Silverman, Milton Friedman, Keynes and Karl Marx who were all doing their best to treat economics as a science. It used to be called Political Science in fact.

*"Economics is the study of business in its social aspect"* according to Henry Clay. *"Political Economy or Economics is a study of man's actions in the ordinary business of life; it enquires how he gets his income and how he uses it.... Thus it is on the one hand a study of wealth and on the other and more important side, a part of the study of man"* Marshall wrote. But they all, quite properly as they thought, ignored the possibility of immoral and unethical conduct and so all of these economists and their writings and their formulae are irrelevant in today's world.

What we now need to explain what is going on is an economic version of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

Michael Stack ©.

## McIntyre's Thesis

continued

What the Provos have learnt from Britain is the mastery of the art of power politics in which ideology is taken to be subservient to power. That is what has marked them out from the old republicanism.

This can be seen in the ability of Sinn Fein to function effectively within the transition between War and Politics. If Sinn Fein had found itself floundering and fragmenting in the new situation which it had carved out for itself, and then resorted to ideology to know what to do next, it would have been clear that it had failed in this art of power politics. And that is just what Britain tested it with in the aftermath of the Agreement.

After 1994 Sinn Fein found itself in unchartered waters. It had attained a position that it needed to know what to do with. It might have fallen between two fires and done neither one thing nor another. It could easily have run out of perspective in the new situation—if it had not got the relationship between ideology and power politics right.

If Anthony McIntyre's position had been that of the Republican Movement it is most probable that that is just what would have happened.

Having ruled out a return to the military campaign, what McIntyre's alternative to the Sinn Fein strategy amounted to was a kind of Republican version of the old Nationalist Party policy of boycotting Stormont to maintain its dogmatic purity and Anti-Partitionist credentials. But the history of the Catholics of 'Northern Ireland' surely demonstrates that this would surely have just resulted in an impetus to participate in politics and government again.

Perhaps the idea was to start the cycle that began in 1920-1 all over again.

This might have satisfied the ideological principles of some Provos and their intellectual hangers-on in the trendy academic left but there would be little appetite for it in the community who hardly wished to throw away the hard-won gains of the 28 Year War for the sake of ideology.

Pat Walsh

**NOTE: Pat Walsh is writing a book on the decline and rise of Catholics in Northern Ireland.**

## TRADE UNION NOTES

continued

fell in the first three months of the year, statistics show.

But on average, pay costs went up in Ireland in the first quarter, according to Eurostat.

The European statistics agency said wages in Ireland increased on average by 0.4% between January and March, 2013.

In the so-called business economy, which includes industry, construction and services, pay jumped 0.9%.

But those in the non-business economy weren't so lucky. It includes sectors such as public services, education, health, arts and entertainment. They saw wages fall by 0.7%.

Wages across the Eurozone increased on average by 1.6% in the first three months of 2013.

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### Social Justice

"Lobby group Social Justice Ireland says no company should pay less than 6% tax on profits and called for a cap on the effective tax rate for individuals.

"The maximum and minimum rates are outlined in a pre-Budget submission from the group—formerly known as the Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI). The group wants Budget 2014 to include a major public investment programme and an end to cuts in services, but accepts the need to reduce the overall Budget by €3.1 billion.

"It wants a cap so that the effective income tax rate is not higher than 45% once income tax, PRSI and the universal social charge are added up." (*Irish Independent*, 24.6.2013).

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### What About That!

"Although Lord Ardilaun {Sir Arthur E. Guinness 1840-1915} was, and is, a Conservative, the working classes, nearly all Nationalists, showed great enthusiasm in reference to the honour proposed to be paid to him. Books of subscription forms were widely circulated amongst the trade unions, and thousands of shillings and sixpences were subscribed by the working men.

"On May 7th, 1891, the foundation-stone of the Ardilaun Monument was laid by Alderman Meade, Lord Mayor. There was a great procession of trade unions and their bands to the scene of the function, on the west side of St. Stephen's Green Park, Dublin" (*Reminiscences of Sir Charles Cameron*, CB. Dublin 1913).

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## GUILDS continued

another, was sometimes called by translating the offender to the group whose territory he had invaded. Occasionally, too, a man's translation to a different Guild was made conditional upon his retaining membership in the one with the first claim to his allegiance.

As it worked out, simultaneous membership in different companies served to complicate the system and increased the difficulty of keeping apart Guild groups concerned with different branches of an occupation, thereby serving to defeat the purpose the Guild system had been instituted to further.

"Moreover, as the centuries progressed, the division of employment became so minute as to make it impossible of enforcement, whether peaceably or otherwise, by the best regulated of systems. Men content at one epoch to buy and sell old cloth could not at others be kept from handling new. It was merely a question of time when men who baked white bread would bake black bread too, and those who baked bread of corn, bake it of barley as well" (*ibid*, p.136).

"The point is that a system so evidently based upon the idea that trade and industry would remain stationary could not work peaceably when men branched out and used two handicrafts or kept two shops, regardless of whether in so doing, they trespassed upon the territory of their neighbours. Incorporating groups separately failed to prevent their trespassing no matter how closely the lines were drawn to effect the separation. The most closely drawn lines were bound to overlap at some point and so forment strife" (*ibid*, p.137).

"Indeed, there was practically no way of eliminating friction in a system so evidently based upon the principle that handicraftsmen needed corporate protection to enable them to work with any degree of freedom. The freer one group became to extend its sphere of industry the more extended the protection accorded it, the more restricted in consequence became the sphere allotted a less favoured group, to the confusion of the system and its inevitable overthrow.

"In its broadest aspect, the course of the conflict between the English trades and handicrafts which has thus been traced from its inception in the economic scheme, appears, as it were, a conflict between the opposing economic principles of protection and free trade as they worked out in the economic life of medieval England. Each step forward in the direction of free trade naturally resulted in a step backward for protection and for

the protected trades and handicrafts. Free trade triumphed with the repudiation of protection and of the trades and handicrafts organised in its service"

(*The English Craft Gilds, Studies in their progress and decline*, Stella Kramer, Columbia University Press, 1927, p.138).

- \* **Lujo Brentano**, byname of **Ludwig Josef Brentano** (1844-1931), born Aschaffenburg, Bavaria. German economist, associated with the historical school of economics, whose research linked modern Trade Unionism to the mediaeval Guild system. In 1868 Brentano made a thorough study of Trade Unionism in England that resulted in his *Die Arbeitergilden der Gegenwart* (1871-72; "Workers' Guilds of the Present").
- \* **Emperor Sigismund**, (1368-1437), born Znojmo, Bohemia. Holy Roman Emperor from 1433, King of Hungary from 1387, German King from 1411, King of Bohemia from 1419, and Lombard King from 1431. The last Emperor of the House of Luxembourg, he participated in settling the Western Schism and the Hussite Wars in Bohemia.
- \* **Leet**: Yearly or half-yearly court of record held by the Lords of certain Manors.

## TRADE UNION NOTES

### Lower Earnings

"Every man, woman and child in the country earns about €1,000 less than they did three years ago" (*Irish Independent*, 20.6.2013).

New figures from the Central Statistics Office show that average annual earnings have dropped by €4 billion since 2009 to some €55.3 billion.

The biggest fall has been in the construction sector, where earnings have collapsed more than 43% to little more than €2.1 billion in 2012, while public administration and defence earnings have tumbled 12.6% to €5.4 billion.

Few sectors have seen earnings rise by significant margins. The only exception is the information and communications sector, where earnings have jumped more than 12% over the last three years. Even compared to 2011, wages from that sector are up 13.2%.

Overall, the average wage rose marginally last year, but additional labour costs rose more than 15%, it has emerged.

Figures from the Central Statistics Office show the average annual earnings added 0.5% to €36,079. However, additional labour cost, such as PRSI, jumped 14.6% to €5,582.

During 2012 the largest increase was in the professional, scientific and technical

activities sector, where wages climbed 5.2%.

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### Food & Drink

"Irish people pay more to eat, drink and smoke than nearly everyone else in Europe.

"And for some staples such as fruit, vegetables and potatoes we're paying a whopping 38% more than everyone else.

"Overall, the price of food and non-alcoholic beverages in Ireland was 18% more expensive than the European Union average in 2012, a new Eurostat survey shows.

"Alcohol prices here are 62% higher than average and cigarettes are twice as dear—making them the most expensive in the whole EU.

"Ireland was the fifth most expensive country in the EU for foodstuffs, with milk, meat and bread all well above average.

"And the price gap has widened since 2011 when it stood at 17%" (*Irish Independent*, 22.6.2013).

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### Immigrants

"The recession has hit immigrants much more severely than native Irish workers, new research has shown" (*Irish Independent*, 15.6.2013).

"One-in-five immigrants lost their jobs at the peak of the recession compared to just 7% of Irish workers.

"And the wage gap between Irish and foreign workers widened from 10% before the recession to 29% afterwards, said Professor Alan Barrett of the Economic and Social Research Institute." (*ibid*.)

His study showed that average immigrant earnings fell from €19.50 an hour in 2006 to just under €18 in 2009, whereas Irish workers saw wages increase from €21.50 to €23.

The wage gap between Irish workers and those from new EU member states in eastern Europe was even more striking as they earned less than €13 an hour in 2009—meaning Irish workers were paid 79% more on average.

However, immigrants from the older EU states such as France and Germany fare better, earning almost as much as Irish workers, while British workers actually earn slightly more.

The value of remittances sent home by Irish emigrants overseas soared to €570 million last year, up 27% since 2007, said Frank Laczko of the International Organisation for Migration.

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### Pay Costs Up

Wages in construction and non-business related sectors like education and health

continued on page 24

## GUILDS continued

were scarcely prepared to countenance the separation of special economic interests and consequently took such steps as they could to prevent it. Later, in the Thirteenth century, a certain number of artisans who belonged to the gild merchant at Leicester were discovered conspiring together to regulate their own business; yet there too the gild merchant was quick to detect and to thwart the conspiracy. The gild merchant's opposition may for a time have delayed the withdrawal of the Leicester craftsmen into separate guilds, but separation was inevitable in the end" (*ibid*, p.124).

### CONCILIATION

"At the time that the London feltmakers denied the right of the haberdashers to control the making of felt hats in their city, they took a fairer view of the rights of both sides in a controversy of this sort. Wishing to live themselves they were willing to let their opponents live also. They considered that the exercise of the power given them by their charter "cannot hinder the haberdashers from the exercise of the power given by theirs, but if both have a power which they may execute" for the prevention of fraud and abuse in their respective trades, they "could wish that the haberdashers would cease to hinder" them and "with diligence pursue the work to which they pretend they are impowered". The *Case of the Feltmakers Truly Stated*, 1650, quoted from Unwin, *Industrial Organisation*, p.245".

### MONOPOLY

"Equally inconsistent in theory and practice appear guildsmen who, after enjoying centuries of monopoly themselves in their chosen fields, yet sought to have rendered null and void the patents which were, from time to time, granted to different monopolists. Thus, under date of 1594, the records of the London leathersellers frankly reveal that company's efforts to have revoked as "vexatious" the monopoly of searching and sealing leather accorded Sir Edward Darcie by Queen Elizabeth" {1558-1603} (*ibid*, p.129).

"At this point one naturally wonders whether newly organised companies really expected established corporations to take seriously their claim to monopolise specific branches of their calling. After all the rights of the newcomers could have been enforced only at the expense of those of the older claimants. If Chester's brewers, for instance, had carried out such provisions of their charter as gave them the monopoly of brewing beer and ale, ruin might indeed have overtaken the three hundred or more innkeepers and victuallers who, according to their allegation "had used brewing tyme out of mynde". To listen to most crafts one

might suppose that each had indeed exercised sole jurisdiction over the most extended field "from time immemorial" or "from the time the memory of man was not to the contrary" or from some equally mystical period" (*ibid*, p.130).

The allegation was probably true in the case of the handicrafts first in the field, shoemakers, smiths, carpenters, weavers, fullers and the like. "*Before division of labour delegated to special groups different branches of a craft, craftsmen had probably much as a matter of course exercised wide latitude in the respective trades*" (*ibid*, p.130).

"The guilds could not boast of the consistency of their ruling in the enforcing of a division between the crafts. But then neither could the state or the boroughs for that matter. Indeed in the city of London a year after the drapers and their fellows were given control of specific trades, the right of a man who gained his freedom in one mystery to pursue another was publicly proclaimed by city officials" (*ibid*, p.132-33).

"Boroughs might issue rules to this end but whether they enforced them was another matter. One can scarcely conceive of the town council of Hereford enforcing the order it issued in 1558 which informed local furriers that only so long as they made "furre gownes" as "good" as local tailors could they have "the doing thereof"... " (Johnson, *Customs of Hereford*, p.127).

"In insisting in the Act of 1363 that two of every craft be chosen to see that none use a craft other than that chosen, the English parliament of the period publicly proclaimed the wish to effect a systematic division of labour under gild control. Moreover, as late as 1657 the corporation of Kinsale, {Co. Cork} apparently favoured the continuation of the same policy, when, in that year, it announced that nothing was more conducive to the well-ordering of that borough than "to subdivide the body politic into several companies and to see that the members of each applied themselves to their particular branch of industry without meddling with that of the others"... " (*Kinsale Council Book*, p.34).

"Sixteenth century feltmakers in London told of the disadvantages under which they laboured, not having any "government of themselves as other companies have", Unwin, *Industrial Organisation*, p.131".

"And as late as 1743 the validity of a crown charter given city brewers was contested by the Cork authorities on the grounds that it impugned the city's chartered right to appoint its own industrial corporations" (*Cork Council Book*, p.622)

### STATUTE OF APPRENTICES, 1563

"A Fifteenth-century defense of the

system explains that the crafts were originally devised for the purpose of keeping one person from interfering with the work of another in order that each might earn a living. Emperor Sigismund\* is credited with expressing this sentiment in 1434. (Quoted from Webb, *Local Government*, p.397.) Much the same view seems to have prevailed in England a century later, to judge from a paper written about that time discoursing about the Reformation of Many Abuses (see Cunningham, *Growth & Development of English Industry and Commerce*, vol. 1, p.559) and probably to provoke the Statute of Apprentices, a measure which virtually upheld a rigid division of labour since few persons would be apt to serve a long apprenticeship in more than one trade or industry" (*ibid*, p.133).

In certain localities the authorities seem to have intervened to prevent simultaneous membership in different guilds. As early as 1518, according to a ruling issue by the Coventry Leet\*, any person dwelling within that borough have "a good occupation to live by" who would leave it to "occupie with another occupation" was "to agree with the seid occupation that he wold be with-all", *Leet Book*, p.655. And, in 1670, when the bricklayers and plasterers of Dublin were incorporated with power to control their occupations, all persons using them were to be discharged from all "obseruances heretofore enjoyed them by any other corporation" in the city (*Egerton MS., B. M., 1765, f. 203*).

### AMALGAMATION AGAIN

"Moreover, amalgamation did not always prove more satisfactory to other crafts who adopted it as a way out of their difficulties. Scarcely a decade after the carpenters and joiners of Newcastle-upon-Tyne united their gild forces, there prevailed among their members not the "great quietness, profit and comoditie" they had counted upon, but "great debates, quarrellings, malice and strife, to the great perill of some of the parties and to the daily trouble of the magistrates of" the city. The dissolution of the combination which followed apparently left the members of each group as free as they had been in the beginning to trouble the others. Even when amalgamation proved enduring, it was at best only a form of compromise, inconsistent with the principles of a system which was adopted and ordered primarily to enforce a rigid division of labour" (*ibid*, p.137-38).

Efforts directed toward keeping the peace between rival groups did not always take the form of transferring a whole group to a rival fold. A truce to a clash which followed the pursuit by a member of one group of an occupation dominated by

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## GUILDS continued

though many had once belonged to their order. Seventeenth century adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne refused to acknowledge the existence of a gild established early in the previous century by drapers of their city, on the ground that they were "noe company" but merely "a sort of people who traded in the making of capps". One wonders whether the adventurers of Chester did not include drapers among the retailers when they tried to keep them as well as the artificers from joining their society" (*ibid*, 107-08).

"At this time the question arose as to whether the merchant adventurers of Bristol, Exeter and Newcastle should free themselves "from the bondage of the Marchants Adventurers of England". It seems that in 1637 the merchant adventurers of London "beinge of great wealth and power" than the Newcastle company tried to exact from them "at their owne pleasures" a "greater Imposition" than the Newcastle company had been paying them. By 1678 the Newcastle company of Adventurers had not only to take into serious consideration "that great affaire of defending their privileges against the infringers thereof", especially the "Hambrough Company" (as the Merchant Adventurers of England was commonly called) but against the "Muscovia" company as well" (*ibid*, p.110).

*Merchant Adventurers* was the name given originally to all merchants in England who engaged in export trade, but later applied to loosely-organized groups of merchants in the major ports concerned with exporting cloth to the Netherlands. They were incorporated as a trading company in 1407. Originally the company's activities centred in Bruges, but in 1446 it obtained trading privileges from the Duke of Burgundy and established its staple (i.e., trading centre) at Antwerp. In 1560 it was given the monopoly on exporting cloth to Germany and the Netherlands. It continued to prosper throughout the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, although political rivalries forced it to move its staple to Hamburg (1567) and Dordrecht (1655). The company was dissolved in 1808.

While it originally referred to English merchants engaged in any export trade, it came to represent those who were willing to "adventure", or risk, their money in speculative ventures.

One of the most speculative adventures to be found in the Seventeenth Century was the colonization of North America,

and merchants backed a handful of attempts to settle the New World beginning in 1583. The best-documented endeavour belonged to the London Merchant Adventurers, who backed the Pilgrims as they established Plymouth Plantation in 1620.

They formed with the colonists a joint-stock company, meaning the merchants would put up the money and the colonists the labour in a seven-year agreement. During those seven years, all land, live-stock, and trade goods such as lumber, furs, and other natural resources were owned in partnership. At the conclusion of the seven-year period, the company was to be dissolved and the assets distributed.

### ACT OF 1363

"Archdeacon Cunningham believed that the act of 1363 {See last issue} was intended to prevent artisans from encroaching upon the business of merchants. *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, vol. i, p.383. According to Fourteenth century records, however, artisans seem to have encroached upon the business of rival artisans rather than upon the merchants. Artisans apparently, did not take to trading until a later epoch" (*ibid*, p.116).

### DEMARCATIION

"Spurriers bought tanned leather and after dressing made "sayle" of it again despite the law which declared that the "dressing of leather doth not convert it into mayd wares". Weavers would be fullers. Fullers and shearmen alike wove cloth and at least "needy dyers took up the occupation of both shearmen and fullers". Dwellers in "Hamletts, throps and villages" not only took into their hands "dyverse and sondre fermes and become fermers, graziers and husbandmen" but also "doo exercise, use and occupie the mysteries of cloth-makyng, wevyng, fullyng and sheryng". Cutlers made wares pertaining to the arts of the goldsmiths as well as to those of the blacksmiths. Carpenters worked at joinery and joiners at carpentry and neither craft apparently hesitated to furnish customers with locks, bolts, or hinges when the opportunity presented itself. Bakers brewed and brewers baked" (*ibid*, p.118-19).

### INTERNAL STRIFE

However, trouble was not confined to members of rival Guilds, but broke out at times between men who belonged to the same gild group. As early as 1377, in London, we find the poor "*commons*" of the mystery of goldsmiths denouncing the richer members of the company for making them promise to treble the price of all wares which they should thereafter sell to

mercens, cutlers, jewellers and others of their class. And those who refused, they said "*are imprisoned and in peril of death by grievous menace till they seal the bond as their poor companions have done before*".

### COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL

"Professor George Unwin, for his part, undoubtedly recognised the existence of an antagonism of interest between the trades and crafts, and interpreted it as a conflict between commercial and industrial capital. Professor Unwin's arguments, however, seems not to take into account the fact that commercial companies warred openly with one another as well as with industrial companies when their interests conflicted, and that industrial companies, in turn, clashed not only with rival industrial groups but with commercial bodies. Professor Unwin cites, as one case in point, the conflict which raged throughout the late Sixteenth century and the first half of the Seventeenth, between merchant haberdashers and artisan feltmakers in London when the former attempted to control the city's felt-making industry. This is all very well as far as it goes. But the feltmakers had scarcely carried out their "designe" of "cutting themselves from" the haberdashers when they set about opposing, evidently, as strenuously as the haberdashers, the efforts made by the city's beaver-makers to monopolise the making of beaver hats. Granting, therefore, that the struggle between the haberdashers and the feltmakers was a struggle between commercial and industrial capital, the clash between the feltmakers and the beaver-makers grew out of the rivalry between two industrial groups, each one of which seemed bent upon gaining control over the same industry" (*The English Craft Gilds, Studies in their progress and decline*, Stella Kramer, Columbia University Press, 1927, p.123-24).

"Thus Professor Unwin's theory seems to take a rather limited view of the conflict which, at one time or another, embroiled practically all the different forces in economic society. That which Professor Unwin regards as a conflict between commercial and industrial capital, seems rather to be such a conflict as was bound to arise in a system which attempted to effect a rigid division between organised trades and handicrafts.

"The beginnings of the trouble date probably as far back as the days of the Angevin kings {1154-1216} in towns like Oxford, Beverley, Marlborough and Winchester, which controlled trade and industry through a gild merchant and consequently looked askance at the separate gilds then being established by local weavers and fullers under royal protection. By the late Twelfth century or the early Thirteenth, those communities

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## Trades v Artisans

"Thus, as far as one can judge, there was practically no limit to the friction likely to declare itself between different trades and handicrafts, in spite of laws insisting upon their separation or of charters guaranteeing a monopoly to particular groups. In fact, English industrial society seems never to have been free from friction from the time when artisans first established guilds of their own to control their various occupations... Professor Brentano\* ascribes the origin of the earliest English craft guilds to the hostility which local merchants felt towards artisans and manifested by expelling them from the gild merchant..."

(*The English Craft Guilds—Studies in their progress and decline*, Stella Kramer, Columbia University Press, 1927, p.122-23).

In the last issue of *Labour Comment* (June, 2013), it was pointed out that the conflict between kindred trades and handicrafts often proved to be such as to force them into association although the sentiment of the times favoured their separation. This being so, it may be interesting to attempt next to get at the cause of the conflict which proved the source of so much local disturbance throughout the period of Guild domination.

### FIRST CLASH

"The first evidence of friction comes from Shrewsbury, in 1323 due to the war waged by the tanners upon local cordwainers {shoemakers} for presuming to tan skins in addition to their regular business of making boots and shoes. This resulted in the seizure of such of the cordwainers' goods as were found in their 'houses of tanning'..." (*ibid*, p.101).

"This account of the clash between tanners and shoemakers over the latter's right to tan is peculiarly significant for our discussion in that it bring out clearly the cause of the disturbance then agitating English economic society. We have, as it were, been following division of labour

in the making between the crafts of tanning and shoemaking, a division which under the gild system, could scarcely have been effected peaceably either between these two handicrafts or any other two. In all probability the cordwainers of Shrewsbury and Bristol who tanned their own leather as a matter of course established guilds long before the art of tanning had developed sufficiently to justify its being separated from the other branches of the leather business" (*ibid*, p.102).

In practically every trade and industry, established Guild group are found, whose refusal to confine themselves to their immediate business and to permit others the exercise of special branches made for trouble in their immediate vicinity. For example, when Guilds of drapers were put in control of the local cloth trade, they found themselves confronted, not alone by the mercantile groups, the merchants, mercers and tailors, who at one time or another had handled cloth, but also by the textile handicrafts, the weavers, fullers, dyers and shearmen, who from the beginning had probably dealt more or less

extensively in that commodity. From the earliest times local merchants and mercers sold cloth in the different boroughs and they apparently continued to sell it in spite of the opposition of drapers.

### "MERELY ARTIFICERS"

"Drapers even in the more important trade centres could well reconcile it with their pride to settle their commercial feuds with ordinary merchants, mercers or even tailors, by amalgamating their interests, since as traders they occupied much the same rank in the gild firmament. The case was different when it came to weavers, fullers, dyers and shearmen. From the draper's point of view, the men using those occupations were merely artificers, with no legitimate right to purchase or sell clothes generally. Needless to say drapers failed to impress handicraftsmen with this viewpoint of their mission" (*ibid*, p.105).

"To the London weavers, fullers and dyers, who by 1364 had not only become makers of cloth, but forestalled other cloth and sold it at their own discretion, the incorporation of city drapers probably worked considerable hardship. We have no means of judging the extent to which London drapers of that epoch kept local clothing craftsmen from engaging in drapery. To be sure, towards the end of the century men of the mystery of drapers contrived to have one weaver disfranchised for occupying drapery or the selling of cloth. Only three centuries later, in 1634, they had evidently not succeeded in convincing city clothworkers that they had no right to sell cloth which they had bought and dressed" (*ibid*, p.106).

### MERCHANT ADVENTURERS

"However retail drapers probably met their match when merchant adventurers appeared upon the scene proclaiming their right to adventure cloth as one exercise "tyme out of mynde" (1559). Local drapers did not apparently loom large in the eyes of the bigger merchants, even

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### Letter to the Editor

## Exporting The German Social Model ?

In its April issue the *Irish Political Review* published an article by Philip O'Connor entitled "*Angela Merkel and the Export of Industrial Democracy*" in which he attempted to show that the German ruling class has a plan for exporting its social economic model to the rest of Europe. I don't think the scraps of quotations from 2006 to the present day that he assembles there amount to anything so substantial. I see no reason to believe that those scraps of quotations will ever be brought together, built upon and presented to the rest of Europe as a coherent programme.

I do, however, agree with Philip that, were such a programme on the table, it would only be of value if there were political forces in the rest of Europe anxious to take it off the table and implement it.

But then Philip loses the run of himself completely. According to Philip there is precisely such a political force in Ireland which goes by the name of Joan Burton. And this is how he introduces this political force:

"...another good listener seems to be our own Minister for Social protection, Joan Burton TD. At the biennial "Social Inclusion Forum" on 26th March she laid out her perspective on the Youth Guarantee programme she intends to launch. She said that an essential tool in combating youth unemployment was a properly developed vocational education system, and for this she would not be looking to Britain but to the dual system that had proven so successful in Germany and Austria."

Great stuff, to be sure. But where is the evidence that Burton said any of it?

In the first place the remarks which Philip attributes to "*our own Minister for Social protection*" are a bit odd. The European "*Youth Guarantee*" programme is not specifically geared to establishing a "*properly developed vocational education system*" in Ireland. It does have something,

but not necessarily a lot, to do with vocational education. Vocational education may be a part of it. Or it may not.

There is a Youth Guarantee website (<http://www.youth-guarantee.eu/>) where the very reasonable question "*What is a European Youth Guarantee?*" is asked and, very concisely, answered:

"The European Youth Guarantee is a guarantee that ensures that every young person in Europe is offered a job, further education or work-focused training at the latest four months after leaving education or after becoming unemployed. It can be implemented at European or at national level"

So, vocational education may be part of Joan Burton's "*perspective*" on "*the Youth Guarantee programme she intends to launch*". It is, at least as at present defined, far from being, whole and entire, the burden of the matter. I find this curious.

What then about Philip's report of her dismissal of Britain in this context?

Phil Bennion MEP is a Lib Dem Employment Spokesman. This is his view, published on his website on Friday 1st. March 2013, of the European Youth Guarantee:

"Commenting on the decision of the European Council of Ministers to back an EU Youth Guarantee, Lib Dem Employment Spokesman Phil Bennion MEP said: 'This is a fantastic initiative to help a generation in danger of being left behind and builds on the example set by the UK coalition government.

"Under the EU scheme, young people up to the age of 25 should receive either an offer of employment, further education or work-focused training at the latest four months after leaving education or after becoming unemployed.'

'On the Youth Guarantee, the UK has led the way. The Lib Dems in government have done a lot to help young people into work, education or training if they have been unemployed for more than 6 months

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The EU proposal has a 4 month deadline, but also includes using EU funds to achieve this more demanding target. It is in constructive negotiations like these that the UK thrives, especially when the ministers are Liberal Democrats who understand the EU and know how to work with other people constructively - such as the excellent Jo Swinson, who covers a lot of the EU Employment and Social Affairs files.' "

The general European and the particular British approach to the Youth Guarantee being apparently so similar, I wondered at Burton's reportedly definitive rejection of the British version of the policy. This again I found curious. So, I thought I'd see what else I could discover about just what exactly Joan Burton said in her speech to the Social Inclusion Forum. But this raised yet another problem. You see, it turns out that nothing in the official Labour Party report of its Coalition Minister's speech on March 26th, bears any resemblance to Philip's report of it.

To my knowledge, there is only one thing in Philip's remarks that can be verified: the biennial Social Inclusion Forum was indeed held at the Croke Park Conference Centre in Dublin on March 26th. It was chaired by Ms Kathleen Stack, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Social Protection. The published programme for the conference has Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton scheduled to speak for 15 minutes between 15:40 and 15:55. Five minutes then was allocated for Closing Remarks, with the Conference ending at 16:00.

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"*Ireland's system of social transfers crucial in preventing poverty.*

"26 March 2013. Statement by Joan Burton TD. Minister for Social Protection  
"The Minister for Social Protection,

Joan Burton, T.D. told the 2013 Social Inclusion Forum today (Tuesday, 26th March) that compared to other EU countries, Ireland's system of social transfers is the most effective in reducing poverty and is far superior to that of other countries most affected by the economic crisis (Estonia, Greece, Portugal, Spain and Britain).

"The Forum provides an opportunity for engagement between officials from Government Departments, community and voluntary organisations and people experiencing poverty in relation to the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016.

"Addressing the Forum, which took place in the Croke Park Conference Centre in Dublin, the Minister spoke of social welfare playing a pivotal role in protecting the most vulnerable in society and reducing poverty during the economic crisis. *"I am very conscious of how crucial our welfare expenditure is in protecting the most vulnerable and minimising poverty during the economic crisis. This is precisely why I protected the core weekly social welfare payments in Budget 2012 and again in Budget 2013"*, the Minister said.

"A particular issue that the Department and the ESRI have recently highlighted as a key risk factor for poverty and social exclusion in Ireland is jobless households. Jobless households, in which effectively no adult works, are far more prevalent in Ireland than in any other EU member state. They comprise 24 per cent of the Irish population from infancy to age 59 years. *"The percentage of jobless households actually increased during the peak period of the economic boom, indicating a structural problem that was never sufficiently addressed by previous governments,"* Minister Burton said. *"It is essential we now act to tackle the issue, as jobless households have a high risk of poverty, despite being in receipt of significant welfare payments. We need structural reform of the welfare*

*system to enable all working-age adults to access the labour market and to ensure that a large segment of the population is not permanently cast aside and consigned to a lifetime without work."*

"This year, the Department will invest more than €1 billion in work, training and education schemes and supports such as Community Employment, Tús and JobBridge, benefitting approximately 85,000 people, with an emphasis on the long-term unemployed.

"Speaking on the Government's commitment to tackling poverty in the EU along with fellow member states, the Minister said that while achieving the national and EU targets will be challenging in the economic circumstances, *"we are determined to succeed"*. Ireland is engaged in significant reforms to address poverty and help jobseekers return to work. These range from Intreo - the Department's new "one stop shop" service where jobseekers can get their income supports and employment supports in the one place for the first time - to improved access to services such as childcare.

"Minister Burton expressed confidence that the social welfare reforms currently in train will help people on the path back to work, thereby increasing employment and reducing poverty.

*"Developing an inclusive society will require a joined-up policy approach, linking together income support, inclusive labour markets and access to services. My Department has a central role to play in this"*, she said.

"Commenting on the Social Inclusion Monitor 2011, which reviews progress towards the National Social Target for Poverty Reduction, the Minister said: *"While it is hardly surprising that the indicators reflect the impact of the worst economic and fiscal crisis for a generation, it is very welcome to see the strong performance of social transfers in protecting those on the lowest incomes as this remains a key part of the Government's approach to protecting our citizens from the worst effects of the crisis."*

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