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Promissory Notes, Croke Park and the Euro

The brief moment of rule by bankers in Europe has passed. As the Goldman Sachs technocratic 'leaders' propelled into power by the financial crisis gradually leave the stage, the *political* revolution initiated by the Fiscal Compact in December 2011 continues to take its course. The consequences of the British veto and the decisive move by Europe to re-arrange itself as an inter-Governmental affair outside or alongside the structures of the EU are coming home to roost. The political deal on Ireland's Promissory Note is a further decisive step in this process.

In its technical aspects there is nothing very extraordinary about the conversion of the short-term Promissory Note arrangement. The Promissory Note s already represented a form of subsidised "*monetizing*" of bank debt by the European Central Bank (what else is a 1% interest rate?), requiring an elastic re-interpretation of the constitutional powers of the ECB. Their conversion into longer-term national bonds pushes the activities of the ECB to the very edge of its constitutional mandate. An analysis of ECB activity by Citigroup Global Markets in 2011—one of the biggest US players in the global financial game—grudgingly concluded that the ECB was already functioning effectively as a "*lender of last resort*" and preparing the ground for refinancing—i.e. resolving—European sovereign debt problems through "*expansionary debt restructuring*", i.e. interest reductions and longer maturation periods for subsidized ECB "liquidity measures" ("The Debt of Nations", *Global Economics View*, 2011).

As shown in detail in this month's *Shorts from the Long Fellow* the Promissory Note deal in itself will not produce the €20 billion debt reduction promised by the Government—probably in fact no more than €4 billion. But its political impact is much more important. Keynes, who is much in vogue again in certain quarters, understood that the entire capitalist system, that it was his business to save, was based in the last resort on the centrality of confidence in the credit system to unleashing the "*animal spirits of capitalism*". The Irish deal reduces the short-term financing requirements of the State and has led to a dramatic fall in Irish Bond yields to about 2.2%, which in itself will

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The Fiscal Union *versus* the European Union

"The eurozone's push toward closer fiscal integration could undermine the EU while doing little to resolve the single currency's debt crisis, according to Sweden's finance minister. In an interview with the Financial Times Anders Borg said he was deeply sceptical about the idea of fiscal union whether it involved common euro bonds, joint tax or a eurozone ministry. "I would strongly argue that the euro countries should be much more hesitant when they are talking about moving towards a fiscal union. They might create something that solves very little, but undermines the whole fundamental structure of the European Union", the minister said." (Financial Times, 20 Feb.)

This seems a strange attitude for a Minister for Finance. The object of the Fiscal Union is to secure the . It is accepted by all—by those for as well as those against the Euro—that this is necessary to secure the currency in the long term. It is most odd that a Minister for Finance anywhere could regard that as solving "*very little*". It seems odder still that a Finance Minister in the EU should say so.

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The Good Friday Agreement

Fifteen Years On

Fifteen years ago the Good Friday Agreement was signed. It provided for the establishment of subordinate government in Northern Ireland on the basis of a division of power between the Unionist and Nationalist communities. Unionist and Nationalist parties elected to an Assembly would take turns choosing government offices, the biggest having the first pick. The major parties were the

Ulster Unionist Party and the Nationalist SDLP, with Paisley's DUP and Sinn Fein in third and fourth places.

The UUP and SDLP were the Constitutional parties. Now they had a Constitution and all they had to do was operate it. But they couldn't operate it and they are now the third and fourth parties. The SDLP had talked so much while others acted that they did not know how to act in the situation that the others had brought about for them.

The 1998 Constitution was brought in because the Provisional IRA had declared

war on Britain in 1970 and the British Army proved to be unable to crush it. The Constitution was the price of ending the War. Nothing like it would have been contemplated but for the Provo success in the War.

The UUP leader, David Trimble, signed the Agreement because he was personally bullied into it by Tony Blair. It was said at the time that, while submitting to the Agreement, he could not bring himself to sign it. That didn't matter. He agreed to it by not rejecting it.

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Fiscal Union

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Furthermore the logic of his position is that the success of the Euro and the necessary policies entailed will undermine the EU. That may seem absurd. But it is not. The fact is that the Member States of the EU had to move outside the EU structures and the Community method to stabilise the currency situation. The Fiscal Union is a break with the EU as it is an inter-Governmental arrangement. There is a basic incompatibility between the two methods and that has to be faced up to. The two cannot live in harmony forever. Borg seems to be the first to state openly the possibility of one—the Fiscal Union—undermining the other. Others see this also but think it wise not to state so openly.

The great way of putting this off is to talk and plan Treaty changes. This is a repeat of the diversion and displacement activity that began over a decade ago with the nonsense of an EU Constitution. A piece of paper would solve all problems. That was an illusion then and Treaty

changes today are a bigger illusion about how to solve the current problem.

The real Europe has a real problem of two European political structures and Europeans have to make a clear choice between them. When that choice is made, then whatever constitutional arrangements that are needed can be made and what is useful in one structure can be incorporated into the other and the rest discarded. If Treaty changes are made the priority it is a case of putting the cart before the horse.

Jack Lane

Correction

James Stewart

It should have been made clear that the two paragraphs which followed Wilson John Haire's Obituary of James Stewart were from the CPI Website and contained the incorrect formulation that "In 1955 Jimmy joined the Communist Party of Ireland". As was made clear in the article, the CPI did not exist in 1955 and it was the CPNI that Stewart joined.

Editor

Promissory Notes

continued

accumulate savings of billions. This psychological success started with the sullen but decisive Irish referendum vote endorsing the Fiscal Compact, which began the re-awakening of the "animal spirits". Economic contraction has ceased and employment growth in both the multinational sector and the indigenous exporting sector grew by a net 12,000 jobs last year. There is a general sense that the once all-smothering debt burden is moving to the territory of "managability" and will further recede in economic importance, opening the space for solutions through re-arranging private debt burdens and pursuing solid industrial policy.

The managing down of costs in the Irish economy and the spreading of the taxation base, both towards European norms, and initiated by the Lenihan Government, have been continued quite competently by the new Government, despite the pre-election rhetoric of the new governing parties. Opinion polls show that the electorate has the measure of this reality. Ireland as a society seems determined to see the process through and to bet its future on the euro.

Part of this process is the new Croke Park deal, which has been recommended to its membership "overwhelmingly" by the National Executive of the largest Trade Union in the public sector, IMPACT. The Union published its Trade Union arguments in favour of acceptance on its website (www.impact.ie—28.02.2013), while on radio its General Secretary, Shay Cody, represented the deal as the contribution of the Trade Unions to assisting Ireland's financial consolidation and its pathway out of the debt crisis. SIPTU President Jack O'Connor described the deal as the best that could be achieved through negotiation, and the outcomes as being better to the alternative of a solution imposed by legislation. While its National Executive had not yet met on a recommendation to its members as we go to press, the SIPTU leadership has sent a clear message to its membership by announcing that the terms of the deal were being applied to its own staff.

Minister Brendan Howlin has greatly contributed to steadying nerves among public sector workers by stating that these will be the last demands the State will make on public sector earnings and conditions. Given the strong national

traditions and consciousness of both these major Unions, it would be surprising if members don't vote accordingly.

Much is made in the media of the Unions that have rejected or are likely to reject the deal. But that UNITE and the CPSU would reject it is hardly a surprise, given those Unions' consistent rejection of central agreements over many years. Indeed, the role of the reliably blindly militant in the tradition of the old English Left is a mantle long worn with pride by UNITE, the "Ireland section" of Ernest Bevin's once proud Transport and General Workers Union across the water. The Unions of teachers, hospital doctors, nurses and guards have likewise expressed opposition to the deal, but it is unclear if these sectional groups are really prepared to launch an industrial war against the State or to provoke the State into imposing the terms of the deal on them by legislation. Union ballots have now to follow and there is a strong force pulling members of the sectional Unions towards rejection. But, as the IMPACT National Executive decision and the stance of the SIPTU leadership have shown, this is not the political mood in the broader Irish Trade Union movement, and it is on the politics of it rather than, to paraphrase Keynes, "*the animal spirits of labour*", that many Union members will vote.

The European importance of the Irish Promissory Note deal is that it clearly indicates that the banking and monetary union being put in place assiduously over a timeframe to the end of 2014 will deliver for smaller countries. The first structural aspects of that banking and monetary union have already been put in place to schedule in several steps since December 2012. When Draghi announced that the board of the ECB had "*unanimously noted*" the Irish arrangement, this meant that at the political moment that mattered, no European Central Bank was prepared to block it.

The serious business of Europe is now occurring through the eurozone arrangements. The previously informal gatherings of euro country representatives before meetings of the EU Council of Finance Ministers (ECOFIN) are now formalised meetings where the real business of the euro is done, with ECOFIN downgraded to a forum where non-eurozone Finance Ministers can express their frustrations. The Swedish Finance Minister was given prominent coverage recently in the *Financial Times* (19 February) for his complaints about the marginalising of the EU by the eurozone, the increasing tendency towards

Pay Negotiations

Fine Gael TD Olivia Mitchell has criticised the "*inexplicable*" and "*disappointing*" failure of years of austerity to reduce the overall cost of public sector pay. This seems to me to be the real problem for the civil sector bill. The figures "*reveal that approximate savings of just under €290 m in pay in 2012 were cancelled out by an increase of €311 m in pension payments*". With an increasing number of public servants reaching retirement age, and a policy of encouraging early retirement as part of job cut-backs, the pay to pension balance will alter radically. This means that even if you stop any future pay rises the pensions are guaranteed to keep pace with inflation and consequently you have to cut pay over and above what otherwise might have been the case.

I notice that some public sector Unions have withdrawn from the Croke Park negotiations. This seems to me to be a completely crazy decision. The Unions should be hanging on in there and putting the case for a significant cut in politicians' pay and pensions (not the cosmetic shaving that's already been announced). The demand that politicians pay and pensions be calculated on the basis of the average worker's pay should be part of a *quid pro quo*. This would enable the Unions to ensure that their actions resonate with the public in a way which can neutralise the inevitable media hostility that comes their way in the event of a breakdown. They could then depict themselves as the defenders of the broader public interest rather than being seen as narrowly following their sectional interests—something that would inevitably lead to their defeat in the event of any subsequent industrial action.

Eamon Dyas (25.2.2013)

"*eurozone-only initiatives*" and the domination by the eurozone countries of planning for the banking and monetary union. Warnings by the *Financial Times* that Britain, through its rejection of the latest moves towards banking union, has placed itself further outside the loop than even Sweden only reinforce the point ('Diplomatic fallout from EU bonus cap', FT online, 01.03.2013).

Following adoption of the Fiscal Compact, Draghi's statement in June 2012 that the ECB would "*do everything necessary to save the currency*", followed by statements by French and German leaders that no country should leave the eurozone, put a halt to the widespread speculation on a Greek, Portuguese or even Irish "*exit*". The reality on the ground in Europe of confidence in the currency is shown by the fact that since the start of the crisis four new countries have actually joined the euro and several others—including all-important Poland—continue in their unwavering intention to do so.

There is severe *political* conflict across Europe on the technicalities of the banking and monetary union, not least in Germany itself, where Angela Merkel has maintained the primacy of politics over the many economists, and capitalist interests, that have opposed the drive towards a "*transfer union*". Despite the faltering electoral fortunes of her Christian Democratic Union, she is now the most popular Chancellor since the war. The political forces in other countries favouring the

same approach—e.g. in the Netherlands—have recently won convincing electoral victories, wrong-footing the many dire predictions to the contrary.

Italy, as is its nature, has contrived to surprise everyone with its interesting election result. One aspect of the outcome is indisputable—the banker "*technocrats*" have been sent packing and the ball passed squarely back to the politicians to resolve. Since the destruction from outside of the Italian Christian Democracy—which had organised the state as part of Europe after WW2 and engineered its extraordinary 30-year economic boom from the 1950s—and the resultant self-destruction of the Communist Party, party-political life has taken trivial, transient forms. The success of Grillo's anti-political "*Five Star*" movement in winning 25% of the vote may precipitate a grand coalition of the Democrats and the Berlusconi forces—or some other combination possibly—even including some of Grillo's people. Five Star is a rebellion against the weak politics of professional "*career politicians*" who have lost any clear connections to real social forces. Similar movements have arisen elsewhere (e.g. the "*Pirate*" Party in Germany, which regularly wins up to 15% in local elections). But how "*anti-political*" are such movements compared to the bland professionals of the political centre? Unlike traditional parties, Five Star now has a parliamentary party consisting of real people—IT professionals, actors, public servants, carpenters, business people and others. The role of Grillo's

movement in resolving the Government impasse in Italy will be instructive to watch.

World capitalism, which is synonymous with global finance, nearly collapsed in 2009-10, but was probably saved by the absorption of trillions of dollars of US debt by China, acting for its own developmental purposes. Unless and until the Chinese float the yuan, the euro is now the only world reserve currency other than the dollar. Sterling represents an oddity in this structure—its fortunes closely track those of the dollar and it is seen as the house currency of the City of London, still the largest money trading place in the world.

Despite its internal structural problems and debt crises in some of its member states, the euro is nowhere seriously challenged, not even—with the possible exception of Grillo's Five Star movement—by the protest movements in debtor countries. Colm McCarthy, the author of the "*Bord Snip*" reports and generally a sceptic of all things European, welcomed the Promissory Note deal in the *Sunday Independent* as an unqualified triumph. But, speaking on RTE radio shortly afterwards, he said that it would have been better if the ECB had not been involved at all, and that the IMF and EU Commission had organised things. But the fact is Ireland's future is with the euro as the alternative is a re-linking with Sterling. The Irish electorate know this, disagree with McCarthy, and have consistently acted accordingly.

OLD CRIMES AS NEW

They regret past colonial crimes enacted a hundred years ago. Murder and democracy are made to rhyme causing trade with India to flow. No apology because regret means somehow you were also to blame when you made those Amritsar thousands] fiends. Too early so they doused the independence flame. Anyway, they can never be sorry when they keep doing the same thing again and again. A thousand Amritsars when Iraq was the quarry, with the re-conquest of territory designed.

Wilson John Haire
20th February, 2012

Is Ireland Now A Nothing?

"*Ireland has become a nothing mosaic with no binding identity*" was the title of an Opinion Piece by Desmond Fennell in the *Irish Times*. He says:

"...from the 1960s onwards, because of a continuing lack of sufficient home-grown economic enterprise, the depopulation of the countryside, the abandonment of the language replacement project, and various new divisions in the collective mentality, we lost that shared and valued definition of our distinctive national identity that had united and empowered us" (25.2.2013).

What Desmond is presenting here is a very negative and loaded synopsis of changes in Irish society. One can just as easily say that one type of economic enterprise has been replaced by another. Whatever the mistakes of the Celtic Tiger boom era, it did demonstrate an Irish economic, capitalist, enterprise of a non-traditional kind. And all the indications are that the country will cope with the inevitable slump that follows such booms.

As regards the countryside, its main industry was never in better economic shape. It is a genuine and thriving international industry. The language project has taken a whole new form via the proliferation of Gaelscoileanna. We have a new identity as a tried and tested member of the European community project. What we have had and are having is a change of some major elements in the society and Desmond seems to equate that with a descent into nothingness.

By way of explanation he tries to have it every which way:

"It is not a case of the Irish, collectively, expressing aversion to Ireland and the Irish but rather of a considerable number of Irish individuals intimating that they subscribe to standards of right action or intelligent insight superior to those of the Irish generally: a sort of 'Ascendancy' attitude."

So it seems to be simply the perception of a few people but not representative of the society as a whole. If that's the case, where's the problem? We have been coping with an '*Ascendancy attitude*' for centuries. It's a bit like the rain, it will always be with us—with a daily shower from the *Irish Times*.

To give more credence to his doom laden view he presents the following evidence:

"Ireland is nothing. In 1985 a visiting Australian writer, William (sic) Buckley,

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

I suggest that if Vincent Buckley and Desmond Fennell used the word '*new-thing*' rather than '*no-thing*' their case would collapse. Buckley was a cultural tourist to this country and his book is a paean of praise to Irish literary icons and themes. Through them Buckley presents snapshots of a society that can be arbitrarily arranged to paint a variety of impressions but the substance is usually missed. These snapshots are dear to him and he regrets the passing of what they represent. These types of literary/cultural excursions are not good guides to how a society functions.

The book bears a resemblance to one called *Doomsland* by Shane Leslie published in the early 1920s.

For example, the visit that made most impression on him was that made during the HBlock hunger strikes. That should surely have made him think seriously about Northern Ireland and what it was. But he says: "*That border is certainly a joke, but it is not an Irish one.*"

How can one take seriously such a flippant view of what was the issue of the day during his visit? It is typical of his approach and makes *him* a joke as any sort of analyst and makes him just a self indulgent wordmonger.

His superficiality is also clear in his claim that: "*Ireland is not a nation, once again or ever, so the new story runs, but two nations, maybe several*". I do not know of any theory that says there are several nations in Ireland but he cannot resist the flippancy. And if he thinks '*the two nations*' case is evidence of a '*no-thing*' society and self-evidently absurd he should have elaborated a case against it.

But it is very odd that Desmond seems to subscribe to '*the two nations view*' as a sign of a '*no-thing*' Ireland. He himself

advocated a version of this theory and still does, I believe, but I don't think he would thereby accept that he was a contributor to making Ireland a "no-thing". The 'two-nations theory' was an attempt to show a weakness in the traditional view that the nation had of itself. No more and no less. Making the case for it was a perfect example of the type of changed perspectives that nations have to cope with in order to sustain and develop themselves.

Desmond played a part in this change yet he now appears to disown it!

There are many states and nations that are going through much more traumatic upheavals and changes than what Ireland is experiencing as the western world seems to generate permanent existential problems for its peoples and any it can influence, individually and collectively. Ireland is coping as well as any with such issues.

Jack Lane

Fifteen Years On continued

He disagreed with it without rejecting it. And he prevented it from coming into operation for a year and a half by refusing to nominate a Minister under it. (As leader of the largest party, it was up to him to set it in motion.)

John Hume resigned the leadership of the SDLP when the Agreement was signed. His collaboration with Gerry Adams in negotiations leading to the Agreement was strongly condemned by elements in the SDLP and there had been moves to oust him. He saw the thing through to the signing and retired. His successor, Seamus Mallon, was then left hanging around by Trimble for a year and a half. He didn't know what to do about it, and the ground began slipping away from under him. Eventually the State brought pressure to bear on Trimble which obliged him to let the Agreement begin. But, when he nominated his Ministers, he gave a post-dated letter of resignation to the Secretary of the Unionist Council (which controlled the Unionist Party and had the Orange Order as part of its constitution) to be put into effect if the IRA had not disarmed, and also demanded that it disband. He then allowed the Agreement to function by fits and starts. These antics meant that he could neither reap the benefit of working the Agreement and making the best of it, nor of rejecting it.

He chose as his advisers members of Official Sinn Fein/IRA: Eoghan Harris,

Paul Bew and Henry Patterson.

The UUP went into serious decline, carrying the SDLP with it. The Agreement was then taken in hand by Sinn Fein and Paisley—the substantial forces in the two communities—and was made workable.

The political meaning of the Agreement was that it abolished the majority status of the Unionist community in the devolved government. Parties had their government departments independently of the Cabinet, which scarcely existed. And the Unionist majority in the Parliamentary-style Assembly was of no account as motions of any consequence had to be carried, not by a majority of the Assembly, but by a majority in each of its components, Nationalist and Unionist.

A 15th Anniversary meeting held at the Camden Irish Centre in London on February 26th was attended by Margaret Ritchie, a former leader of the SDLP. She said "it was time to move away from nationalism". But where is there to move?

Northern Ireland was set up in 1921 in such a way that the only possible politics in it was the conflict between Anti-Partitionist Nationalism and Unionism which stood for the British connection but was excluded from actual British politics. The 1998 Agreement formulated that reality into a Constitutional structure.

Margaret Ritchie wore the Poppy before finding it expedient to retire from the leadership. But that doesn't get you very far, now that the Dublin Establishment is embracing the Somme and saying that the Great War was "Our War" too.

Of course there is the nondescript ground, the Limbo, between the two active components of the Constitution—the Alliance Party. Is that where she's going? Does she think that will help her to retain her seat?

The meeting was also attended by James Winston, whom we had not noticed for many years. A little over twenty years ago he helped Kate Hoey MP with her sectarian disruption of the Campaign for Labour Representation. The CLR had the object of putting pressure on the Labour Party to include the Northern Ireland region of the state within its sphere of operations. It was the only political organisation where Protestants and Catholics collaborated uninhibitedly for a common purpose—without the underlying antagonism carefully camouflaged and preserved by tortuous politeness, such as existed in Alliance

Party circles. It lobbied Labour Party branches around Britain, and held meetings at Labour Party Conferences. After many years of effort the campaign was gathering serious momentum by the late 1980s. Kate Hoey joined and was soon elected its President. Having access to the CLR contacts, she set about setting up an alternative organisation, supposedly with the same object, but one which would be supported by some very important people. She went about it secretly, making confidential approaches to Protestants in the CLR and telling them that the CLR was controlled by a sinister body in Athol St. which was hindering its further development. But she did not court all the Protestants in the CLR. Some were apparently judged to be incorrigible. And she did not contact any Catholics, except one or two English ones, whose nationality must have been judged to be the primary thing about them.

Most of the CLR Protestants understood that Hoey's scheme would be fatal to the movement. A couple didn't, one of whom was Jeffrey Dudgeon MBE.

When Hoey's organisation, called Democracy Now, launched itself at the Labour Party Conference with a lavishly-funded exhibition of Union Jackery and the support of the Unionist Editor of a London daily newspaper, the CLR understood that the movement had been wrecked. It was the strong Catholic presence in the CLR that gave it credibility with the prevailing sentiment of the Labour Party.

Democracy Now made a showing at one or two further Party Conferences before disappearing, its work done. And Kate Hoey was rewarded with a Junior Ministry when Labour returned to Office.

When the CLR announced that Democracy Now sectarianism had queered the pitch and that it was ending the campaign, John Hume saw that an irritating obstacle had been removed from his path and he gained a new lease of life.

James Winston was Kate Hoey's very active lieutenant in the Democracy Now operation. But an impropriety came to light which made it prudent for him to adopt a very low profile for a while. He seems to be back in business, however. But what business is it? His efforts twenty years ago helped to bring Unionism to its present plight—one which was scarcely imaginable then.

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

PROMISSORY NOTES: PART 1

As indicated in the April and May issues of last year's *Irish Political Review*, the object of the Promissory Notes was to replace emergency liquidity assistance (ELA) or "printed money" to the IBRC (Anglo and Nationwide) with sovereign debt. ELA was charged at about 1% interest but was never intended as long term funding.

In normal circumstances the terms of the Promissory Note structure were not onerous. The architecture was deliberately opaque in order to prevent popular opposition to the deal from creditor countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands. As explained last year, the high interest paid by the State to the IBRC does not matter, since the cost to one arm of the State is revenue to another arm. The State was required to pay just over 3 billion a year under the terms of the Promissory Note. It was only when the first tranche of 3 billion was paid in 2011 that a real financial cost to the State was incurred (by replacing a loan at 1% with a loan of 3.5%). The bulk of this process of replacing the 1% loans with 3.5% loans was over a period of 10 years.

After the 2011 General Election the outgoing Finance Minister, Brian Lenihan, made a parting gift to the Fine Gael/Labour Government. He postponed the payment of the 3 billion on democratic grounds, so that it could be authorised by the incoming Government. The incoming Government did not refuse to pay and therefore the high flown rhetoric of the General Election winners was shown to be just . . . high flown rhetoric.

THE SECOND "PAYMENT"

The current Government has been fortunate in one respect: the political and economic landscape has changed in Europe. When Fianna Fáil was in power the instinct of some countries was to use Ireland as a scapegoat in order to pretend that the banking crisis was confined to Ireland (Greece's crisis began as a sovereign debt crisis). This sentiment was by no means confined to Germany. Portugal, for instance, considered it a matter of national honour that Ireland enter the bailout programme before herself. Accordingly, there was a punitive element to the

initial terms of the bailout.

But within a few months of Fine Gael and Labour coming to power it became clear that the banking crisis was not confined to Ireland. If Ireland failed there was a serious risk of contagion: with Spain, Italy and then France next in the queue. The punitive approach was now considered counterproductive. The interest rate on the bail out was dropped from close to 6% to about 3.5%.

Also, Europe was impressed with the fiscal adjustment that Ireland was making following Lenihan's 2011 Budget. By March 2012 Ireland was allowed another concession on the already generous Promissory Note terms. Instead of making a payment of 3 billion, the Government was allowed issue a bond equal to that value to the IBRC. The IBRC used this bond to borrow from Bank of Ireland at an interest rate of 2.35%. Bank of Ireland, in turn, used the bond to borrow from the ECB at 1% interest. The long and the short of it was the ELA liability was transferred from the IBRC (a dead bank) to the Bank of Ireland (a going concern).

FAREWELL TO PROMISSORY NOTES! . . . AND TO THE IBRC!

Michael Noonan continued the policies of Brian Lenihan and accordingly the stock of goodwill towards Ireland has increased. The rest of the Eurozone needs Ireland to emerge from the bailout programme.

The Government has been allowed liquidate the IBRC and replace the generous Promissory Note terms with an even more generous arrangement. This is a tremendous political *coup* for the Government. The Anglo Irish/Irish Nationwide fiasco can be consigned to the dustbin of history. But, in truth, the liquidation makes economic sense. The IBRC is nothing more than a debt collection agency on behalf of the State. However, there is already a debt collection agency called NAMA, which has half the running costs of the IBRC. The real assets (i.e. the outstanding loans to IBRC customers) of IBRC will be transferred to NAMA. The Promissory Notes will revert to the Central Bank of Ireland and convert into long term bonds.

HELLO TO LONG TERM BONDS!

The Department of Finance and Michael Noonan have been allowed get away with complete rubbish in their public announcements on the new dispensation. These have over-stated the cost of the Promissory Note arrangement and under-stated the cost of the new arrangement to claim that the benefit amounts to 20 billion euro.

The Promissory Note arrangement was not odious or penal as some Government Ministers claim. The interest of 8.2% to be paid on the Promissory Note was irrelevant in real terms since the cost to the State was revenue to the IBRC (a State institution). Also the new arrangement does not postpone the repayment of debt to an average of over 34 years as claimed by the Department of Finance press release.

It is true that initially the Promissory Notes will be replaced by long term bonds with a weighted average life of just over 34 years. But this is a piece of window dressing because the Central Bank of Ireland is obliged to replace these long term bonds with bonds of a shorter duration. The weighted average life of the replacement bonds—issued to third parties—is just under 15 years, which is almost eight years longer than the weighted average debt of the Promissory Note structure.

It would be churlish to deny that there is a benefit to the State, but it falls far short of 20 billion. What is the value in terms of today's money of the deal? It depends on how you value today's money in terms of future money (the discount rate). It also depends on what your view of future interest rates will be and the difference between the Irish rate and the ECB rate. The distinguished economist Seamus Coffey in his blog assumes a discount rate of 6%; ECB rates rising to 3%; and the "margin" of Irish rates over ECB rates of 3.25%. On this basis Coffey concludes that the benefit of the new deal is worth about 4 billion Euro. If the assumptions are changed (e.g. a lower discount rate) the benefit increases, but the Long Fellow thinks 4 billion is a reasonable estimate. Of course, each concession has an intangible benefit in terms of confidence, which affects the cost of borrowing and investment in the economy.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

The Long Fellow considers the Left and Trade Union analysis of the crisis curious. It has many similarities with the Right or "West Brit" element of Irish society represented by Shane Ross and other *Sunday Independent* columnists. The Long Fellow recently had a conversation with a Sinn Féin activist who expressed sheepish admiration for David Cameron's line on Europe. The logic of the Irish Left's position is Euro-sceptic: abandonment of the Euro and a return to the sterling zone: totally at variance with the principles of Roger Casement and James Connolly.

Fintan O'Toole in his column of 12th

February in *The Irish Times* accuses the ECB of "grand larceny" in relation to the Promissory Note deal and the revised arrangement. Does this mean that Irish political leaders had no responsibility for the crisis; and that their only error was a failure to stand up to Europe? A left-wing critique of Fianna Fáil would focus on the dependence of the Irish economy on the property boom at the expense of the productive sector. But such a critique is rendered incredible by the Left's current knee-jerk opposition to property taxes.

OPINION POLL

The Long Fellow, of course, has no need of opinion polls. Like his namesake he only has to look into his heart to understand the mind of the Irish people. He was not surprised to read that an *Irish Times* opinion poll (9.2.13) showed that Fianna Fáil was the most popular party at 26%.

Fianna Fáil has deep roots in the Republic (in contrast to the North, which is reflected in Micheál Martin's recent inanities on that subject). This was shown in Eamon O'Cuiv's impressive handling of the complex horse meat issue. Michael McGrath appears to have grown in confidence as FF's Finance spokesman.

It has been said by Government spokesmen that the people have forgotten FF's recent economic record. But it is possible that there is nothing wrong with their memories. They remember FG and Labour promises before the election and now find that their economic prescriptions are remarkably similar to those of Fianna Fáil.

Sinn Féin has performed impressively in parliamentary debates, but it appears to have reached a plateau (at about 18%, this is almost twice its General Election showing). Its anti-Euro stance may put a brake on further progress. Up until now SF has been vying with FF as the main opposition party. If FF consolidates its position as the leading opposition party, SF may struggle to retain its recent rise in popularity. The forthcoming Meath East By-Election will give an interesting indication of the state of play.

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The Intelligence Officer's Diary From Dunmanway Located

A full photographic copy of the famous Auxiliary 'K' Company Intelligence Officer's Diary left behind in the Dunmanway Workhouse in 1922, which was the subject of an extensive series in the *Southern Star* in 1971, has been found by Barry Keane in the Military Archives in Dublin. There has been much controversy as to what is in the diary. This debate is now over as anyone who wishes to read the diary can do so—it is a public record. It is available by appointment at the Military Archives in Cathal Bruagha Barracks Dublin.

Barry was following up a lead in the Military Archives and found a reference in the Contemporary Documents index (available online) lodged by Flor Begley

(the famous piper at Crossbarry). Donation Number 31 was described as *Notebook entries made by IO of 'K' company Auxiliary RIC, Dunmanway Co. Cork 1920-1921*. 19 pages of photographs, donated 7 July 1947.

Nothing is blacked out and the first page includes the alleged informers.

Barry Keane is a local historian who has recently published a book on *The Bard: Seán Riobaird O Súilleabháin, North Cork's leader in the Land War 1881-1891*, Aubane Historical Society, and an article on the April 1922 massacre entitled *'Ethnic Cleansing?—Protestant decline in West Cork between 1911 and 1926'*, Pp. 35-38 in *History Ireland* in 2012. He has completed and submitted a new book on the 1922 Massacre to Mercier Press in Cork.

Emergencies Here And There

I'm old enough to remember when Britain was waging wars on native peoples in Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus and to recall that the BBC and other British media described these wars as Emergencies.

The tone of voice of BBC newscasters when those resisting British rule were hanged, I imagine mimicked Victorian floggers of helpless schoolboys as they advised their victims, "*this hurts me more than it hurts you*". Truly the White Man's Burden was a heavy one as over 1,100 Kenyans were hanged in the first eight years of the current Elizabethan reign.

I'm not old enough, as I wasn't born then, to remember the negotiations to limit the size of airforces during the 1930s, when Britain, which maintained Naval fleets equal to the combined fleets of the next two maritime powers, sought similar superiority in the air. Britain disclaimed any ambitions for further territorial acquisitions or belligerence towards other powers. She just needed aerial bombers for "*police*" actions in Iraq and on India's Northwest Frontier. Iraqi villages were bombed with high explosives and chemical weapons for their own good, in peace time.

I've just been re-reading, after a gap of about forty years, *Goodbye To All That* by Robert Graves, a memoir covering his childhood, service in the First World War, and the immediate post-war years. It was hailed as a classic when it first

appeared in 1929, and deservedly has had many reprints.

After the 1918 Armistice he was posted to Limerick where he resigned his Commission and applied for Demobilization. The War Office acceded to his request by telegram, but on the day of its receipt the War Office also decreed that all demobilization of troops in Ireland was to be stopped indefinitely from the following day. Ireland was deemed by the War Office a "*Theatre of War*", unlike those parts of "*the United Kingdom*" East of the Irish Sea in February 1919.

It would be interesting to know when it ceased to be so deemed. The Anglo-Irish War was to intensify during the next two and a half years during which on the British side the propaganda line was that brave "*policemen*" and "*police auxiliary cadets*"—grizzled Great War Veterans—were being attacked by criminals.

Donal Kennedy

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Still Fighting The Provos!

Ed Moloney complains that the British Government won't let the Northern Ireland War be over. But if anyone encouraged the British Government to keep up a war mentality after the formal settlement of 1998 became substantial a few years later with the Sinn Fein/DUP understanding, it was Ed Moloney. And since leader of Fianna Fail Michael Martin has decided that the cute thing to do, in his electoral rivalry with Sinn Fein in the Republic, is to adopt Moloney's tactic of undermining the actual peace process in the North by means of a transcendental concern for individual Truth and Justice, Moloney's approach deserves a close look.

Ed Moloney is an English journalist who as a young man took part in the *People's Democracy* radicalism in Northern Ireland in 1968-69, which jazzed up the Civil Rights movement, freed it from Communist party inhibitions, and detonated the "*Explosion In Ulster*" in August 1969—the Big Bang, after which things in Northern Ireland could never be the same again.

There was nothing very unusual in that. Many young English radicals went to Northern Ireland to take part in the agitation. They wanted something to happen. Nothing ever happened in England, so they went to the region of the state where there were happenings.

Against my expectations, the Northern Ireland facade of the state blew apart under pressure of a few slight Civil Rights demands vigorously agitated by the PD.

A revolution of illusion, or an illusion of revolution, was then in the air for a few months. Things were in flux during those few months amidst the ruins of the Northern Ireland facade. Intense revolutionary feelings flourished in and around the PD. There was heartfelt conviction that an existential break with the past had happened and that thenceforward all would be new and utterly different. And things might well have been different if the government of the state had put an end to the sub-contracting of the governing of the Six Counties to the local Protestant community.

The British Establishment, with its

Northern Ireland experiment having blown up in its face, considered doing that for a brief instant. The Shadow Home Secretary, James Callaghan, visited the 'province', saw what the situation was, indicated that something should be done about it, discussed the matter with his party Executive,—and dropped it.

The political atrocity called "Northern Ireland" continued. But it could not continue as before. It was to continue being, in its political life, a no-man'-land between the Governments of two states. But the stability it had enjoyed for close on half a century, based on the forceful subjugation of the Catholic or Nationalist third of the population in 1922, could not be restored. The minority had been disrupted by the wild Protestant or Unionist response to the Civil Rights agitation, and it was now two-fifths instead of a third.

Excluded from the opportunities that would have been presented by the democratic system of the state, the large minority, made vigorous by the disruption of the routine of submission, turned to the political notions that were to hand.

In 1968-9 the radicals of the Civil Rights agitation told us that the politics relating to Partition was obsolete, and many of them believed it was so. But what politics did they construct in its place? Politics have to do with the forming of states or the governing of states. Northern Ireland was not a state. It was a local facade on the British state, which Whitehall had set up in 1921 for some purpose of its own which it chose not to reveal. As it was not a state, and was not striving to become a state, it had no internal political life deserving the name. The Protestant majority wanted to remain "*connected*" with Britain, and for that purpose it had agreed to operate the Northern Ireland facade. The Nationalist community had been cut off from its national movement when the Irish national state was in process of formation in 1921, and since there was no politics in Northern Ireland for it to participate in—where politics consisted of waving the Union Jack, loving the King, and warding off Papism—it organised itself with relation to the state from which it was excluded.

And so things continued after August

1969. Nothing else was possible. Northern Ireland, being only a facade, was not a possible arena of socialist revolution. The facade might be overthrown but the state continued. The apparatus of the British state had never ceased to operate behind the Northern Ireland facade.

The change that happened in 1969 was that the virtual removal of the Ulster Unionist buffer (which became an actual removal in 1972) brought the Nationalist minority face to face with the British State, and that the futility of Constitutional nationalism became evident. Of course the futility of Constitutional nationalism in the Northern Ireland set-up was evident from the start, but the beating down of the Nationalist minority in 1922 deterred it from taking practical account of the obvious. And engaging in the futile routine of Constitutional nationalism gave it something to do in a hopeless situation and demonstrated, as much to itself as to others, that it continued to exist.

The shock effect of the events of August 1969 dispelled the post-1922 lethargy of the Nationalists. Between the Autumn of 1969 and the Summer of 1970 a new Republican force materialised. Its object could only be the ending of Partition, because that was the aim that was to hand in the situation. And the people who were drawn into it were the people who a year earlier were convinced (on the basis of the most advanced theories of 'Political Science') that anti-Partitionism was *passé*.

Also a new Constitutional nationalist movement was formed—the SDLP. It despised the passive ways of the old Nationalist Party, and undertook to demonstrate that progress could be made by Constitutional activism. But progress towards what end? Its first leaders, Gerry Fitt and Paddy Devlin, had two ends in mind—socialism and a United Ireland—and refused to prioritise between them. In the circumstances those two aims were incompatible. And, since Northern Ireland was only a facade on the British state—a wafer-thin facade by the time the SDLP was formed—socialism was something that could be established in it only through political action by the State.

The SDLP refused to acknowledge these facts of the situation. The aim implicit in its rhetoric was the establishment of a socialist Northern Ireland as a step towards a United Ireland. The rise of the new Republican force gave the State an incentive to make concessions to it. But the SDLP, made uncertain by its

contradictory aims, was unable to seize the concessions and build on them. It feared that, if it got too much drawn into the Constitutional system of the state, it would lose support in its radicalised constituency. This concern established a *de facto* continuum between Constitutional nationalism and physical force nationalism.

The dynamic of the situation did not present the Nationalist community with a choice of Either/Or. What it required was Both. Constitutional nationalism would be taken little heed of, if it was not seen as being in some degree an alternative to the physical force movement. And, since the physical force movement could not win an outright military victory, it was necessary that it should have some kind of constitutional engagement with the State.

A considerable degree of political virtuosity was required of the Constitutional nationalists in this relationship, and some of its leaders were inclined to lapse into Constitutional illusion. The Republicans therefore decided to take the politics of the situation in hand as well as the War. Their electoral initiative was given take-off momentum by the Hunger-strikes. A few years later the transmission of energy from the military to the Constitutional sphere was facilitated by the leader of the SDLP, John Hume. This was greatly resented by many in the SDLP who had succumbed to Constitutional illusions and he came close to being ousted from the leadership.

I had no inside information about the IRA. I didn't want any. I distrusted inside information on this as on other things. I saw what was there for everyone to see and drew conclusions from it. In the mid-eighties it seemed evident that Gerry Adams was intent on transferring the momentum of the military struggle to political struggle with the Republican movement itself as the main Constitutional actor.

The point at which that would begin to be done would be the point at which everything could be lost. The Provo leadership seemed to be well aware of that possibility, and to be able to exercise sufficient control over events to back off and do something else when there was danger of it happening.

When a helicopter-load of top British secret service men from Northern Ireland flew into a cliff in Scotland, killing them all, I thought that must be a window of opportunity for risking the move from war

to politics.

I don't know if that is how it was. Anyhow, the manoeuvre from war to politics was successfully accomplished. And the Provos proved to be much more capable of handling the politics of peace than did the SDLP, which had been preaching peace for thirty years.

The operation of a new system of devolved government under the rules of the Good Friday Agreement (1998) began with the Ulster Unionist Party, led by David Trimble, and the SDLP, led by Seamus Mallon, as the major parties in the Stormont Assembly. Trimble had been bullied by Tony Blair into signing the Agreement. He refused to allow implementation of the Agreement to begin for about eighteen months. When he did let it begin, he only let it operate sporadically. He was always on the lookout for opportunities for suspending the system.

The SDLP leader, Seamus Mallon, was eager to get on with operating the Agreement in friendly alliance with the Unionist Party, but he was run ragged and undermined by Trimble's stop-go tactics. Mallon was too simply constitutionalist to be able to counter those tactics to his own advantage.

Trimble bizarrely took members of the Official IRA as his political advisers. The Official IRA was the pre-1969 IRA which had been disarming in the late 1960s in order to fight class war instead of national war. It expelled members who objected to disarmament and held to traditional ways. In 1968-69 it was active in the Civil Rights movement, enabling Unionist leaders to paint that movement as a Republican tactic to undermine the Constitution. When the Civil Rights agitation led to the Unionist pogrom, the IRA was widely held to have neglected its primary business of defending the Nationalist community. The expelled members naturally regained credibility in the light of the Northern events and they began organising the new movement.

In January 1970 there was a dispute at the Sinn Fein conference between the established leadership and advocates of the new movement. The established leadership won the vote and therefore presented itself as the Official Republican movement. And at the Easter 1970 commemoration it brought in the novelty of adhesive lapel badges in place of badges held in with a pin—hence Stickies, which is the name they have usually been known by.

When the new movement, the Provisionals, declared war on Britain in 1970, the Officials declared war in rivalry with it, and against it. The Officials claimed that their war was utterly different to the war launched by the Provisionals. The Provisionals were mere nationalists and Catholics, whereas the Officials were National Liberationists and Marxist-Leninists. The Stickie War was sustained until 1972 and consisted of a handful of politically meaningless bombings and shootings. It went on Ceasefire in 1972, after receiving a large import of arms, but it did not disarm. A group within the Officials disagreed with the Ceasefire, especially in view of the arms just acquired, and they formed a new movement to continue the war: the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) with its political wing, the Irish Socialist Republican Party (the ISRP). A kind of civil war followed, with the Stickie movement disciplining its dissenters.

Thereafter the Official IRA seems to have been motivated, so far as the North was concerned, by a profound resentment of the Provisional movement, whose war was flourishing. In the nurturing of this resentment they nudged themselves gravitationally from National Liberation to Ulsterish Unionism.

I don't think David Trimble could have chosen a more unfortunate adviser than the Official IRA. The Good Friday Agreement put Ulster Unionism in the position of having to "*move on*". The Agreement was an accomplished fact. Blair was in his prime and he was not going to let it go away. But the Officials were lodged in the past, searching for new ways of conducting their feud with the Provos. (Trimble's chief advisers from the Official IRA were Eoghan Harris and Professor Paul Bew.)

The Good Friday Agreement was galling for Ulster Unionism.

Ulster Unionism had a decade earlier rejected a suggestion that it should seek a future in the democratic political life of the state. It still claimed to be British, but it refused to entertain the possibility of a future in British democratic politics. It preferred the security of its majority status in Northern Ireland devolved politics, detached from the political life of the state. That security proved to be illusory. While devolved government was restored by the Good Friday Agreement, the majority status of the Unionist community was negated politically in the process. What was set up in 1998 was not a

restoration of what had been abolished in 1972. It was not even a restoration of the semi-voluntary power-sharing system conducted by a Cabinet under the supervision of the Secretary of State. It was a kind of apartheid system in which government departments were allocated to political parties in proportion to their electoral strength, according to an objective process. The First Minister had no say in the allocation of Ministries. The Ministers were not subordinate to a Cabinet. The Government was not responsible to the Parliament (Assembly). And voting in the Parliament on matters which were contentious between the two communities negated the Unionist majority by being conducted in two segments. A motion could be carried only by gaining two concurring majorities. This arrangement acknowledged the obvious reality that there was no Northern Ireland body politic. There were two body politics and contentious motions had to gain a majority of the representatives of each.

It was hardly possible to doubt that this arrangement was brought in for the purpose of ending the War. It was an acknowledgement that the War could not be ended by a defeat of the Provos. It could only be ended with an arrangement which facilitated the transfer of the Republican activity from the military to the constitutional sphere. The making of that arrangement was a tacit recognition of the legitimacy of the War. And the point was driven home by the release of the prisoners-of-war and the dropping of the pretence that they were criminals.

The change was not merely a change of policy facilitating the entry of people who had been through a process of criminalisation into responsible political office. It was a change in the Constitutional structure of the state, placed beyond the play of politics as far as such a thing is possible in the British system.

All of this was galling enough to the Unionists. It was salt rubbed in the wound when the Provos themselves became the major nationalist Constitutional party under the great Constitutional change they had brought about. It would have been some small comfort if the SDLP had reaped the electoral benefit and Sinn Fein had declined. But the Provos flourished Constitutionally as they had done militarily. And they clinched their achievement by doing a deal with Paisleyism as the Unionist Party, directed by the Stickies, went into decline.

As the Provos became the responsible stabilising element in the new Northern Ireland system, an intensive campaign of personalised destabilisation against Gerry Adams took off. Central to this was the building up of a Confession Bank against him by former colleagues.

This consists of taped interviews with people who had been associated with him in the Provisional movement but who came to hate him because of the part he had played in bringing the War to an end.

The interviews were given in confidence, in the sense that the interviewees were assured that they would not be published while they were alive. David Trimble's senior adviser, Professor Bew of the Official IRA, seems to have been a central mover in this project. The tapes were held in a safe in Boston College waiting for a death. The first to die was Brendan Hughes. Extracts from his interview were published by Ed Moloney.

In the early 1970s Moloney had been picked up, along with others in the PD, by the British newspaper in Dublin, the *Irish Times*, which had survived for two generations after independence as a full-scale newspaper without visible means of support in the form of mass circulation. Many radicals and revolutionaries were picked up by it in the early 1970s.

Moloney went on to make a successful career in international journalism. I don't know what his political connections were after the decline of the PD. All I know of him is his two books, which have Gerry Adams as their target—and an earlier book on Paisley.

The first of them, *The Secret History Of The IRA*, tells much the same story as the second which is based on the Brendan Hughes interview. It seems as though the first was written under the influence of the Hughes Interview, which was still secret at the time. And I suppose that was the case as Moloney was one of the organisers of the Confessions.

His complaint, since the British Government has applied for the tapes to be made available to the prosecuting authorities in Northern Ireland, is that the Government is continuing the War after it has ended. But, if raking over the past with a view to discrediting Gerry Adams it to be described as continuing the War after it has ended, then it is what Moloney himself has been doing for some time.

The first of Moloney's books about Northern Ireland is *The Secret History Of The IRA*, published by the Penguin Group in 2002. In it he acknowledges that—

"Dr. Anthony McIntyre gave me access to a number of embargoed IRA interviews he conducted for his doctoral thesis, which filled important gaps in the early history of the Provisionals..." (p xx).

Dr. McIntyre's Thesis is not available to me for this review. I gather that it was done at Queen's University, under the supervision of Professor the Lord Bew. (I have been told that this is Bew's correct title.)

The point of Ed Moloney's *Secret History* seems to be to prove that Gerry Adams was a liar, a murderer, a duplicitous person who deceived the colleagues who trusted him and helped to put him in power, with a strong suggestion that he was a British agent who was adept at covering his tracks. It has many reference notes to prove its points, but when you look them up you find that most of them are anonymous—secret.

The book begins with a *Prologue* about the import of arms from Libya. A couple of arms ships got through, but the main one, the *Eksund* was detected and captured. Arrangements had even made to blow it up if it was in danger of being captured, but at the critical moment it was found that the mechanism had been sabotaged. The circumstances were such that the sabotage must have been done after the ship had left the Port:

"The betrayal of the *Eksund* condemned the IRA to military stalemate with the British. The successful Libyan shipments certainly made the IRA a more dangerous enemy than it had been for years, dangerous enough eventually to persuade the British that talking to the IRA might be more productive. But the chance of securing a decisive military advantage over the British—the aim and purpose of the "Tet offensive"—had been lost forever..."

"It was in such an atmosphere that the idea that politics might be an acceptable, even unavoidable, alternative to armed struggle took hold and was nurtured. When Gabriel Cleary inspected the sabotaged firing unit on the bridge of the *Eksund* and realised that its precious cargo was doomed, he was not to know that the spy who had betrayed his mission had also boasted another secret operation that not even the Army Council knew about but

which the world would soon know as the Irish peace process" (p33).

Is the meaning of this that Adams increased the striking power of the IRA, but prevented it from becoming so strong that defeat of the British Army became a realistic prospect, so that the British would know that there would be no easy victory, and that the Army Council with the expected heavy weaponry snatched from them, could be nudged towards negotiations; and that he did this with an apparatus he had constructed behind the official structure of the IRA in order to control it? I don't see what else can be meant.

The defeat of the British Army was something I never saw as a possibility. Nor did I see a revolt of British public opinion against the War in response to a "*Tet offensive*" as a probability.

The British public is inured to warfare. War and trade constituted the medium in which British public opinion developed after 1688, with the exception of a single generation under Walpole in the early part of the 18th century. The combination of war and trade was laid down as the appropriate medium of British development by the prophet and martyr of the Glorious Revolution, Algernon Sidney, whose influence on the creation of the regime was profound.

Soon after I went to London in the late fifties, I went to see the Cenotaph celebrations. I knew what Britain was, but there I saw what it was. And, while it is useful to know, it is more impressive to see.

Britain is a militaristic society: a society adapted to warfare. It does not need to rouse up a war spirit in response to some particular threat to it. Readiness for war, regardless of the occasion for war, is built into it. Its militarism is cold-blooded.

In the early 1970s I used to meet London journalists in Belfast. I was surprised by how little they seemed to know of Britain in this regard, and could not make up my mind whether they were pretending not to know.

1969 was the first year in a very long time when a British soldier had not been killed in action somewhere in the world. And Edward Heath had become leader of the Tory Party and appeared determined to make Britain just another European state—and the appearance was so

persuasive that De Gaulle's veto on its entry to the European Union was lifted. I suppose busy modern journalists take their cue from the superficial appearance of the moment. Anyhow, those journalists were of the opinion that they were members of a peaceful state which would pull out of Northern Ireland if given a good kick. (And Fine Gael and Irish Labour politicians with whom I debated the matter, were of the same opinion.)

When I asked those journalists why they thought the British Government, when dividing Ireland, had not governed the Six Counties on a par with Wales and Scotland, they thought about it, and answered this would have angered the Free State, and it was afraid of the consequences. The notion that Whitehall subcontracted out the governing of the Six Counties to the Ulster Unionist Party, because governing it within the democratic system of the state would have raised up a Republican onslaught, made little sense to me then, and makes no more sense now.

I soon stopped bothering my head with journalists, and I went by what I knew and what I saw of the British state. Therefore I never saw British withdrawal, in response to a strong Republican military offensive, under pressure of pacifist opinion in Britain, as a possibility of the situation.

Moloney does not make it clear what he understands by a "*Tet offensive*", which he alleges that Adams sabotaged. But, as I recall it, the Tet Offensive was not a military victory for the Vietcong. While it gained complete surprise (due apparently to an overload of American information), it was effectively contained and subdued. Where it hurt the United States was in its effect on American opinion, which was going through a strongly idealist phase of a kind that has never existed in English society. (Only one British war that I know of was ever stopped by the influence of opinion in England. That was the war with France in the early 18th century. The Tory pamphleteer, Jonathan Swift, influenced the effective stratum of opinion with *the Conduct Of The Allies*. But Swift was not an Opposition pamphleteer. He was the *Government* pamphleteer. His pamphlet influenced opinion sufficiently to enable the Government to end, on advantageous terms, a war that had been launched by the Whigs, and that the Whigs were intent on continuing until France was utterly crushed. Such is England.)

Moloney's second book is *Voices From The Grave: Two Men's War In Ireland*

(Faber & Faber 2010). It consists of extracts from taped interviews with Brendan Hughes, formerly of the Provisional IRA, and David Ervine of the UVF, interspersed with lengthy comment by Moloney.

The gist of Hughes' Confession, as presented by Moloney, is that he happened to be home in Belfast, on leave from his job as a seaman, in August 1969; that he got drawn into Catholic defence against the Loyalist assault; that he drawn into the new IRA, the Provos; that he was associated with Adams; that he was imprisoned with Adams, shared a cell with him, and plotted with him and Ivor Bell to take over the leadership of the Provisional IRA and change the way the war was being conducted when they were released; that they did this; that the Official IRA split over the Ceasefire while he was in prison and members of INLA turned up in an adjacent cage; that he considered leaving the Provos and joining INLA but Adams persuaded him not to; that he helped Adams gain the leadership of the Provos; that Adams deceived him by setting the peace process in motion behind his back; that all the peace process led to was Sinn Fein taking the place of the SDLP; and that, since the war for the socialist revolution was stopped, it was all a waste of time, effort and lives.

The last statement was made under questioning by the interviewer about the disappearance of Jean McConville in 1972.

Jean McConville disappeared from Divis flats in December 1972, leaving a large family. David McKittrick's catalogue of people killed in the War, *Lost Lives*, published in 1999, has one of its largest entries about her: six columns, when the average entry is less than a column. It tells us that she was taken from her maisonette in the Divis complex on 7th December 1972, and was "*beaten for some hours before escaping and returning home*". Then she was taken again, and disappeared without trace.

She was a Protestant from East Belfast who married a Catholic in the late 1950s, became a Catholic herself, and began raising a family. Her husband had served in the British Army. On leaving it in 1964 he became a builder. He died of cancer in 1968. The family lived in a Protestant area in East Belfast until they were driven out in the ethnic clearance of 1969. They then moved into the Divis Flats complex in the Lower Falls (which was subsequently demolished, except for the

Tower block, which had a British Army observation post placed on top of it).

Jean McConville's eldest daughter, Helen, who was fifteen when she disappeared, tried to keep the children together as a family but the social services would not allow it, so they were put through the orphanage system. Later, in her married name of Helen McKendry, she kept the issue of her mother's disappearance alive.

Here is the gist of the *Lost Lives* entry:

"Little is known about what happened to Jean McConville or why. Helen McKendry has suggested that the IRA may have been looking for a woman they believed was involved in the Four Square laundry, an army undercover operation which ended in the death of a soldier, Sapper Ted Stuart. A frequently suggested explanation, however, is that Jean McConville angered the IRA by comforting a soldier who had been seriously wounded outside her door..."

(The Four Square Laundry was a British Army espionage operation in the Falls Road area. It was discovered by the IRA and dealt with.)

The "*preferred truth*" in influential circles was that Jean McConville was killed for giving a cup of tea to a wounded soldier, for the purpose of discouraging fraternisation with the Army of Occupation. This fitted with the official truth that the Provos were not in any real sense a representative movement of the Catholic community, but had made that community subservient to its will by exemplary acts of terror against it. But this was so far from being the case that there was a widespread assumption in the community that people punished by the IRA must have deserved it—with the realistic proviso that in war mistakes will be made and accidents will happen. And it seemed to me that many of those who asserted the preferred truth did so, not because they thought it was literally true, but because they thought it was morally superior to the actual truth, and they expected that in the end the relentless power of the State would dominate memory and ensure that the moral rather than the factual truth would be the remembered truth of the matter.

I was editing *Workers' Weekly* at the time, opposing Provo war policy while living within a few hundred yards of Divis Flats, in a street that was intensively bombed, and also intensively searched by the British Army. Being on the battlefield, we could see something of what went on. The media were full of "*atrocities*".

Government policy seemed to be to milk the latest "*atrocities*" of all the emotion that could be got from it in the hope that this could somehow undermine the Provo war effort. It didn't have that effect, and I couldn't see how it might have. The effect of the hype was to render the community immune to State propaganda. It had from its own recent history a reservoir of emotional resistance to the histrionic emotionalising of media hacks.

There was no intelligible and practicable policy ground of resistance to the Provo War operative within the Catholic community, and sentiment without organised policy was politically futile. SDLP spokesmen would go on radio and television and condemn as required, but everybody knew that the border between 'constitutional' and Republican nationalism was very porous. The two had a common source in the experience of British government sub-contracted to the Protestant community outside the democracy of the state. The SDLP therefore could not attempt to act coherently and decisively against the Provos without destroying itself. And I do not mean that the "*men of violence*" would have destroyed it. I mean that such an attempt would have been a denial of itself—would have been its "*sin against the Holy Ghost*", to use a phrase from a time when there was vivid language for describing such things. It would have reduced itself to meaninglessness and collapsed.

In later years 'Peace Movements' arose on waves of sentimentality, without policy or organisation relevant to the ingenious and baffling Northern Ireland set-up. They had their moment, during which the British media made them world-famous. They then withered for lack of political purpose. Peace as an abstract sentiment is not politically functional.

Apart from the politically futile SDLP, there was only the Catholic Church. The Church was the most widely-organised structure in the nationalist community. But it was for that reason an organisation that was not capable of acting on the community politically. It was a medium of existence of the community rather than an organisation within it.

I suppose it was natural, in the light of what we were publishing, that it should have been proposed to us that we should become an espionage service for "*the security forces*". The proposal was made by somebody who joined BICO. I don't know whether he came from the British or

the IRA. We didn't interrogate him. We didn't even indicate to him that we assumed that he was either one or the other. We did not support the Republican war effort, but we held the British State entirely responsible for the political condition of the Six Counties which made Republican war a practical possibility. Therefore we would take no part in the War one way or the other.

We were well placed to do espionage for the British, so the approach might have been from them. And it was the business of the IRA commander to establish whether we were entirely in earnest about our published position. Whichever the approach was from, the person who made it disappeared and no more was heard of it.

Some people thought I must have a death wish, to be doing what I did in the place where I did it. If the Provos were as they have often been represented, they might have wiped me out and I would now be a very minor Lost Life indeed. I assume the Provos sized me up, as I sized them up. I took it that they were in earnest about their War, that they went about it objectively, and that I was as safe where I was as I would be anywhere else—and safer than I would be where ideological feuds were rampant.

One's own experience necessarily enters into the judgment one makes of other things. I do not recall that we commented on Jean McConville's disappearance at the time. But I know that I would have been sceptical of the suggestion that she was killed for giving a cup of tea to a British soldier.

Here is the account of it given in Brendan Hughes' Confession (omissions are in the original):

"At that time Divis Flats still existed and it was a major source of recruitment and activity by the IRA . . . I'm not sure how it originally started, who she became . . . an informer {but} she was an informer; she had a transmitter in her house. The British supplied the transmitter into her flat. _____, watching the movements of IRA volunteers around Divis Flats at that time . . . the unit that was in . . . Divis Flats at the time was a pretty active unit. A few of them, one of them in particular, young _____, received information from _____ that _____ had something in the house. I sent . . . a squad to the house to check it out and there was a transmitter in the house. We retrieved the transmitter, arrested her, took her away, interrogated her, and she told {us} what she was doing. We actually

knew what she was doing because we had the transmitter . . . if I can get the hold of this other wee man he can tell you more about it because I wasn't actually on the scene at the time. And because she was a woman . . . we let her go with a warning {and} confiscated the transmitter. A few weeks later, I'm not sure again how the information came about . . . another transmitter was put into her house . . . she was still co-operating with the British; she was getting paid by the British to pass on the information. That information came to our attention. The special squad was brought into operation then. And she was arrested again and taken away . . .

Q. Arrested by the IRA?

A. By the IRA.

Q. For the second time?

A. Yeah. Second time, and that was as much as I knew. I knew she was being executed. I didn't know she was going to be buried . . . or 'disappeared' as they call it now. I know one particular person on the Belfast Brigade at the time, Ivor {Bell} argued for {her} to be shot, yes, but to be left on the street. Because to take her away and bury her . . . would serve no purpose, people wouldn't know. So looking back on it now, what happened to her . . . was wrong. I mean, she deserved to be executed, I believe, because she was an informer and she put other people's lives at risk . . . There was only one man who gave the order for that woman to be executed. That . . . man is now the head of Sinn Fein. He went to this family's house and promised an investigation into the woman's disappearance. That man is the man who gave the . . . order for that woman to be executed. Now tell me the morality in that . . . I wasn't involved in the execution of the woman . . . but she was an informer, and . . . I warned her the first time. I took a device out of her house . . . and warned her. She'd a load of kids. She carried on doing it. I did not give the order to execute that woman—he did. And yet he went to see them kids—they are not kids any more, they are grown up—to promise an investigation into her death . . . {Ivor Bell} argued, 'If you are going to kill her, put her on the street. What's the sense of killing her and burying her if no one knows what she was killed for? It's pure revenge if you kill someone and bury them. What's the point of it?'

Q. And he, Adams, rejected this logic?

A. He rejected it.

Q. And ordered her to be disappeared?

A. To be buried. She was an informer.

Q. . . . with all her kids and the way the family was left, in hindsight, do you still feel as strongly about executing her?

A. Not really, no, not now . . . at that time, certainly . . . but not now because as everything has turned out, not one death was worth it.

Q. . . . after the event, did you never discuss the issue with Gerry as to why it happened, what was the purpose of it, given that you had a different attitude?

A. . . . there was a never great deal of [that sort of] conversation; certainly we talked about it but the war was so intense and, I mean, you might have had twelve, fourteen operations taking place on the one day, and I never got a great deal of time to sit down and think about {anything} except organising operations and getting operations out and getting kills and getting bombs in the town and so forth . . . you never thought about it too much because you were so intent on carrying out the war. I lived from operation to operation . . . you were robbing banks, robbing post offices, robbing trains, planting bombs, shooting Brits, trying to keep alive yourself, trying not to be arrested.

Q. Well, you know in recent years that Gerry has been trying to blame Ivor?

A. Hmm.

Q. And has actually been telling people like Bobby Storey to go and ask Ivor Bell questions because Ivor Bell would know the circumstances of Jean McConville. And Ivor Bell when asked is obviously denying it, and saying, 'Well, go and ask Gerry, coz he's the man.'

A. Hmm.

Q. It seems very machiavellian, I mean, you worked with all these people.

A. . . . I just can't believe, well, I do believe but I find it so difficult to come to terms {with} the fact that this man has turned his back on everything that we ever did . . . I never carried out a major operation without the OK or the order from Gerry. And for him to sit in his plush office in Westminster or Stormont or wherever and deny it, I mean, it's like Hitler denying that there was ever a Holocaust . . . I don't know where it ends, once you get onto {a} position where you . . . start denying that you ever were what you were. It's a lie and . . . to continue telling lies and to deny his whole life. I just cannot accept that it's so, I mean, did he not go and talk to Willie Whitelaw as an IRA representative? Of course he did.

Q. So was he lying when he denied any involvement in 'Bloody Friday'; was he lying 'when he denied any involvement in the killing and disappearing of Jean McConville?'

A. He was lying.

Q. Does he just lie about his whole life in the IRA?

A. It . . . appears that way, that he has just denied and lied about everything that ever took place. And to do that gives me the impression that the man cannot be trusted.

Q. Although you agreed with the informer executions, do you think the reason for the disappeared was that there was an element of embarrassment at the Belfast Brigade—which was supposed to be a lean, mean, fighting machine, striking terror and fear into the heart of the enemy [but] had actually itself been extensively penetrated, and he didn't want this known?

A. I don't believe that is the case . . . As regards McConville . . . I think the reason why she [was] disappeared was because she was a woman. The reason why Seamy Wright [was] disappeared is because of the Republican family that Seamy Wright came from . . . McKee was the same . . . he came from a Republican family and that was the reason there . . . to protect the family . . . that was the reason as well for Eamon Molloy's disappearance, because of the Republican family connection, because of his wife, Kate. I don't know where the logic came from. I don't, well, obviously it came from Adams; he was the person that was largely responsible for the disappeared . . . But looking back on it now . . . it was totally, totally wrong." (Pages 128-132).

Taking this account to be substantially accurate, the situation was that Jean McConville found that a War had grown up around her. She took sides in it actively. She was well-placed to give information to one side. The other side discovered what was doing and gave her a warning. But she continued doing it. And the side against which she was acting killed her.

Complicated issue of sovereignty arise in connection with the use Fianna Fail chooses to make of the incident, and they will be dealt with in a further article.

Hughes' opinion that the conflict in which he played an active part was not worth a single life was drawn from him by questioning. It was the implication of the position he had come to and he was required to draw it. The other implication of his position was not drawn out—that, if the War was still ongoing for the purpose of making a socialist revolution, it would be worth all those lives, and more.

*

The whole Interview, or Confession, operation was conducted by Anthony McIntyre irresponsibly.

The interviews were sponsored by the *Boston College Center for Irish Programs IRA/UVF Project*. The General Editors of the Project, Thomas E. Hachey and Robert K. O'Neill, explain in a Preface to the book that:

"The transcripts of interviews... are subject to prescriptive limitations governing access. Boston College is contractually compelled to sequestering the taped transcriptions unless otherwise given full release, in writing, by the interviewees, or until the demise of the latter..."

This means in effect that the interviewees were encouraged to speak

freely about what they had done, and who they had done it with, on a guarantee of impunity. The guarantee was that it would remain secret until they died, unless they chose to make it public, and would be made public when they died.

This is an irresponsible arrangement—designedly so, I assume. It means that the interviewee might give evidence against others, and also against himself to lend it plausibility, without leaving himself open to prosecution, and without being present to defend against cross-examination of what he says about others.

The General Editors particularly thank "Paul Bew, politics professor and senior political adviser to a Northern Ireland first minister, together with two historians who remain anonymous" for assistance—

"in an assessment of the information contained in the recorded interviews. Lord Bew strongly encouraged Boston College to document and archive the stories of paramilitaries who fought on both sides of that sectarian divide, known more popularly as the Troubles, because it was such a natural fit. Boston College has had a long interest in Ireland and offered a welcoming and neutral venue in which participants felt a sense of security and confidentiality that made it possible for them to be candid and forthcoming. What Bew perceived as the real value of the IRA/UVF accounts was in what they revealed about the motives and mind sets of participants in the conflict, a resource of inestimable value for future studies attempting better understanding of the phenomenology of societal violence..."

The way this is phrased gives the impression that the Provo War was a sectarian one, between themselves and Loyalists. It was never that. The Provos declared war on Britain and tried to prosecute it on that basis, while the Government tried to "Ulsterise" it and make it a Protestant/Catholic war. Bew's proposal, however, leaves out a major source of the "phenomenology of ... violence"—and that is the British Government and its operatives. Focus on the volunteers distracts from the professionals who acted on behalf of the Government. And no professional has put his Confessions on tape in Boston. The Editors have nothing to say about that. The Provos have proposed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on South African lines, but that is unlikely to happen anytime soon.

If the purpose of the exercise was to get Republicans and Loyalists speaking frankly, for future historians, about what

they had done and thought, surely the arrangement should have been that the tapes would be made public in the future. We are still living in the political present in which those tapes were made. The Hughes tape is made use of by present historians—political historians rather than historians of politics—and by present politicians, acting in the present to which the tapes relate.

Fifty years would seem to be a reasonable interval during which the tapes should have been put out of reach in a time-locked safe—or thirty years at the least. But the tapes are being used *now* by those who made the arrangement. And some of those who made the arrangement were active parties to the conflict of which they now purport to be historians.

And it is also a virtual certainty that, if the interviews were conducted on an understanding that what was said would not become public knowledge for half a century, the interviewees would not have spoken quite as they did.

When lovers set out to tell the truth, Stefan George said in a poem, "*Wie bald sie lügen*"—how soon they lie. And I take it that the same goes for hate.

It appears that Brendan Hughes had, in his own mind, come to the end of his life. And he saw it as a life that had been made futile by Gerry Adams. And there was Adams, as energetic and purposeful as ever. And Hughes was gifted, by the Establishment, with an opportunity to take revenge posthumously on Adams, who was likely to be far from posthumous at the time.

Moloney has given Hughes his revenge. It has had very little effect, beyond becoming part of the banter of party-politics in the Republic, used by party leaders, disconcerted by the resurrection of Sinn Féin there, who never troubled to figure out what Northern Ireland was.

And, with Moloney making political use of the Boston tapes, the British Government demands access to them. It is hardly credible that the British Government does not have a complete transcript of the tapes. But what is required here is public disclosure, that can be used to resurrect investigations into old cases.

Moloney complains that the demand for access isn't fair. But, judged by the standard of fairness that Moloney himself has set, I can't see what's unfair about it.

As I was concluding this article Dolours Price died. She too had made a tape. And she too was intent on damaging Adams politically. *When would her tape be published?*, Ed Moloney was asked by a Radio Eireann interviewer. He replied angrily that there was no obligation on him to publish it at all. The tapes had been made for a serious purpose, not to be put in shop windows for people to gawp at whenever somebody died.

Dr. Anthony McIntyre appeared on the same programme. He had been a member of the IRA. He disagreed with Adams on much the same grounds as Hughes, as far as I could tell. He had conducted the interview with Hughes. And he said the tapes should be destroyed. Moloney did not say that.

They should be destroyed. They were not made in accordance with their pretended purpose and they should never have been made. And the movers of the project should be viewed accordingly.

Brendan Clifford

Report

Remembrance Project

6 February 2013

**To: Jerry Conroy
(Project Group Member)**

Dear Mr. Conroy,

I am responding to your undated circular, copy attached, to Cork Local History and Heritage Groups titled 'A JOURNEY OF REMEMBRANCE' (sic) introducing your plans for a project that "has been launched to honour the memory of all Irish soldiers, sailors, airmen, and others who fought and died in the First World War" with a particular emphasis on those from Cork.

It is very natural that people would wish to remember soldiers who are killed in wars and especially that their family members would wish to do so.

As your project is clearly much more than one of family remembrance I think it incumbent on you, when asking the people of Cork for support to explain and justify why these fellow Corkmen, who killed and were killed in that war, should be *honoured*.

These fellow Corkmen invaded, attacked and killed Germans, Turks, Austrians, Hungarians, Bulgarians and people of many other countries none of whom had ever attacked or done us—or them—any harm.

Why did they do it?

All wars are fought for some reason but your circular is silent about why these Cork soldiers participated in this particular war and it is surely important that you provide a credible explanation when launching such a project and requesting the support of the people of Cork.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Lane

Aubane Historical Society

Phoenix Park 'Child Murder' Myth Exploded

The Irish Mail On Sunday carried the following item on February 10th from its columnist, the RTE "Liveline" broadcaster Joe Duffy:

"For the past three months I have been working on a piece of public art ... the first public memorial to the Children who were killed in the 1916 Easter Rising. Amazingly, no such list has ever been fully compiled, so using census returns, newspaper reports, cemetery records, death certs and the numerous histories of the Rising that are published, I have managed to name and locate 30 children who were killed in the six-day revolt. Some of the individual stories are truly harrowing—babies killed by crossfire as they lay in their prams, babies shot in their mothers' arms. We know the names of the 64 rebels who died fighting for freedom; now we might begin to know the stories of the 30 children who have been forgotten for too long."

Duffy set out to discover, among others, the story of a Playfair 'child', supposedly "murdered" by Gary Holohan, Quartermaster General of Fianna Éireann Boy Scouts, in one of the first military actions of the 1916 Rising—the raid on the Magazine Fort in the Phoenix Park. It was described as follows in the *Irish Times* on 29th April 1916:

"The Fort was occupied by Mrs Playfair, the wife of the commandant (then at the front in France) and her family of two sons and a daughter... The elder of Mrs Playfair's boys rushed down to Park Place, about a hundred yards from the Fort, to a house in which he thought there was a telephone, and just as the lady of the house opened the door a Sinn Féiner rode up to the gate on a bicycle, and rushing to the door, discharged three shots point blank into the unfortunate lad, from the effects of which he died next morning."

In his 1949 Witness Statement to the Bureau of Military History, Gary Holohan himself recounted:

"We noticed a youth of about 17 years of age {or so he thought—MOR} running towards the (Park) gate. He stopped and spoke to the policeman who was in the middle of the road, directing the traffic, and then ran away in the middle of the road towards Islandbridge... When he got to the corner of Islandbridge Road he ran towards one of the big houses, evidently with the intention of giving the alarm. I jumped off my bicycle, and just as the door opened, I shot him from the gate."

In his 1963 book *The Easter Rebellion* the Fleet Street journalist Max Caulfield told the story more graphically, while conceding that there was a military imperative to Holohan's pursuit of Playfair:

"Holohan sighted the boy as he ran through the park gate and out into the middle of the road to speak to a policeman on traffic duty. Immediately he pushed down hard on the pedals. There were two military barracks close by—Islandbridge and the Royal Barracks—and so they (the Irish Volunteers) could be easily intercepted... It was over in an instant; Holohan fired three times and the boy (who was barely seventeen years of age), his hands clawing out frantically at the still-opening door, crumpled up on the step, dying" (pp49-50, 1995 edition).

British Commandant George Robert Playfair of the Magazine Fort did indeed have a son, Harold, aged 17. But Kevin Myers could not remain satisfied with that version of the story and insisted, instead, that it had been the youngest son, Gerald, aged 14, who had been killed for no other reason than sheer Fenian savagery. Under the heading of "*Pity those poor children—all victims of our Rising 'heroes'*", Myers wrote in the *Irish Independent* on 29th January 2008:

"One of the more common criticisms I've received over the years is my loathing of the 1916 Rising. And I accept, to a degree, that in imposing modern judgments on affairs that occurred decades ago, one can fail to allow for the contemporary mores... I trust we agree: anything which brought violence to these young boys' lives should surely be regarded as a matter for loathing. On Easter Monday 1916, a group of insurgents attacked the undefended Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park, where Georgina Playfair was minding her family... When the attack on the Magazine Fort began, young Gerald Playfair, aged just 14, ran in panic to Conyngham Road, pursued on a bicycle by a terrorist called Holohan. As the boy frantically hammered on a front door, seeking sanctuary, Holohan coldly shot him through the head, killing him. You will read countless textbooks on the Rising, but you will probably not read of the cold-blooded murder, in its opening moments, of a schoolboy by—to use President Mc Aleese's imperishable words at UCC two years ago—one of '*our heroes*'. The boy's father, George, was on the Western Front."

In a more recent 2010 history, Fearghal McGarry, of Queen's University Belfast, swallows the Myers yarn—hook, line and

sinker:

"Civilians, as well as policemen, were subject to sporadic acts of violence in the first hours of the Rising. A raid on the (British) army's Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park by young Volunteers and Fianna boys disguised as footballers, timed to coincide with the storming of the GPO, resulted not in the destruction of the city's armoury but the pointless murder of the fourteen-year-old son of the fort's commandant" (*The Rising—Ireland: Easter 1916*, p138).

But any historian or journalist worth his salt who might make the effort to consult the *Irish Times* of 6th May 1916 would have easily learned that neither Harold nor Gerald Playfair had been shot, but their very much older, adult brother, George Alexander. And, in fairness to Joe Duffy, when his researches have led him to that conclusion, he is prepared to explode the myth. As he has put it under the heading of "*I've solved mystery of the boy shot dead in the Park in 1916*", Duffy has written in *The Irish Mail On Sunday* on February 17th:

"When I mentioned in this column last Sunday that I had compiled a list of 30 children killed in the Easter Rising, little did I know the reaction would help unravel one of the great mysteries of 1916. A number of people contacted me to tell me I had left out one child, Gerald Playfair, the 14-year-old son of a British soldier killed in cold blood by the rebels in the Phoenix Park. But Gerald Playfair, whom historians and commentators have recorded as the Rising's first fatality, was not, in fact, shot or wounded at all but went to live in Canada where he was married in Toronto in 1923. However, his killing is mentioned in almost every written history of the period that I have seen, though his age varies from 14 to 17. Up to a few weeks ago, commentators have used his killing as an example of the blood lust of the rebels. I discovered this week, however, that it was Gerald Playfair's brother George, 23, who was shot dead during the Easter Monday raid on the Magazine Fort. The Playfair family lived in the fort—a British Army munitions depot in the Phoenix Park—which was a key target for the insurgents that fateful day. At the time, newspapers reported that the 'eldest son of Mrs Georgina Playfair' was killed by insurgents when he tried to raise the alarm. They assumed the eldest child was Gerald. Indeed, the 1911 census records five children resident with their father, George Robert Playfair—the fort's commandant—and Gerald was the eldest boy on the census form {not so, it was Harold—MOR}. His older brother George was studying in England when the census was taken, hence the confusion. I tracked down the death certificates and discovered that George Alexander Playfair, a clerk

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Letter, *Evening Echo*, Cork, 4.2.13

Ireland in the Great War

According to Gerry White of the Western Front Association (Letters, January 24 2013), the Irish soldiers of the Great War killed, not for money, nor for excitement, nor because they were duped by war propaganda. Instead they killed as a Christian duty, for the honour of Ireland, in defence of civilisation. He says that Irish sailors and civilians were killed by German U-boats; and militarist Germany invaded neutral Belgium causing thousands of civilian deaths.

It is true that a ruthless genocidal power “found itself at war” in 1914. It is also true that a neutral country which struggled desperately to stay out of the conflict was savagely invaded, occupied, and forced into the slaughter.

The genocidal power was Belgium, which was guilty of the brutal holocaust of untold millions of slave labourers in the Congo. The innocent, peaceful neutral was Greece which was invaded, conquered and occupied by Ireland.

By us? Well, by Britain actually. But according to Mr White, the British government was “our” government, and Britain's Great War was Our War. By Mr White's reasoning Ireland was a superpower which owned most of the surface of the earth, extracting untold wealth from the greatest empire the world had ever seen.

Ireland was not attacked, invaded or occupied by Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria-Hungary or Germany. Neither was Britain—which is more to the point. Nevertheless, “we” declared war on Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria-Hungary and Germany. “We” embarked on this orgy of slaughter by choice, not necessity. “We” could easily have stayed out of it. Therefore Ireland has no reasonable cause for complaint if the peoples we attacked carried out counter-measures against us.

So how and why, in Mr White's words, did we “find ourselves at war”? Mr White, who celebrates and honours Our War, offers no plausible answer to this crucial question. But at least, according to the veteran's letter quoted by Mr White, we conducted the slaughter “with clean hands and a pure heart”, so perhaps we should now be bursting with pride, even though we cannot explain how or why we “found ourselves” engaging in this unspeakable brutality.

A major element of “our” Great War strategy was starvation of civilian populations by means of naval blockade. Should we also be proud of our despicable war on innocent civilians?

An armistice took place on November 11, 1918. Germany had already offered an armistice on December 12, 1916; a cessation of the slaughter by all sides, with all sides returning home and giving up all Great War conquests. But this offer was rejected by “us”, as were several other such proposals, including one by Pope Benedict XV on August 1, 1917. How many more millions of lives were thus destroyed by “our” insatiable blood-lust?

And even our 1918 “armistice” was a fraud, because instead of terminating the brutal slaughter we continued our barbaric war of starvation against innocent civilians. Hundreds of thousands of helpless innocents were starved to death by us during the months following our so-called armistice. And far from giving up our conquests, in 1918 we expanded “our” Empire with vast new acquisitions in Africa and the Middle East. I wonder if this had anything to do with why we “found ourselves at war” in the first place?

Was there a psychopathic aspect in Our War? Did some of us go to war simply for the pleasure of violence and killing? When Corkman Michael O'Leary was awarded the Victoria Cross for killing eight Germans, his father said: "I am suprised he didn't do more. I often laid out 20 men myself with a stick coming from Macroom Fair, and it is a bad trial of Mick that he could kill only eight, and he having a rifle and bayonet."

Phoenix Park

concluded

in Inland Revenue, died from 'bullet wounds to the abdomen' nine hours after he was shot in 1 Park Place, beside the Islandbridge Gate to the Phoenix Park. His death is recorded in the Irish War Memorial, indicating he may have been in the British Army reserves."

So much, then, for the myth of the Phoenix Park "*child murder*"! George Alexander Playfair was indeed a most courageous British Army reservist who gave his life defending the Empire against Irish independence.

Manus O'Riordan

This mentality was present at all levels: "I think a curse should rest upon me, because I love this war. I know it is smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment, and yet, I can't help it. I enjoy every second of it" (– Winston Churchill to the British Prime Minister's wife Violet Asquith on February 22, 1915. Churchill's other psychopathic exploits include the consignment of millions of Bengali civilians to death by starvation in 1943.)

Perhaps Mr White can take some comfort from the famous recruiting speech of Michael O'Leary's father at Inchigeela: "If you don't enlist, the Germans will come here and will do to you what the English have been doing for the last seven hundred years."

Mr White says that, whether I like it or not, during the war more than 200,000 Irishmen voluntarily enlisted in the British armed forces. Involvement of large numbers makes it worse, not better. There are probably more than 200,000 Irishmen abusing drugs and alcohol at this moment. The fact that there are so many wrong-doers does not mean I should respect them and honour them for committing a crime which causes harm to themselves and others.

We should be careful what we give approval and remembrance to, as there are consequences.

Pat Maloney, Labour Comment, Cork

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

COURT SENTENCING

Do you get the impression when looking around you that nothing stacks up any more? Your hamburger which you thought was beef, now turns out to be horse or pig or donkey? Where have all the dogs and cats gone? Don't ask. Don't go there! Suspend belief.

There was a time when, if something criminal was done, the criminal would be uncovered, would be brought up in Court and would be sent to gaol if convicted. It's not that way any more. Now a criminal most likely will not be arrested nor brought to court—we all know the guilty bankers for example and they wreaked havoc with millions of people's lives and many of these bankers, known criminals, are not even being investigated by the Gardaí.

The Gardaí are demoralised by the conduct of the judges who in their turn have given in to the Government's refusal to deal with prison overcrowding. For example, a couple were out shopping with their 7 year old son and they saw a woman who they didn't like. They attacked her and beat her up there and then. The victim suffered a broken nose, two black eyes, a loosened tooth, bruising and quite obvious trauma. For this horrific crime in a public place in front of a child, Judge Moran gave the attackers a three year sentence, suspended and bound them to the peace for three years. That is, they got away with it. All the work of the Gardaí was set at nought by the Judge. This is not in any way an exceptional case—but an ordinary run-of-the-mill barely-reported story in today's Ireland.

AUSTERITY?

But not for our politicians! They are the rulers. Why should they take their feet off our necks when they have us where they want us? Minister Brendan Howlin, Labour, did not even ask former Ministers to agree to reduce their massive self-awarded pensions. About 35 former Ministers are getting pensions over €100,000 a year. None of the Fianna Fail Ministers who presided over the financial crash gave up any portion of their pensions and two MEPs have MEP salaries of €91,000 (paid by us naturally) and are in addition claiming their full Ministerial pensions.

There used to be a time when the prospect of a future General Election

would keep the politicians reasonably controlled but not anymore. They have self-awarded themselves such huge pensions that to get the pensions they do not even have to appear honest. All it takes is to stay in Office long enough to qualify for the pensions and in the meantime ride the system into the ground for their own benefit. They have no sympathy for the electorate. Nor should any thinking person have any sympathy for the electorate. The Irish electorate enjoy talking about politics so much that the talking is enough for them. They do not *want* to fix the system. Just look at the recent "protests"—here we in Ireland had Christy Moore and other musicians giving such a carnival atmosphere that some visitors told me that such was the *craic* they simply couldn't believe that we—the Irish—were actually meant to be making a serious statement of intent to the Government. What came across instead was the Irish protest by singing and the Greeks by firebombing anything they could lay their hands on—an "*angry electorate*"—nah not us!

THE BANKING SYSTEM

The recent statutory liquidation of

former Anglo-Irish Bank or IBRC Ltd. just shows how crooked the system can get. The Government had the reins of power, they were and are in the driving seat and so they can do what they want and so they did! How much money did TDs, MEPs and Ministers and their friends and their families owe to Anglo Irish Bank? We are unlikely to find out now. There has been a huge cover-up, an enormous fudging of who owed what to which, or to all banks. What happened with IBRC was an enormous thimble-rigging trick done right there in front of us. While the whole attention of the media and the Irish people was focussed on the "*renegotiation*" of the Bonds/Promissory Notes, the Dáil, Seanad and President Higgins passed, in a lightening fast move, the Act to liquidate IBRC. Nobody in the Oireachtas except the perpetrators knew what was happening.

The IBRC Act was said to be connected with "*negotiations*" in Brussels. It was not, except in the remote financial sense. Were there any negotiations in Brussels? Other than the usual talk, talk, talk? No doubt someone will do a PhD on it all sometime. We live in interesting times!

Michael Stack ©

Dail Diary

DUBLIN/MONAGHAN BOMBING

Deputy *Finian McGrath* question to Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter, 12th February, 2013

DÁIL WRITTEN QUESTION

To ask the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will provide an update on the lack of cooperation from the British Authorities on the Dublin and Monaghan bombings.

REPLY

"...I do not think any of us can forget the horrific events perpetrated in Dublin and Monaghan in May 1974 or, indeed, the pain that is still being felt as a result..."

"As the House is aware, the late Judge Henry Barron carried out a detailed and painstaking inquiry into those awful events of May 1974..."

"...this House and Seanad Éireann have previously and unanimously urged the British Government to allow access to documents relevant to these events. I know that many Deputies in this House have raised this issue directly with our counterparts at Westminster and that they will continue to do so. For its part, since this Government took office, the Taoiseach has raised the issue with the British Prime Minister and the Tánaiste has also raised the matter with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland."

IRELAND LEADS OSCE

"A Labour backbencher has expressed concern over Ireland's ability to successfully lead the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) given the financial constraints and crises closer to home..."

Michael McNamara, who once worked with the OSCE, said the timing of Ireland's year-long chairmanship was not ideal... at a time when domestic crises and strains on the Coalition demand careful handling...

His predecessor, Lithuania's foreign affairs minister, made the role a full-time job. Audronius Azubalis made 23 official trips to 18 countries and issued 90 public statements on OSCE-related issues.

Mr McNamara said he feared Ireland's contribution would pale by comparison.

"The quality of the chairmanship has varied considerably and you would have to say that countries that did not have a strong strategic involvement in the region have been less successful. That would not do our international reputation any good."

Professor Ray Murphy, the director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights, who also worked under the OSCE, also expressed concern about the availability of resources to tackle the role at this time.

However, Mr McNamara said Ireland's position would not be helped by the decision to close the embassy in Iran, which was influential in many of the conflict zones. He said the decision was a "*terribly bad move*."

(See *Caroline O'Doherty, Irish Examiner*, 12.1.13) Read more: <http://www.examiner.ie/ireland/labour-td-critical-of-irelands-osce-role-179853.html#ixzz1m0oqRbfo>

GUILDS continued

looked upon by those who made them as the product of some great industrial machine, but as their own handiwork and of it, all who had a part in the final result were justly proud.

Thus the guilds of Florence, as in fact all the guilds, fostered by their very character and organisation a spirit of joy in the construction of worthwhile things of use and of beauty. Such were the craftsmen of the Middle Ages; the economic system, if in some respects crude as regards its technological mechanism, yet preserved that vital human touch, and never failed to recognise and to respect the dignity and independence of the human personality of the workman. Other important Florentine guilds were those of "Judges and Notaries", "Doctors and Apothecaries", "Masters of stone and wool", "Locksmiths and workers in Iron", "Carpenters", as well as the Guild of Flax, and the Guild of Wool, to name some of the notable fraternities.

These various guilds were graded in positions of honour and importance. This graded order of economic associations produced a sense of solidarity in the body politic, which is only possible to modern society by the restoration of all things in Christ, according to the mind of the Church.

Thus by the time the Middle Ages were coming to a close guild life and influence embraced almost every charitable enterprise: the relief of poverty, assistance in sickness and in old age; help for the blind and the dumb; aid to those who suffered loss in shipwreck, or from floods.

Some guilds provided, according to the custom of those days, dowries for worthy girls desiring to enter religious congregations, or intending to marry.

The repairs and upkeep of roads and bridges, and also of churches, are only some of the many works undertaken by these fraternities of Christian men and women. They were the insurance companies and benevolent societies of the Middle Ages, and they performed their self imposed tasks with an efficiency, which in many respects, was superior in its effectiveness and in its humanity to some similar organisations of later ages.

Only the superficially informed, or the downright prejudiced, would wish to attempt to brush aside as of small value, or as of a commonplace nature, the truly great contribution made by the guilds of the Middle Ages, to the welfare of the times in which they functioned and the legacy of high achievement and noble example they left upon the pages of history. Modern trade organisations, both of

employers and of employees, may learn much of practical and timely interest in the way the guilds of the Middle Ages brought out from the rough hewn elements of many nations an economic structure which for nearly a thousand years ensured to all the blessing of industrial and social harmony in so large a measure." (*The Irish Monthly*, Vol. 63, No. 746-Aug. 1935), pp. 504-512. Published by: Irish Jesuit Province).

TRADE UNION NOTES

Mutiny?

"There was mutiny in the air of the Tallaght Basketball Arena in Dublin. More than one speaker made reference to Big Jim Larkin and the neat symmetry of events last night and 100 years ago.

"However, this time they are turning on their fellow trade unionists.

"In 1913 we had a lockout, in 2013 we have a sellout', roared Seamus Murphy of the Psychiatric Nurses Association before symbolically stripping off his suit jacket and rolling up his shirt sleeves to appreciative roars from the crowds.

"Colleagues, and comrades they're waving the white flag of surrender', he boomed." (*Irish Independent*, 19.2.2013).

Clearly the more than 2,500 nurses, guards and prison officers from the 24/7 Frontline Alliance who crammed into the hall meant business.

Cork Gardai

are looking at the option of joining the Western Australian police.

"One source said: 'There are a number of people considering the Australian option with the police in Perth because they are looking for members who have between three and seven years of service.'

"Garda sources said they are waiting to establish if they will be able to take advantage of a proposed three year career break but it is not yet known if the career break will be made available to them" (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 18.2.2013).

Now, if the Cork colonial boys could persuade the West Aussie Police Federation to concede a similar "three year career break", they could very nearly hold down careers in both forces and maybe throw in both pensions after 30 years on top of it as well.

Ballot

Trade Unionists at Bus Eireann will ballot members on new plans to cut their premium payments, expenses, and holidays, following threatened industrial action in January.

SIPTU and the National Bus and Rail Union will ask members to vote on revised proposals that have been backed by the Labour Court, in a bid to end the dispute.

The court accepted that the state-owned transport company was experiencing serious financial difficulties, which could put jobs at risk. But it did not back all of the original cuts it planned.

The revised cuts include:

- Overtime rates will fall from time-and-a-half to time-and-a-quarter for the first two hours; the rest will stay at time-and-a-half. The original company proposal was for time-and-a-quarter all the time.
- A shift payment for unsocial hours of one-sixth of pay will be cut to one-seventh, rather than to one-eighth as proposed by the company.

Strikes

The number of days work lost due to industrial disputes more than doubled last year.

Workers missed 8,486 days because of disputes with their employers, compared with 3,695 days the previous year.

However, there were just five industrial disputes last year and eight in 2011.

Two disputes at Bord na Mona and Irish Cement accounted for almost three-quarters of the days lost last year. The disputes accounted for 6,114 of the 8,486 days lost.

Irish Cement closed for a total of 46 days, leading to over 3,600 lost days, while there was a three-day strike at Bord na Mona. The dispute at CRH subsidiary Irish Cement involved 110 workers.

However, there were no days lost due to industrial disputes during the final three months of last year.

Pay

"Most workers saw their pay packets decrease marginally last year although workers in IT, industry and administration have seen a steady increase in wages over the past four years, according to the latest CSO figures." (*Irish Ind.* 23.2.2013)

"All workers in the private, public and industrial sectors took home 0.3% less in average weekly earnings in the last quarter of 2012 compared with the same period the previous year, from €697.65 in 2011 to €695.80 in 2012." (*ibid.*)

There was a similar decrease in hourly wages over the same time period, with average hourly rates down to €21.96 in the last quarter of 2012 compared with €22.03 in the last quarter of 2011.

However, workers in the information technology and communication sectors saw their pay increase by more than 4% over the course of the recession, from an average of €959.86 per week in the last quarter of 2008 to €1,000.88 per week at the end of 2012.

Workers in administrative and support services also saw an increase of 3.1% over the past four years. Industrial workers also saw modest pay increases of 1.3% over the past four years.

Not surprisingly, construction workers took the biggest hit in pay over the course of the recession, with an average 11.1% decrease.

Conversely, professionals, including those in law and accountancy saw the greatest decline in their wages last year of 6.5%.

The only thing that hasn't changed is the hours of work, with the average worker working 31.7 paid hours per week last year.

The statistical analysis of earnings and labour costs also revealed there were 9,100 fewer workers employed in the public sector in 2012 compared with the previous year for a total of 381,000.

GUILDS continued

master artisans and other skilled workmen to spend their whole lifetime in co-operative effort and to raise out of the very soil, as it were, of Europe noble and beautiful cathedrals, which have not been equalled or surpassed in their artistic beauty or religious symbolism.

As a traveller remarked: "How did they ever do these things, with the simple tools they must have had, and with the resources at their disposal?" There can be but one answer: they were labours of love, inspired by faith, rather than works for mere material profit.

Guild regulations and ordinances, homely as some of their subject matter may appear to a more sophisticated age, all seemed to be designed to temper the fierceness and harshness of the battle for existence; to Christianise the economic relationships of life. Guild ordinances, for instance, provided that guild brothers were not to bring each other before the civil courts until their differences had been presented to the aldermen of the guild, in an effort to establish "unity and love betwixt the parties", to use the exact guild words. Such a rule mutually imposed and obeyed, as it was in the days of the guilds, certainly holds up a timely lesson for many people to-day [1935] who, upon the slightest possible excuse, bring legal action in the courts against their neighbours, when it should be possible with a little goodwill and common sense to settle many minor differences without recourse to the process of law.

The guild ordinances relating to chaplains, show that their framers had close knowledge of the Canon Law of the Church, and that they respected it. We read in the ordinances of the guild of Cambridge that "A chaplain shall be appointed after the approval of the parish priest has been secured". The duties of the chaplain were well defined for the ordinance further states: "It is neither becoming nor lawful that a parson should burden himself with the secular business of the guild, nor does it befit the good name or come within the calling that they should take upon themselves such offices and things of this sort."

In the sphere of trade regulations were ordinances which forbade one merchant from taking undue advantage of his neighbour by the erection of booths in the open streets, so as to give his display

undue prominence over that of his fellow merchant. The guild rules also made it an offence to offer fresh meat or fish (and, in fact, any perishable articles of food) for public sale for a longer period than one day. Thus did the guilds protect the public welfare in a hundred ways, none of which, however, violated the fundamental human rights of the individual or the home.

Weights and measures, used in public sale, were also matters coming within the jurisdiction of the guilds. The ordinances of the Guild of Mercers provided that "The searcher is to make search among the guild members that one of them shall use any false balance weight or measure whereby the people might in any wise be hurt or deceived."

Pressure of the hand upon the scale was also a detail which was the subject of guild regulation, a fine being provided for any intentional offence in this way. Other guild rules provide punishment for tricky or fraudulent advertising: if an article was offered for sale as "solid brass", "hand-wrought iron", or "real silk" it had to be as indicated; it was a serious offence to directly or indirectly misrepresent goods in the Middle Ages.

Within this present century some progress has been made in this direction by legal enactments in practically all the western countries; but the consciences of many tradespeople to-day in this matter are far removed from the sense of public responsibility which existed throughout Catholic Europe in the ages of the guilds. We all know that legal enactments can in reality go but a short distance if the moral sense of the public and of the individual is not based upon a knowledge of and obedience to the ten commandments, and in this case, by what is meant by the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal".

The men of the Middle Ages had ample time to reflect upon these eternal verities, for on the great feast days of the Church all work ceased; the religious reason why it ceased was brought home to the people by means of various and appropriate pageants, which were presented by the guilds, or under their direct auspices.

Nowhere is the true Catholic spirit of the guild system more clearly exemplified than in the ordinances which regulated the acceptance and treatment of apprentices. Having accepted a youth of good moral character as an apprentice, a master workman was expected to treat the newcomer as he would his own son. If during the time of apprenticeship, which in some cases

lasted seven years, the apprentice should leave his employer, the guild regulations provided that the employer was to wait for more than a year before replacing the apprentice, in case the young man should return to his apprenticeship.

Regulations also provided against a journeyman abruptly leaving his master in such circumstances as to cause injustice to him or injury to his business. These regulations show that under the guild system the true social character of labour was understood, and injustice or harsh treatment could not be justified by an expression of the sentiment, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We have only to compare the guild idea of the relationships and sense of responsibility of both master and workman with the attitude so prevalent in the present-day system of industrialism, with its readiness to "hire and fire", and in some cases, to strike without just cause, to realise the great gulf which must be bridged before the true reconstruction of the economic world of to-day can be fully achieved.

One group of guilds whose development to a high degree of usefulness is of timely interest, in view of the constructive work of Premier Mussolini of Italy, were those of the great City of Florence. Every boy and man in Florence, at the time, was required to be an accepted member of some guild, appropriate to his talents and his state of life. Not to belong to any guild was to be branded as a good-for-nothing idler. Even the relatives of such a one as was without guild membership were called upon to pay a fine to the municipal authority for possessing so worthless a relation. From this it will be seen to what a complete extent the guild principle had extended into all economic life of Florence.

The Florentine guilds were highly organised. The great Guild of Silk, as it was called, was composed of twenty-two lesser guilds, all the artisans of which were experts in various types of work in silk. Designers, banner makers, reelers, painters on silk, and many others each had their own guild with its regulations, meetings, regalia and last, but not least, its religious exercises.

Groups of master workmen, known as "inspectors of flaws and blemishes", were responsible to the Great Guild of Silk that no faulty or shoddy work was allowed to pass.

The beautiful articles produced by the artisans of the Guild of Silk were not

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LABOUR

Comment

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(*The Irish Monthly*, Vol. 63, No. 746-August, 1935), pp. 504-512.
Published by: Irish Jesuit Province)

Practical Aspects of Mediaeval Guilds

By WILLIAM E. KERRISH

"The undying spiritual personality, which is the Catholic Church, is not normally confined in her influence to the cloister and the sacristy. The Divine energy which is hers would rightfully permeate, spiritualise and sanctify, in Christ's Name, every human relationship in, the whole mortal life of man. Family life, and social and economic affairs in particular, need the balancing and harmonising influence of religious principles, and the elevation of religious ideals. The recognition of this spiritual background upon which the world of material things reposes, was the underlying reason why the guilds of the Middle Ages were able to leave a noble and indelible record of a golden age.

The guilds of the Middle Ages, spread as they were over the whole face of Europe for many centuries, were the logical result of the spiritual influence of the Catholic Church. Some historians, wishing to rob the Church of the credit that is her just due, have tried to place the origin of the guilds in the social or economic organisations of pagan antiquity; but in reality they had no other source for their spirit and for their religious character, than in the culture of the Church, mother as she was of the civilisation of the west.

The religious, the craft, and the merchant guilds of the Middle Ages were bone of the bone of Catholic Europe, and when its united structure was torn asunder by the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, the guilds, too, were destroyed in the chaos and violence that ensued.

The charters and ordinances of the mediaeval guilds bear witness to their fundamentally Christian character. Even those guilds whose first purposes were those of manufacturing or of trade, were

religious to the core. It should be remembered that in the ages of the guilds, religion and everyday life were inextricably interwoven, to a degree which is difficult for us to fully comprehend. This intermingling of everyday life and labour with religion and worship, which existed in those, golden ages of Faith, resulted in an organic social unity, and a public sense of brotherhood, among all classes of the people, far removed from the spirit of fierce competitiveness which has in our day caused widespread economic insecurity and industrial strife.

The extent to which guilds existed in pre-Reformation Europe is easily realised when it is recalled that in England alone, on the eve of the so-called Reformation, there were thirty thousand of these fraternities. The following, from the preamble of the charter of one of the twelfth century continental guilds, gives the keynote to practically all of the charters and other documents which have been preserved to us. We read:

"Brothers, we, are images of God, for it says in Genesis, 'Let us make man to our own image and likeness'. We are united in this idea and we shall, with the help of God, be able to accomplish our work, if brotherly love is spread among us; for through the love of neighbour we attain to the love of God."

Hundreds of similar quotations, from authentic guild records which still exist, bear testimony to the religious source from which the guilds of the Middle Ages derived their constructive power and co-operative strength; a power and a strength which made it possible for them to build an economic edifice befitting the needs of the times, which has not found its equal in modern industrial society.

The large measure of co-operative enterprise in material things, which the guild system was able to foster, was possible because, for one thing, the mind of the Middle Ages was at rest upon the fundamental facts of man's origin and final destiny. Men of all classes, in those ages, did not doubt for a moment that they were creatures of God's special creation, endowed with an immortal soul, and destined through the merits of Christ's redemptive work, for an eternity with their Maker.

Thus material things logically fell into their proper place in the life of the people; they were able to consider with a calmer vision than we, the vicissitudes of life. Moreover, the mental tension (which has at its roots a spiritual tension; and which has grown to such proportions in modern life, due to its speed and intensity, was unknown in the ages of the guilds). This is why it was possible for generations of

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