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Social Partnership

EU

## The Ruins Of Croke Park

In our last issue we wrote of the drift towards a rejection by Trade Union members of Croke Park II, the proposed deal for curbing the public sector pay bill:

"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 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" (*Promissory Notes, Croke Park and the Euro*, Irish Political Review editorial, March 2013).

And so it was to be. The politics of it changed in the two weeks up to the announcement of the results of the SIPTU ballot.

The wall-to-wall coverage of the anti-Agreement Teacher Union Conferences in the week after Easter (in contrast to the slight attention Irish Congress of Trade Union Conferences receive), and the early decisions by traditionally inveterate Agreement-opponents, such as UNITE and some craft Unions, created a climate of inevitability about rejection of the deal. Clear direction was required and for this all eyes were on SIPTU.

When the SIPTU National Executive met on 14th March, it seems that its public service representatives (representing a third of SIPTU membership) overwhelmingly urged acceptance of the Agreement in the interests of low-paid workers. The deal negotiated put an end to substantive threats of outsourcing, ruled out compulsory redundancies and ring-fenced wages and salaries under a €65,000 ceiling. There were painful concessions on working time, deferral of increments and options of flexible working. But on balance the SIPTU National Executive put the case for the Agreement, arguing that *"the best way Public Service Workers can protect their interests is through a single centralised Agreement"*, and stating that it was *"the best that could be obtained through negotiation"*. And then . . . it left its members to make up their own minds (i.e. take their leadership from the *"the politics of it"*, i.e. the general public debate).

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## 'Treaty Change':

### *the big red herring*

Cameron's plans for a renegotiated EU received a serious setback when Germany and France (followed by Ireland) declined to participate in his plans on the very valid grounds that this was a domestic UK affair. Cameron then went on a charm offensive with a get-together of his and Merkel's family at the Chancellor's official guest residence, Schloss Meseberg, in the Brandenburg countryside. One result was that afterwards *"she was willing to pursue the option of treaty change"*.

This must have been music to Cameron's ears, as it effectively reversed the earlier German decision not to engage in his so-called *"renegotiations"*.

'Treaty change' is code for Cameron's determination to change the EU—another way of accepting his *'renegotiation'* plans.

This position was echoed and spelt out in more detail at a Dublin meeting:

"Germany laid down a big barrier on the fast track to European banking union, insisting a revision of EU treaties is necessary to create a single authority to

*continued on page 3*

## Report

### Spot the Party Line!

In the 26th April edition of *The Irish Times*, Arthur Beesley began his piece on the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis as follows:

"Fianna Fáil's ardfheis opens tonight in Dublin, the second since the party's abject defeat in the 2011 election. The gathering comes amid resurgence in the polls, raising hope within the party that it can eventually overcome the dismal

legacy of the Ahern and Cowen years. But is a humbled Fianna Fáil really on the cusp of a comeback?"

Later that day (5.41pm) Mary Wilson introduced a piece on RTE radio's *Drivetime* as follows:

"The Fianna Fáil ardfheis opens at the RDS in Dublin this evening. The gathering comes amid a revival in the opinion polls raising hopes within the party that it can eventually overcome the

grim legacy of the Ahern and Cowen years. But is a humbled Fianna Fáil really on the cusp of a comeback?"

Wilson did not tell her listeners that she was quoting almost verbatim from *The Irish Times*.

It is difficult to know whether it has become the natural, unconscious instinct of RTE presenters to parrot *The Irish Times* line.

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

Jim Larkin

by

*Patrick Kavanagh*

Trade Union Notes

(back page)

That was the end of the Agreement. Over the following two weeks as SIPTU members pondered their options, the media was awash with anti-Agreement argument. Mary Lou MacDonald (SF) denounced the agreement in the Dáil as a "sell out by the Union leaders", while right-wing commentators like Eddie Hobbs commended Unions that were rejecting the proposed Agreement. SIPTU members ultimately rejected the deal, by a close enough margin of less than 10%.

Sinn Féin has generated an "ideological" position for its political advance in the Republic based on a leftist rejectionism of the State and all its works. It has taken its economic policy—such as it is—off the shelf of the failed British Left and repackaged it in the belief that it was ready-made to appeal to southern urban working class discontent. Its basic text is the book by its economic advisor, Eoin O Broin, *Sinn Féin and the Politics of Left Republicanism*, published by the house publisher of the old British Left, Pluto Press, in London. This trend was observed with disquiet by the late Pat Murphy, and he has been proved right.

Sinn Féin can be excused for adopting an unremitting hostility to the Irish State—after all that State has been consistently seeking to destroy it for many decades. But, if it wants to become anything in the State, it is going to have to develop out of that rejectionism, or be left far behind by a revived Fianna Fáil, as its excellent candidate Martin McGuinness already discovered during the late Presidential election.

The inability of the Labour Party to handle the State and its social elements has a long track record. When yet another coalition in which it failed to develop a convincing developmental policy collapsed in rancour with the Trade Union movement in 1957, its greatest leader which it never had—James Larkin jnr.—left the sorry mess of Irish Labour politics to concentrate on the far more real business of Trade Unionism, to develop it as the substantial force for working class advance in the State and society. His perspective set the movement on the course of national bargaining, embracing the EEC and ultimately delivering industrial develop-

ment, a welfare state, and full employment through Social Partnership.

Throughout the years of the Celtic Tiger the Labour Party adopted an irrational refusal to enter coalitions with Fianna Fáil. In 1987 it had virulently denounced Trade Union negotiations with the Fianna Fáil Government on a 'Programme for National Recovery', the historic first Partnership Agreement, and subsequently was never again to come to terms with the Unions. Labour collapsed its short-lived coalition with FF in 1994 for no discernible reason other than visceral hostility to its coalition partner and personal pique, thus leaving FF reliant on the PDs in shaping the prosperity of the years that followed, in agreement with the Trade Union movement.

The Trade Unions had to learn to deal directly with the State in the interests of their members without the vehicle of a labour party that cared much for them. Taking their cue from Larkin jnr. they were spectacularly successful in this for many decades. But, in the current moment of crisis on securing a national agreement for the public service, the Trade Unions proved incapable of offering a clear perspective to their members. In recent years the ICTU established a think tank—the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI). Unfortunately this has been stocked with pure and simple economists, and to create a profile and rationale for itself has naturally gone down the road of developing an "alternative economic strategy" that last refuge of a stranded Left. This has taken the form of rejecting "austerity" and promoting the cause of "stimulus led growth" to be financed by boosting consumer spending and increasing taxes further. This has proven to have as much credibility with the public as the economic imaginings of Sinn Féin.

Michael Taft, research officer with UNITE, claimed on RTE radio after the rejection of Croke Park II that "austerity" assumed that "if you cut, the economy will grow". This is a travesty. "Austerity" is the term of abuse applied to a strategy of 'sound money', which is what must underpin the Euro. The "alternative economic strategy" necessarily means denouncing the Troika programme in favour of the type of illusory alternative of confrontation with Europe promoted for Ireland by *The Financial Times*, the organ of the City of London.

Trade Union leaders who made the case for Croke Park lacked credibility because they rejected the adjustment programme on which the logic of the pay

agreement was based. Trade Union members considering their vote on the deal saw themselves being asked to accept an agreement which was based on an understanding of the crisis which the ICTU leaders themselves rejected. The essential basis of the successful Partnership Agreements of the 1990s had, after all and crucially, been a negotiated, shared view of the nature of the then economic crisis and how to develop out of it.

The politicians of the Labour Party now "*find themselves sitting in the ruins of Croke Park II watching a false dawn breaking on the horizon—where Fianna Fáil are encamped*" (Victoria White, *Irish Examiner*, 25 April 2013). Fianna Fáil politicians, including Micheál Martin, have been warming to the Unions, condemning the Government for its failed strategy of "*divide and rule*" towards "*public sector workers*". The previous comebacks of FF in 1957, 1977 and 1987 from political defeat were all preceded by that party engaging with the Trade Union movement to develop a shared view of the main issues and how to return to planned economic development. No doubt we will see similar moves in the near future. The Unions should ensure, as in 1984 ("*Confronting the Jobs Crisis*"), that it is their initiative that sets the scene.

## Germany's Rethink On Blame For Irish Bank Bailout

Germany has been thinking again about where responsibility lies for Irish Banks getting into serious difficulties towards the end of the last decade. Current thinking can be summarised as follows:

1. Most investments in Irish banks pre-crisis were not from the eurozone but from the UK, US and offshore locations (though some of this may have originated in the eurozone);
2. There was no pressure from Europe leading to the Irish decision to introduce the Guarantee;
3. Lenihan's decision was the only option he could see;
4. German banks were "liberalised" and encouraged to play the global game by the government of the Blair-acolyte, Social Democrat Gerhard Schröder. The new boys on the block, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*, were viewed as "*useful idiots by many Wall St veterans*". The Finance Minister implementing deregulation under Schroeder was Peer Steinbrück, now leader of the Social Democrats, and his deputy was Jörg Asmussen, now a German Government representative on the European Central Bank. Both now accept that deregulation was a disaster. The deregulation has been substantially reversed by the Christian Democrat Merkel Government.
5. Eurozone bailout conditions have been partly driven by the intent to protect pension funds.

This analysis first appeared in *Die Zeit* and was reported in the *Irish Times*. See: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/germany-s-rethink-on-just-where-the-blame-lies-for-the-irish-bank-bailout-1.1339854?page=2>

Philip O'Connor

## Treaty Change

continued

wind up banks, even if it took several years to accomplish. Wolfgang Schäuble, the German finance minister, strongly voiced his legal concerns at an informal meeting of EU finance ministers in Dublin over the weekend. His comments point to the high political stakes involved in forging a common institution to shut down troubled financial groups" (*Financial Times*, 15 April).

The banking union is necessary to sustain and develop the Euro. The Euro now has an existence and a life independent of the EU. Mr. Schäuble still seems to see the two as one and the same, if we are to believe the *Financial Times*. But what is good for the EU is not necessarily good for the Euro. The interest of the two could coincide, were it not for the UK which blatantly uses the EU and an alleged concern for its structures as a stick to beat off any real plans for the Euro's development.

The existing EU legal structures no longer correspond to the new realities and cannot be made to do so. A new legal reality has to be created, based on maintaining and developing the position of the

Euro. The first step in that direction was the Fiscal Treaty and that should be built on as soon as possible.

This is the Treaty that needs to be developed and, as it is an inter-Governmental Treaty, it cannot be accommodated within an EU Treaty no matter how modified. It is a case of apples and pears.

The FT reporter appreciated the obvious implications of Schäuble's position:

"By throwing his weight behind the need for a treaty revision in the medium term, Mr Schäuble also raised Britain's hopes of opening a path to an eventual repatriation of powers from the EU. George Osborne, the UK finance minister, made clear that Britain's backing for treaty change would come at a price. "That sent a chill around", said one person in attendance."

Schäuble is handing the UK a stick with which to beat the Euro—all in the name of the EU!

The UK demands would also make a joke of the EU as any sort of Union worthy of the name. It would also make ridiculous the much-proclaimed British concern for

the Single Market. For them it is to be a Single Market with two currencies and with a series of opt-outs that give one member (guess who?) clear competitive market advantages within this market. It is a logical absurdity.

The significance of this is that Germany has a disorientated political position on the future of the Euro. A currency needs to be based on a political entity that corresponds to its remit. That is ABC.

While the UK is in the EU and determinedly not in the Euro, there will be an unbridgeable fault-line in the European project. That fault-line must be removed or it will undermine the Euro—and what is left of the EU.

Germany seems determined not to see the fault-line because it does not yet have the political confidence to face up to the fact that it must provide the political leadership to guide the Euro. That means having the confidence to face down Britain's chicanery. These recent statements from Merkel and Schäuble do not give much hope that such confidence exists.

Jack Lane

# Margaret Thatcher

Margaret Thatcher was awarded eight pages of obituary notices in the *Irish Independent* on April 9th, and six in the *Irish Times*. Despite that, her major achievement was not mentioned.

What else that she did bears comparison, in its ongoing consequences, with her effective subversion of the European Union?

The London *Times*, before her arrival in Downing St, felt that the end was nigh for England's historic balance-of-power policy towards Europe. By her actions she reversed the tendency that was leading towards that end. There is now an even chance that within ten years Britain will again have Europe where it wants it—as an arena of States in conflict which it can manipulate to its advantage.

Europe gained a degree of collective awareness through the 2nd World War. Christian Democracy in Germany and Italy combined with Gaullism in France in understanding the catastrophic part that Britain had played in Europe's affairs, and being determined that it must not happen again. They did not disable themselves by raking over and dwelling upon all the kinds of dreadfulness that had happened during the War. They treated the War as a learning experience. They formed a Union and kept Britain out of it, knowing that Britain's interest was to manipulate them towards another war. De Gaulle put it crisply. Britain was maritime and insular. The leopard doesn't change its spots.

That generation of European leaders, who had been through the destructive Versailles 'Peace' and Britain's malevolent handling of it, passed away. Britain got a disarming leader who seemed in earnest about making it a European state. The wisdom of those who had experienced British perfidy towards Europe passed with them, now they were no longer there to insist. And, *Is fear ciall ceannuith na ciall an muinteoire*.<sup>\*</sup> So they let Britain in. And Heath was discarded and replaced by Thatcher. Then Thatcher said she wouldn't have this and she wouldn't have that and they could like it or lump it. Gradually the situation came about that Britain was at the heart of the European decision-making process, shaping it to its own advantage—exempting itself from arrangements it didn't like, and encouraging random expansion after the collapse

<sup>\*</sup> Sense Bought Is Better Than Sense Taught

of the Soviet Union, directing it towards the delusion of making the EU a globalist Super-Power by means that ensured that it would never happen.

The Eurozone may or may not survive as a viable body. Britain has gambled on its not surviving, and on the EU falling apart into hostile states. The fact that that is worth a gamble is Thatcher's heritage.

Another of Thatcher's achievements not commented on is the enormous transformation and expansion of the Welfare State system. The attempt being made at present in Britain to cut back on welfare spending is an attempt to get back to the austerity welfare system as it was before Thatcher got her hands on it.

The Welfare system projected by Beveridge during the 2nd World War, and implemented by a Labour Government after it, provided for the upkeep of the unemployed on a minimal standard in a Poor Law atmosphere intended to humiliate and deter. It was thought that anything more humane would undermine labour discipline. The book setting out means-tested entitlements to what was then called National Assistance was a State secret. Applicants for relief did not know what they were entitled to, nor, for the most part, did the workers in the Spartan National Assistance Offices. Certain minimal payments became known by the front-line office staff. Everything else was referred to consultation by the hierarchy behind the scenes. And payments, however small, were conditional on regular 'home visits' by a kind of policing staff.

Thatcher brushed all of that aside. She published the book of entitlements. People became aware that they were entitled to all sorts of things they had never thought of. Things that had been treated as luxuries became necessities. Payments in addition to the basic Unemployment Insurance became routine. And the policing of the system was cut down drastically.

Thatcher did this by appointing a Socialist, Reg Prentice, as her Minister for Labour and apparently giving him a free hand.

Prentice, an old-fashioned Labour MP in East London, was de-selected when mindless revolutionary socialists got control of his Constituency organisation. He stood as an Independent and held the seat. And Thatcher gave him the Ministry of Labour to run.

The present Tory Government declares

that for many unemployment became an acceptable way of life. It was Thatcher who came close to making it so. At a certain point during her administration the managers of Labour Exchanges were instructed to interview their customers—and try to sort out those who really wanted to get back to work from those who were only making a decent pretence that they did, and to help the former and let the latter be.

Thatcher is credited with having broken the Trade Union movement as a major participant in the political life of the state by her treatment of the last great Miners' Strike. But that was really Arthur Scargill's achievement. He took over the leadership of the National Union of Miners from Joe Gormley and tried to use it as a revolutionary instrument. Gormley was an old-fashioned Labour socialist who was skilled in Trade Union affairs and knew the possibilities and limitations of Trade Union activity. He prepared the ground for strikes, ended them with advantageous compromises, and enhanced the presence of the Union in national political life.

Scargill, who had little experience in negotiations, launched a strike without preparation, either within the Union or with relation to the economy. And, urged on by the Communist Party (of which he was not a member), he refused to ballot the members, and he refused an advantageous compromise when it was on offer. He insisted on carrying on to the bitter end, mobilising all the instincts of class solidarity in support of an "all or nothing" conflict, leaving the Union, its industry, and the general Labour movement all weakened and demoralised at the end. With an enemy like that she couldn't lose.

And Scargill, the leader who didn't know how to win, is now suing the remnant of the Union which he wrecked because it wants to discontinue paying for a luxury flat in the Barbican for him.

A couple of the obituarists half-acknowledged that she lost her war with the IRA. This was a sort of reversal of her conflict with Scargill. She might have defused the Hunger Strike situation by some tangible concession when Britain Hughes called off the first Strike. She preferred to claim victory and suggest that the Provos had deceived themselves into believing that they had been promised something. (Ed Moloney *et al* continue to say that there had been no such promise.) This only brought her up against the inflexible will of Bobby Sands, and his wily accomplice, Gerry Adams, and the

transfer of the momentum of the War into politics.

Anglophile Commonwealth man, Garret FitzGerald, was horrified. He had never stopped for a minute to ask himself what Northern Ireland was, and how it was that a war could be fought within it. Whether one thought it good or evil, the War was an amazing fact that should have been thought about. Fitz Gerald gave no thought to how it was possible. He had only one fixed idea—how to keep the community that supported the War voting for the SDLP that condemned it. He made suggestions to Thatcher about changes that would help the SDLP. She said *Out, Out, Out!* The Anglophile element of the 'Constitutional nationalist' Establishment in Dublin was horrified. The bumbling FitzGerald was their ideal of a nice man and she had slapped him in the face. It wouldn't do! They wouldn't stand for it! Something too awful to contemplate would happen if she didn't change her mind.

So she changed her mind. In the 1985 Agreement she gave Dublin a consultative role in the governing of the North. A joint Dublin/Belfast Secretariat was set up in Belfast. It had no power but it drove the Unionists crazy thinking about it. It was like a dart that the picador inserts in the neck of the bull that might be doing no real damage to the bull but that drives him into a frenzy in his efforts to shake it off.

This concession naturally did not lead to a decline in the Provos. Nominally it was a concession to the Dublin Government and the SDLP, so that they might claim to be achieving by negotiation part of the aims he shared with the Provos. But everybody knew that it was the War that caused the concession.

A strange thing happened in connection with this turn of events. FitzGerald, the lifelong Commonwealth man, became

### WHAT'S LEFT

Once more an exercise in Englishness,  
marching soldiers, gun-carriage for the dead,  
(Imperial sister on her bridal bed)  
in England the wrong protest made them less,  
no culture 'cept Chopin's Funeral March,  
the perennial patriots line the route,  
white England's day with no racial impute,  
bayonets, bibles, bishops overarch,  
you cannot tell them not to celebrate,  
were Attlee and Bevin England-mute,  
did not colonial boots trod till late  
as they set up the NHS en route,  
forcing through the welfare state did not brake  
those future *peace missions* with bloody shoots.

Wilson John Haire  
19th April, 2013

increasingly nationalist in outlook from this point on.

This journal had been arguing for many years that the only way to bring about 'normal' politics in the North was to bring it within the political normality of the state. We had been making this case to the Labour Party for ten years, with little result. In 1985, with the Unionists reeling in shock from the impact of the Agreement, we made the case to the Tory Party where it met with an immediate response. People close to Thatcher saw that the exclusion of the North from British political life made nonsense of her statement that Belfast was as British as Finchley. This was put to her but she closed her mind to it. However the issue remained alive in the Tory Party for a couple of years. At one point Nicholas Scott, Under-Secretary at the time and Secretary of State soon after, tried to stop discussion with an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, but it did no more than evade the issue.

That campaign ended in failure in 1990, but in the course of failing it generated a lot of discussion in all quarters of Britain and Northern Ireland, and demonstrated the extent to which Northern Ireland is not British, and the determination at Westmin-

ster that it will not become British. And that means, of course, that it must become something else.

The assertion that it is as British as Finchley and the decisive action taken to prevent it from becoming so happened under Thatcher.

Olivia O'Leary (a British/Irish journalist) asks in the *Irish Independent*:

"How could you agree with anyone who said there was no such thing as society, only an economy?"

What we recall Thatcher as saying is that there was only individuals and their families. And then she put the skids under the family. It was in her time that we first heard it said that the natural unit of society was the single-person household.

She acted to bring about the single-person household as the norm. But in doing so she only facilitated a well-established tendency in British society to dissolve itself into atomised components of the state.

She also restored war as the normal activity of the state when that was in danger of being forgotten. Her heir, Tony Blair, defined Britain as a "*war-fighting state*".

## That Rising Sun!

The first thing I was asked as a teenager at my first meeting of the *Young Worker's League* in Belfast was: had I read *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* which was written by Robert Noonan, a Dubliner living in Hastings, England. He wrote under the nom-de-plume Robert Tressell. He was a house painter who advocated a socialist society. The book is based on house which he and his workmates were refurbishing.

I had already been reading but it was mostly war memoirs from WW2 and the survivor stories from the Concentration Camps. The War had just ended four years previously. I was loaned a copy of the book there and then when I said I had never heard of it. This copy ends in despair and suicide. The original copy was said to be 1,600 pages handwritten, which he completed in 1910. Noonan died of tuberculosis in 1911. His work had been rejected by three publishers and he thought of burning it but his daughter saved it and it was published in 1914 in an abridged form and in an even more abridged form in 1918—90,000 words from the original 250,000 words: with much of the socialist

ideology removed.

The copy I read would have been an abridged edition but it still retained its Marxist flavour. The book was also published in Canada and the USA in 1914, the Soviet Union in 1920 and in Germany in 1925.

In 1955, what was said to be the original manuscript was published by Lawrence and Wishart. They claimed to have reinstated Noonan's original ending which wasn't one of despair and suicide but quite a sunny one. It reminded me of a banner which the CPGB (Communist Party of Great Britain) once carried in demonstrations. It was of workers holding hammers and sickles and advancing into a rising sun, the rising sun of socialism. The world was of course one third red at that time and social democracy reigned in England. (but don't mention the colonies). I was highly suspicious of the new unabridged edition and I was especially suspicious of the new ending. I was even more suspicious when it was reported that Noonan's manuscript had been found in a basement in Bayswater, London.

Lawrence and Wishart was the party's publisher.

They still survive today, calling themselves an independent radical publisher, and are also under the name of Central Books, a once Party outlet for the selling of books of the Left. To paraphrase Gerry Adams—'They never went away, you know.' That is, the spirit of the CPGB, which still lives in the body of Lawrence and Wishart, though the physical demise of the party took place in 1991. When you see the work of Eric Hobsbawm still on sale, then you know they are in the land that time forgot. (To quote an old film title.)

Culture was a very strong element also in the CPNI (Communist Party of Northern Ireland) and its youth wing the YWL (Young Worker's League).

The emphasis was on good literature, classical music, theatre, and good film. The Lagan Film Unit was set up by the CPNI and films were imported from Eastern Europe. Most of them were extremely good, like the Hungarian *Kuski* about post-War Hungary and its roaming gangs of orphaned feral children who murdered on a daily basis. For a time you could ignore what you were living under in N.I., with our contacts with radical Iranian and Sudanese students who were studying at Queen's University and with two lecturers who were members of the French Communist Party.

Life was lived in those optimistic days around the Party bookshop in Church Lane, Belfast. Some of us as teenagers got the idea of writing something and so we did for the World Federation of Democratic Youth magazine: short stories about our industrial workplaces would be translated into dozens of languages. Somehow we had to end on a sunny note of optimism, no matter how grim our workplace. This would never lead to the development of the would-be writer. Most gave up their ambitions. At 17 and 18 you might want to see your workplace blown up or set on fire and the bodies of the supervising staff thrown in the flames. But don't try to express that, though it would be a passing phase, to be grown out of.

In the London of 1954 most workers were badly paid, food was poor, while accommodation was pretty rough and hard to find. At that time there was a certain amount of glamour in being in the CPGB and the YCL. (Young Communist League.) Communist Embassies held a Saturday night dance in which you got to meet real

communists from real communist countries and you sometimes went home with a bag of literature depicting that Embassy's country. Chinese literature was the most emotional and violent, written extremely well, though again all problems were overcome at the end and the sun rose to shine for a better future.

During the Kenyan colonial period I was horrified about what Britain was doing to the Gikuya tribes people, who were leading the struggle for independence. They were being hanged in Britain's Hola Camp in public as a method of traumatising the prisoners. Staid English women were being recruited in Britain as camp warders. They carried walking sticks to beat the women prisoners. I wrote what I felt was an epic poem on the situation and sent it to the YWL paper *Challenge*. After a time I met with Professor Arnold Kettle, head of a Party Cultural Committee, who said I was a gloomy and not very optimistic young man. He said at least give us some resolution at the end. I interpreted this as to mean: '*Give me the sun, the rising sun of optimism.*' I could see no optimism in the Kenyan situation and as far as I know the sun has never risen there to this very day. I didn't alter the poem. In fact I tore it up. It wasn't going to be published anywhere in colonist Britain.

I began to wonder if I had irked this man on the subject of British colonialism. I once asked another party official *intellectual* about the future of the colonies, should Britain turn communist. Would the colonies be let go? No, he said, we'll hold on to them and radicalise them, much like the Soviet Union turned the Tsarist colonies into independent republics. But it would be done through peace and socialism. I could only think this might mean yet another blood bath. English communists were hostile to Catholic Ireland and I thought that they could call for a reconquering of that part of Ireland that had achieved independence.

But I soldiered on and wrote yet another poem about the execution of the Rosenbergs. This time I didn't send it to any of the Party publications. I couldn't find a sun anywhere as an end attachment.

In the Party with its emphasis on culture there were always those who wanted to write, and they were encouraged to do so but had to be prepared to take plenty of advice.

Len Doherty fell into that category. Born in Glasgow about 1929, the family

moved to Yorkshire when he was 14 years old. The young Len became a miner at the Thurcroft pit. His interest in literature attracted him towards the Party's Yorkshire District Cultural Committee. Soon after Len found himself being mentored by the same Professor Arnold Kettle. This resulted in his novel of a coal miner's life and the existence of the CP as a powerful influence in the pits being published in 1955 by Lawrence and Wishart. It was mostly read by the party faithful and sections of the miner community—who were said to be not too pleased about the Party's prominence in the novel.

I found myself, as a militant Trade Unionist in the building industry, that the work force will go along with you when you are acquiring better conditions and pay rises for them but that doesn't mean they will ever join the Party or even be *fellow travellers*. On those occasions when there was a *coup d'état* by a more right-wing setup, you were sacrificed and had to go down the road and on to a black list set up by *Moral Rearmament* and the employers.

A second novel followed in 1957 called *The Man Beneath*. Professor Kettle and Lawrence and Wishart were trying to develop Socialist Realism in the novel and other arts. I don't suppose you could blame them for that: it was a world-wide trend at the time. Then they decided to pull the plug on a venture the public weren't interested in. Socialist Realism was the norm in the communist countries and the public had no choice.

Doherty wrote a third novel called *The Good Lion*. This time it was published by MacGibbon and Kee. This time it was said to be a favourite read in Sheffield and with the mining communities. It concerned life in a steel mill and the domestic problems of some of its workers.

Doherty then got a job as a journalist on Sheffield's *The Star* and was said to have done well. In 1983 he committed suicide. There was no sunny ending to his life. A theme in his *A Miner's Son* was about a miner who finds his life too much in the pits and thinks of suicide. A Party organiser helps to change his mind. Sheffield today commemorates Len Doherty.

Once upon a time you could call Sheffield the beating heart of socialist England. A number of us in the YWL went there to train as cadres. Picasso thought it worth his while to go there in 1950 to attend the *Second World Peace*



*Congress*. There is famous photo of him there with Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury, nicknamed the Red Dean of Canterbury—the only canon that can't be fired. All-in-all an exciting time.

It was possible to be at a social when Paul Robeson, the black bass singer and dubbed the most perfect human musical instrument on earth, would fly in, before his passport was taken by the US Government. It was possible to send a play to John Howard Lawson, the blacklisted Hollywood screenwriter, and get a reply. Even when he was doing his year in prison during the McCarthy period for communist activities. His book: *Theory and Technique of Playwriting* was hard going in its demands for the young writer to adopt Socialist Realism while he was being generous with George Bernard Shaw, calling him: "*The most important English-speaking dramatist of the period following Ibsen.*" He was certainly knowledgeable about European theatre of the 18th Century, was conversant with Kant, with Diderot and Carlo Goldoni, with Moliere and Goethe and Schiller. It is still interesting stuff if you read it carefully. Fine for these writers to fully express themselves but not for you who was expected to don the straightjacket of Socialist Realism.

No doubt the revolutionary communist countries needed that forced form of expression as Cuba today needs a one-party state as a way of keeping out the USA. Straightjackets were being offered by Howard Fast, the one-time American leftist writer, or Ralph Fox in his book *The Novel And The People*. Fox was one of the founders of the CPGB after he had visited the Soviet Union in 1920. He was to die in the Battle of Lopera for the International Brigade in December 1936. I read some of his work previous to him becoming a communist and I felt it was superior to his later work. His death was no doubt a tragic loss to the literary world and the CPGB, so I found it hard to dismiss his theories on the novel. But I did.

Not being able to satisfactorily develop literary adherents to Socialist Realism—or at least developing one like Len Doherty, but finding no reading public—the search began for some *truisms* in the bourgeois world of literature. Rudyard Kipling's work came in for examination by the various Party cultural committees. His poem (or ballad) *Tommy* seemed to fit the bill—a semi-illiterate soldier of the lower ranks lambasts the English public for his being treated badly after he had fought for them

and his country. The Party always had his idea that there were dissatisfied elements within the armed forces. At that time in the early 1950s the youth of the YWL were being told, ordered even, to do their two-year National Service. The Party decided a conscript army was much more volatile than a professional one. It didn't quite work out like that, for most of the English youth did their time with relish and boasted about it later. The more obstreperous Scots were a different matter, nevertheless they heeded Party dictates. One Glasgow YCL branch had a number of its members sent to the Korean War in 1950 after only six weeks training where they died at the hands of the Chinese People's Army.

Kipling I couldn't agree with. He was England speaking to England. He was allowed some criticism within English boundaries. Kipling speaks to no one but England.

So we waded through 19th Century and 20th Century literature in search of nuggets of truth which author had buried under a foot of dross. We simply read too much into every book, every film we watched, every theatre we visited. Samuel Butler's *The Way Of All Flesh* yielded one line about a visit to a farm labourer's cottage and the glimpse the author gets of the inside of it and the impression he gets of the anguished faces of the farm labourer's family—something that caused the French Revolution.

A single line was sufficient for the adoration of the author. The modern author of the period was also examined. Graham Greene was out. Thoroughly decadent, especially his *Brighton Rock*. I think the real reason was that he had been a member of the CPGB during the 1930s and was now considered a renegade. I read him anyway and found something interesting about his novel *The Ugly American*. Their lack of forgiveness made them miss many nuggets of truth and wisdom in his work. You just ignored the convert Catholic enthusiasm part of him.

One favourite quote from George Bernard Shaw heard in these cultural committees was on his visit to the Soviet Union when he said: "*I have seen the future and it works.*" Sean O'Casey was already a member of the CPGB so he wasn't going to be as important as say a suspected *fellow traveller* who might come over and whom they were flattering in the *Daily Worker*, later *The Morning Star*. The work of James Joyce wasn't considered to have any nuggets suggesting he

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

*Bloomsday* got attention in the national press, which was unusual as Unity was beyond the pale with its left-wing agenda. That version of Joyce made the future career of a number of actors. One in particular got a place in university in Prague to study theatre, another become a household name, and the Belfast man, Allan McClelland, got twelve and a half thousand pounds for his script back in 1962 which later became a film.

Finding no Irish literature that could yield hidden nuggets of truism that could have fitted Party policy, the cultural committee decided there was no literature in Ireland. So it was back trawling the British literary waters. *The Heart Of Midlothian* did turn up something about *common folk* coming out at times of crisis in a revolutionary fashion and when something had been achieved disappearing again into anonymity. This attitude now makes me think of the pits being closed down in England, Scotland and Wales and coal being imported from Poland and China. The CPGB and their *intellectuals* turned people like Len Doherty towards Socialist Realism and when the British public rejected it they abandoned him while at the same time going on with their university careers and their sinecures from the Soviet Union, China and Eastern Europe.

This way of looking at literature and the arts was lectured time and time again in Marx House in Holborn until it became the thinking of the average Party member. It took you out of your isolation I suppose. Later, when the communist movement disintegrated, this fantasy ceased: former Party members had to face cold reality. The excitement had gone out of life. The *People* were not a hostage to a reactionary Government, they in fact voted for that Government. Most of the arts were on the side of the Establishment. They were not sending out secretive message in their work while remaining covert until the sun rose, the sun of socialism and peace. How dull life became in the aftermath, for a time.

**Wilson John Haire**

26 April 2013

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## ITALY

Italy's national politics has been a joke for some time. Her saving grace is that she is fortunate to have strong, competent local government. Perhaps Italy does not need her national politics to be purposeful, but Europe is the poorer for it.

From de Gasperi to Andreotti, Italy has made a great contribution to post-War European politics, but no more it seems, even if a very capable Italian is the current head of the European Central Bank.

In the first Election after the War there was a stalemate between the Italian Communist Party and the Christian Democrats. The CIA used Italian immigrants in the US—some of dubious reputation—to tip the balance in favour of the Christian Democrats. There followed decades of Christian Democratic-dominated government, with the permanent exclusion of the large Italian Communist Party from national political power.

The Italian CP recognised that it could never smash the bourgeoisie and was prepared to make a "*historic compromise*" in the 1970s. The Christian Democratic leadership, on the other hand, was willing to accept that a large section of the Italian electorate could not be permanently excluded from national state power.

The development was subverted in 1978 by the Red Brigades' assassination of Aldo Moro, who had been a Christian Democrat Prime Minister. The Long Fellow always wondered in whose interests the Red Brigades were acting: certainly not the Italian working class.

It is also worth noting that both the Americans and Soviets were against the policy of "*historic compromise*". The Americans feared Communist participation in Government would undermine Italy's membership of NATO. The Soviets thought that the accommodation with bourgeois politics would weaken their influence over the Italian Communist Party.

The post-War character of Italian politics began to unravel following the failure of the "*historic compromise*" development and continued to do so with the implosion of the Soviet bloc when the Communist pillar of the Italian post-War political structure collapsed. This did not lead to an increase in the political power

of the Christian Democrats, but the opposite. An incoherent populism filled the vacuum, which undermined Italy's largest party.

The results of the most recent Election are further evidence of Italian political decline.

## THE LOWRY TAPE

The *Sunday Independent's* campaign against Denis O'Brien continues. The publication of the Lowry tape is the latest attempt to add fuel to the fire. But the acres of newsprint devoted to it cannot conceal that the *Sindo's* story is a damp squib. As pointed out in last month's column, the content of the tape, if anything, exonerates O'Brien in relation to the Doncaster investment (Lowry had no involvement in this).

In recent weeks the newspaper has noticed with mounting irritation that nobody else seems to be interested in the story. Could it be that Denis O'Brien has more influence over media outlets in which he does not have a controlling interest (e.g. RTE), than those in which he does (e.g. the *Sunday Independent*)?! ... Or is there another more logical explanation?

There are two problems with the tape story: firstly there is nothing of substance in the content; secondly, they are of dubious provenance.

The tapes suggest that Lowry wished to hide a £250k payment. That is not exactly earth-shattering in its implications. The tape does not establish a link between Lowry and O'Brien. Indeed the opposite is the case.

The person who made the tape—Kevin Phelan—took advantage of his residency in Northern Ireland to avoid lawyers from O'Brien or Lowry cross-examining him in the Moriarty Tribunal's proceedings. Apparently, the reason why RTE did not run with the story was that Phelan refused to be interviewed by the broadcaster.

Phelan is not releasing all recordings that he has made, only extracts from those that serve his interests. A media outlet that publicises these partial extracts is allowing itself to be manipulated.

## A FREE PRESS

What is a "*free press*"? Does it mean that journalists should be allowed to write anything about anyone, regardless of the truth and that any attempt to curtail such 'freedom' is undesirable? That is the question that arises from Michael Smith's long article on Denis O'Brien (*Village*, April—May, 2013).

Smith accuses O'Brien of having a "*chilling effect*" on the media. He goes on

to say that Sam Smyth cannot write about O'Brien because he is "*under legal siege from you-know-who*". Elaine Byrne, "*a heroine of free speech*", is quoted as saying: "*the Sword of Damocles has a marginalising effect on your career*". A picture of Eamon Dunphy is shown with his mouth taped.

The article takes it for granted that an injustice has been perpetrated. How could a "*heroine of free speech*" be wrong! And yet it accepts that O'Brien was vindicated in his recent successful case against the *Daily Mail* in which he received 150,000 euro. Why does Smith think O'Brien was justified in suing the *Daily Mail*, but not justified in suing Elaine Byrne and Sam Smyth?

Apparently the case against the Mail was: "*Less chilling because it didn't really centre on denying the proceedings of a Tribunal...*"

The proceedings of the Tribunal must be deemed to be sacrosanct?!

There is no doubt that the Tribunals have extended journalistic "*freedom*" (or irresponsibility). The Tribunals cannot be sued for adverse findings made against an individual. The corollary of this is that journalists cannot be sued for quoting from Tribunal findings. The key question is: can journalists assert a Tribunal finding as a fact (without quoting from the Tribunal) rather than a mere opinion of the judge.

This is the area that editor Michael Smith wishes to probe. For example, on page 44 he says:

"The Tribunal, which O'Brien informed *Village* was, despite being presided over by a judge, not 'judicial'; also found that O'Brien made two payments to Lowry, in 1996 and 1999, totalling approximately £500,000, and supported a loan of stg£420,000 given to Lowry in 1999. In his 2,348 page report, Judge Michael Moriarty found that the payments from O'Brien were 'demonstrably referable to the acts and conduct of Mr Lowry' during the licence process."

It is clear from the above that the article is quoting from the Tribunal. However, on page 41 he has the same quote in a bold print caption under a picture of a gagged Eamon Dunphy. But this time the following part is left out:

"The Tribunal, which O'Brien informed *Village* was, despite being presided over by a judge, not 'judicial'; also found that..."

The effect of leaving out this part of the first sentence is to give the false impression that it is a statement of fact rather than a Judge's opinion.



Media reports suggest that Fiona Muldoon, the Central Bank's current Director of Credit Institutions and Insurance Supervision, is likely to succeed Matthew Elderfield as Financial Regulator. Muldoon is certainly not shy about giving the banks a well deserved, public kicking. One of the most remarkable aspects of our banking crisis was the complete absence of credit control by our lending institutions: a function that even a small business neglects at its peril. It is only in the last 2 years that the credit control function has begun to be adequately resourced to cope with the massive amount of debt that is outstanding. And for the most part the banks are still playing 'catch up'.

Her speech of 11th April was a thoughtful exposition of the current state of play. Progress has been made in coming to grips with the crisis, but it has been painfully slow. There is still plenty of work to be done on mortgage arrears and outstanding Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) debt. There remains a question mark over the adequacy of the banks' provisions against bad debts.

Although it wasn't in her prepared script, her comment that a provision of 50% of the total SME debt of 50 billion euro owed to domestic banks might need to be made grabbed the media headlines. The Long Fellow can only hope that she is being unduly pessimistic. If there is an existing provision of 30% or 15 billion euro, this will leave a massive hole amounting to 10 billion in this sector alone. In such circumstances another bail-out of the banks cannot be ruled out.

The level of potential bad debts in the SME sector suggests that the criticism by Employer organisations of the banks' failure to extend credit is wide of the mark. Muldoon's gloomy prognosis suggests that, on the contrary, the banks have been extending too much credit to SMEs!

Admittedly, the above analysis is a little simplistic. On the question of debt, Muldoon remarks that all roads lead to property. During the Celtic Tiger era business owners were given more credit than they actually needed. The surplus was invested in property. Following the collapse of the property market, funds generated from viable businesses were and are being used to pay back property-related debt. The leaking of funds to repay property loans has undermined those businesses.

In recent years there have been calls to break the link between sovereign and banking debt. There is also a need to break the connection between property debt and debt incurred for the purposes of productive investment.

## The *Irish Bulletin* And The Academy

*History Ireland*, a pop-history magazine sponsored by the academy, established and edited by a former revolutionary socialist, carried a comment in its March/April issue on the Aubane publication of the first volume of the *Irish Bulletin*. It is neither a review nor a criticism of the Bulletin. It is almost entirely about a 20 page Introduction written by me to the almost 500 pages of the *Bulletin*. The result was to underplay the insight into the Independence movement given by the faithful reproduction of this rare journal, the ambitious nature of the scheme to reproduce the whole run of the *Irish Bulletin*, and the mammoth effort made by the Aubane Historical Society in indexing the work.

In the Introduction, to show how the *Bulletin* was treated with ignorant contempt, I quoted from Roy Foster's *Modern Ireland* and from a biography of Erskine Childers by a Leonard Piper. *History Ireland* (HI) concedes that Piper's comment was ignorant. But Piper was "not an academic". It says nothing about Foster's ignorant comment, though it has undoubtedly been read by a hundred times as many people as Piper's. Foster is not only an academic—whose credentials are unchallenged even though his Professorship was bought for him by a wealthy capitalist who gave a vast sum of money to a University—but a person who has exerted considerable influence on the careerist side of things in academia. So, with regard to Foster's ignorant comment, HI observes the rule that silence is golden, and treats the unfortunate Piper as his whipping-boy.

And, while Piper may not be an academic, I venture to doubt that his attitude was not influenced by the prevailing attitude in academia.

HI chooses to say nothing about the content of the *Bulletin*. Safety first! And makes only one quibbling criticism of Aubane's reproduction of it:

"(some surnames, such as 'Porsunan' [p28] look suspicious) and only occasionally are there gaps marked by 'words illegible'. It might have been better to place the editorial notes (signed J.L.) in footnotes or bold face rather than in brackets within the text."

If the name in the original is not Porsunan, what is it? They are the academics, the paid experts.

As to the way of indicating that we found some words illegible—fashions change. It might be that the way we did it is not the current academic fashion. If we had been producing the book for the academic market—in the foolish expectation of its being admitted to that market—I suppose we would have looked up the current fashion. But we did not produce it for the academic market. We produced it because academia—with its vast resources—had not produced it.

The expert discovered one mistake. On page 127 Alderman T. Kelly is wrongly identified as Sean T. O'Kelly, a piece of "simple ignorance curable by consulting the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*".

In my note on Lawrence Ginnell, the originator of what became the *Bulletin*, I remarked that: "He was the only Irish MP who supported women's suffrage at Westminster". I said this—

"even though William O'Brien (on whom Clifford has written in the past) and two associates voted for suffrage in the very same divisions".

Now, where *did* I get the notion that only Ginnell had voted for it? Why, in the *Dictionary Of Irish Biography*! I wrote the piece on Ginnell from memory and from notes I had made over the years. Then I did a quick check to make sure I had got nothing drastically wrong by looking up the DIB. It told me that: "Ginnell was the only Irish MP to support the women's movement actively".

*History Ireland* tells us that the author of its review, Patrick Maume, "is an editorial assistant" with DIB. The present tense suggests either that a second edition is being prepared, or that there will be a continuation volume. So here is something for him to correct. And he might also take a look at the entry on William O'Brien, which did not tell me that he had voted for women's suffrage.

I suppose I should have known better than to consult the DIB, because of Maume's entry on D.D. Sheehan, which records one side of a dispute in the Sheehan family as fact, and does not mention that

in the end Sheehan's appeals for compensation as a Loyalist refugee from Cork were not found to be credible by the British Tribunal in the mid-1920s.

Further on the DIB: in my note on Kathleen McKenna, who did the physical production of the *Bulletin*, under very difficult conditions—a fact which I appreciated, as somebody who has never been in the position to pay to get such things done—I said that she was somebody whom the Royal Irish Academy and Cambridge University did not consider worth a mention in the DIB. HI concedes that this was "*an unfortunate omission*".

But the concession is made in an interesting way:

"Clifford assumes that academic historians are omniscient beings who already know everything there is to be known about the historical record and possess unlimited resources enabling them to write it up as they please; hence if (for example) the DIB does not include an entry on Kathleen Napoli McKenna (an unfortunate omission), this was not inadvertence or misjudgment but a deliberate attempt to write her out of history..."

When this is unravelled it does not say that the omission was simple oversight. It suggests that it was due to "*inadvertence or misjudgment*". Inadvertent omission would mean it was not done on purpose. Omission by misjudgment would mean it was done on purpose. It would mean that the judgment that she should be omitted had to be admitted to be ill-founded when an issue was made of it. And the difference between this and attempting "*to write her out of history*", in the compiling of a work such as the DIB aspires to be, escapes me.

About thirty years ago I had occasion to go to the Royal Irish Academy to look at a letter it held. Being entirely without academic credentials, I had to make a fuss to be let in. It was also necessary to threaten a row to get into the Trinity College Library, even though it remains a British Copyright Library (entitling it to free copies of all books published in the UK). The first library I was ever in was the Reading Room of the British Museum. I was straight out of the Irish countryside but got instant access to it by asking. The experience gave me very low tolerance of the coterie libraries in Dublin. Anyway, I made a fuss and the RIC had to let me in and let me see what I wanted. And I happened to meet somebody who was working on the DIB, which was not published until twenty years later. So it wasn't a rushed job. There was plenty of

time to mull things over again and again, deciding which names should be immortalised and which should not. Simple oversight of Kathleen McKenna strikes me as incredible in such circumstances. HI must have felt likewise. Hence its "*inadvertence or misjudgment*".

HI attributes to me the view that "*Academic historians of Ireland are engaged in a neo-colonial conspiracy to delegitimise the War of Independence and the nationalist project as a whole*", and that some of them are "*conscious operatives of British intelligence*". I don't know where it gets that idea. I have described it as having been done in the open. The one contemporary academic Irish historian for whom I had some regard forty years ago, Raymond Crotty, lecturer in Statistics in Trinity College, made a declaration of bankruptcy of both intellect and will on behalf of Irish academia in an article in the *London Times* (reprinted in *Irish Political Review* in February 2012). He appealed to British authority to do the thinking of the Irish for them again. It had already begun to do so, but must have been encouraged by Crotty's appeal to redouble its efforts. Crotty in return founded the Irish Sovereignty Movement, which amounted in practice to a seconding of the British campaign against the European Union.

Academic history-writing has, for a generation, been done under obvious British influence. And it has often been done by foreigners, as if the Irish Universities weren't even up to writing according to the British pattern themselves. There has been nothing furtive or conspiratorial about it. The Irish academics traipse openly to Cambridge or Oxford in order to be shown what to do.

As to "*operatives of British intelligence*": two of the major influences made no secret of the fact that they had been. Nicholas Mansergh, hailed by a recent Professor of History at Cork as the greatest Irish historian of the century, ran a section of the British Department of Information during the 2nd World War, conducted a subliminal campaign against Irish neutrality, and came to Dublin at the height of the War to deliver a series of propaganda lectures at the Queen Alexandra College about the First World War. And the Professor of History at the National University in Dublin for a long generation came straight to it from British Intelligence.

The following is also attributed to me:

"that Britain has historically been a

purely destructive force and the First World War was entirely caused by a deliberate British conspiracy to destroy its socially progressive German rival, a view held at the time by Arthur Griffith and many Germans"

—but surely by some others too?!

I do not recall quoting Griffith about the War, but I may have done so forty odd years ago. The writers I have quoted within living memory in support of the view that British diplomacy brought about the World War have been James Connolly, and Roger Casement—who in his career as a British diplomat saw where British diplomacy was heading. And I have reprinted a book by Charles James O'Donnell to the same effect. O'Donnell went into the British civil service in India, and felt he was doing good in the world until Curzon became Viceroy and adopted a sectarian policy, setting Muslim against Hindu. O'Donnell then resigned his position, returned to Britain, stood for Parliament, won a seat, and tried to warn the British public about what was being done in its name in India. The British public paid no heed. But O'Donnell was there near the centre of things while war was being prepared.

I also quoted some American writers who, in 1914-16, were of the opinion that the reason why Britain brought about the World War was that Germany was helping the Ottoman Empire to modernise its infrastructure and defences, thus obstructing the British plan to carry out the next logical expansion of the Empire—from India, through Persia, across Arabia, to Egypt.

In all that I have written on the subject for a number of decades I have distinguished between the European War and the World War, as I have distinguished between Partition and Northern Ireland. The assassination at Sarajevo did not begin a World War any more than the decision to hold Six Counties within the British state set up the apparatus of Northern Ireland. The authoritative mind in Ireland—the mind encountered in political and academic authority—will not entertain that distinction. It is a distinction which British authority does not wish to be made. It is not in the British interest to make it. And I assume that is why authority in Ireland does not make it, even though it appears to me to be very much in the Irish interest to make it.

The idea that Britain entered the European War and made it into a World War is an observation of obvious fact

rather than an argument. It can be countered only by a determined silence. Argument requiring complicated analysis only arises on the question of whether Britain, through its diplomatic activity in the ten or fifteen years before 1914 (during which it changed France and Russia from enemies to allies) was aiming at bringing about a European War which it might avail of to take its next step in the conquest of the world.

HI cannot discuss such things. But in its monopoly niche as a protectorate of the academic Establishment it can safely toss out the remark that I take the view of the War held by Griffith and many Germans.

I don't think it is possible for anybody to look at what Connolly wrote from September 1914 onwards and not know that he was a strong supporter of Germany in the War—and that the ground of his support was not the "enemy's enemy" one. He argued his support for Germany on socialist grounds.

As to "many Germans". Many of them did not support the German war effort. The revolutionary socialists didn't—the ones who made such a mess of the revolution when it came in 1918-19. Connolly took no heed of them in the *Workers' Republic*. The Germans he took notice of were the Right Social Democrats who supported the German war effort.

The fact of Connolly's alignment with Germany in the War is suppressed in the entry on him in the *British Dictionary Of National Biography*, written by Ruth Dudley Edwards. (He was omitted altogether from the DNB for about 60 years. He was then included in a *Missing Persons* volume in the 1990s, and is included in the 2nd edition of the whole, published about ten years ago.) And his alignment with Germany in the War is, of course, not mentioned in the *Dictionary Of Irish Biography*.

My Introduction to the *Bulletin* is criticised for saying that it "*should be read as the simple plain truth*". I don't know where I said that. I did little more than say who the people were who produced it. Its content is an account, day by day, of what Britain was doing in Ireland in its attempt to govern the country against the will of the people after losing the Election. (I know that this way of putting it is intensely irritating to the revisionist mind, but I just can't see how it is inaccurate.)

If its factual reporting was false, why did the British administration, with the

vast resources at its disposal, not expose the falsehoods? And why does HI, as an organ of the academic Establishment which has been dismissive of the *Bulletin*, not expose the falsehoods now?

I know that HI has something more profound in mind than factual truth and falsehood. The sentence, of which I have quoted the first clause, continues after a semi-colon:

" ; any attempt to assess it as shaped to influence its intended audience of British liberals—for example, the 1919 issues, instead of defending IRA actions as legitimate warfare in defence of the Dail government, repeatedly suggest that attacks on Crown forces are staged by *agents provocateurs* to justify repression—is a continuation of British propaganda..."

If all of that means something, and you know what it is, you're a better man than I am.

The Introduction to the *Bulletin* says that the *Bulletin* made no pretence of standing impartially between the elected Government and the Imperial Government, and its object was to influence opinion abroad in favour of the elected Government.

The other criticism is that I say "*The War of independence was entirely a politically motivated conflict between states...*" I certainly described it as a conflict between an elected Government and an unelected Government. That gave the War its character. The "*entirely politically motivated*" phrase is an Aunt Sally. There are no homogeneous wholes in the real world in which each particle is identical with every other particle. I was working in a Creamery when homogenised milk was introduced and that did seem to be of a kind throughout. But in political affairs there is no homogeneity *per se*. There is a combination of particles for a purpose.

Joost Augusteijn went around asking War of Independence survivors why they fought. He was not impressed by their answers. He did not seek out survivors of the other War, in which people were mown down by the thousand, and ask them why they fought. Whatever the purpose of the British Sate was in launching that war on Germany and Turkey, it was treated as having bestowed its meaning on the individuals who were recruited for it.

Wars do not come about through decisions taken by large numbers of people coming to the conclusion individually that

they want to fight, and getting together and agreeing who it is that they want to fight. The decision for war is taken by a political body, which then persuades people to combine to fight it. Those who went off to fight in Flanders or Gallipoli were recruited by the militaristic jamboree with which strong States can usually overwhelm the minds of a large part of the populace with exciting noise.

Even Francis Ledwidge fell prey to the beat of the drum. Then, being an intellectual, he gave himself the individual purpose of being a Christian on Crusade to smite the heathen. But I have not seen it said that he enlisted for that purpose. And, in any case, he would never have got to Gallipoli as a Crusader if the British had not reversed their historic attitude to Turkey for the purpose of taking Imperial possession of the Middle East.

The reasons why people joined the Republican Volunteer Army were not as mindless as the reasons why they joined the British Army. There were no drum rolls and no shillings. Individual decisions were taken after reflection on the situation, very much more than is usually the case.

The situation was that they had voted to establish independent government and had to decide what to do when the British Parliament ignored the vote and authorised continuing British military government in Ireland.

What should the Irish have done then? Slunk home and forgotten it? The academic Establishment does not approve of what they actually did, and I do not see what else was possible.

Probing the motives of those who decided to fight in support of the Government that had been elected, while not mentioning the Election, and assuming that it had no bearing on the decision to fight, is unrealistic to the point of fantasy. It is what Augusteijn does in his extensive study of the period. The Election, which, *prima facie*, should be taken in the first instance as a major cause of subsequent conduct, is written out of the narrative as a cause worth mentioning.

So I hold the erroneous view that—

"The War of Independence was entirely a politically motivated conflict between states, with the Dail government legitimised by the 1918 election as the sole representative of the Irish people..."

But I'm sure I did not restrict the role of the Election to legitimation, but presented

it as a major factor in the *causation* of the War.

The academic elite do not seem to need a cause for the War. They follow the dogma of Professor Townshend (Peter Hart's Examiner) that "*political violence*" is just what the Irish do.

That's the English stereotype. Racial or cultural stereotypes have served the English State well. It has had to set some of them aside in recent years. But not the Irish one. It has got the Irish Universities writing Irish history in accordance with the stereotype—which as far as I know they used not to do until they were persuaded, against all reason, to feel responsible for the outcome of British government in Northern Ireland, and to feel guilty about it, and to seek absolution by doing penance in the form of writing false history.

As to the Dail being the "*sole representative of the Irish people*": it got three quarters of the Irish seats in the Election, and I believe that is not merely a majority but what is called a *plurality*.

HI comments:

"Any use of social history techniques to discuss why some fought and others did not, why fighting broke out in one place and not another, analysis of nationalism or unionism as conditions of diverse groups rather than state-driven monoliths, wilfully distracts attention from the central political issue—democracy versus imperialism..."

That is a view that it attributes to me.

In modern societies it is always the case, when armies are raised by volunteering, that some will fight and others won't.

The West's asleep, the West's asleep.  
Alas, and well may Erin weep  
When Connaught lies in slumber deep

Why did Munster bear the brunt of the War while Connacht took longer to become active? Not because Connacht changed its mind about what it had voted for. That was shown by subsequent elections held in the midst of the War.

Military tradition for Irish purposes had been well broken in Irish society by the Cromwellian and Williamite conquests and the system of subjugation based on them.

Why did it revive quicker in Munster in response to British treatment of the Election in Ireland? I have assumed that

it was because of what Munster, and particularly Cork, had been doing in the preceding generation. The Home Rule Party was broken in Cork and damaged in the neighbouring Counties in the 1910 Election by the All-For-Ireland League. The AFIL charged Redmondism with having made the Home Rule Party a Catholic sectarian Party, and with obstructing the abolition of landlordism in order to preserve grievance. It appealed to the Protestant landowners, who no longer stood in a position of necessary antagonism with the bulk of the people since the land was taken from them, with handsome compensation, to join as country gentlemen in the formation of a liberal national movement. Its slogan, scorned by the Home Rule Party, was *Conference, Conciliation and Consent*.

The AFIL had also attacked Redmond's attitude to the Ulster Protestants as driving the country towards Partition.

At the end of the Great War, because of what had happened during it, the AFIL dissolved and joined Sinn Fein. The Home Rulers did not contest a single Cork constituency in 1918. And, when Westminster treated the Irish Election with contempt, the Conciliators went to war.

The *prima facie* assumption must be that the fact that the region had been politically active, outside the demagogic routines of Redmondism, had a bearing on its conduct in 1918-1921.

That possibility is ruled out by academic authority. It does not suit their script of presenting Redmond as something he was not; treating the AFIL, when it is mentioned at all, as "*maverick*"; and finding the cause of the War in the Irish habit of faction-fighting and hunting the wren.

It is true I did not present "*analysis of nationalism or unionism*". It did not seem relevant to the period covered by that volume of the *Bulletin*. I have done it at length elsewhere, and no doubt will do so again. But where in academic magazines is there a discussion of them? I have never come across a discussion of the AFIL with relation to either Redmondism or Sinn Fein. And my analysis of Ulster Unionism as the expression of a national will, which I published in 1969 in an attempt to avert what followed, did not meet with even a whisper of support from academia.

As to "*social history techniques*", as applied by Augusteijn and others to very local affairs: they are not applied in the

context of the political situation created by the 1918 Election, to discover why one area responded to the British challenge to democracy more quickly than another. The Election is omitted from them. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that they are distractions set up against it.

**Brendan Clifford**

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## An Irish Anti-Fascist Volunteer and some other soldiers

At the outset of this series I pointed out that I knew of very few Irish volunteers in the British armed forces during the Second World War who had been primarily driven to enlist for definite anti-fascist reasons, as distinct from becoming radicalised and anti-fascist during the course of that War itself. The Cork Communist Republican and former Curragh Camp internee, Kevin Neville, who volunteered to serve in the RAF following Nazi Germany's invasion of the USSR, was certainly one such consistently anti-fascist exception that proved the rule. His close comrade-in-arms, Connie Green of Derry, who served as a British commando in Italy, may also have been. In any case, they both emerged from that War with a concept of anti-fascism that led them to become Saor Uladh volunteers and fire the first shots in a Republican Border Campaign, with their November 1955 attack on Roslea RUC Barracks, in which Green was killed in action and Neville wounded.

What of Robert Reuben Crivon? In *Dark Times, Decent Men—Stories of Irishmen in World War II* (2012) Neil Richardson writes:

"Irish Jews joined the British forces in order to help stop the Nazis... In 1939 he (Crivon) travelled to Britain and joined the British Army. By the following year he was a second-lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps. During the war, Robert was involved with Operation Ironclad—the Allied invasion of Vichy French-occupied Madagascar which took place on 5 May 1942—after which he served on the staff of the Eighth Army in North Africa when Montgomery took command in August that year." (p266).

In the *Irish Times* on 29th July 1950, writing *An Irishman's Diary* under his *nom-de-plume* of Nichevo, its Irish Unionist Editor, Bertie Smyllie, had suggested a shared British allegiance:

"I met a young Dublin man who is on the staff of the Council of Europe. He is an old boy of St. Andrew's, named Rueben (sic) Crivon, who did Classics in Trinity, only to find out afterwards that his real *metier* was Modern Languages... Joining up during the war, he was appointed to Military Intelligence, where his quick wit and knowledge of languages came in very useful. For a time afterwards he was Secretary to the Jewish Board of Deputies in London, worked for the British Institute in various parts of Europe, to find an

important niche at last at Strasbourg... Although by this time a thorough cosmopolitan, he retains a fairly rich Dublin accent. He is attached to the Council of Europe Secretariat officially as 'British', but, so far as I know, he is the only Irish citizen on the staff."

In the case of the Protestant RAF volunteer, Brian Inglis of Malahide, Co. Dublin, a shared British allegiance with Smyllie was most definitely involved, as recounted in his admirably frank autobiography *West Briton* (1962):

"It was necessary to think of getting some sort of work after coming down from Oxford in the summer of 1939... There simply were not enough good jobs to go round; for by this time the R.C.s were moving in, securing accounts that had been in Protestant hands for generations. War or peace, therefore, it was likely that my career would lie in England. And with the vague notion of getting a post in the newly-established British Council ... I went out in the summer of 1939 to Grenoble to try to acquire sufficient fluency in French to impress a London selection board. Then the Germans invaded Poland; and Dublin looked inviting... Better go back to Dublin, offer my services in writing and await a formal invitation... Arriving in London early on the morning of Sunday, September 3rd, war was by this time imminent... My passport was English. It simply had not occurred to me to get one of those comic-looking passports in Erse. I went straight to Euston to catch the Irish Mail. The news that war had been declared came while we were on the train... At Holyhead... as the mailboat left, a scatter of spectators booed us from the jetty. It was mildly irritating that they should assume all the passengers were ratting; unaware that one of them had posted his application for a commission to the War Office that morning" (pp 36-37).

In the meantime, Inglis was taken on by Smyllie in the *Irish Times*, until such time as his RAF call-up would come:

"On the departure morning, Smyllie wrote a couple of kindly *au revoir* paragraphs in the 'Irishman's Diary'. Already the wartime censorship was deleting references to Irishmen joining up in the British forces, so he adopted what was later to become his standard evasion technique. Mr. Inglis would be absent from Ireland, he wrote, 'for an indefinite period. He has always been interested in flying but had few opportun-

ities in Ireland to follow his bent I shall be surprised if he has any further cause for complaint in this regard'. The lead story that day, 3 June 1940, was about Dunkirk." (pp57-58).

By 1945, however, Inglis's horizons had been broadened:

"By the time the war ended I was more Irish—in the sense of thinking of myself as Irish—than when it began; too indignant with Churchill for his sneers at de Valera in his Victory broadcast to be appeased by his references to the Irish volunteers who had won V.C.s; and taking it for granted, when my demob number came up on New Year's Day, 1946, that I would be returning to work on the *Irish Times* (as its Air Correspondent), and to make Dublin my home." (pp67-68).

"Many things were to shake (my) Anglo-Irish preconceptions... Coming into the office one day when I was on leave towards the end of the war, I had found the editor with a man in the uniform of an Irish Army lieutenant; to be introduced, to my astonishment, to the *Irish Times'* new drama critic (Seamus Kelly). The idea that anybody in the Irish Army, let alone one whose friends called him Seamus (though Smyllie persisted in calling him Jim), should be appointed to such a job was startling, all the more so when it transpired that he came from an Ulster Catholic background that Smyllie was inclined to shudder at... On his demobilisation a few months later Kelly (also) became a Public Relations Officer for Aer Lingus; in that capacity he had much to do with the *Irish Times'* Air Correspondent; and after a period of advanced mutual distrust—of the kind a Deep South white might have with a Deep South black, if both thrown together in business—we had found ourselves butties under the skin. And with him as a convivial companion it had become much less easy to remain satisfied with Anglo-Irish attitudes." (pp89-90).

As far as Smyllie was concerned, any references to "*joining up*" or "*the Army*" referred exclusively to the British Army. For a later *Irish Times* Editor, Douglas Gageby, however, "*the Army*" referred exclusively to the Irish Army. Indeed, Gageby forbade his journalists to use the qualifying adjective "*Irish*" at all, maintaining that it was insulting to this Republic to suggest that "*the Army*" could refer to anything else but the Defence Forces of this sovereign State itself. It was, therefore, our own Defence Forces that Kelly and Gageby had themselves joined during World War Two, "*because Dev asked us to*", as Gageby himself put it. Yet, in a supposed tribute at a Gageby memorial meeting held on 9th July 2004, the reference to Gageby's wartime role in Irish Military Intelligence made by the



then *Irish Times* Editor Geraldine Kennedy amounted to little better than a calculated sneer:

"Like all of us, he had his pet interests; ... the Army, in which he had served during the so-called Emergency" (quoted in Andrew Whittaker, ed, *Bright Brilliant Days: Douglas Gageby and The Irish Times*, 2006, p 228).

In the *Irish Times* on 11th June 1979 Gageby announced:

"The death occurred in Dublin yesterday of Seamus Brian Kelly, drama critic of the *Irish Times* since 1945 and Quidnunc of 'An Irishman's Diary' since 1949. Born in Belfast in August 1912 ... his father was a civil servant and a founder director of Belfast Celtic AFC... He worked his way through University College Cork, where he read Anglo-Irish literature under Daniel Corkery... He joined the Army in October 1940, and was posted as a volunteer gunner before being commissioned to Intelligence on the General Staff in September 1941... In 1972 the German Federal Government invited him to view and review the contemporary German theatre, including the Berlin premiere of Sean O'Casey's 'The Bishop's Bonfire'... In 1946 he wrote a short history of the 1916 insurrection..."

In a more affectionately expressed personal appreciation on 12th June 1979, Gageby further recalled:

"Seamus first came into the ken of this writer almost 40 years ago as a stinky lieutenant, all green jacket, yellow breeches, flaming hair, cherry leggings and boots. Of a large draft of junior officers who were then posted to GHQ, a number are still around. He loved the Army."

I suppose a former Irish Army Intelligence Officer like Kelly had been better positioned than the Unionist Smyllie to detect in Crivon, the retired British Army Intelligence Officer, something more substantially Irish than a Dublin accent, and certainly something more substantially European than British. Writing his *Irishman's Diary* as Quidnunc in the *Irish Times* of 14th March 1962, Kelly noted:

"Robert Crivon, who recently resigned from the Council of Europe, has for a number of years been one of Ireland's international backroom boys... A Dubliner, Crivon ... swept all before him (in Trinity College) in the classical field of his time. After post-graduate studies in French and German universities, he lectured in Classics at the universities of Glasgow and Cairo. Just before the Second World War he had been working in Greece with the British Council, but left it to join the British Army, where ... he ended his wartime career with the

rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Intelligence service. When the Council of Europe was set up in 1949, Crivon became one of the first members of the staff of its Secretariat, and has been closely associated with the Council's educational and cultural activities ever since. I understand he proposes to return to Dublin, where, with his wide experience of international affairs and his expert knowledge of modern languages, he should be snapped up by some of the many Irish concerns interested in Common Market developments."

Crivon's pioneering work in the Council of Europe was not in pursuit of a British agenda, but of a specifically Irish one. To return to the biographical entry in Neil Richardson's book, with which I began:

"He had been offered the French *Légion d'Honneur* for his wartime services but had refused to accept it from de Gaulle. After being discharged from the army, Robert then returned to teaching. However, when Irish minister Seán MacBride—a close friend—invited him to help set up the Council of Europe in 1949, Robert Crivon settled in Strasbourg and served as Director of Cultural Affairs for the organisation. Robert 'Ruby' Crivon died in 1968, aged sixty." (pp266-7).

Puzzled as to what was meant by the de Gaulle reference, I enquired from Crivon's nephew, Quentin Crivon, when I met him this January 27th at the Holocaust Memorial Service in Dublin's Mansion House. He explained that his uncle abhorred de Gaulle as a would-be dictator of France. He also confirmed that one of Robert Reuben's closest friends, from pre-War days onwards, had been Seán MacBride. What! That Nazi lover! For that is how Seán MacBride has been caricatured—or should I not say character assassinated?—by Professor Eunan O'Halpin, Bank of Ireland Chair of Contemporary History at Trinity College Dublin, in his book *Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality During the Second World War* (2008). In her 2007 biography of MacBride, Elizabeth Keane took issue, if rather timidly, with allegations made by O'Halpin in his earlier book, *Defending Ireland* (1999), and she added:

"MacBride apparently supported the Government's policy of neutrality. He wrote a letter to the newspapers urging the avoidance of violence and other acts that might jeopardise neutrality... (On 23 March 1944) Seán wrote to de Valera offering help, 'if in the course of the present crisis, my services can be of any value to the Government, I shall be at your disposal. If I may be permitted, I should like also to express confidence in the manner in which you have handled

the situation'..." (Seán MacBride—*A Life*, p66).

Yet there is no getting away from the fact of just how timid Keane had been in confronting O'Halpin's *non sequiturs*:

"It has been suggested that Seán had made contact with Nazi Germany in the hope of obtaining help for the cause. Eunan O'Halpin believes that he courted German aid... O'Halpin does not mention when this contact took place, but Seán's claim that 1937 was the year of his departure from the IRA absolved him from having to defend his position about the war." (p64).

There had been a slow build-up to the extremes of O'Halpin's 2008 allegations against MacBride. His 1999 book, tentatively queried by Keane, contained the following narrative:

"Shortly after becoming IRA chief of staff (in 1936), he (MacBride) court-martialled his quartermaster-general Seán Russell, an out-and-out militarist who had travelled to America to promote the case for a campaign of attacks in Britain... MacBride was replaced in the autumn of 1936 by Tom Barry, and became director of intelligence: ironically in view of his eventual metamorphosis into a patron saint of Irish radicalism and of the international struggle for human rights, he then reportedly made 'the first contact' with agents of Hitler's Germany. In 1938 he withdrew from the IRA and he gradually shifted his full attention to his legal practice. He was to do the republican movement much greater service as a skilled courtroom defender in the years ahead than he had done as its military chief. For the next three years it would be the man whom he had temporarily ousted from GHQ, Seán Russell, who would dominate IRA thinking and policy on armed action ... who continued to work towards this end in Ireland and America even after his courtmartial in 1936. The issue was not resolved decisively until April 1938, when a majority of the army council backed Russell, causing Barry and his supporters to quit the IRA. This led in turn to the calamitous IRA bombing campaign of 1939-40... Joe McGarrity controlled Clan na Gael (USA) and he was an experienced fund-raiser and gun-runner. He used these skills to assist Russell ... and he undoubtedly approved of ... (Russell) approaching the German embassy in Washington in 1936. Tom Barry later claimed that in supporting Russell's plans for a campaign in Britain 'Clan na Gael ... were acting on behalf of German Agents there and that the source of financial aid was from that quarter also' (Florrie O'Donoghue note of his June 1940 talk with Tom Barry)... Barry himself visited Germany late in 1937, though the American FBI later reported

that 'such contact was casual' up to 1939. (memorandum on Irish Republican Army, J Edgar Hoover—FBI Director—to Adolphe A Berle, US State Department, Sept 1943)... (pp 126-9).

Why did Keane not point out the inconsistencies in O'Halpin's own 1999 account? It should be obvious that, given the intensity of the MacBride-Barry hostility to Russell's bombing campaign plans, any 1937 contact with Germany on their part was an attempt to sabotage Russell's intrigues. Tom Barry's June 1940 interview with his War of Independence comrade-in-arms, Major Florrie O'Donoghue—by now G2 Intelligence Officer with the Irish Army's Southern Command and O/C of its Supplementary Intelligence Service, whose counter-intelligence expertise would successfully close down both German and United States espionage adventures without fear or favour—had been in the context of Barry's offer of his own expertise to assist the State's Defence Forces in support of de Valera's policy of wartime neutrality.

In his 2008 book, however, O'Halpin resolves these inconsistencies by eliminating them, unconscionably so, in the wrong direction. One could read his *Spying on Ireland* from cover to cover without realising that there was any MacBride-Barry opposition to Russell's plans. In that book MacBride-Barry-Russell contacts with Germany are presented as a seamless continuum, the only difference in the outcome being the portrayal of MacBride as a Nazi German spy in a manner that it is accepted does not apply to Russell himself.

O'Halpin both comments on, and regurgitates, the following nuggets of 'Intelligence' gossip from the files of the various British Intelligence agencies:

"During the war it became clear that there had been sporadic German-IRA contacts since 1936, probably initiated by the ideologically mercurial Seán MacBride—eventually to die a patron saint of the Irish left—during his brief period as IRA director of intelligence. The one-time IRA chief of staff Tom Barry told a G2 (Irish Army intelligence) officer in 1940 that MacBride had paved the way for a visit he made to Germany in 1937... The veteran Irish-American conspirator Joseph McGarrity and the IRA's Seán Russell also put out feelers to the German embassy in Washington. Barry said that these contacts had resulted in the provision of money through Clan a Gael to Russell to fund the S-plan (Bombing Campaign)... There was also public evidence of a shift in German

attitudes towards the IRA: whereas in 1936 the German press praised de Valera's repression of it, in January 1939 it praised the Irish people's 'fight for freedom' and commended the bombings in Britain." (p40).

"MI5 received information via the (British) Foreign Office ... In August (1939) came another strange tale, passed to the Foreign Office by the Czech chargé d'affaires in London: Hempel (the German Minister to Dublin) had had discussions about forming 'an Irish Legion' to fight with Germany against Britain with two republicans, Seán MacBride and his brother-in-law, Francis Stuart. Hempel had also supposedly discussed this scheme with Fred Boland, the assistant secretary of (Ireland's Department of) External Affairs and later a key figure in Anglo-Irish security dealings. Aspects of the report—the suggestion that Boland was involved in *pour-parlers*—may be doubted, but there was a germ of truth in the suggestion of sympathetic contacts between republicans and the German legation. MacBride and Stuart were strong admirers of Nazi Germany... Stuart travelled to Germany in September to take up an academic appointment, and also acted as an IRA messenger and link for subversive purposes (his wife Iseult was the first person contacted by the key agent Herman Goertz on his arrival in Ireland in May 1940). Stuart later became a broadcaster on German English-language radio stations, delivering a peculiar mixture of apocalyptic nihilism, anti-British rants and cryptic anti-Semitism. MacBride remained a stalwart friend of the German legation, and was most likely a key wartime source on the IRA and on Northern Ireland" (pp41-42).

"(An) unusually detailed piece of (SIS, otherwise MI6) political intelligence was perhaps based on nothing more than gossip... Summary descriptions of other SIS reports indicate predictable concerns and subjects: suspect individuals (inter alia) ... pro-Nazi Irishmen such as ... Seán Mac Bride" (p119).

"Hempel had a trusted intermediary with links to the Northern IRA—the British assumed this to be Seán MacBride, which seems likely" (p209).

"A handful of republicans recur in these (1943 SIS) reports... Seán MacBride, 'the prominent Dublin barrister and counsel for members of the Extremist IRA ... has always been regarded as a potential Quisling'. SIS reported that in June (1943) he had travelled some distance to dine with Hempel during the German minister's holiday stay in County Mayo. Whether accurate in detail or not, these reports pointed in the right direction" (p223).

In his reliance on the gossip of British spooks, O'Halpin produced not a single piece of evidence to justify the smear that MacBride was "pro-Nazi" and a "potential

*Quisling*". It is as invalid to conflate MacBride with his half-sister Iseult and her estranged husband Stuart (whom MacBride loathed), as it would be to conflate O'Halpin's sympathies with those of his granduncle-in-law Jim O'Donovan, "who became the main point of contact between the IRA and Germany in 1938/9" to quote O'Halpin's own description (*Defending Ireland*, p viii). There is not one iota of evidence to suggest anything subversive in MacBride's friendship with Hempel. In fact, MacBride's efforts would seem to have been directed at attempting to steer Hempel himself away from any such subversion. As he told Lieutenant-Colonel John P Duggan in a September 1978 interview:

"MacBride had the formidable task of constantly counselling Hempel: his golden rule for him was not to appear to be on the wrong side of the law at any time" (Duggan, *Herr Hempel at the German Legation in Dublin*, 2003, p68).

But what is most unconscionable and reprehensible about his 2008 *Spying on Ireland*, is that, despite the fact that he had been in correspondence with Meda Ryan concerning her 2003 biography *Tom Barry—IRA Freedom Fighter*, O'Halpin chose to ignore the fact that in that same biography she had produced correspondence from Barry to Sighe Humphreys which irrefutably established that the MacBride-Barry initiative to try and sabotage Nazi German support for Russell was as much motivated by antipathy towards Nazism itself as towards Russell's Bombing Campaign, further confirming what he had already informed Major Florrie O'Donoghue of Irish military intelligence in June 1940. And I suppose if we want to put any label on Barry in respect of that period, it would have to be "anti-Nazi informer"!

With her own bracketed acknowledgement of sources, Meda Ryan had related:

"Russell, feeling bitterness towards MacBride and Barry, left for America and in August 1936 he issued a strong propaganda statement containing forceful language about bombing England, using planes, explosives and other ammunition ... Though 'on the run' Barry, Chief-of-Staff, went to Germany 'primarily to find out and if at all, the Nazis had penetrated the IRA', because he was convinced that the 'bombing plan' of Britain was 'of course German inspired and financed'. (Tom Barry to Dr T Ryle Dwyer, a letter in response to a query, 25/5/1975. I am grateful to T Ryle Dwyer for this personal correspondence.) It was not until 'very late in the decade' that Britain through their intelligence agencies, learned of 'the IRA's sporadic contacts with Nazi

No newspaper saw it to publish this letter of 1st April

## Graves Vandalised

On Friday March 29th graves and headstones in St Finbarr's Cemetery in Cork were vandalised. Graffiti was daubed on some headstones. The desecrated graves, all of which were of republicans, included those of the Lords Mayor of Cork Tomás MacCurtain who was murdered by members of the RIC in 1920, and Terence MacSwiney who died in Brixton prison on hunger strike also in 1920, in addition to the grave of General Tom Barry. The fact that this attack was perpetrated just two days prior to commemorations marking the 97th anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916 adds a sinister element to this desecration. Some national newspapers did not even report this vile incident.

If an attack of this nature had been perpetrated on the Irish National War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, which honours the memory of those Irish who gave their lives in the Great War, just hours before Armistice Day commemorations, there would be public outrage and would undoubtedly draw strong comment from parliament, pulpit and publications. Why the double standards?

**Tom Cooper**

War one, and why he agreed to be enlisted by MacBride for his Council of Europe project.

Keane has further related:

"One of Seán MacBride's most important contributions during his time in ministerial office is involvement in the Council of Europe and other multilateral organisations. As Minister for External Affairs (1948-51), he was directly responsible for Ireland's growing role in European politics... As Demot Keogh (in *Ireland and Europe*, 1990) indicates, *MacBride was a Christian Democrat and it was quite fashionable to speak of European unity in 1948 within those circles. MacBride saw himself in the fashionable company of Alcide de Gasperi in Italy, Robert Schuman in France, Konrad Adenauer in Germany and Pius XII*... In addition, with the notable exceptions of Churchill and Ernest Bevin, Britain did not appear enthused; the *'official attitude of Great Britain toward the young Council of Europe was cold and disinterested, and even in some cases almost hostile.'* (Paul-Henri Spaak, *'Strasbourg: The Second Year'*, 30 October 1950)... The Irish sensed this ambivalence; a 1950 External Affairs memo indicated that *'British policy seems to have been directed, in the main, to the task of slowing up or side-tracking any proposals for a greater degree of European cooperation.'* British aloofness could provide a chance for the Irish to distinguish as well as providing an opportunity to prove that military neutrality did not mean political isolationism... Ireland received an invitation to join in 1949... Seán asked the Dáil to approve: *'World War I, in effect, created a situation in Central Europe which caused World War II. The last war has created a situation which at present disrupts Europe... The Council of Europe is a recognition of the dangers and of the*

*remedy for those dangers'* (Dáil Éireann Debates, 12 July 1949)." (pp163, 166, 168-9 and 170-1).

In his own memoirs, published posthumously in 2005, MacBride himself recalled:

"During my period in office I concentrated a lot of my efforts in building up the Council of Europe towards the unification of Europe, a bold ambitious concept of which I was then, and still am, in favour... I was interested in Europe. I travelled around the Continent, knew it fairly well and felt that European culture was important. But apart from that, I had reasoned to myself that Europe seemed to be the storm centre for wars. Therefore it was essential to bring about a closer understanding in Europe to try and avoid wars... I was also interested in another aspect of the European movement which subsequently proved to be very important. A number of us, principally some French members, (like) Robert Schuman, conceived the idea that we could have a European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms... I felt that the last war probably would never have occurred if there had been a judicial body, a forum, before which complaints could have been brought as to what was happening in Germany, as to the arrest of Jews, their prosecution and extermination. But these matters were kept more or less suppressed and for some extraordinary reason the world press didn't take it up. A few newspapers did, but there was doubt as to whether these things were or were not taking place... I felt that we should try and establish mechanisms to prevent this from happening again... We had begun working on the Statute for the Council of Europe some time in 1948. It was completely new. I was one of the founding members ... (including Labour Foreign

*Germany'* which made them scrutinise such activities for their own security during the Second World War. (Eunan O'Halpin, 'British Intelligence, the Republican Movement and the IRA's German links, 1935-1945', in Fearghal McGarry, ed., *Republicanism in Modern Ireland*, forthcoming, 2003. I am grateful to Eunan O'Halpin for manuscript. Irish government intelligence kept a close eye on Tom Barry's activities, though some of government suspicions on Barry were unfounded.)... By April 1938, at a general army convention... the London bombing campaign was again brought to the fore, opposition to it centred around Barry... He wouldn't agree to it *'ethically, morally or physically'*... *'Leave a bomb in a cloak room, leave a bomb in a hotel, and be 40 or 60 miles away with a time bomb, and you blow to pieces somebody who is working for £3.10 or £3.30 a week!'* (Jack Doherty Lynch—father of the late Conor Lynch, MOR—author interview, 10/1/1981; Tom Barry to Nollaig Ó Gadhra, 1969, RTÉ Sound Archives.)... After the formation of a new executive which had a majority committed to Russell, Barry *'publicly walked out'* of this convention *'over the passing'* of the *'resolution to start a bombing campaign'*, he told Sighe Humphreys, as it was *'inspired and financed by the Nazi German Band (sic) of the USA'*. (Tom Barry to Sighe Humphreys, 12 June 1976, Sighe Humphreys Papers, University College Dublin Archives). (Barry had total hostility and contempt for the Nazi German-American *Bund*—MOR). He *'could not be party to it as it was unethical and immoral'*. Moreover, he had no confidence in the new leadership and their scheme was *'unworthy of consideration by the IRA'*..." (pp300-6).

Trinity College Professor Eunan O'Halpin is also the 2003 Editor of MI5's own *MI5 and Ireland 1939-1945—The Official History*, with an enthusiastic Foreword provided by the MI5 academic operative, Cambridge University Professor Christopher Andrew, author of *The Defence of the Realm—The Authorized History of MI5* (2009). See [http://free-downloads.atholbooks.org/pamphlets/Jack\\_Jones\\_Vindicated.pdf](http://free-downloads.atholbooks.org/pamphlets/Jack_Jones_Vindicated.pdf) for a point-by-point refutation of the dossier of lies and slanders trumpeted by Professor Andrew in respect of the British Trade Union leader and anti-fascist International Brigader Jack Jones. As for Professor O'Halpin, in contrast with his sleight-of-hand smearing of Seán MacBride, Robert Reuben Crivon, that Dublin Jewish World War Two British Military Intelligence Officer, knew full well that Seán MacBride and Francis Stuart should not be spoken of in the same breath. Which is why Crivon's post-War friendship with MacBride became even stronger than than his pre-

Secretary) Ernie Bevin from Britain... I decided I would try to convert Bevin to a Convention on Human Rights. I told him that I understood his irritation with Churchill, 'But the fact that Churchill advocates a united Europe is no reason for opposing a united Europe. I think you should be more European than Churchill. ... What people would be most interested in would be a Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, to ensure that never again would we drift into a position where millions of people would be put into a gas chamber, unbeknownst to the rest of the world, and nobody would do anything against this. Instead of agitating about Churchill, why don't you take the lead in urging the adoption of a Convention for the Protection of Human Rights within Europe? In that way you would probably weaken Churchill and enhance your own position.' The night ended up with Ernie Bevin being really interested in the idea... He made a speech either in Strasbourg or in the House of Commons a few days later saying that, 'it was essential that Europe should take the lead to ensure that never again could human rights be violated in Europe. There must be judicial machinery, there must be a rule of law to protect individuals and fundamental liberties.' That was the turning point. Once I had Britain supporting the Convention on Human Rights, they all became much stronger on it... Italy had a rather weak, shilly-shallying position at the time, suffering from a guilt complex because of the war. When they saw France and Britain petitioning for a Convention on Human Rights, they jumped on the bandwagon... The negotiations for a Convention for Human Rights, which was signed on 4 November 1950, were long and protracted... The British were prepared to go a certain distance and were really quite afraid of the European Convention. It was an innovation. And of course, in truth, though this has never been said publicly, once the British ratified the Convention on Human Rights, they in fact accepted a written constitution, which they never had before. Because it is a written constitution, they have to abide by it. And the decisions of the Commission and of the Court can override the home courts. So, to that extent, they had waived sovereignty" (*That Day's Struggle—A Memoir 1904-1951*, pp187, 197, 199-200 and 204-6).

MacBride went on to describe how Strasbourg was chosen as the seat of both the Council and the Court:

"Schuman was always anxious that the centre of the Council of Europe should be in Strasbourg, for he came from that part of the country. He felt it would be difficult to propose this, for the French would say the Council should be in Paris, the Belgians that it should be in Brussels,

and so on. It was agreed between us that I would propose Strasbourg, and that is how Strasbourg became the seat of the Council of Europe" (pp206-7).

And so it was to Strasbourg that Crivon went, at the request of his friend MacBride, to serve on the Council of Europe Secretariat. It is indeed noteworthy that that this wartime British military intelligence officer chose as his closest Irish friends the sons of two 1916 martyrs. MacBride was, of course, the son of Major John MacBride who was executed by the British authorities, while Owen Sheehy Skeffington was the son of Francis Sheehy Skeffington, the socialist pacifist so brutally murdered by the Anglo-Irish Captain Bowen-Colthurst, a cousin of writer Elizabeth Bowen. On Crivon's death it was to Skeffington that Gageby turned for an appreciation in the *Irish Times* of 18th September 1968, Skeffington began:

"Born in London in 1908, of parents who were Russian Jewish in origin, Reuben (Robert) Crivon, who died suddenly from a heart attack in Strasbourg last Thursday, was brought up in Dublin from the age of two, and was proud to proclaim himself an Irishman with, of course, far wider cultural interests and intellectual contacts than most Irishmen are granted. His first spiritual love was ancient Athens... (In 1931) he spent a year as *lecteur d'anglais* at the University of Montpellier. There he fell very much under the sway of France."

Skeffington and Crivon had been friends and contemporaries at Trinity College Dublin from 1927 to 1931 and were both ardent Francophiles. Following graduation, Skeffington studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris, while, moving on from Montpellier, Crivon undertook further post-graduate studies at both the Sorbonne and Germany's University of Cologne, as Hitler was coming to power. It is evident, therefore, that Crivon was the unnamed Jew in "*Memories of Owen Sheehy Skeffington*", penned by W.J. McCormack for the *Irish Times* of 12th and 14th July 1971, shortly after the first anniversary of Skeffington's own death in June 1970. This, however, was not at all an appreciation, but very much a deprecation instead. In those years McCormack played the role of a John the Baptist *cum* John the Evangelist on behalf his literary Messiah, Francis Stuart, and in April 1972 that apologist and apostle would go on to compile and edit *A Festschrift for Francis Stuart on His Seventieth Birthday*.

In the *Irish Times* on Bastille Day 1971, and writing under his pseudonym of "Hugh

Maxton", McCormack condemned Skeffington for adamantly turning down his request that he might chair a meeting to be addressed by Stuart in early 1970, several months before Skeffington's death:

"Skeffington refused to budge and began to explain. It appeared that he and a friend had taken a walking holiday in Germany shortly after Hitler's accession to power; then they reached a certain town and sought out the university restaurant... On the door, however, was a notice barring Jews and Marxists from the premises. Skeffington's friend, who was a Jew, declared that he intended to ignore the paragraph relating to him. And Skeffington declared that he was prepared to regard himself as a Marxist, so that both could violate the regulations together. Anyone who voluntarily lived among such regulations as these was beyond his sympathy. He would not chair a meeting which Stuart attended."

'Maxton'/McCormack would be accused of whitewashing Stuart's pro-Nazi sympathies in letters from Hubert Butler to the *Irish Times* of 17th July and 2nd August 1971. Neither Skeffington nor Butler dissented from Irish wartime neutrality. Quite the contrary, as Butler pointed out:

"Francis Stuart and Owen Skeffington and I myself would be at one in thinking that the Second World War, which did not open till six years after Hitler became Head of State, was about Power and not Suffering Foreigners."

But Butler related how Stuart's own sympathies had been anything but neutral:

"On December 9th, 1938, Francis Stuart wrote to the *Irish Times* a letter from Glendalough headed 'Suffering Foreigners', protesting against an Irish campaign to raise funds for refugees from the Nazis and giving them asylum in Ireland... It concerned a group of Austrian refugees whom I had brought from Vienna to Ireland (several of them and, in particular, their leader Erwin Strunz and his wife Liesl, were later to play an honoured part here)... Because of my respect for Francis Stuart I regarded his letter with sadness as a set-back and as clear evidence of Nazi sympathies. Soon after he left Ireland for Germany. Owen was aware of all this... Stuart's letter was very damaging, for he sought to discourage sympathy for the victims of Hitler... If we recall that letter now, it is not to hound a fine writer for what happened long ago, but because he has been used {by WJ McCormack—MOR} as a stick to beat Skeffington. Owen Skeffington made a final decision in that little German town, as Hugh Maxton (McCormack) relates."

Skeffington's own appreciation of

Crivon continued:

"World War II caught him in Athens, working for the British Council. As an Irishman, he had no need to 'get himself involved', but moved both by his loathing for all that Hitler stood for and by his love of France, he crossed the sea to Egypt and joined the British Army as a volunteer. 'I am no soldier', he would say wryly but he put his heart and soul into the job on hand, the defeating of fascism, and he saw active service in Madagascar, in the North African desert, in Italy and in Sicily. He rose to the rank of Major—was for a time Acting Colonel—and was doing staff instruction work in London at the flying bomb period. He was in the Normandy advance shortly after D-Day and saw Paris again with joy, later finding himself in Berlin and then in Saigon. After the War, which he hated for its cruelty and waste but regarded as a necessary evil, he was glad to return to civilian life, yet at first had difficulty in settling. He lectured for a year at Glasgow University; worked for a time with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency ... and in 1949 became one of that little band of enthusiastic international civil servants who helped to build the Council of Europe... He became Cultural Director... His Irish background and nationality and his wide experience of Europe and the world, together with his fine linguistic gifts and his administrative capacity, made him a first class international civil servant and a brilliant representative of Ireland... Reuben Crivon was a cosmopolitan Irishman, with an unfeigned admiration also for all that is best in English liberalism; a warm appreciation for the mind and art of France, for the heart of Italy and for the humanitarian political climate of ancient Greece and modern Scandinavia. He took great pride, too, in the qualities and achievements of his Jewish forebears and contemporaries. He was happy to be Irish and he was proud of being a Jew, not in a religious sense, but with a deep feeling for the cultural and intellectual heritage, and continued contribution to humanity, of that great people... Dublin and Paris were his true spiritual homes... The Europe for which he strove was not a Europe of trusts and cartels, nor yet the chauvinistic 'Europe of nation States', but a truly united Europe in which narrow vested interests would play no part, and the strength and culture of all would be readily at the disposal and service of each individual European... There was nothing narrow about him, and his very knowledge of the world's variety precluded him from any form of sectarianism, religious, political, racial or cultural. What he stood for above all was the intellectual and cultural liberation of Europe and the world, through the fostering of what is wise and good in mankind's story. The united Europe of the future has lost a faithful friend who served it well with heart and mind."

Owen Sheehy Skeffington was an anti-fascist, just like his mother Hanna who had chaired the Women's Aid Committee of Irish Friends of the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Anti-Fascist War. Before that, she had been Assistant Editor to Frank Ryan's editorship of the IRA newspaper *An Phoblacht*. Owen remained true to his mother's Republican principles when he refused to accept any Fianna Fáil condolences on her death in 1946, so soon after de Valera had allowed the Northern IRA leader Seán McCaughey to die on hunger and thirst strike in Portlaoise Prison. MacBride had been McCaughey's defence counsel, as he had also acted for the Protestant IRA leader George Plant, executed by de Valera in 1942. In a full page article in the *Irish Times* of 13th October 1962, published by Gageby to mark the eve of de Valera's 80th birthday, Skeffington recalled both of those IRA deaths:

"One need not stress such black episodes. One should not, however, conceal them. Both were personally defended by Mr de Valera in the Dáil in speeches of uncompromising selfrighteousness."

But then Skeffington went on to sing Dev's praises on quite a different front. In the *Irish Times* of 30th August 1975, when Gageby marked de Valera's own death by proudly publishing Dev's May 1945 reply to Churchill—under the heading of "*Neutrality Defended*"—he reproduced what the now deceased Skeffington had written in 1962 in his sub-heading—

"Mr. de Valera's famous reply to Mr. Churchill's attack on Ireland's neutrality is still remembered by many. Owen Sheehy Skeffington wrote in 1962 '*the whole of Ireland stood up and cheered de Valera*' on that occasion."

Why, then, did Skeffington view his friend Reuben Crivon's wartime service in the British Army so positively? Because he saw it as having been motivated by anti-fascism throughout, with such anti-fascist principles and values becoming confirmed all the more strongly in the post-War years. Smyllie had conveniently omitted one significant period of Crivon's life between British Army discharge and his Council of Europe recruitment by MacBride. But in Skeffington's appreciation of Crivon, he made a point of going out of his way to highlight it in the following manner:

"He was not orthodox in any sense; his outlook often unexpected. His friends would sometimes 'rag' him on the fact

that his voice and manner seemed those of 'a Poona Colonel'. Yet, in that voice, what he said was strongly of the liberal left. After a term of university lecturing at Magee College, for instance, what he saw and heard, outside the sphere of the university itself, led him afterwards to remark in indignation that if he had stayed another few months in Derry he would have felt like becoming a Roman Catholic and joining the IRA!"

That is the choice that the Catholic anti-fascist Connie Green, a World War Two British commando veteran, felt he had no option but to make in his own native city of Derry. Green progressed forward from the IRA to Saor Uladh, as Seán MacBride copperfastened that organisation's coming to terms with and embrace of this Republic through ensuring the election to Seanad Éireann of its Chief-of-Staff Liam Kelly. But the agenda that MacBride requested Crivon to pursue on his behalf was his Council of Europe one. And the crowning achievement for MacBride on that front was when the Council's Convention on Human Rights finally resulted in the establishment of the European Court of Human Rights.

There was, of course, a certain irony attached to how it began its casework, as Keane's biography of MacBride relates:

"In 1957, faced with increasing IRA violence, the Fianna Fáil Government reintroduced internment. MacBride took the case of Gerard Lawless, a dissident IRA man who was about to emigrate when he was arrested and interned. It was the first case to be heard by the European Court of Human Rights in 1959. He lost, but the proceedings established the principle that the Court could investigate whether a state of emergency exists in a country that is sufficient to allow the use of internment or other measures." (p225).

And it was in the case brought by Ireland against the UK, in respect of the five techniques of sensory deprivation employed by the RUC against Republican detainees, that the same Court found against the UK in 1978 that "*recourse to the five techniques amounted to a practice of inhuman and degrading treatment, which practice was in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights*", preceded by a pre-emptive statement from the UK Attorney-General in February 1977 that "*the Government of the UK have considered the question of the use of the 'five techniques' and with particular regard to Article 3 of the Convention. They now give this unqualified undertaking, that the 'five techniques' will not in any circumstances be reintroduced as an aid to interrogation*". As MacBride pointed

out, this was the element of a written constitution that he had persuaded Bevin to accept for Britain. The current British Home Secretary now wants the next Tory election manifesto to pledge a UK withdrawal from that European Convention in order to restore the British Constitution to its pre-War unwritten glory as a blank page.

IRA/Sinn Féin historiography would respect the memory of Seán MacBride in his role as defence counsel for so many of their glorious dead of the 1940s, as they would welcome that 1978 European Court judgement against the UK. But, because they would dispute Clann na Poblachta's 'premature' anti-abstentionism, they remain blind to MacBride's achievements as Minister for External Affairs of this Republic in whose formal declaration in 1949 he had been so instrumental, and whose 'Free State' statesmanship resulted in the European Convention on Human Rights in the first place, followed by the establishment of that self-same Court.

Sinn Féin seems incapable of respecting any of this Republic's achievements, whether by de Valera or MacBride. For a brief moment it seemed to do so, when it ran Martin McGuinness for President of Ireland and when I gave him my No. 1 vote. But that appears to have been but a brief interval between those decades of refusing to give any recognition at all to the validity of what it persisted in misnaming the "*Free State*" and its current incessant denunciations of a "*Failed State*".

Sinn Féin's demand that this State apologise for disciplining those who deserted our Defence Forces in order to enlist in the British Army during World War Two was in fact a profoundly anti-Republican act, for it was directed against the only Republic we have had for the past three quarters of a century.

In the aforementioned book on Douglas Gageby, Mary Maher related the following *Irish Times* incident:

"Someone suggested we should expose the inadequacies of the Garda training system ... that all they learned ... was how to shine their buttons... Someone piped up to remark that when he was in the RAF, the squaddies had special buttons that didn't need to be shined. Douglas Gageby peered up over his glasses and said in his drawling ironic tone, the one that chilled bone marrow, '*Is that so ... when you were in the RAF you didn't have to shine your buttons. Wasn't it well for you—you fucking*

*traitor.*'" (p91).

One can only imagine how Gageby would have responded to the apology to the Irish Army deserters. It has indeed come to a sorry pass when one has to invoke a former Editor of the *Irish Times* in order to demonstrate to Sinn Féin some basic elements of Republican patriotism! But, of course, Gageby would have been even more thoroughly

disgusted by the Fianna Fáil failure to offer even one word in defence of the Irish Army and its own wartime record. Fianna Fáil had in fact presented Sinn Féin with an open goal. But Sinn Féin, by demanding an apology to Irish Army deserters, chose instead to score an own goal.

(to be continued)

Manus O'Riordan

**Poetry Review: Eddie Linden, A THORN IN THE FLESH, Selected Poems.**  
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## Linden: A Maverick Poet

Eddie Linden is probably actually a Derry-city-born man, Edward Sean Glackin: his was a one-parent family when such things were deeply shameful. He is a queer, working class, Glaswegian, Catholic poet. He escaped from Glasgow to London and to the owner-editorship of a poetry magazine *Aquarius* (since 1969).

These poems cover all aspects of Eddie Linden's personality: the first dozen are auto-biographical and rather nostalgic for a hard, bitter early life. They include *City Of Razors*, about Glasgow—not Sheffield. The razors are used for cutting up 'the other sort'. Linden writes from the point of view of the Irish-Catholic minority in the erstwhile Second City of the Empire. *The Man In The Black Suit* and *Drag Show* are surprisingly similar. He sympathises with the alcoholic priest in the one, and the, presumably queer, man doing the drag show.

'Drag' has become ubiquitous in queer bars (and treated as endemic to 'the Gay subculture'). My own first encounter with it was in a huge pub in Manchester, run by a Mussolini-like heavy who didn't much like homos. Some of his clientele were 'drag'—others were transvestite, and some transsexual. Some Gay (men) sneered at all of these people. They felt superior, forcefully reminding me of the old Blueshirt Yeats's lines "*A beggar upon horseback / Beats a beggar on the ground*".

Linden's ambiguous Catholicism is touched on in the (slightly sardonic) *Prayers For The Foetus*, as well as in the entirely unambiguous or sardonic *To Archbishop Roberts*. Roberts was the anti-imperialist Archbishop of Bombay (Mumbai), a 'liberation' theologian '*devant la parole*', and an inspiringly decent human being. (His decency almost certainly applied to the sexual awkward squad.) Another poem is *A Table Of Fruit*, subtitled 'for Father Michael Hollings'. There are a number of poems about his fellow-artists—poets mostly, but including at least one musician and the sculptor John Behan. *Tranquillity*, 'for Douglas Hyde on his eightieth birthday', is carefully dated '1991'—a tribute to 33 years of friendship. Hyde, a 1950s (pre-Hungary) defector from Communism to Catholicism, founded the company of radicals like Linden congenial. The poem is about being together on Aldermaston (anti-nuclear war) marches, organised by CND, the still-existing Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Sitting down to 'review' this wee book has been an interesting experience. It dawned on me how much substance there was to these two dozen poems. Only one runs to two pages. Most don't take up a whole page. But the range of feeling is extraordinary—particularly his contempt for the nice people encountered at readings: *After the Reading*, is ferocious, while *Editor* is probably meant to frighten the life out of anyone even contemplating submitting material to the Editor of *Aquarius*.

There is the material noted above, underlining his talent for friendship, the fact that he can use 'cunts' without making me squirm, and his sidling up to his Irish connection. These *Selected Poems* are dedicated to John Rety (and the *Guardian* journalist John Ezard).

Seán McGouran



Does  
It  
Up

Stack  
?

#### FARMING

This Spring farm animals and farmers have had a very hard time. Fodder for the animals has run out on many farms. The hungry animals are baying for food day and night and this is very distressing for farm families. In Ireland, most farm families live on the farm near the animal housing. Silage is selling for fifty euros a bale but most farmers cannot buy and banks have not money to lend according to their managers. (What did we save them for?) Fields appear to be ready for grazing but although they are green with small grass they are so waterlogged that cattle cannot be allowed on them—the cattle would sink up to their hocks in mud. Hungry cattle will eat their bedding, which is usually straw but not always.

There was an unfortunate disaster last year in Northern Ireland when several members of the Spence family died. The Spence family were farmers and one of them—the father—went down into the slurry pit to rescue their dog which had fallen in. Another member—a brother—went down to rescue the father and a third—a sister—went down the ladder to rescue the other two. They were overcome by the deadly gas Hydrogen Sulphide (see last month's issue of *Irish Political Review* on chemical warfare). The usual gas in slurry tanks is methane. However, on the Spence farm, it seems discarded gypsum building material was used as animal bedding and gypsum when mixed with animal urine produces the lethal gas hydrogen sulphide which kills instantly when it is inhaled. The gas is heavier than the air and so it stays in the tank. A tiny quantity of this gas smells like rotten eggs but a large quantity overwhelms the sense of smell and is not detected in time to avoid it. In the case of the Spence family—the daughter was the only one to survive and that was after she was pulled out by neighbours and spent some days in intensive care in hospital overcoming the toxicity in her blood. She was very lucky not to die.

The sale of scrap gypsum panels has now been banned in Northern Ireland but they are still being sold in the Twenty-Six Counties to farmers who have not been told of the lurking danger. It does not stack up that the Department of Agriculture has

not banned the use of gypsum for animal bedding especially after the NI tragedy received such wide media publicity. The younger brother in the Spence family who died was a top Ulster rugby player and that impacted hugely on Irish rugby so it was a sports as well as a news story with the kind of concomitant coverage that that entails.

#### NATIONAL COMMEMORATIONS PROGRAMME

In the *Evening Echo*, 16th April 2013, under the heading *UCC academic is appointed to Government body* was the news that Gabriel Doherty had been invited by Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Jimmy Deenihan, Fine Gael, as "a historian to sit on the Expert Advisory Group of eminent historians which advises the Government and the all-party Oireachtas Committee on Commemorations". Doherty replied that he was "honoured and humbled" to be invited to participate in the work of the committee. The committee was set up by Taoiseach Enda Kenny, in conjunction with his Minister Jimmy Deenihan, with the announcement that it was to be chaired by Dr. Maurice Manning (Chancellor of the National University of Ireland) and supported by Dr. Martin Mansergh. It was to include the following:

Professor John A. Murphy,  
Professor Eunan O'Halpin,  
Professor Diarmuid Ferriter,  
Ms. Sinead Mc Coole,  
Professor Mary Daly,  
Dr. Eamon Phoenix,  
Dr. Leeann Lane,  
Professor Gearóid O Tuathaigh,  
Mr. Francis Devine.

The foregoing "eminent historians" have the following remit from the State:

"The initial work of the Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations will be towards the preparation of an overview statement to inform the development and delivery of the commemorative programme for the period 2012-2016, following which further statements could address annual commemorative programmes and thematic issues."

The group will continue in being for the duration of the commemorative programme 2012-2016.

I can remember that it must be a decade ago when the idea was propounded in this magazine by a colleague—Julianne Herlihy—that local Historical Societies were the new "hedge schools". They were doing the work of the academic institutions regarding historical archiving/research/writing and, with no State input, were

keeping the past alive and were bringing to their local communities rich historical scholarship—all voluntary unpaid work. This was at the time when the universities were riven—and still are—by the poisonous ideology of revisionism which had the effect of driving droves of young students away from studying—with those that remained being chained by the likes of Professor John A. Murphy *et al* to producing revisionist analysis that was as false as it was paralysing. Now UCC in travelling road-shows, curated by Gabriel Doherty, chase after local Historical Societies in a desperate attempt to urge the local student bodies to take up studying history in their universities. But it is all too late and their numbers are dropping like stones.

The State too of course has done its part by also pushing this *ideological revisionism* and if ever there was any doubt about this—it was shown graphically in the Professor Eunan O'Halpin TV3 'historical documentary, titled *In the Name of the Republic*—which according to *The Phoenix* was funded by the tax-payers to the tune of €200,000. The former was as far from objective history as one could get—it wasn't even folklore as some said but rather crude propaganda in the mode of old Froude (whom Lecky had to eventually denounce himself—and then Lecky got flack from Herbert Butterfield for his type of "cherry-picking from the documents"—in the latter's seminal work 'George and the Historians' Macmillan. London. 1959. p.59—which must have been pretty galling

#### WALTER MACKEN

In my opinion, Walter Macken is one of our greatest writers of novels and plays in the twentieth century. Every emigrant to Britain will recognise the emotions and feelings of his novel *I Am Alone*, while there has been tribute to his great trilogy of novels *Seek The Fair Land* (about "Ireland when Cromwell's armies ravaged the land in an orgy of death—a horrific, gargantuan saga of a terrible moment in history—strong meat", according to *The New York Times* review). He also wrote *The Silent People* ("The scourge of famine, fever and tyrannical landlords—written with all the power of suppressed pity and rage", according to a review in *The Liverpool Daily Post*) and *The Scorching Wind* (about the Irish War of Independence). Before Macken turned to full-time writing, he was an actor, director and dramatist. Some of his work was in Gaelic. He wrote seven plays, ten novels, three books of short stories and two children's books. He died prematurely at 51. His

biography is given three columns in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (DIB).

But why is Walter Macken ignored by the commentariat in the Irish literary establishment? Why did Séamus Deane and his associates ignore such a towering figure in Irish Literature in their *magnum opus*—the three-volume *Field Day Anthology*?

And of course he is also ignored in all other *Dictionaries of Irish Biography* produced by the likes of Cambridge and Oxford for the Irish Universities.

Such is the fate of yet another great Irish writer who was marvelled at by his contemporaries and forgotten by his successors. It would be no exaggeration to state that Macken was to Irish literature/culture what Dickens was to England and Tolstoy was to Russia.

### IASIL

This is the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures i.e. literature in the Irish Gaelic language and Irish literature written in the English and any other languages. There is quite a large body of literature relevant to Ireland written in French, German, Norwegian, Spanish and Latin, as was pointed out at the IASIL Annual General Meeting held in University College, Cork, on the 7th July 1995, when a proposal was put forward in the teeth of hot and heavy academic argument. The then Chairman Dr. Michael Kenneally, Concordia University Montreal, Canada proposed that the name of the association be changed to the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures. The previous name for twenty five years had been The International Association for the Study of Anglo-Irish Literature and of course Anglo-Irish literature was mostly written by Protestants. The original IASIL was founded in 1970 under the chairmanship of Professor Norman Jeffares of Queen's University, Belfast. The annual Conference of IASIL is held once every three years in Ireland and the other annual conferences are held at Universities across the world. For example, the 1996 conference was held in New York at which the name was actually changed again in the face of Anglo-Irish opposition which came mainly from *Irish universities and their standard bearers in English universities like Roy Foster, Professor Edna Longley et al.*

The 1997 conference was held in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1998 in the University of Limerick and in 1999 the University of Barcelona etc. The 2013 Conference is to be held in Belfast in

QUB. I have attended conferences in places as diverse as Cork, Barcelona, Bath etc and it is interesting to meet people of all nationalities who are interested in Ireland, not only literature but culture also. The social side is catered for at formal and informal gatherings in the evenings during the conference. You may hear Irish music being played on the fiddle and flute by Japanese students from Tokyo or Korean students from Seoul or from Rio de Janeiro in Brazil—the latter also held a very successful conference attended by universities from all over the world.

The 1995 conference was organised in UCC by Professor Colbert Kearney, who was Professor of English, and it seems it is the departments of English in the universities which control IASIL and which study Anglo-Irish literature only. The British Council were and are heavily involved in promoting literature in English and, until the Celtic Studies Departments can take over the study of Irish literatures and remove it from the grip of the English Departments, we will not see much study of real Irish literature by the likes of e.g.. Walter Macken, Canon Sheehan or Daniel Corkery—to name but a very few!

Britain has proved that commerce follows the culture and it is most important for the Irish State to vigorously promote the study of Irish culture and literature in countries abroad with which Ireland wants to do business. The way is wide open to do this if the will is there in Irish State organisations and in Irish commercial enterprises. It is the way forward but looking at what is happening now—I wouldn't hold my breath.

### SYRIA

The *Irish Catholic*, 18th April 2013 reported that it was a "leave or die" option that now operated for Syria's ancient biblical Christian community. Archbishop Samir Nassar of Damascus said in an interview that they were subjected to "daily car-bombings and sniper attacks" and that these "with scarcity of food and medical supplies were making life intolerable for the dwindling Christian population still attempting to exist in the city". The ever deteriorating conditions, the Archbishop said, was presenting impossible choices for both lay people and clerics. He described the reality now of people pleading with the local Church "for help in finding a visa to leave". For clerics, Msgr. Nassar pointed out, the situation brings its own tribulations. "To advise them to stay could lead to death like a lamb dumb before the butcher" he said, "while helping them leave means

*emptying the biblical land of its last Christians. Our martyrology simply gets longer."*

Archbishop Nassar's words come just days after one of the rebel factions battling against the regime of Bashar al Assad (also a secular leader) announced itself aligned with al Qaeda in Iraq, bringing fears of direct and bloody attacks on Christians, as occurred in that country after the ousting of the secular President Saddam Hussein. Now that the UK is considering lifting the ban on weapons exports to aid the rebels—one has to question what is the West really up to? It just doesn't stack up at all.

Michael Stack ©

### ALL THAT GLITTERS

She could have won gold,  
yes gold,  
could have won gold,  
would have won gold,  
only it was raining.  
She was destined  
during training  
to win gold  
but her legs turned to lead,  
and lead isn't gold,  
though at one point  
she was ahead.  
May I make so bold  
as to say once more,  
she could have won gold,  
though she won silver,  
didn't you hear the crowd roar.  
Silver, it's not something you can  
pilfer,  
it's got to be won,  
and she did, win,  
ahead of bronze,  
when she heard the starter's  
gun.  
So, who won gold.  
No one from the UK,  
to be precise,  
to subtly convey:  
no one from around here,  
in this London Olympian year.  
But she (who should have won gold)  
did win,  
though gold would have been  
nice.

Wilson John Haire  
30th July, 2012

## TU NOTES continued

claimants, after rising by 3,431 in the last 12 months.

The hike in those who are over a year on the dole was fuelled by women, whose numbers rose by almost 9%.

In contrast, the number of men who are long-term claimants dropped by almost 1%.

The unadjusted figures show there were 425,088 people on the live register last month, an annual drop of 8,966, or just over 2%.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, there was a monthly fall of 2,200 last month, bringing the total to 426,100.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Holidays

"Irish people are almost twice as likely to holiday than most other Europeans, according to an EU-wide survey (EU Statistical Office, Eurostat) on tourism trends.

"Just 24% of all holidays taken by EU citizens are by people travelling outside their own country.

"The research shows that 43% of all holidays taken by Irish people in 2011 were to foreign destinations, with 4.7 million out of 10.9 million holidays taken overseas that year" (*Irish Examiner*, 16.4.2013).

\*\*\*\*\*

### Parental Leave

The entitlement to unpaid parental leave has been increased by a month from 14 to 18 weeks, Minister for Justice Alan Shatter has announced.

"Mr Shatter yesterday signed the changes into law giving effect to a 2010 EU directive allowing parents to over four months of leave.

"The regulation will also give parents a right to request a change in working hours for a set period on return from parental leave. However, employers are not required to grant it, but under the regulation they must consider it.

"It is important that we support parents of young children in the difficult balancing act of caring for a young family and working", Mr Shatter said in a statement" (*Irish Times*, 9.3.2013).

Parents can avail of the leave for each child under eight, but are limited to 18 weeks per year if they have more than one child (except in the case of twins or triplets).

\*\*\*\*\*

### Pay Deal

Ryanair has agreed a deal with cabin crew and some pilots that will see them

get an average 10% pay increase over the next four years.

With no Trade Union representation, the pay negotiations have been handled by internal employee representatives and management. There are over 2,400 pilots working for the airline and 5,200 flight attendants.

"The company said the pay increases for cabin crew will apply to all grades, from supervisors to junior members. They've also negotiated higher supervisory and other allowances, while what Ryanair describes as a stable "home every night" roster has also been maintained.

"Ryanair spokesman Robin Kiely said: "It is a considerable success for Ryanair's cabin crew and pilots to secure pay increases and favourable rosters at a time when unions in Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK are currently negotiating job cuts, pay cuts and pension cuts."

"Ryanair said pilots at bases in Cork, Shannon, Bristol, Alicante, East Midlands and Luton have also negotiated fresh terms. They include pay rises of up to 10% as well as allowance and pension increases. The pilots will also work a five-day on, four-day off roster" (*Irish Independent*, 27.3.2013).

But Ryanair, which last week confirmed an order for 175 new Boeing aircraft, concedes that it tries to control its labour costs by seeking to "continually improve the productivity of its already highly productive workforce".

Productivity-based incentive payments accounted for about 47% of an average flight attendant's total earnings at Ryanair last year and 37% of the typical pilot's compensation.

Ryanair has a 29% holding in Aer Lingus, the national airline.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Universities

Ireland is the graduate capital of Europe, with a bigger share of 30-somethings holding a degree than anywhere else in the EU.

Over half of Irish 30 to 34-year old persons now have a third-level qualification, the only EU country to pass the 50% mark.

Among women, the figure is even higher, with 58% of Irish females in that age bracket having completed third-level education, compared with 44% of males.

New figures from Eurostat, track how Ireland's impressive graduate output over the past decade has put it to the top of the leader board.

The continuing rise in Ireland's graduat-

ion rate has seen it come from behind to pass out countries such as Finland, which have highly-rated education systems.

In 2002, when 32% of Irish 30 to 34-year olds had a degree, the comparable figure in Finland was 41%, but in 2012, Finland's 46% was trailing behind Ireland's 51%.

Meanwhile, a detailed analysis of this year's CAO applications confirms the shifting trends in the areas of study being undertaken at third-level, as school-leavers and other college hopefuls follow the promise of jobs in hi-tech sectors.

There has been a significant increase in applications to study science, technology and engineering over the past five years, according to the analysis by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Technology now accounts for 21% of all Level 8 (honours degree) courses and within that category, computing has seen a 51% rise in first-preference applications since 2009.

In the same period, science has seen a 17% jump in first preferences, while engineering is up 22%. The trend is similar at Level 7/6 (ordinary degree/higher certificate) where technology accounts for 34% of all first-preference applications this year. In the past five years, computing applications have risen by 41%, while science is up 25%.

"However, Oireachtas education committee members expressed concerns about the level of foreign-language uptake among third-level students in Ireland, despite growing demand from employers for such skills.

"Less than one-third of Irish school-leavers takes a foreign language at third level and far fewer graduates opt to pursue careers using their language skills, Department of Education official Breda Naughton told the committee" (*Irish Independent*, 18.4.2013).

\*\*\*\*\*

### Finances

Irish people withdraw more from ATMs every year than citizens of any other European country, and Ireland remains one of the few EU countries where social welfare payments are still regularly paid over the counter in cash, the Central Bank said.

Cheque usage in Ireland is also one of the highest in Europe, and remains particularly prevalent among businesses. In a research paper, the Central Bank said the heavy use of cash and cheques in Ireland was a huge cost to the economy. (*Central Bank* press release, 2.4.2013.)

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**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## JIM LARKIN

(1874-1947)

by

PATRICK KAVANAGH

Not with public words now can his greatness  
 Be told to the children, for he was more  
 Than a labour-agitating orator—  
 The flashing flaming sword merely bore witness  
 To the coming of the dawn: 'Awake and look!  
 The flowers are growing for you, and wonderful trees,  
 And beyond are not the serf's grey Docks, but seas—  
 Excitement out of the Creator's poetry book.  
 When the Full Moon's in the River the ghost of bread  
 Must not haunt all your weary wanderings home.  
 The ships that were dark galleys can become  
 Pine forests under winter's starry plough  
 And the brown gantries will be the lifted head  
 Of man the dreamer whom the gods endow.'

And thus I heard Jim Larkin shout above  
 The crowd who wanted to turn aside  
 From Reality coming to free them. Terrified  
 They hid in the clouds of dope and would not move.  
 They eat the opium of the murderer's story  
 In the Sunday newspapers; they stood to stare  
 Not at a blackbird but at a millionaire  
 Whose horses ran for Serfdom's greater glory.  
 And Tyranny trampled them in Dublin's gutter  
 Until Jim Larkin came along and cried  
 The call of Freedom and the call of Pride  
 And Slavery crept to its hands and knees  
 And Nineteen Thirteen cheered from out the utter  
 Degradation of their miseries.

(*The Bell*, Dublin, March, 1947)

The Mondragon Series will resume in May's *Labour Comment*

## TRADE UNION NOTES

### Croke Park Rejection

"Now SIPTU has delivered its rather long-winded verdict on Croke Park II, it looks set for a home run. General president Jack O'Connor has set the scene for a badly-needed win for Labour, and in particular, Public Expenditure and Reform Minister Brendan Howlin" (*Irish Independent* editorial, 15.3.2013).

That was then : *this is now!*

"The rejection of the Croke Park II deal by SIPTU has plunged the Government into the deepest crisis of its term in office so far. Due to the voting strength of SIPTU, the new deal is already holed below the waterline even before the final overall verdict of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions is delivered today" (*Irish Independent* editorial, 17.4.2013).

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### Dole Figures Down

The number of people on the dole has fallen again, bringing the total signing on down by almost 9,000 since last year.

However, the long-term unemployed now make up 44% of all live register

continued on page 27

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