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Parliamentary Politics?

The Máiría Cahill case was debated in the Dail. The debate took the form of a denunciation of Sinn Fein, by Fine Gael, Labour and Fianna Fail, as a sinister terrorist organisation. In the Radio Eireann discussion of the debate that evening the representative of the (formerly Fascist) Fine Gael party referred to Gerry Adams as Il Duce. A couple of days later the Labour Party leader and Tanaiste, who had been vituperative against Sinn Fein in the debate, was terrorised in Tallaght, a working class area of Dublin, when she ventured into it on an engagement. The crowd was angered by Water Charges. The terrorising had nothing whatever to do with Sinn Fein, whose role in opposing the Water Charge was studiously moderate.

The instigators of direct action against the water chargers were the independent socialist TDs who have sprouted up under the austerity regime, which the Labour Party insisted on going into Government with Fine Gael to operate, instead of seizing the opportunity presented by the collapse of Fianna Fail at the last General Election to become the main Opposition Party.

RTE's interviewing of Sinn Fein members about the strange Máiría Cahill affair took the form of heckling, but interviews of the Independents who advocated direct action against Government members was respectful. The Government was frightened by the rage which its mode of governing had aroused in the section of the populace to which it had done the most damage. Feeling the ground move under it, it discarded ideology and policy and capitulated to the extremists, not daring to denounce them as extremists. It put one in mind of the great Homeless agitation of the Winter of 1968-9—a few months before the civil rights insurrection in the North in support of equal rights proved to be the Trojan Horse that penetrated the Unionist defence.

In the course of the Máiría Cahill denunciations Sinn Fein was accused of "*hijacking the civil rights issue*" in the North. The Southern parties display an impressive ability to forget their enthusiasm at that time for the overthrow of Unionism by a combination of moral and physical force. They now speak as if they had recognised the old Stormont

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From Gay To Grotesque War Games

I have no problems with commemorating the Irish dead of World War One, even if they fought on the wrong side. That is why, when Britain's Duke of Kent dedicated the "*cross of sacrifice*" sculptured sword of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Dublin's Glasnevin cemetery last July 31st, I held up two placards by way of my own contribution towards having a more honest commemoration: "*Remember the dead buried here*

with sympathy and respect, but curse Britain's imperialist war lords who sent them to their deaths. In memory of my cousin, John Sheehy, sacrificed on the Somme front in 1918, cannon fodder in Britain's criminal imperialist 1914-1918 war. Lest we forget.

Nor do I object to Gay Byrne relating, in his TV documentary of last April, the story of his father's experiences as a First World War combatant. But I do object to

Report: 94th Kilmichael Commemoration:

Address by Jack Lane, 30 November

The Meaning Of Kilmichael

I want to thank the Committee for giving me an opportunity to address this Commemoration here today. The ambush that occurred here was a pivotal event in the War of Independence and it is a privilege to be involved in a commemoration of such an event. It changed the character of that War because, after it, all involved realised that this was a real War and the Crown Forces realised for the first time that they were up against a competent army because they were thoroughly defeated. It concentrated their minds wonderfully. Nothing like it had happened before in that war.

Anyone who takes an interest in our history will know that there is an ongoing debate about the War of Independence and it is appropriate that this Ambush has been central to this debate. The Ambush has been the subject of detailed discussion and every minute and every blow of the

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Report

his distortions and misrepresentations of the facts of Irish history, not only of the 1914-18 War itself, but also of how I myself experienced its remembrance in the Irish school curriculum of 50 years ago. This was, in part, the subject matter of my article in last August's *Irish Political Review*, which I do not need to repeat. But there is a postscript, my disgust on hearing just two more words from Byrne: "*Well done!*" On October 23rd the *Irish Times* reported:

"Tonight, the Irish embassy in Belgium is hosting broadcaster Gay Byrne

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regime as legitimate and democratic and had urged the Northern minority, on whom they had a fair degree of influence, to submit to it peacefully and willingly; and as if they had never seen the Republican upsurge as anything but an outbreak of criminality.

In the course of the Cahill dispute somebody told Gerry Adams that he was no Michael Collins—as if he had ever claimed to be. What Adams and his colleagues did in the North from the early eighties onwards was far more impressive than what Collins did, and it is apparent that they were determined not to do what Collins did. They made a settlement while holding together the movement that had fought the War that had made that settlement possible. Collins split the movement and made war on the military core of it on Britain's insistence and with British arms.

British law ceased to be functional in the North in 1969. It was not the IRA but the Civil Rights movement that subverted it. The IRA developed within the situation brought about by the Civil Rights movement, which at a certain point did not know how to continue what it had started.

In the absence of State law, an informal system of community law was established. The alternative was anarchy. The Free State parties—given their continuing refusal to accept Sinn Fein as a Constitutional party, what else can we call them?—now describe that informal system of justice as a system of Kangaroo Courts. So be it. Kangaroo Courts were what was available and they were supported by the community in preference to anarchy.

The SDLP made a gesture towards formalising an alternative system with its Dungiven Parliament—funded by Dublin—but it lacked the substance to develop what it had started. So the alternative system on the ground became Republican, even while the SDLP continued to monopolise nationalist electoral representation.

An understood division of labour came about, whereby the community supported Sinn Fein while voting SDLP. Máiría Cahill said at one point, faced with some Dublin misunderstanding, that "*the community would understand*" her. And the community did understand, and it was entirely out of sympathy with the game she was playing in making accusations on the BBC *Spotlight*

programme with the encouragement of the Dublin Establishment.

It is said that Sinn Fein is not a normal party. That is perfectly true in the North. The Northern system is essentially incompatible with normal political parties. The SDLP is not normal, nor was the UUP, nor is the DUP.

Sinn Fein became the movement of a community, and the things that go on in a community went on in it.

Máiría Cahill came from a prominent Republican family. She was a member of Sinn Fein and became President of its Youth Wing. At the age of 16 she had a sexual relationship with another republican which she concluded after the event had been rape. So she complained to the authorities—the authorities that actually existed on the ground because of the failure of the British State to establish a functional *modus vivendi* with the nationalist community—and put her case to a Kangaroo Court.

From the articles she has written for the Dublin press, and from the statements of the Taoiseach and the leader of Fianna Fail, one would gather that she had been kidnapped and hauled before an IRA Court of Inquisition where she was grilled because she had dared to lay charges against an alleged IRA member. But this is entirely incredible.

She was a Republican with a grievance against a fellow Republican and she dealt with the matter within the Republican body. The Kangaroo Court heard both sides and could not make a decision. And there the matter rested for some years. The accused left Northern Ireland and eventually ended up in England with a new relationship.

Máiría Cahill later parted company with the Provisional Republican movement because it made a 6 County settlement, of a transitional kind, in 1998, which it consolidated a few years later by recognising the PSNI replacement of the RUC as a legitimate police force. Máiría Cahill left the Provos and joined the Anti-Agreement Republicans.

Then, having rejected the Provos because they recognised the police, she went to those police with her rape allegation. The police took up the case for her, but insisted on bringing two court cases: one against the members of the Kangaroo Court and also the alleged rapist for IRA membership and the other for the rape. They also insisted on bringing the IRA membership case before the rape case, on the alleged grounds that she had

a better chance of obtaining a conviction. When the republican membership trial opened, Máiría Cahill refused to give evidence. As the Crown was relying on her evidence, the Court found them Not Guilty.

Then, having aborted the Court action which she had instigated, she went to BBC television, which made a *Spotlight* programme, presenting her side of the case without any rebuttal evidence. Then the Dublin parties, who were all losing votes to Sinn Féin, took up the case from *Spotlight* and averted their minds from all that had preceded it.

Bertie Ahern even came out of retirement to repeat that he knew all about the IRA and knew that Gerry Adams was the leader of it. He had said all this as Taoiseach. He had said that he knew that the IRA had done the multi-million Northern Bank robbery—which remains unsolved. So it appears that the former Taoiseach is withholding evidence from the police.

When Máiría Cahill went to the police she found that they were at least as interested in getting her to give evidence against members of the Kangaroo Court which would be used to prosecute them for IRA membership, as prosecuting her rape allegation. That was the usual police procedure in Belfast and was one of the reasons why the minority community kept their distance from it.

The Kangaroo Court had four members. One of them, Breige Wright, was named in Máiría Cahill's witness statement to the police. When the Dublin Establishment was going strong on the Kangaroo Court hysteria, Ms Wright made public two letters which Máiría Cahill had written to her in 2005 and 2008, expressing gratitude for the kindness and understanding she had shown towards her in the Kangaroo Court episode. The text of these letters is given in this issue of the magazine.

After we had gone to print last month, it was revealed that two other complainants against Máiría Cahill's antagonist had gone to the police, but had eventually dropped their complaints when it became clear that the primary interest of the police was to get Witness Statements from them that could be used in prosecution for IRA membership. These complainants had much better ground for 'paedophile' allegations, as they were 13 and 14 at the time the relevant events occurred. But the police were single-minded in their concerns.

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Letter sent to *History Ireland*, 7th November 2014

Drolls

A Clown in Holy Orders, celebrating Requiem Mass in Dublin for a soldier killed serving with the British Army in Afghanistan (or Iraq), said in his praise that the deceased always carried his Irish Passport. Perhaps we should expect the Pope to canonise all adulterers who wear their wedding rings when on the job?

And we should expect Taliban and others to let the citizens of Ireland, bearing such passports, to pass "freely and without hindrance" through their countries, and to "afford them all necessary assistance and protection" as requested by the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, even when they are carrying and using lethal weapons, and wearing the liveries of British and other foreign powers?

Apart altogether from the moral confusion of the unfortunate deceased and the Clerical Clown, ordinary peaceful citizens, faithful to Ireland, are put at risk by such irresponsible nonsense.

When US Marine Colonel Oliver North was getting Arms to Iran in an underhand deal under President Reagan, US agents carried Irish passports. An assassination team in Dubai, apparently acting for Israel, used the same *ruse de guerre*. But Ireland is not at war and her citizens' safety should not be put in jeopardy by such practical jokes.

Reporting from Paris for *The Irish Times* of October 7, Lara Marlowe, an American, tells us that 750 Irish people lived in France when the Second World War started. I'm not sure what she means, but from the context it seems she thinks it started in 1939, but her own country kept out of it until December 1941 when its Pacific Fleet was attacked at Pearl Harbour by the Japanese and Hitler declared War on behalf of the Third Reich. Until then the United States maintained embassies in Tokyo, Rome and Vichy, and Berlin. It's moot whether without Pearl Harbour or Hitler's declaration, the United States would have become a belligerent at all.

The gist of her story was the unveiling of a plaque at the Irish College in Paris to Irish people who engaged in French Resistance activities between 1940 and the Allied expulsion of the Germans from France in 1944. She quoted Professor of Military History, David Murphy of National University of Ireland -

"These people made a moral choice, they could have waved their Free State passports, mirrored the Irish Government's stance and said, 'I'm not involved, I'm neutral' "

The fact that voters in the Irish Free State in 1937 abolished that state and established a sovereign, independent democratic Irish State with a Republican form of Government seems to have escaped the notice of the Professor, together with the fact that Government and Opposition parties and populace supported neutrality then and for decades since.

Citizens waving "Free State" passports were presumably stateless in 1940. I'd guess that Irish passport holders active in the French Resistance held on to their passports like the British soldier already mentioned, to shelter behind the neutrality of the Irish State, whose electorate expected them to render fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State. Or did they openly renounce their Irish citizenship, trash their passports, and replace them with passports issued by General de Gaulle's shadow Government in London, an Irregular junta unrecognised by any power on earth? I understand that Marshal Petain's administration had the backing, or acquiescence, of most French men and women, until long after D-Day in 1944.

On first reading Professor Murphy's remarks I nearly hit the roof. He appears to think himself a moral Colossus, and the Irish Government and Opposition and electorate in 1940 as Pygmies. I should be, but am not, surprised that he's a Graduate and Professor of Ireland's National University, God save the mark! It did not surprise me to learn that Professor Murphy is a member of the United Kingdom's Royal United Services Institute, and has been awarded a Fellowship at the Summer Seminar in Military History at the United States Military Academy at West Point, where, I guess, he may have got his Moral Compass.

A Droll Fellow indeed!

Donal Kennedy

It is clear that, had the police chosen to pursue the rape allegation, given that there were two other cases pending against the same man, there was a good chance that a conviction might have been obtained.

Máiría Cahill's solicitor has issued a challenge to the alleged members of the Kangaroo Court to bring a libel action against her and the television authorities over the *Spotlight* programme.

We recall a prissy RTE interview with Gerry Adams some years ago in which he was asked why he did not take libel actions against those who were saying he was Chief of Staff of the IRA. The interviewer said that was what she would if anyone said she was Chief of Staff of the IRA—and on an RTE salary she could have afforded to do it. He explained to her that libel depended on defamation in the eyes of one's peers, and that in the eyes of the nationalist community in the North the accusation of IRA membership does not damage one's reputation. (Proof of it would of course lead to criminal prosecution, even though the clear implication of the 1998 Agreement is that the IRA's war was not an outbreak of 'criminality'.)

The residual anti-Partitionism of the leader of Fianna Fail has now taken the form of the demand for an All-Ireland Inquiry into paedophilia within the IRA. The demand has been taken up by the Taoiseach, but it seems the British won't play.

*

The water-charges crisis was dealt with by a drastic reduction in the proposed charge, along with the payment of every 100 Euros to every household, whether liable to Water Charges or not. This means a gift of 100 Euros to farmers who have their own water supply systems. This option was chosen instead of a simple 100 Euro reduction for those liable to the charge. Fine Gael looks after its own.

The charges crisis has its source in the abolition of rates by Fianna Fail in 1977, but the Government could make nothing of that because Fine Gael and Labour would have done it if FF hadn't.

The water-supply crisis—real but absurd in a country rich in rain—is left for a future Government to deal with.

*

In the North the SDLP has rejected a Sinn Fein proposal for an Election Pact in three constituencies in the forthcoming British Election, describing the proposers as *Sleeveens*. In the absence of a Pact, there is a possibility of these seats being won by the DUP, which the Tory Party

has been courting with a view to a possible alliance in the event of a hung Parliament.

The SF proposal was made in the light of the virtual certainty that there will be a pan-Unionist agreement.

The reality of Northern politics is the conflict of two communities. A kind of party politics not tied to community has never been a practical possibility in the NI set-up. It is always a simple case of either/or. But the SDLP, ever since losing electoral ground to SF after 1998, has embarked on an incoherent form of make-believe under the influence of Seamus Mallon, under whose leadership it failed to maintain its position as the promoter of the Agreement.

Sinn Fein won the Fermanagh seat at the last British Election against an agreed Unionist candidate by a handful of votes,

despite the SDLP splitting the nationalist vote, and must now try to do so again. There is no possibility of the SDLP taking the seat.

Gerry Adams' remark about "*unionist bastards*" who obstruct the equality agenda, and the description of the equality agenda as a Trojan Horse which subverts Unionism, were made in a speech in Fermanagh.

The SDLP's characterisation of SF as a *Sleeveen* party fits well with Gregory Campbell's dismissal of Irish as a "*Curry myyoghurt*" pseudo language. Forty years ago it seemed that Irish, one of the six and a half thousand languages in the world, was in the half destined for extinction. That, clearly, is no longer the case, and the SDLP would do well to buy an Irish/English dictionary, look up *sleeveen* in it, and discover itself.

The Civil Rights Trojan Horse

The Gerry Adams slip that described the Sinn Fein equality agenda as a Republican Trojan Horse has, says Unionism, let the cat out of the bag. Mike Nesbitt, the UUP leader, said that the Sinn Fein leader "*has taken what we all politically assumed was a core value and part of the vision for the future of a new Northern Ireland, namely equality, and he has turned it into a weapon*" ("Trojan Horse jibe will haunt Adams", *Belfast Telegraph*, 26.11.14)

A "new Northern Ireland"—now that would be a fine thing! A Unionist vision for equality—now that would be a fine thing!

But now that "*the mask has slipped*" with the Adams slip and Republicans have been proved to be... well, Republicans, after all, Mike has changed his mind and the "*new Northern Ireland*" of equality that he so dearly wanted to give to everyone is off. So there!

"The next time a senior Sinn Fein member talks about equality the first image that springs to mind is going to be a Trojan Horse. It is clear he views equality as merely a tactic" said Nesbitt of Adams.

The Unionist Party leader it seems, will see a Republican now when he sees a Sinn Feiner.

Unionists, those sensitive souls—including the "*bastards*" that Republicans would have to break—are appalled it seems at this shocking revelation at who they

have been dealing with all these years. They are nothing but unreconstructed Republicans, after all, as Unionists have been telling everyone for years. And now proof from the horse's mouth, at last!

Well, that's finally it. We will be taking our toys home. You will not be getting our "*new Northern Ireland*" and you will go to bed without your supper!

Are Unionists such slow learners that they did not know about this weapon of Nationalists already? Or has the horrible thought just dawned on them that equality is a weapon because Unionism has been seen to be unable to live with it without combusting, even when they are proclaiming that "*the Union is safer than ever*" and a "*new Northern Ireland*" is finally available?

Gerry Adams has been accused of many things in recent years but he is certainly not one of the architects of the Trojan Horse. We must inform Unionists, if they have forgotten everything they have been whinging about for half a century, that It began life 50 years ago when Big Gerry was still a wee lad.

Fifty years ago, in January 1965, the Taoiseach Sean Lemass had his famous meeting with Stormont Prime Minister Captain O'Neill. He then urged a shocked Nationalist Party to take up the role of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in the Northern Parliament. Just a few years before, Eddie McAteer, leader of the Northern

Catholics, had said that such a thing would be tantamount to *"taking the soup"* and he would have none of it. However, the Taoiseach let it be known that the Patriot Game was over and it was time for Northern Catholics to participate in *"the Northern state"*.

The Northern Catholics had held themselves apart from this *"state"*, which they knew was not a State, ever since it was set up in 1921. They preserved themselves apart from it and awaited deliverance from it by the main part of the Nation to the south. And then Lemass let it be known to them that deliverance was cancelled.

So what were they to do? Looking for equality within this 'state' was their only option for the future.

And so the Trojan Horse was born.

The Trojan Horse was not a thought-out plan of Sean Lemass. It is doubtful if he had a plan at all with regard to the North. His daughter Peggy later said that he indeed had the plan to unfreeze the North through Catholic participation and open it up for a new thrust at the Border. And the Irish archives from late 1969 reveal that the Lynch Government felt that that was his great achievement after the miracle of August and they looked forward to exploiting the situation that Lemass had carved out through his wise and novel innovation in policy. What was described was the Trojan Horse.

Lemass did not advise Civil Rights but that is where participation naturally went after Parliamentary Opposition in Stormont proved futile and demeaning, as McAteer knew it would. So The Northern Catholics had nowhere to go but to the Civil Rights strategy after the Taoiseach had re-directed their efforts into a cul-de-sac. There was luckily a man with a plan on hand for this and his name was Desmond Greaves. Greaves had established relations with the Republican movement and given them a plan for re-opening the Border question through the Trojan Horse of Civil Rights. Demand more than O'Neill could concede was the advice and it worked a treat.

Greaves' plan was fantasy, of course, in its belief that Civil Rights would free the Prods up for a re-embracing of the Republican heritage of their 1798 forefathers. But it provoked the miracle of August 1969 after which all things were thought possible, right across the Nationalist spectrum.

A famous Derryman was very impressed with the success of the Trojan Horse and he told the Irish Government's man in

the North so. The Irish archives have blanked out his name in the report but the present writer presumes it was "you know who" who described the Civil Rights Movement as a magnificently successful Anti-Partitionist Trojan Horse. And he certainly learnt a lesson or two from it, if his subsequent efforts and mode of operation are anything to go by.

That is why it is surprising to see the SDLP criticise Sinn Fein for seeing equality as a mere tactic rather than a principle and objective in itself. But perhaps not, as they still wonder what went wrong.

The reason why the 1960s Trojan Horse was successful was because the 'Northern Ireland state' could not deliver equality, even though there seemed to be no reason why it could not as a region of a state that proclaimed itself in the vanguard of progress in such things. But 'Northern Ireland' was incapable of such progress because of its peculiar character. It had an inbuilt majority whose main and eternal function was maintaining itself in a dominant position. And, having the semblance of democracy on the Westminster model, its governing party relied on the votes of a mass base which insisted on an unequal relationship between the loyal and the disloyal. If the government did not maintain this, other would.

Equality, even though it seemed easily something that could be conceded by Unionists to strengthen the Union by giving *"British Rights to British Citizens"*, was not conceded.

And so, after the Trojan Horse drove the Unionists berserk in August 1969, it produced the Catholic Insurrection, the 28 Year War and the Peace of 1998. And it was Westminster that had to concede what Unionists proved incapable of conceding from the confines of their 'state'.

The Good Friday settlement, that the Unionist leader Trimble signed his community up to, has turned into something of a nightmare for Unionism. It produced an equalising of political power between the two communities but left enough unresolved issues to give room for further Catholic advance. And Sinn Fein momentum in the North has thrust across the Border, something Taoiseach Lemass would not have imagined possible in his wildest nightmares.

The Trojan Horse lived on, *"bearing to the Trojans death and fate"*, as Homer said.

The fact that the Good Friday Agreement equalised power in the North, but

left unfinished business within it to absorb political energies, tends to suggest that the fundamental problem of 'Northern Ireland' remains unresolved. That is to say that, while 'Northern Ireland' exists, it exists as a problem. So the problem seems to be 'Northern Ireland' itself.

At the same time Westminster has signalled that the only direction 'Northern Ireland' can go in is toward the Republic. So the basis of politics since 1998 is a Catholic drive for equality within 'Northern Ireland' against a Unionist rearguard action in favour of marginal inequality—until a Catholic majority votes everyone into a United Ireland.

Malachi O'Doherty says in the *Belfast Telegraph*:

"Gerry has been saying for years that Northern Ireland can only be shored up by inequality and injustice and that when these have been dealt with the border will go. We may question whether he believes that or ever believed it, but the point is made in practically every book he has written."

That sounds very like the Greaves/Stickie project of the original Trojan Horse. Has Gerry returned to being a Stick for the revived Trojan Horse by any chance? Will the circle be unbroken?

The most significant part of Gerry Adams' speech was not the Trojan Horse slip or the *"breaking those bastards"* utterance but that terrible question for 'Northern Ireland' that has haunted Unionism for 50 years: *"Who could be afraid of equality?"*

Pat Walsh

Máiría Cahill Controversy

Statement of Breige Wright

I have been the subject of a media onslaught following the BBC Spotlight broadcast on October 14th 2014.

Due to the fact that Mairia Cahill refused to stand over her allegations against me in court where she would have been challenged, I feel that I have to release two significant letters that she sent me in 2005 and in 2008.

My legal team would have questioned her about these letters had there been a trial.

There has been a deluge of inaccurate, prejudiced and selective reporting of all aspects of this case. Particularly, my relationship with Máiría Cahill and in

terms of the support that I offered her.

Some ill-informed commentators and political parties have added to the biased Spotlight broadcast. They have been eager to set aside due process and the verdict of the court.

My intent was to try to help Máiría. I believe that these letters demonstrate that Máiría accepted and valued that support.

The letters have been slightly redacted due to personal information that relates to others including Máirías' family.

Madden & Finucane, Solicitors,
Belfast. 4th November 2014

Máiría Cahill Letters To Breige Wright

[2005]

"Well Breige,

I thought I'd write you a wee note to go with the card. You know me Breige, sometimes I try to say stuff and it comes out the wrong way, so I thought I'd write it down. Bet ya this is the first letter you have received

I was just saying to ——— earlier, fair play to ya, you are never going to know how much you have helped me—through all of the shite that went on years ago, and in the aftermath, and again recently, I meant what I said before about you being the only one from that time that I trusted, and for me to trust anyone after everything that has happened is a major thing. I might get angry and snap, but that anger is not directed at you—I'm angry at myself and at other people that I can't get at, and I'm sorry if you have taken the brunt of it. You mean the world to me, you are kind, compassionate, committed, and above all, you gave me an ear when I needed it—even though I know I put your head away. I think if I had been in your shoes I would have told me to fuck off a long time ago—but I am so glad that you didn't. I would not be here now if it wasn't for you, and I think that deep down you know that.

So, I am really going to try and piece my head, and my life back together, even though at the minute it seems next to impossible. I just feel helpless at the minute, because I don't even know where to start. Well, I know I need to look at —

— so I think its going to take a hell of a long time—say a prayer that nothing else will happen to me in the meantime. I seem to have a knack of attracting trouble. Sure, maybe my luck will change and I'll win the lottery or something—if I do I'll buy you a vodka supply for life ha ha!

Anyway, this started off as a wee note and has turned into a book! I definately have too much time on my hands at the

minute. You take care of yourself and don't work yourself into the ground. You have a gift of helping other people out, and it really is a gift but don't lose yourself to it on the way—help yourself out first. Please stay in contact with me—your phonecalls have been great over the last two weeks, they have really helped, but even send a wee text now and again to let me know how you are getting on.

Just think, Uncle Joe + Marie are probably up there right now working on some sort of campaign and having a good yarn into the bargain.

I'm signing off now, thanks a million Breige for helping me just by being you. Take care

Grá ó Máiría xx

3/12/08

Hey Breíge,

Just a wee note to say I hope you're doing well and that everything is sound. Everything is good this end, just very busy in work but looking forward to the Christmas break. Nothing really strange or exciting except I went to a medium a fortnight ago and Siobhan came through—

it was scary and peaceful all at the one time—the medium knew nothing about me, didn't even know my name, but she was able to tell me all about my life, and it was like Siobhan was sitting facing me—I got shouted at and comforted at the same time, in a way only Siobhan was able to do [smiley face symbol]. I never really believed in any of that stuff before, but like I said, yer woman had every detail from years ago. Spot on right up to today. I roared (and I never cry, but was a peaceful thing!)

Apart from that nothing exciting, —

And everything else is ticking along.

Bridget, you may get up and see me for a cup of tea frig sake I've near forgot what you look like [smiley face] Seriously though, anytime. I've about three years of biz for ya so you a may bring earmuffs or something. Na, only slegging, I'm boring enough this weather to have biz, but be good to see you.

Hoping this wee note finds you well, and that you are taking it easy. Have a lovely Christmas and take care.

Grá Máiría X

Kilmichael Address

Ambush has been analysed, researched, interpreted and misinterpreted *ad nauseam*. You might say there has been a concerted attempt to ambush Kilmichael and the reputation of Tom Barry but it has been repulsed.

The fact is that the War of Independence has been fought all over again in recent years, without guns this time, fortunately, but a no less significant war because of that. It is just a different kind of war.

In the context of this new 'War', events such as this commemoration here and similar commemorations elsewhere have a vital importance because they present opportunities for putting the record straight about the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence. Opportunities for doing so are few and far between these days. You will very rarely find such opportunities in forums such as the media, in academia, in the educational system and in 'history books' and in mainstream political parties. And when the mainstream politicians commemorate such events they give the distinct impression that they are simply going through the motions. In those forums you will get everything from outright condemnation of the Rising and the War of Independence to an acknowledgment of these events but with all sorts of reserv-

continued

ations, qualifications and regrets and a negative tone throughout. The end result is to seek to give us a bad conscience about the whole thing.

One of the latest efforts that is typical but also the most extraordinary is that coming from an ex-Taoiseach, John Bruton. It is mind-boggling to hear an ex-Taoiseach condemning the foundation events and the founding fathers of this state of which he was a leader. I cannot imagine a leader of any other Republic, e.g., that of the France, America, China or wherever, where a leader of those countries would say anything similar about their state's origin. It is unimaginable. And there was a lot more war and bloodshed in establishing these and other states than was the case here. Overwhelmingly popular support here for independence minimised the bloodshed.

But when an ex-Taoiseach feels the need to claim that all this was misguided and campaigns seriously to promote this view, it is necessary to consider what he says and if there is any merit in it. This is necessary also because what he says probably seems very plausible to anyone who has learned their history in recent

years.

He says that the Volunteers of 1916 should have trusted in Home Rule as it was on the Statute Book and it would have evolved into a Republic. And there was therefore no need for war and bloodshed. Of course, if wishes were horses we would all go for a ride. No sane person wishes for war if there is a viable alternative. So was there a viable alternative in the context of the time? Bruton implies there was and so the Volunteers deliberately chose the road of war. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Well, very briefly, let's start at a time when the Volunteers of 1916 *did* trust in Home Rule and it seemed another course was possible. Because there was a time when the people of 1916 did trust in Home Rule. Home Rule was of course a very, very limited form of devolved government—for example a lot less than what Scotland has. It appeared possible to have this in 1912 after nearly 30 years of Parliamentary effort. That mountain of Parliamentary labour had produced a mouse.

In 1912 Pearse shared a platform with Redmond in support of Home Rule. What happened? Pearse changed his mind. Why? Keynes was once accused of changing his mind and he responded by saying, "*When circumstance change I change my mind. What do you do sir?*" What changed Pearse's mind?

What happened? There was a rebellion against the Government's plans for Home Rule. And this was a real rebellion. In 1912 the British and Irish Tories/Unionists organised themselves to set up a Provisional Government, an alternative Government to prevent Home Rule. An illegal army was set up in 1913, the UVF, to prevent by force the Government implementing the law it was about to pass, Home Rule.

Tons of arms and ammunition were imported. The Irish Volunteers were set up afterwards to *support* the Government in implementing Home—to assist in implementing the law not to break it as the Ulster Volunteers were planning to do. In 1914 the British Army supported this rebellion when in the Curragh mutiny it would not obey the Government on Home Rule implementation—they refused to enforce the law! And the important thing was that the Government allowed all this to happen and conceded all along the line.

But then in 1915 a most important thing happened. Something that is never mentioned these days though it was a crucial event. At the time no UK Parliament could

run for more than five years and the last election had been in 1910 so one was constitutionally due in 1915 as the Government's mandate had run out. But the Government decided that an election may not suit them so they did a deal with the Opposition, the Tories/Unionists, to bring them into Government and avoid an election. These were the people who had openly and proudly broken the law against the Government over the prospect of Home Rule. Now the lawbreakers were the lawmakers! It was a parliamentary *coup d'état*.

The Unionists had their own army, with plenty arms, they had British Army support and now they were in government. They had won and it was absolutely clear that Home Rule or any form of Irish independence was off the agenda. There was no two ways about it. If that Government had its way, we would be still be waiting for Home Rule. It was already suspended on the day it was passed on 18th September 1914 and that is where it would remain.

As a result, this new Government lost all moral authority in Ireland. In fact it only had legal authority because the British House of Commons is above the law. Because whatever it is does is legal. It can do whatever it likes and it is automatically legal—this is the essence of the British Constitution. Unlike other countries there is no Court or Law that it is accountable to.

But in his current campaign, John Bruton, tries to obscure this basic fact about a non-elected Government being in power in 1916 and is quoted as saying:

"Referring to 256 Irish civilians killed during the Rising, as well as 52 Irish members of the British army, 14 RIC members and three members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, he said: "These Irish men were acting on the orders of a duly constituted Government, elected by a parliament, which had already granted home rule to Ireland, and to which Ireland had democratically elected its own MPs"... (Irish Times, 2 Nov. 2104).

The Government was not "duly constituted" and there were no Irish MPs in the Government or elected in support of that Government.

Some of the Irish Volunteers were not slow learners when they saw this happening. It was clear that parliamentary democracy had become a sick joke and that the only reality that the Government responded to was rebellion.

To use management-speak, rebellion was best practice when it came to political success at the time.

It is true that 1916 had no mandate but the existing Government had no mandate either. It was not an elected Government. The electoral mandate of the British Parliament, given in 1910, ran out in 1915.

But it decided to carry on without an Election. The Ulster Rebellion had no mandate either, except what the Unionists gave themselves. They had set out to break the law and had won and the Irish Volunteers who had been set up to uphold the law had been treated with contempt. There were no mandates all round.

John Redmond committed the Home Rule party to a war of the British Empire on Germany and Turkey. He did this without an electoral mandate. He never put it to the Irish electorate that he would take Ireland into Imperial wars if the Empire gave him Home Rule. But he took Ireland into the Empire's war in 1914, even though he had not got Home Rule.

The National Volunteers went to war without an Election mandate. Just like Redmond had done.

These Volunteers could not have got an electoral mandate in the circumstances of 1914. The Home Rule Party could. It could have resigned its Parliamentary seats and re-fought them on an Imperial war mandate. It chose not to do so. And, after the 1910 mandate ran out in 1915, it continued sitting in Parliament and supporting the Imperial War.

The Volunteers sought an electoral mandate for their 1916 action as soon as they could. When the British Parliament returned to electoral politics after a three-year gap they fought the Election and they won it.

British-oriented critics say electoral support for 1916 two and a half years after the event is no good. Democratic authorisation should have been got beforehand. Well, the Home Rule Party which sacrificed tens of thousands of Nationalist Irishmen in the Empire's War didn't get democratic authorisation before the event—or after it either.

You cannot advertise a military insurrection and look for signatures on a Petition in support of it—not under the *Defence of the Realm Act* anyway. But the Volunteers fought the General Election when the British Government eventually decided to hold one. They asked for a democratic mandate to establish an independent Government in Ireland. And they got it.

The British-oriented criticism then is that Sinn Fein did not in their election programme say that, if they were given a mandate to set up independent govern-

ment, they would defend it if the British Government made war on it. This is the kind of criticism made by the defeated Home Rulers. They had supported Britain's World War for more than four years, saying that it was a war to establish democracy and the rights of small nations throughout the world. And all the time it was in their minds that Britain would make war on the Irish if they voted for independent government and set it up!

The Irish Volunteers decided that a Rebellion was the only way to get the Government to respond as had been proved by the success of the Unionists. That is the political and moral case for the 1916 Rebellion. Rebellions by their nature cannot have any electoral mandate. You cannot advertise, announce or vote for a rebellion.

But the rebellion was electorally sanctioned two years later in the overwhelming electoral support for Sinn Fein. And the Government's response confirmed that they still had no respect for Irish Democracy. The Mother of Parliaments totally ignored the result and began immediately to suppress the new Dail by all available means—and not just ignore it.

Now it is important to remember that to add insult to injury this rejection of the 1918 Election result coincided with the end of the War that was supposed to be for *'the freedom of small nations'*. About a quarter of a million Irishmen volunteered and up to 50,000 were killed. But a recent estimate by a retired Irish Army Officer, Tom Burnell, has put the figure at 50% higher, about 75,000. We could assume they also killed as many Germans, Turks, Austrians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, etc. who had done no harm whatever to them or to this country.

In fact they more than likely killed a lot more, if the actions of the local winner of the VC, Mick O'Leary from Inchigellagh in the Gearagh, is anything to go by. The citation he got for being awarded the VC from King George V himself at Buckingham Palace in early 1915 explained that he got it because *"he rushed to the front and himself killed five Germans who were holding the first barricade, after which he attacked a second barricade, about 60 yards further on, which he captured, after killing three of the enemy and making prisoners of two more."*

Rudyard Kipling wrote the history of O'Leary's regiment and said about the same event: *"Eye-witnesses report that he (O'Leary) did his work quite leisurely and wandered out into the open, visible for any distance around, intent upon killing*

another German to whom he had taken a dislike."

That makes it 9 in this one incident alone.

On February 20, 1915 the "Cork Examiner" interviewed him as he was the man of the moment and he said:

"We captured a machine gun, killed the gunners and took some prisoners. The Huns lost terribly... On the 6th inst. we attacked them again with the bayonet and took all their trenches ... When the Irish Guards charge, they do charge, and the Huns knew that too. You would laugh if you saw us chasing them, mowing them down by the hundreds... We have not yet properly started on them. God help them when we do, for there will be some slaughter" (See *"Michael O'Leary, Kuno Meyer and Peadar Ó Laoghaire"* by Manus O'Riordan in the *Ballingeary Historical Society Journal*, 2005)

As they used to say, he was a broth of a boy! As O'Leary did his VC killing in just one sortie one can only imagine how many he killed across four years of war. But the mind simply boggles at the number he and *all* his 250,000 compatriots may have killed across that period. No wonder they were flattered as the *"Fighting Irish"*. But it's worth giving it some thought to try to imagine how many people were killed in total for what was believed to be the freedom of Ireland under the slogan of *"the freedom of small nations"*. I have not seen any effort to record or acknowledge these numbers among all the remembering that we are being asked to do. How many people allegedly died for Ireland across the world in that War?

And what did he and the other Irish soldiers get for their sacrifices and their mass killing? Instead of the 'freedom of small nations' they got Martial Law, the British Army, the Auxiliaries, the Black and Tan thugs and the RIC doing what they had always done but with knobs on.

The Auxiliaries, who were defeated here, were of course officers from the Great War who had fought it allegedly for this *'freedom of small nations'*. What a peculiar idea of 'freedom' they must have had! The Great War was the greatest con job in Irish history as far as Ireland was concerned.

It was this insult that created the mass support for the War of Independence. People were outraged.

The people had sought independence for decades, had been promised independence, had fought and killed for it in WWI, were in turn killed for it by the tens and tens of thousands; they voted for it

overwhelmingly and were then treated with contempt. People can only take so much. That is why there was committed support in every corner of the country for the War of Independence.

You need only read the daily paper of the first Dail, the *"Irish Bulletin"*, to see the extent and depth of this support in every corner of the country. Aubane has begun republishing this and it is the first time this has been done since the original was published during the War itself. I would recommend you to read it.

It was this mass support that ensured the success of Tom Barry here and elsewhere. Barry was a military genius but he could not have won without mass support.

These days we are asked to remember those who fought and died in WWI. And of course it is understandable that people would want to remember their family members and friends who lost their lives. But we must also remember how those people were betrayed and cynically betrayed by the Government they fought for. For Ireland the Great War was a Great Fraud. But this is not what we are encouraged to remember these days.

Those who ask us to remember WWI also want us to forget a lot about it. We are given glib phrases, such as that we should appreciate our shared history, our shared experience. It's nice to share—it sounds so comforting.

But some things cannot be described exactly as a shared experience. If one of us was mugged on the way home tonight, I wonder how the Gardai or the judge would respond if the assailant claimed it was all just a shared experience. Likewise, what would a judge's reaction be if a rapist claimed that his action was really just a shared sexual experience? Would it not also be a sick joke to describe the ongoing War that Israel wages on Palestinians as a shared experience? Would anyone who fought at Kilmichael have described it as a shared experience?

This is really a technique to explain away our history rather than explain it and to get us to forget our historical memory.

But amnesia is never a virtue. A people, like a person, who loses their memory is a sad, pathetic sight because, if you don't know where you have come from, you are not likely to know where you are going or indeed who you are.

The fact is that the War of Independence was not a war of choice for us. John Bruton would lead you to believe it was. The British threw everything they had to suppress the new democratically elected

Government—but failed. There was a war for independence only because of the war that was launched *against* independence.

If the people had accepted the Government's reaction to the way they voted in the 1918 Election and not responded by defending their legitimately elected Dail, it would have meant they did not take themselves seriously and that they had no self-respect. The defence of the first legitimately elected Dail by its legitimate army, the IRA, was an assertion and a defence of the people's self-respect. That was its *raison d'être*.

And this commemoration and others like it is an opportunity to honour those people for having had the courage of their convictions, maintaining their own self-respect and thereby getting the respect of people across the world and our respect. The people of 1916 and the War of Independence fought for what they were entitled to, were promised, had fought and died for, and voted for. In doing so they were, as Samuel Ferguson said of Thomas Davis, "*Self-respecting, self-relying, self-advancing*". They should be honoured without qualification or reservation.

And honouring the Boys of Kilmichael is our way of asserting our own self-respect today because, if we ever disown them, we would be disowning ourselves and what we are. We would become self-haters.

That is why it gives me great pleasure to be here and I thank the Committee again for inviting me and I wish them all the best for the future and I am sure that they will ensure this annual commemoration becomes a bigger and bigger event.

Gay . . . Grotesque

continued

at a sold-out event in central Brussels. Byrne is expected to reflect on his experience of retrieving the hidden history of his father's participation in the First World War, ahead of a screening of the RTÉ documentary broadcast earlier this year, *My Father's War*."

Sure enough, as I took that morning's flight to Brussels to attend a meeting of the European Economic and Social Committee, there was Byrne seated a couple of rows in front of me.

Yet it was what I had observed on going through Dublin airport security that had first turned my stomach. From time to time, I have seen Irish Army personnel wearing military uniform at the airport,

whether flying out to, or returning from, UN service. But the two adults I saw in military uniform that morning were not dressed as Irish Army officers. They were dressed in British Army uniforms, as were the score or more who followed them, complete with their army helmets being checked through security. But the reason why the "*army rank-and-file*" were considerably more diminutive than their "*officers*" was that they were, in fact, mere children, primary school pupils aged 11 or 12, at most. Before continuing with my own experiences of the flight, I will refer to the report of an RTÉ news item that I subsequently ascertained had been broadcast on the previous day, October 22nd:

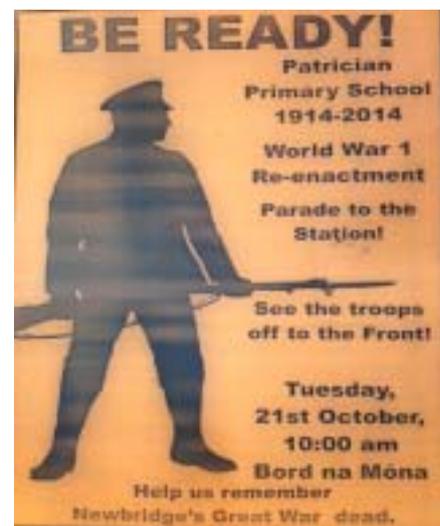
"Patrician Primary School in Newbridge Co Kildare found a special way to combine their 100 year anniversary with the centenary of the First World War. 26 of the students represented soldiers from the town that went to war in 1914. The group also marched to the train station, just as those soldiers would have 100 years ago. As part of the commemoration the student soldiers are heading to Belgium for four days to visit historic World War One sites like Ypres, the Menin Gate and a day trip to the Somme in France. Following in the footsteps of those who made that journey a century ago."

The Newbridge "*British Army*" platoon boarded the plane after me, led by two teachers, posing as "*officers*". I was in an aisle seat, another adult at the window, and one of the boy "*soldiers*" in the middle. I averted my eyes, as he turned in my direction on a number of occasions, anxious to start a conversation. I was so incensed at seeing such Imperialist War child abuse, with teachers performing the role of pernicious Pied Pipers, that if I opened my mouth at all, I was afraid that I would explode and take my anger out on the child himself. So, the boy turned to the other passenger, saying "*I suppose you're wondering what we're doing*", and proudly proceeded to give a narrative along the lines of the RTÉ report.

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the children were told something about the Co. Meath poet Francis Ledwidge who was killed in that War in 1917. Ledwidge is often extolled not only for his poetry and personal courage but also for the cause for which he enlisted in the British Army. Ledwidge, who fought in Kosovo in 1915 in order to expel the new Bulgarian invaders and restore that province to the only slightly more recent Serbian invaders of 1912, has been frequently quoted with approval for the anti-German sentiments contained in his statement that "*I joined the British Army*

because she stood between Ireland and an enemy common to our civilisation and I would not have it said that she defended us while we did nothing at home but pass resolutions". But this statement is usually quoted out of context. Alice Curtayne's biography, *Francis Ledwidge—a A Life of the Poet*, makes it perfectly clear that it is taken from a June 1917 letter in which Ledwidge, while no longer adhering to such a view, explained what had been his original motivation for enlisting in 1914. In that same letter Ledwidge revealed his sympathies for the 1916 Rising, referred to his poem on the executed Rising leader Thomas McDonagh as his favourite one, and described how awful it felt to be "*called a British soldier while my own country has no place among the nations but the place of Cinderella*". Home on leave in the immediate aftermath of the Easter Rising Ledwidge had in fact told his brother Joe: "*If I heard the Germans were coming in over our back wall, I wouldn't go out now to stop them. They could come!*"

The Newbridge children will certainly not be told **that** about Ledwidge! But I am not sure there will be any Irish cultural references at all. When not excitedly explaining the purpose of his journey to the other passenger, the "*boy soldier*" repeatedly rehearsed that jolly British War song, "*Pack up your troubles in your own kit-bag and smile, smile, smile!*" The child will not be told that the Welsh author of those 1915 lyrics, George Henry Powell, became a conscientious objector in 1916 in protest against conscription. Nor will he be told how the British war poet Wilfred Owen, who would be killed on 4th November 1918, exactly a week short of Armistice Day, had mocked those lyrics in his poem entitled just that, "*Smile, Smile, Smile*". This poem had been written by Owen on the French front on 23rd September 1918, in protest against a



rejection by French President Clemenceau of an Austrian peace initiative, on the grounds that such a peace would be a "betrayal" of the Allied fighting troops. In that poem, the bitterly satirical Owen referred to the simultaneous war propaganda publication of a photograph of three smiling wounded soldiers, under the caption "Happy".

There is, of course, that even more powerful poem by Owen, "*The Parable of the Old Man and the Young*", in which he subverts the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. (Rather than start a row whenever I hear sentimental World War One songs being sung, I often follow on by singing my own adaptation of this Owen poem as an antidote): "*Then Abram*

bound the youth with belts and straps, and buildèd parapets and trenches there". When an angel asks Abram to spare Isaac's life and sacrifice instead the Ram of Pride, the outcome in Owen's poem is very different from that of the Bible, and it ends with the powerful lines: "*But the old man would not so, but slew his son, and half the seed of Europe, one by one*". These words about the Imperialist corruption of youth by war propaganda, and the actual sacrifice of youth in Imperialist war itself, did, of course, spring to mind yet again, as I disembarked at Brussels airport and saw another "*boy soldier*" engage with Gay Byrne, and overheard the response of a delighted Byrne: "*Well done!*"

Manus O'Riordan

Book Review: *Brian Lenihan: In Calm And Crisis*, Irish Academic Press, €22.45.
Editors: *Brian Murphy, Mary O'Rourke, Noel Whelan*

Brian Lenihan

This book is a collection of essays about Brian Lenihan, a much loved politician who found himself in the eye of the political storm arising from the worst economic crisis in the history of the State. The editors of the book don't claim that that the collection is balanced, although some of the essays are critical. Inevitably a sympathetic account of Brian Lenihan's life cannot avoid being a defence of his brief and tumultuous tenure as Minister for Finance. In this reviewer's opinion the case for the defence is strong, but why has it taken so long for it to be made?

Lenihan's Aunt, former Cabinet Minister Mary O'Rourke, expresses disappointment in her essay at the current Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin's reluctance to defend her nephew's legacy. The criticism is completely justified. There were some outrageous allegations made about the Fianna Fáil/Green Party Government by various media and politicians that went unanswered.

At the end of 2010 the Fianna Fáil/Green Party Government had run its course and was about to face the electorate. The handling of the Troika's arrival in November 2010 was shambolic and caused a crisis of confidence within the Government parties. Having done all that was necessary to restore the economy to a sustainable footing, Fianna Fáil panicked at the prospect of facing the electorate.

By deposing its leader, Brian Cowen, the Party was conceding that it had failed in the previous three and a half years. Enoch Powell famously said that all

political careers end in failure. However, it is unusual for the political failure to precede the verdict of the people. The thinking of the Party seems to have been to replace Cowen with someone presentable, who had not been associated too much with the economic crisis. Micheál Martin as the outgoing Minister for Foreign Affairs seemed to be the ideal candidate.

There is a glib maxim of political spin, which says that "if you find yourself having to explain, you're losing". Fianna Fáil adopted that maxim. It decided to apologise in the hope that it wouldn't have to explain. But, of course the media's appetite for obeisance was insatiable. No apology was contrite enough. A second element of the Party's strategy was to talk about something else besides the economy. So, Martin proposed a number of gimmicks such as changing our electoral system. In the various debates he did quite well, but nobody really cared. The electorate saw the Fianna Fáil campaign as a futile attempt to induce amnesia.

In retrospect it is clear that Brian Cowen should not have been deposed as Fianna Fáil leader before the election. The Irish people had a deep need to come to terms with what had happened since 2007. Replacing Cowen with Martin was an evasive action, which meant that a defence of the outgoing Government went by default. While the outcome of the election might not have been much different, the evasiveness of Fianna Fáil was neither in the long term interests of the Party or the State.

This book reads like an attempt to remedy that strategic error. It remains to be seen whether it has come in time to save the Party. But if recent economic data is anything to go by at least the future of the State is secure.

While Lenihan's time as Minister for Finance is examined in the most detail, he had a life before May 2008. And, of course, his family had a long tradition of public service. Dr. Harman Murtagh gives some insight into his family background.

Lenihan's grandfather, P.J. Lenihan, supported Michael Collins and the Treaty. After a period in the Civil Service he was seconded to a textile factory in Athlone in the 1930s, which at its height employed 700 people. Murtagh's account is brief, but the impression given is that the factory was largely sponsored by the State. It also seems to have been quite progressive with Workers' Councils and Trade Union recognition. The grandfather became General Manager and the company was commercially successful. In 1957 he retired and opened a small hotel by the shores of Lough Ree. He seems to have developed an appreciation of the industrial policy of Sean Lemass (both pre- and post-Protection) and for this reason was attracted to Fianna Fáil. He served as a TD for a number of years. Murtagh notes that in 1965, when the famous Fine Gael politician and War of Independence hero General Sean McEoin lost his seat in PJ's constituency, there was no sense of triumphalism within the Lenihan family.

Brian Lenihan Senior, PJ's son, had a long and distinguished career in Fianna Fáil. Murtagh says that Brian Senior regarded himself as being a Social Democrat who wanted closer links between Fianna Fáil and the Labour Party. This might refer to the time in the late 1980s and 1990s when Fianna Fáil began to accept that the days of single party Government were over.

The essays of Mary O'Rourke and Mary McAleese give the impression that Brian Lenihan Junior was quite an earnest and studious youth. He studied law in Trinity and won a scholarship. He later graduated from Cambridge. McAleese expected him to pursue a lucrative career in law, but he chose politics without any pressure from his family.

Brian Murphy, a former speech writer for two Taoisigh, gives an interesting account of Lenihan's initial foray into politics: the Dublin West by-election campaign of 1996, which arose following the death of Brian Senior. Lenihan was a

rather diffident candidate on the doorsteps, but a confident media performer. Interestingly, Murphy praises the selfless devotion to the Party of Ray Burke who put in long hours canvassing so that the Party would retain its seat.

Murphy suggests that there were elements of that campaign that presaged future developments in Irish Politics. Fianna Fáil believed that it would need 35% of the vote to prevent Joe Higgins of the Socialist Party from overtaking Lenihan on transfers. But Brian Junior won the seat with a far lower percentage of First Preferences. The reason was that Lenihan had won a significant proportion of transfers from the Fine Gael candidate. Was this the beginning of class politics or a symptom of something else?

Lenihan's political advisor, Cathy Herbert, in her essay notes that he felt the campaign led by Joe Higgins against bin charges reflected a sense of alienation from the State. Lenihan's belief in defending the interests of the State is one of the main themes of Herbert's excellent essay. When he was Minister for Children he ruled out the idea of independent legal representation for children in legal disputes. He was also against instituting a Court of Civil Appeal because it would add an extra costly judicial layer. The answer lay in making the existing system more efficient. He saw these 'reforms' as "*lawyerfattening exercises*". Unfortunately, as Herbert notes wistfully: "*both of these ships have since sailed*".

It is worth quoting from Herbert on Lenihan's views on Government:

"The job of the Government on behalf of the State is to ensure that the common good is served: that requires saying 'No' at least as often as saying 'Yes'... he instanced the Hepatitis C scandal of the mid-1990s. It was his view that Michael Noonan, the Minister for Health, had been treated badly by the political system including Fianna Fáil. While allowing that the controversy had been handled disastrously, he argued that all Noonan had been endeavouring to do was to protect the interests of the State, which was his duty. Lenihan's view was that no matter how deserving or worthy the cause, in a world of limited resources a government had to act proportionately in the best interests of all the citizens."

Herbert gives a very interesting description of Lenihan's period as Finance Minister. He was appointed in May 2008 and immediately set about restoring the State's finances. One of his main philosophical tenets was that all income earners should pay some direct tax. All citizens should feel they have a stake in the State. In this

reviewer's opinion there is some merit in this argument. While the burden of taxation fell too heavily on low income earners in the 1980s, that problem was solved by the early 1990s. However, the resolution of the problem did not stop the drive for even more tax cuts in subsequent years, long after there was a social justification for such measures. Lenihan's cousin, Feargal O'Rourke, remarks in his essay that, by the time Lenihan had become the Minister for Finance, 2 out of 5 income earners were outside the income tax net. That was not sustainable.

But, of course, the budget deficit was not the only challenge facing Lenihan, within a few months of his appointment he was faced with the prospect of a banking collapse in September 2008. As other essays in this book document, it was one crisis after another until the end of 2010 when he remarked poignantly:

"I'm afraid that after all our efforts we are going to end up in the place we have been striving so hard to avoid."

But the efforts were not in vain. The groundwork that had been done enabled Ireland to avoid the social upheaval that other countries experienced. In the two and a half years leading up to the bailout, Herbert says the Civil Servants in the Department of Finance were completely dedicated to restoring the public finances. The morale in the Department was quite good during this period. There developed a sense of camaraderie, in part, as a consequence of the relentless attacks on the Department from the media. Lenihan had a high opinion of most of the senior civil servants. But the nature of the crisis was unprecedented. At one stage one senior civil servant exclaimed in despair:

"Minister we cannot advise you because we have never been in this position before".

While the Minister respected his staff in the Department of Finance, he felt it necessary to seek outside help from such academics/economists as Patrick Honohan, Alan Ahearne, Colm McCarthy, Jim O'Leary as well as the Minister for Finance during the last recession Ray McSharry. Honohan was later appointed Governor of the Central Bank and Ahearne was appointed Lenihan's economic advisor. Honohan, Ahearne and McSharry also contribute to this book.

Cathy Herbert says that Lenihan was very annoyed that Honohan rang *Morning Ireland* on 18th November 2010 to announce that a bailout was inevitable. In this reviewer's opinion the Minister had

every right to be annoyed. The prerogative for announcing entry into the Troika programme should have rested with the sovereign Government. The State had funding for another six months. The Government wanted to delay entry into the programme in order to obtain the best possible deal. In this reviewer's opinion Honohan's unnecessary intervention undermined the Government's negotiating position.

Honohan is very interesting on the days leading up to the bailout announcement in which he was a very significant actor. He says an Editorial in the *Financial Times* (18.11.10) claimed there was a bank run in Ireland. In an uncertain environment perceptions can determine the reality. Then, by way of justification for his *Morning Ireland* intervention he says:

"Things had got to the point where, had it remained silent on the state of play, the Central Bank would have not only failed in its responsibility to use timely communication to steady confidence, but would also have dashed a legitimate public expectation in Ireland that it could be trusted not to deceive through omission."

In this reviewer's opinion that is self-serving nonsense.

He then goes on to say:

"...I made a point of explicitly leaving these two aspects—whether an application would be made and the possibility of a precautionary-only arrangement—open in the radio interview which I undertook the following morning (Thursday 18 November). The Troika remained in doubt about the Government's intentions and the interview, if anything, improved the negotiating atmosphere somewhat to our advantage."

In this reviewer's opinion the Governor overstepped his responsibilities in announcing the bailout. There was absolutely no necessity to do this. It is also interesting that he seems to deny that that is in fact what he did. No one who listened to that interview could interpret Honohan as leaving anything open.

A transcript of the interview is available on the Internet. The interview begins with a quibble about whether to call the Troika involvement a "*bailout*" or a "*loan*". Honohan insists on referring to it as a "*loan*" because the State would be expected to repay the funds.

Then, after some toing and froing, the *Morning Ireland* interviewer Rachel English asks:

"So is it your understanding then, that there will be a loan and we will have to accept it?"

Honohan replies:

"It's my expectation that that would happen yes absolutely"

There is some ambiguity about the above statement, but not much. For most of the remainder of the interview there is a discussion of the terms of the loan as if it was a *fait accompli*.

This appeared to cause some consternation among listeners because English felt it necessary at the end of the interview to clarify matters:

"Ok and just one final question then in relation to the loan, because I know already listeners are getting on to us, they're looking for absolute clarity here. Just to confirm that it is your understanding that we will be receiving a multi-billion Euro loan from the IMF and from the EU?"

Honohan replied:

"Look it's not my call. It's the Government's decision at the end. It's my expectation that this is definitely likely to happen. That's why the large technical teams are sitting down discussing these matters, and... I think this is the way forward" (this interesting interview can be read at <http://web.dfa.ie/uploads/documents/embassy/Madrid%20EM/governor%20of%20the%20central%20bank%20patrick%20honohan.pdf>).

Honohan is right! It wasn't his call. But why was it necessary for him to make a pre-emptive strike?

The most controversial decision of Lenihan's political career was the Guarantee. Lenihan and Cowen were faced with the imminent collapse of the banking system. They had to act and act quickly. Since that highly pressurised night of September 2008, acres of print have been devoted to that decision which have been written in tranquillity by, for the most part, people who have never had to make a decision of consequence about anything.

Honohan's comments on the Guarantee read like quibbles rather than a substantial criticism. He concedes that all the expert advice that Lenihan received was that the banks had a liquidity problem rather than an insolvency problem. Nevertheless, Honohan thinks Lenihan should not have guaranteed existing Senior Debt, which was not due to mature for a number of years. However he admits that this point is "moot", given that the Troika insisted that the State underwrite this debt anyway.

He also thinks the Guarantee legislation should not have covered Bondholders in the "event of default". Bondholders are entitled to early payment of the full amount owed in an "event of default" (an event in

which the debtor is deemed to have reneged on his obligations). By not providing for this, the option of liquidating Anglo-Irish Bank was closed off.

In the main text of his essay he suggests with a few caveats that Anglo-Irish Bank should have been let go:

"...it became evident that the losses assumed by the Irish tax payer were too high, ultimately surely exceeding what would have been suffered by Ireland had Anglo's operations been suspended there and then with a view to liquidation."

However, in a footnote at the end of the book (as distinct from the end of the essay), his view is far more tentative:

"With hindsight of the scale of the hidden losses in Anglo's books, it may seem obvious now that to have pushed Anglo into bankruptcy at that time, leaving depositors and bondholders, domestic and foreign alike, to take their losses would have provided a better allocation of those losses. But it is worth bearing in mind the spill-over effects, i.e. even ignoring the likely market consequences, such action would likely have given Brian and his Government pariah status, given the general perception at the time that the US Government's decision to let Lehman's fall into bankruptcy had triggered the global crisis just a couple of weeks before. A bankrupt Anglo could have been seen as the European Lehman's."

In summary, Honohan is suggesting Lenihan should have provided for an eventuality which none of his advisors (including international consultants) thought would happen. But, even if Lenihan had provided for that eventuality, the policy option, which this would have allowed him to pursue, was not that palatable ("*even ignoring market consequences*"). Also, Honohan does not consider the risks associated with a less comprehensive Guarantee. If Lenihan had not covered existing Bondholders or had not covered Bonds in the "*event of default*", the markets might well have concluded that the Irish Government did not believe that the banking system was solvent, which would have undermined the objective of the Guarantee: to restore confidence in the banking system and stem the outflow of funds.

Martin Mansergh in his thoughtful essay quotes Lenihan's own defence:

"...on the night of 29 September, there simply was too much at stake to discriminate between different types of bondholders, and in the end those whom the Governor felt should not have been covered accounted for just 3 per cent of covered liabilities".

In their excellent essays Alan Ahearne

and Paul Gallagher (Attorney General, 2007 to 2011) provide much needed context to the Guarantee. Before the Guarantee, the ratings agency Fitch gave Anglo-Irish Bank an A+ credit rating. In October 2008, a few weeks after the Guarantee, the Department of Finance was predicting GNP to fall by 1% in 2009 and then to bounce back with growth rates of 2.5% and 3.5% for 2010 and 2011. Unemployment would peak at 7.3% in 2009. The ESRI, the Central Bank and the IMF were making similar predictions. The actual figure for 2009 was a drop in GNP of 9% and unemployment peaked at 15%.

When the Guarantee expired in 2010, the European Central Bank still refused to allow us to burn senior Bondholders. Furthermore, Ahearne notes that to date "*no losses have been imposed on senior bonds of any bank in the euro area*". In spite of this, Ollie Rehn, the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, expressed the view that the Guarantee was a "*mistake*": an opinion that has been seized on by Fintan O'Toole among other commentators. Ahearne finds Rehn's view "*puzzling*" since it was the Commission and the ECB that prevented Ireland from pursuing an alternative policy. This reviewer agrees with the following comments of Ahearne:

"One cannot help feel that for many people it is convenient to blame the country's entire economic woes on the blanket guarantee. Many people are uncomfortable discussing what they said and did—and in some cases what they did not say and did not do—during the years of the bubble. If the public can be convinced that our problems began on the night of the guarantee, then nearly everyone is off the hook. The simplistic narrative that the bank guarantee cost the State €64 billion and that we ended up in an EU/IMF bailout programme because of the guarantee is too often used to distort the truth."

Of course, we could have gone head to head against Europe. That is the theme of Ray McSharry's essay, which has received considerable coverage in the media. McSharry's argument is that we saved the Euro by bailing out Anglo-Irish Bank. This might be true, but we also saved ourselves. Could we have issued a credible threat to Europe in September 2008, which would have involved us committing economic suicide? In this reviewer's opinion the answer is "*no*".

The Guarantee was not the only policy that the Government implemented in order to save the banking system. Ahearne describes the setting up of NAMA

[National Assets Management Agency], which took development loans off the balance sheets of the Irish banks. At the time NAMA was criticised as a bailout for developers which with the passing of time appears as an even more absurd comment than it was at the time: there have been numerous legal actions by developers *against* NAMA.

The Spanish Government established a bad bank identical to NAMA three years later. Slovenia did the same in 2013.

Of course the banking crisis was only one element of the crisis. The deterioration in the public finances cannot be explained by the banking crisis alone. Our tax system had been hollowed out as a result of a policy of making the public finances dependent on property transaction taxes during the period of the boom. While the low-paid contributed to resolving the public finances, higher income earners contributed far more. Honohan points out that by 2011 the OECD found that Ireland's tax system was among the most progressive of that organisation's three dozen members.

This reviewer agrees with Ahearne's conclusion that history will show that Brian Lenihan's incredible hard work and courage during the most acute phase of the crisis put the banking system and the Irish economy on the road to recovery.

The damage done to the economy was as a result of policies pursued prior to 2008. It also must be said that the Irish State was incredibly unlucky. It could have avoided much of the economic hardship if its own economic problems had not been in the midst of a severe international crisis. Also, the EU's response to the crisis was too late for Ireland. Alan Ahearne makes the point that, one and a half years after the Troika arrived in Ireland, the ECB under Mario Draghi introduced a potentially limitless Bond-buying programme in response to the severe crisis faced by Italy and Spain. Referring to a speech by the head of the European Stability Mechanism Klaus Regling in 2014 he says:

"... the European level responses to the crisis have evolved over time and... options that were not available to Ireland, Portugal or Greece have become available now, while new options may become available in the future."

Of course, the story of Brian Lenihan is not just an evaluation of his political decisions, it is also a human story about courage in the face of adversity. In December 2009 he was diagnosed with

cancer. It would have been very understandable if he had resigned. But he decided to fight through the pain in order to fulfil his implacable commitment to the Irish State. This reviewer witnessed his indomitable spirit at the Béal na Bláth Michael Collins commemoration in August 2010, less than a year before his last breath. He stayed long after his speech, drawing strength from engaging with people, mostly from outside the Fianna Fáil tradition. He was accompanied by a busload of Fianna Fáil members from his Dublin West constituency at a time when the Party was at a low ebb.

This is an excellent book, which will be parsed and analysed for as long as there is interest in our recent tumultuous history.

Included in the appendices there are transcripts of Dáil speeches following Lenihan's death. Surprisingly, the best of these speeches was from his political

adversary and constituency colleague, the current Minister for Health Leo Varadkar. He noted that when Lenihan spoke at constituency functions he always acknowledged the presence of politicians from other political parties. When there was a very serious school crisis in Dublin West he worked with the Department of Education to establish a new model of Community National School called after Irish names rather than saints because they are run by the State and are non-denominational.

Always for the State!

Varadker finished by quoting from Aristotle:

"The beauty of the soul shines out when a man bears with composure one heavy mischance after another, not because he does not feel them, but because he is a man of high and heroic temper".

May he rest in peace!

John Martin

Principles, Principles Everywhere

They say Irish pacifists would kill for their principles. Some years ago I came across a bunch of them at a Symposium. I never knew there could be so much trouble concentrated in the one place. I'd never witnessed so many principles at the one time, all vying with one another. The place was crammed with principles. My inferiority complex grew as I gazed at my inner self and wondered at my emptiness. Was there any way in which I could develop a principle? But I knew it was hopeless. When it hadn't happened heretofore, I knew I was a lost cause. A room full of principles and me with empty pockets.

I was doing my best. Trying to hide my deficiency. All those pacifists with principles coming out their ears and me in the middle of them, devoid of anything resembling a principle. I was hoping to slink out the door, but no chance. I was an obvious aberrant. Everyone could see through me. My transparency couldn't be hidden, even from myself. I closed my eyes. Maybe some of these pacifists might be exceptions, I thought. Maybe all of them weren't tarred with the one brush. Maybe there was something left in the bucket. I wasn't long gone from the Army and hadn't met so many civvies in such large numbers together in the one place. It was an unnerving experience. In the Army it was made fun of. Watch out. Mind the civvies. Beware. Don't trust them. Civvy women, maybe. Up to a point. In a pinch. But keep your powder dry. It dawned

upon me: I'd never make it. I peeped out. They were still there.

I'd been asked to speak at this symposium. Why, you may well ask? For no reason that I know. I was asked to speak on Irish Neutrality, which all political parties, at the time, favoured, it seemed. I was to cover the methodology to the military maintenance of neutrality.

The attendance was large, full of trouble. But I was unaware. It was held in Galway. They were all peace-niks of one ilk or the other. They all belonged to different groups or organisations. Little did I know. Some were pseudo. Some were normal, I think. But some were 'off the wall'. Quite scary. One salient feature eluded me. Later on, I realised some of them had hidden agendas, relating to their aspirations. They had ambitions of a political nature. Some of these later would fructify. Those were in furtherance of their aims. It suppose it was quite natural. But, then, their objectives were unseen by me. I could see they were full of principles, but I couldn't discern them all. Myself, I wouldn't have recognised a principle if I owned one.

I'd mixed with soldiers most of my life. Egos were not all-important. There were exceptions, of course. I'd known several who'd been decorated for valour in the field. They were uncomplicated. They shared a common bond. None wanted to speak of himself. Careers were diligently

pursued, but there was candour and openness. But these pacifists I was meeting seemed to belong to a different species. They were restive and clamant. They seemed to be pursuing some chimera. This was a different kettle of fish, entirely.

How did I arrive here? How and why? Without a single principle that I was aware of. Once again, I'd left my flanks exposed. My discomfort was apparent. They were looking at me.

Things proceeded. Kind of. It was my turn to speak. I was at a rostrum, looking out at a sea of faces. The faces were looking back. We weren't impressing each other. Everything seemed surreal. From the corner of my eye, I espied a man. He was oddly positioned. Who was he? I asked him to identify himself. He told me his name*. He was there to chair the meeting. He hadn't done his job. He'd done nothing. Everything was ominous. I told him to stay as he was. I sensed mischief in the air. The Professor was an odd and eccentric figure: tall, aesthetic, ageing and on an unusual mission. By now, I knew I was at some risk or other. I was a target. Set up by manipulators in the background. His dripping nose struck me, and his thinness. He was of a timid demeanour, but observant. He could blend in with the wall-paper. His eyes had been piercing me. He wasn't up for me. He was there for me. I was a sitting duck. The pacifists looked on with horror. He looked on with abhorrence. My stutter got worse. I was on a hiding to nothing. Then, out of the blue, waiting for me, another part of a plan unfolded.

There came a double-whammy. From the body of the hall emerged this man. He was somewhat pudgy, middle-aged, bespectacled. He was spewing hate. So belittled before, nor had I ever seen it done to anyone to such a degree. He told those assembled that he had great difficulty being in the same room as me, a mere soldier. He said he felt like leaving. I was not fit for his company. It was all too much, he proclaimed. I had never seen this person before. His face grew contorted with hate. His voice was very angry. I felt he might physically attack me. I'd never been subjected to the likes of this before. I mumbled that the door was open. But he dismissed me with a shrug. But who was he? What was he?

I continued. The Professor stayed out of it. I was left to my own devices. My dander rose. I was on my oney-o. It was sink or

swim. I was amid a very hostile group. They could take it or leave it. I no longer cared. I let it all out. I gave them what I wanted to give. I had done some study. I had my own conclusions. Also my own rationale. I could argue my case. 'Jowls' had stayed, reluctantly, and seemed more quietened. The hosts had done nothing. In fairness, the audience had not tried any other disruption. I stumbled through.

The background was the Cold War, with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Alliance) on one side and the Warsaw Pact on the other. Britain was central to it all. It occupied the Six Counties on behalf of NATO. If the Cold War became heated, British forces could launch an attack and take the required facilities in the Republic, including major air and sea ports there. These could be vital to the maintenance of the Atlantic Bridge subsequently. (I have no knowledge regarding the Government of the Republic or its acquiescence in this.)

The Warsaw Pact (WP) had massive land, sea and air forces in the Kola Peninsula. From there (including Archangel and Murmansk) these could penetrate Finland, Sweden, Norway and make entry into the Norwegian Sea and try to make entry into the North Atlantic. NATO could block entry at the GIUK Gap (Greenland-Iceland-UK Gap). This would prevent WP vessels, especially nuclear subs, from entering and operating in the Atlantic.

NATO sea convoys, part of the Atlantic Bridge, could re-inforce and gain European destinations with relative safety. This reinforcement of NATO from North America could pass, by sea and air, south of the Irish coast, on to these European mainland ports still in NATO possession, at a moment in time; or utilise Irish sea and airports in the Republic; or utilise the Republic as a concentration area or as a trampoline into those NATO facilities in the West European mainland which remained still intact. WP intervention, emerging from Kola, would be further stretched by this passage of the Atlantic Bridge, south of the Republic. It is apparent from this analysis, due primarily to the space factor, the undoing of Irish neutrality rested with NATO, rather than with WP. (The politics aside, being unknown to me in any capacity.)

Assessing military implications, Irish neutrality was most at risk from NATO. The Irish military counter would be to deprive a potential aggressor of that which he desired: air and sea ports in the Republic. Irish defence would be deployed in order to destroy these facilities. An aggressor would be deprived of that which he required. Aware of this, the aggressor

would have to rethink. The destruction or unavailability could be central to this reconsideration. Deployments by defender or attacker would be cat-and-mouse. Timings would be central. Redundancy would ensue (hopefully for the defender). Decisiveness, conviction and expertise would be required. There would be a big re-think. It would give pause to any aggressor. Buying time, and any timings, would be paramount. (An invasion of the Republic would be by NATO or WP for diametrically opposite reasons: both to do with the Atlantic Bridge.)

I had come to an end. They were open-mouthed. There was no outburst of cheering; Or booing. Some showed some interest. I was not invited back. I wasn't showered with rotten tomatoes.

Up stood the Professor. I was taken by surprise. He had stayed awake. He could speak. He had an Irish, southern, accent. He had a south of Ireland surname. A very strange man. Uncomfortable looking and gauche. Where did he come out of? He was a puzzle. I had gained some bit of confidence. I tried a smirk, which I knew he deserved. I didn't quite know why things were thus. I was seeing blackboards, chalk and dusters. But he was reassuring everyone. He was seemingly speaking from on high. He was talking a load of rubbish. Any WP/NATO conflict would bypass Ireland. Ireland, he seemed to be saying, was immune. Whence this came, he never said. All very odd. He was talking pie-in-the-sky. I thought he must be joking. But no. He wasn't Tommy Cooper. He was being serious. He was talking to children. They listened, these pacifists. They didn't laugh at all. I smirked on and on. Who was he? What was he? Who sent him? There came a break.

People broke up into groups. I found myself in some sort of inner sanctum. There I was, beside the Professor. He was cultivating me, trying to impress. This is not normal for me. He was a Professor, head of a Faculty, in a British University, in a smoke-spilling, chimney-stacked, smog-filled English city, a far cry from the tolling, Angelus-sounding spires of his native Southern Ireland habitat. He'd made a big journey, alright. This suburban James Bond. Somehow, he reminded of a disoriented, just-out-of-bed, newly awakened, tousled Noddy. But he'd become animated.

He'd made a tortuous trip. Little did I know. There was much more to come. This world is full of oddities. Adventurers. Sometimes in a saint's garb. I began to listen carefully. He was opening up. My

Editorial Note: Professor David O'Connell O'Connell, head of the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University between 1978 and 1993.

heart began to pump.

The occasion had got to him. He was very anxious. He'd found his tongue. There came a moment of illumination. I thought I could hear the Bells of Shandon. On and on he went. He was only warming up. He'd go, he said, on exercises with NATO forces. This he blurted out. Now he was in full flow. On exercises he'd be given the honorary rank of Colonel. He seemed to place great store on military rank. He'd be dressed in uniform. He'd participate fully. My gob was widening. After these exercises, he'd serve up a critique. He wouldn't spare NATO's blushes. By now, he was unstoppable. If I asked him for the lend of a fiver, he'd have given it to me. I let him at it. Just the occasional prompt. I'd got a lot. He'd exploded and imploded. I noted it all and stored it up. I had locations and their parts in the scheme of things. Then I was off, rubbing my hands, back to Dublin. I'd have liked to see his Report to his bosses. It probably had no relation to facts. But I knew I stood no chance. I still don't know who is what or where. I had got a peep into their inner circle. All very unexpected. Was I being set up?

I repaired to my well-appointed abode. I opened my archives in the West Wing. I looked him up. I spoke to one or two. I was hugging myself. I'd met with James Bond *sans* tuxedo. He was real. He was not an apparition. He'd come out of the depths of darkest Africa. Via the real capital (Cork). He was a laicised priest. He'd taught in a University in Nigeria. In a country which had in recent times been at civil war. General Gowon was the Head of State. He'd been educated in Sandhurst. He'd become a British puppet. Bond retired to Ireland, to a College in the Six Counties. Then to England, where he got a prestigious position in Smog City. Undoubtedly all influenced by Margerita Herself and his proven loyalty to She Who Must Be Obeyed. Oh, how far the tentacles extend. How firmly thy grasp. How steady they grip. How it all is returned in full. He'd been opposed for his position at this English University by a popular opponent, Uri Davies, whose claims seemed indisputable. But our friend won out. Oh Margerita, Margerita! University politics are the dirtiest, they say. Bond must be some dirty fighter. The years have rolled on. He fulfilled some purpose. Lots are employed on the Empire's business. A tame Irishman is the ideal. But this one showed his hand.

He didn't know much about war and peace, but he knew the ins and outs. His bayonet had prodded one or two. What is pointing at me?

John Morgan (Lt. Col. ret'd).

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

PROPERTY TAXES IN THE REPUBLIC

The hysteria surrounding property taxes seems to have subsided. That is the conclusion that can be drawn from the behaviour of County Councillors who are probably more attuned to grassroots public opinion than our national representatives. The Dublin County Councils have taken advantage of the clause enabling Local Government to reduce the charge by 15%. Only the Green Party opposed the motion. It should be borne in mind that property prices in Dublin have risen by about 25% last year. So, the 15% will only postpone future increases.

But the situation in the rest of the country is more complicated. In Cork FG Councillors opposed any reduction. FF Councillors supported a 10% reduction, while SF opted for the full 15% cut. The FF compromise motion was passed. Kerry and Galway Councils both voted not to reduce the tax.

ST. AUGUSTINE

St. Augustine is supposed to have said "*Lord grant me chastity, but not just yet*". It is quite clear what needs to be done to avoid another property crash, but our politicians and media commentators are finding it difficult to kick old habits.

The Central Bank has proposed a loan to value (LTV) ratio for mortgages of 80% and a loan to income (LTI) ratio of 3.5 times income. What could be more reasonable than that? The Long Fellow agrees with Governor Patrick Honohan who argued that extending credit is not an effective means of rectifying social inequality.

But there has been scepticism from some surprising quarters. David Mc Williams has suggested that the proposals will benefit the middle class at the expense of the working class. The LTI ratio will exclude low-income earners while middle class parents will be able to give money to their children to enable them to jump the LTV hurdle.

HOME OWNERSHIP

This raises the question of whether widespread home ownership is a desirable social objective. The Government clearly believes it is. The recent budget will allow first-time buyers obtain a rebate for DIRT paid on savings that are used to obtain a mortgage. It also undertook to underwrite 10% of loans to first time borrowers. But

why should the taxpayer be on the hook for such bad loans? The Government is, in effect, subsidising imprudent investment in a non-productive asset (a house) at the expense of productive investment.

The world economic crisis was largely caused by the proliferation of sub-prime loans. The Left blamed financial deregulation for the problem, whereas the Right blamed it on President Clinton's policy of encouraging welfare recipients to take out a mortgage. Is it possible that in this instance both the Left and Right are correct?

The low paid are the most vulnerable to shifts in interest rates and house prices. Why is it desirable to impose such risks on these people? It is certainly desirable that people should have a roof over their head, but it does not follow that home ownership will achieve this objective. There are other policy options such as investment in social housing and strict regulation of the private rental market which could achieve this objective without periodic property bubbles and crashes.

INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP

As has been pointed out in this column a low proportion of Germany's population own their own homes (about 43% compared to 75% in Ireland) and yet that country has one of the most productive economies in the world. As Marx noticed over a century and a half ago individual ownership of property is a fetter on an economy's productive capacity. There is no doubt that he was right.

The most dramatic development in the last twenty years is the internet, which has socialised data and thereby facilitated communication and access to information.

Up until recently companies stored information and software in individual file servers. Now the trend is for data storage to be "*socialised*" in data warehouses (the so-called "*cloud*"). Instead of owning computer resources companies are opting to rent them as they are needed.

Google is challenging the custom of car ownership. It is designing a smart car which can be accessed by the user as it is needed rather than lying idle in a garage for long periods of time. Payment would be on the basis of usage.

It is pointless to resist these developments; the task of socialists must be to exercise social control through the State so that technological developments can be used for the benefit of the people and not against them.

PROPERTY TAXES IN N. I.

There are two noticeable features of property taxes in Northern Ireland: firstly

they are much greater than the Republic of Ireland; secondly they are regressive. In Belfast the tax for 2015 is 0.708% on the value of the property compared to 0.153% in Dublin. However, there is a cap on the value of the property at 400,000 pounds (approximately 500,000 euro). So, a householder with a property valued at 500,000 euro pays the same tax as an owner of a property valued at over a million.

The system in Dublin is mildly progressive in the sense that the property tax rate goes up from 0.153% to 0.2125% on that proportion of the value of the property that is greater than 1 million euro.

Let's compare the amount to be paid by someone with a property of, say, 275,000 euro. The householder in Belfast will pay 1,947 euro, while the person in Dublin will pay 421 euro. It could be said that the Belfast householder doesn't have to pay bin charges (say 250 euro) and water charges (160 euro in households with more than one adult). But by any measure the level of household charges in Dublin is a fraction of that paid in Belfast.

It is sometimes argued that the level and variety of services provided by Local Government in Belfast is superior to that provided in Dublin. The Long Fellow cannot comment on whether this is true or not. But, if it is true, it is an argument for a higher local property tax in Dublin.

WATER TAXES

The latest proposals from the Government to assuage the water protests look like a capitulation. A flat rate charge of 160 for one adult households and 260 euro for households of more than one adult will be introduced. All households—including those not liable for water charges (i.e. households which are part of a group water scheme or with their own private wells)—will be entitled to a 100 euro rebate.

The Government thinks that the new proposals will just pass the market criteria set by the EU which would enable Irish Water debt to be kept off the State's balance sheet. But it looks like it will be a close run thing.

The principle of paying for usage in order to encourage conservation seems to have been abandoned until 2019 (well in to the life of the next Government).

The current Government is hoping that the issue of water will now be taken off the agenda before the next election. However if the next Government is going to charge for usage it will have to take account of ability to pay.

A Water Tax based on usage is regressive. But, of course, there are numerous other taxes that are regressive such as

excise duty on cigarettes, alcohol and petrol. Their justification is on grounds other than equity (health, pollution etc).

Nevertheless, water is special. Conservation is desirable but not if it means people go without a shower because they can't pay for it.

The Long Fellow agrees with a proposal by Jack O'Connor (President of SIPTU) that before 2019 a study should be done estimating average household usage. People then should be charged on the basis of using more than 85% of that average. This satisfies the conservation criteria.

The charge on usage above the 85% should not be onerous. If there is a problem in satisfying the EU market criteria (public subsidy must be less than 45%), part of the property tax should be earmarked for Irish Water. This might require a raising of the

property tax, which in the Long Fellow's view is now too low.

THE SINN FÉIN BUDGET

A number of people have asked the Long Fellow about Sinn Féin's budget which it claims was costed by the Department of Finance. The Party's overall budget, taken as a whole, was not costed, but individual measures were. The Department issued the following clarification, which indicates the limitations of the Party's claims:

"Unlike in the costing of the budget, no aggregate savings or yields are provided, the interaction of an individual measure with others is not examined and importantly no impact is taken of the second round impacts of measures, such as their impact on economic growth, job creation, inflation or their impact on tax buoyancy" (*Sunday Business Post*, 28.9.14).

Part 3 of Ballaghaderreen And The Great War

Our War?

The Irish denied the existence of the 2nd World War. They called it *The Emergency*. We are told this authoritatively—that is by people in authority. See, for example, Professor Girvin and Professor McGarry. Ultimate confirmation that this was so came in the BBC's *Mastermind* quiz some years ago, when John Humphreys accepted *The Emergency* as the right answer to the question, *What was the official name of the 2nd World War in Ireland?* I mention this to warn the reader that he should treat my memory and judgment with caution—as if he wasn't doing so already.

I have a clear illusion of reading about the 2nd World War in the *Cork Examiner* and the *Irish Press* while it was happening. And I also have delusion that I saw part of an Irish Army manoeuvre in Slieve Luacra during The Emergency; and being told that Ireland put itself on an Emergency footing when it refused to make itself available to Britain for its World War, and that it was making itself ready to do battle with the first belligerent in the World War who extended that War to Ireland, and that it would do so in alliance with the belligerent who did not invade. And I have an exceptionally clear delusion of an evening when a British invasion was expected overnight and it was thought we would be in alliance with Germany in the morning.

But the Professors assure us that none of that happened; that Ireland denied the existence of World War; and that the Irish

play-acted an Emergency for some undisclosed reason, and took its Emergency arrangements to be the major thing that was happening in the world. And, with the great expansion of University education, the authoritativeness of Professors of History has increased so enormously that you will get nowhere by disagreeing with them. It was not always like that, but it is so now. So, be warned!

The official story is that we denied the existence of the 2nd World War because we refused to take part in it, and that we denied our responsibility for the 1st World War, even though we took part in it, because . . . because . . . because . . . because . . . because—

I must admit that I do not remember the 1st World War. I only remember the way it was remembered by people who lived through it, and some who took part in it. Their memory was that the Irish took part in it in large numbers, supposing it had something to do with them, but mid-way through it came to a realisation that it wasn't their affair and started tending to their own business. They had joined the British Army in 1914, but when they started tending to their own business, the British Army was fighting them. The 1916 Insurrection was an event which jolted them out of the Home Rule mentality, through which they had taken a step towards willing participation in Imperial affairs, and it fostered a self-reliant state of mind in which they could not see why they should settle for

subordinate government within the Empire, if what they wanted was to govern themselves independently.

I do not recall that they had any sense that nationalist Ireland had responsibility for the World War. It was long after I had left Slieve Luacra—provoked by encroaching missionary activity from the Metropolis in which the middle class laity were more aggressive than the clergy—that I concluded that the Home Rule leadership had played an important part helping the inner circle of British Government to put its war-plans into effect. Redmond's statement of support for the War, even before it was declared, helped to disconcert the anti-War disposition of the Government's back-benches, which had formed a close relationship with the Irish Party during the years of intense conflict over the Home rule Bill (1912-14). If the Irish nationalists, who were notorious for their opposition to British Imperialism, broke with precedent by giving uncritical support to this British war, there must be something they weren't seeing.

The least that can be said is that the Irish Party helped the Government to hustle the Liberal backbenches into supporting the War for which the Liberal Imperialist inner circle had made preparations. Redmond gave blanket support for the War, while his co-leader, John Dillon, who had been, for six or seven years, trying to warn Parliament about the Liberal Imperialist war plans which the Government denied, remained silent.

The British system of representative government was a top-down system—certainly it was in those days. The centre managed the periphery. Idealism prevailed on its back-benches—on the Liberal side at any rate. Hard-headed calculations of Imperial interest were made by the Cabinet and ambitious back-benchers were initiated into the realities of Imperial government as they rose.

But the Irish nationalist MPs, while they played no part in government, were not back-benchers either. They were, on principle, independent of the British system of government. It was their business to know what was going on so that they could take advantage of opportunities in the Irish interest. They were an un-British Government-in-waiting, sitting in the Westminster Parliament until the political system which they would govern was constructed. It was their business to see the world in realistic terms—in *realpolitik* terms—as a Government, while sitting on back-benches. And, through the great dispute

of 1912-14, which was a central event of British political life, they held a position in late July/early August 1914 which might be described as the conscience of the Liberal half of the British state. So it counted for something when they gave a thumbs-up for the Liberal war policy.

And then Tom Kettle set the style of the catastrophic war propaganda in the main Liberal paper, the *Daily News*, brushing aside the possibility that the war might have arisen out of a conflict of interests in the capitalist world, and making it a crusade of Good against Evil. And he was seconded by another Home Rule journalist, Robert Lynd.

So I am far from dismissing the idea that the Great War was Our War. Of course it was not entirely our War. We didn't plot it. And the fact that tens of thousands of us responded to the beat of the drum, and to slogans designed especially for us, would not have made it our war. A state which has fought so many more wars than any other European state during the past 500 years knows how to raise up cannonfodder without letting the war pass into the possession of the cannonfodder.

The cannonfodder is flattered while it is being raised, and while it is performing its function of killing and being killed without having a clue about the purpose of it all. Once they enlisted, "theirs not to reason why". Each item of cannonfodder has heroic status bestowed on him while he engages in one of the oldest activities known to human existence, and when he has served the purpose for which he was briefly deified he is discarded with a pat on the head—or with a curse in the case of the Irish who rebelled against their Imperial function.

The English cannonfodder were to have "*Homes for Heroes*" when they returned from the War. While they were away the Government made a deal with the Suffragettes under which women would become workers in munition factories while the men fought, and would get the vote in return. When the heroes came home, they faced unemployment because of the expansion of the workforce and the drastic reduction in markets caused by the end of war production, and found that every item in their heroic homes was means-tested before they could get Poor Relief.

Being heroes—or having been—they rebelled. On Black Friday their leaders had a confrontation with the Prime Minister who had said there would be Homes For Heroes. He faced them down. He told them they stood at the head of the

masses and if they wanted to take over the country he couldn't stop them—but had they made arrangements for taking over the country? He regretted that he could do nothing much for them. It was up to them. Let them think about it.

Twenty years of dull, purposeless misery, alleviated by Hunger Marches, followed for the heroes home from the War and for their families—because family life was restored after the War for a while, and there had even been a notion that the War had been fought to safeguard family life against the depredations of the Hun barbarians (who didn't have families?).

In Ireland there was, on the whole, a sense of social purpose during the twenty years when the widespread experience of mass life in England was one of dull misery. The Irish experience was brought about by the development which followed the 1916 rejection of the regimented heroism of the Great War. There was no enforced heroism in the Insurrection or the War of 1919-21. Nobody went forward because there was a comrade behind him with a gun who would shoot him if he didn't. These little things make a difference.

To sum up, the Great War was Our War to a significant degree because of the part played by the Irish leaders of the time in helping the Government to give it a good launch in August 1914 by disconcerting the potential Liberal back-bench opposition to it, and because the war propaganda they made for as long as they could. But the pronoun was disowned in 1916 by a minority group which had insisted from the start that the Great War was *Their War*, and which made war on the Great War.

The revelation that England's Great War was Our War was made by a Trinity College professor, John Horne. I had heard of Horne before I came across his *Our War* formulation. I knew people who had attended his lectures and they said his purpose was to develop an anti-German mentality in his students in the course of an academic year. At the beginning of the year he would ask the students who they thought was responsible for the Great War. The usual opinion was that the major belligerents shared responsibility. At the end of the year he would ask them again, and if they said 'Germany' he was satisfied that he had done his job well.

That a Trinity professor should be teaching British war propaganda as history three generations after the event did not surprise me. The University of Britain's Irish colony had flourished in the 18th

century and was intellectually ingenious in the 19th, but it went to seed on barren ground after the Mother Country abandoned it in the early 20th. It became old-fashioned in British terms while remaining loyal, and it survived the temptation to go native in the mid-century. It was therefore not surprising that it saw Britain's Great War as "*Or War*" because it was certainly Their War.

Horne's "*Our War*" views were published in academic journals which try to counterfeit history into a natural science. One does not tend to come across these publications in the normal course of life and I have not seen these articles. But Horne published a book: *German Atrocities, 1914: A History Of Denial* (Yale 2001). This is one of the three books recommended by the Religion Correspondent of the *Irish Times* to Eamonn Maloney TD, as a corrective to James Connolly's view of the Great War as a war arranged by Britain to destroy a commercial rival which was outdoing Britain in economic competition and was escaping from the world dominance of the Royal Navy (see *Irish Political Review* last month).

I had glanced through this book when it was published and saw that it was in substance a defence of the 1914 British war propaganda as crystallised in the Bryce Report of 1915, which Britain itself had come to doubt after the War when the peace policy of the victors, which was essentially Britain's policy, was making a shambles of Europe because of the punishment inflicted on Germany for "*war-guilt*" and the destruction of the multi-national Hapsburg State because of its refusal to change sides in the War.

Virtually the entire British intelligentsia—from H.G. Wells down, and particularly the University of Oxford—was active in the War propaganda. And Oxford began to issue War Pamphlets straight away in August 1914. It was from one of these pamphlets, written by a famous Professor of Greek, Gilbert Murray, who made a marvellous translation of the choruses in *The Bacchae* of Euripides, that I got an insight into the tragedy that subverted the English mind in 1914.

Murray, who had written extensively about ancient Greece, predicted in 1914 that the Peace that would be established when the Hun was put down would be the best peace ever established on earth because it would be democratic. He should have expected, on the precedent of Athenian democracy, that it would be the worst. When it turned out bad, he spent the rest of his life trying to explain away his egregious

misconception of 1914. But others began to think that the case against Germany in 1914 had been rigged, and things would have been better if Britain had not intervened in the European War and made it a World War. And books were published by intellectuals who had taken part in the propaganda, explaining the deceptions they had concocted—for example, about the German Corpse Factory.

It is thirty years or more since I read the Oxford War Pamphlets and many other publications by eminent intellectuals—the most famous and influential being Wells's *War That Will End War*. What struck me fundamentally was that this pretentious, and in many respects impressive, intelligentsia was an aspect of the life of the State. I did not know then, what Pat Walsh has since discovered, that they were organised by the State in the secret Wellington House operation. (See *The Great Fraud* by Pat Walsh. Athol Books.)

John Buchan, an organiser of the intellectual propaganda as well as a writer of popular novels for it, said, with a degree of truth, that it was Britain's first middle class war—"middle class" being taken to be virtually synonymous with democratic. The middle class had little to do with bringing about the World War—that was the final effort of the old ruling class which had survived three-quarters of a century of electoral reform. But it could be said that the middle class hijacked the War and prevented it from being conducted as Imperial wars had been conducted for two centuries, and then ensured that a realistic settlement could not be made with the enemy.

The catastrophic 1919 arrangement led on to the next World War twenty years later, and between the two intellectual doubts arose about the rightness of British action in 1914. The message of the three war books recommended by the Religion Correspondent of the *Irish Times* is that those doubts are invalid and should be quashed. That is also the message of the BBC in this year's centenary celebrations of the War. (See Jeremy Paxman's television series and Michael Portillo's radio series.)

These books, however, say nothing explicitly about the responsibility for the World War, though much is implied. They concentrate on the conduct of the German Army in Belgium during a few weeks in 1914 when 7,000 were killed out of all the millions that were killed in the War.

I looked again at Horne's book, searching for something that might be taken as a refutation of Connolly's view but could

find no trace of it. Connolly is not mentioned. Casement is not mentioned. And, even though he book is about Belgium in 1914, Tom Kettle, pioneer of German atrocity propaganda, is not mentioned.

Well, that's understandable. Trinity is after all a physically distinct extra territorial British enclave in Ireland, and its denizens cannot be expected to engage with the jabbering that goes on amongst the natives outside its walls. It is true that it is no longer completely Irish Colonial. Horne comes from another British colonial development, the Australian, where the presence of Irish aggravated the Anglos. *German Atrocities* is co-authored with Horne by Alan Kramer, also a Trinity Professor from the Colonies—South Africa in this case, I believe. And the supervisor of the Trinity project to re-write Irish history in the British colonial interest, Professor Fitzpatrick, is Australian, apparently rebelling against the influence of an Irish parent. He once considered a career in another sphere of historical studies but was advised by his sister, who writes thoughtful books on Russia, that Ireland was the place for him. The colonial residue in Ireland is weak, hence the Trinity imports from the colonies that became states—which the colony in Ireland conspicuously failed to do.

That's how I thought it was. What could a Trinity professor know about the small-time affairs of the Irish? Indeed, what ought he to know? It would be unbecoming for him to have more than a smattering.

And then I find that Horne is a member of the Irish Labour History Society—and an early member, if not a founding member.

My first, and only encounter with the ILHS was at its Conference in Belfast in May 1974, which was, I think, its founding Conference. It met up in Malone, at the University. I was living down in the marsh and taking part in a General Strike. I went up to Malone and asked the Conference, which was commemorating a 1920 strike in the nationalist interest, why it was knotted up with hatred of the Strike that was going on all around it. General Strikes are few and far between, and surely a Labour History Society, fortunate enough to be meeting at the centre of one, should be observing and recording it? The only effect of my appeal was to make me a hate-object to these blinkered Labour Historians.

The fact that Horne is one of them, and was an Editor of the Labour History magazine *Saothar fir sine tearsm* casts a

different light on his failure to mention Connolly, Casement or Kettle in his book on Belgium. It means that it cannot be assumed that he was simply unaware of them.

Connolly's view of the Belgian affair was briskly stated. Belgium had been used by Britain as an assistance to war propaganda. The policy of the Belgian Government was stupid and futile. He didn't bother his head with the 1839 Treaty, but I can only see the Treaty as confirming his attitude. It was not a Treaty *with* Belgium but *about* Belgium. Under it, Belgium was not a sovereign state with an obligation to defend itself, and therefore to have a foreign policy relevant to its defence. Foreign policy was forbidden to it, and if (as the Germans alleged and as our critics of Germany virtually acknowledge) it had engaged in secret foreign policy arrangements with Britain, then it was in breach of the Treaty. Neutrality was not Belgian foreign policy but was the policy of the surrounding Powers with relation to Belgium, therefore the breach of Treaty by one of those Powers was a matter for the other Powers to deal with, not for the Belgians.

Connolly wrote:

"It has often been remarked in Irish nationalist circles that according to the cant of the Parliamentary Party the interests of Ireland can always be best served out of Ireland...

"It must surely be on some such principle of action that England is fighting for the neutrality of Belgium. According to all the British jingo Press, and still more according to the organs of the Irish Home Rule Imperialists, or Imperialist Home Rulers, Great Britain has entered this war solely because of her burning zeal for the neutrality of Belgium... And here in Ireland we are tearfully appealed to, to consider the awesome spectacle of the conversion of England to ways of justice and chivalry, and so considering to rush to her aid and side by side with her army battle for the neutrality of Belgium.

"But when we look around us all that we see tends to arouse the suspicion that England has made a catspaw of Belgium, has deliberately tempted Belgium from her neutrality...

"...All during the first month of Belgium's martyrdom England poured her Expeditionary Troops into France leaving Belgium to her fate. Belgium asked for troops to help defend her neutrality. England replied, 'We are sorry, we would like to send you some troops, but you see we have a pressing engagement elsewhere. But we will write some more newspaper articles about you, and even if you do suffer think how useful your sufferings will be to us in the preparation of speeches against Germany.' That is all the satisfaction Belgium has got or is likely to

get—the satisfaction of serving England as a tortured animal under the hands of the vivisectionist serves science...

"If Belgium had contented herself with protesting against the passage of German troops through her territory she would now have all her fortresses and cities in her own hands, her soldiers would all be alive and in a position to act with effect when the war had exhausted both sides, none of her civilian population would have lost their lives, homes or domestic treasure, or be scattered as exiles on the charity of strangers, her foreign trade would not be lost by the paralysis of her domestic industry, and her neutrality and independence would be effectively maintained.

"If in the fluctuations of the war the soil of Belgium became the scene of conflict both sides would have in their own interests kept aloof from any considerable town or city in the possession of large bodies of fresh Belgian troops, and could have avoided anything calculated to make fresh enemies for their own side.

"Under such circumstances any conflict ... would have been fought out in the open country, or around small villages whose inhabitants could easily have been sheltered in large towns, and all the horrors to which Belgium has been subjected would have been unknown.

"For all these horrors she has to thank her stupid governing class, and the wily, heartless English diplomacy that sacrificed Belgium in a quarrel not her own.

"Will Ireland allow her sons to be sacrificed by the same unscrupulous Power that English capitalism may rise by garrotting the civilisation and commerce of Europe? ..." (*How England Sacrificed Belgium*, 17th October 1914. Quoted from *Connolly On Belgium In The Great War*, Athol Books, 2003, pp11-13).

This argument about Belgium is distinct from the argument that Britain intervened in the European War, in which Germany was caught between the Russian and French Armies, for the purpose of destroying Germany as a commercial rival, which Connolly had published some weeks earlier as *The War Upon The German Nation*. Whatever the reason was for the war being waged by Britain, France and Russia against Germany and Austria, Belgium had nothing to do with it. Belgium was prohibited by the Treaty imposed on it from participating in European alliances. It might make war on helpless natives in Central Africa but it was excluded from the affairs of what England called "*the European balance-of-power*". Insofar as something might be called "*international law*" existed, its bearing on Belgium was that it was not an active subject of it, and that its only obligation under it was to be neutral in the conflicts of those who created it.

The Belgian Government was informed that Germany intended to march an Army through Belgian territory to France. When Belgium did not express agreement to remain neutral while the German Army went by, the German Government said it would regard military resistance as an act of war. The Belgian Government, in what was effectively a secret session, decided in favour of war with Germany. No minutes were kept of that Cabinet meeting and nothing is known of the ground of the decision.

There are no Indexed references in Horne's book for Congo Free State, Belgian Congo or Casement Report. There is not, as far as I noticed, any discussion of the Belgian decision to engage in military conflict with the German march-through.

And the only reference I noticed to the strange Treaties, made by other states, which governed Belgium's existence, is this:

"After Belgium achieved independence in 1830, the European powers guaranteed its permanent neutrality in 1839 in order to prevent it being used as a platform for invasion" (p9).

In a book of more than 600 pages surely space might have been found for something more explanatory than that!

Horne seems to have stringently pared down his narrative to the mere fact of invasion, "*de-contextualising*" it, as they say, and only occasionally in the overtones of language or incautious reference to the future, letting political orientation slip out.

The gist of the story is that the German Army was primed, on the basis of the 1870 War, to deal with civilian resistance by means of drastic reprisals. The 1870 experience is repeatedly referred to but is completely decontextualised, or set by implication in a false context:

"In the Franco-Prussian War and on the eastern front during the 2nd World War, irregular and partisan warfare only emerged once the invasion had come to a standstill or after serious disruption of the defending army" (p77).

This suggests that Germany had fought an offensive war against France in 1870, as it had against Russia in 1941. But the facts of the matter are indisputable, though obscured by historians from the British mould. France launched an offensive war on Prussia in 1870 with the object of preventing the unification of Germany. The French advance did not get far. It was driven back. The fighting continued in France. The French Government refused to call off the war it had declared, even after its regular armies were defeated, and Germany found itself in possession of a

large tract of France. (Was that a German "invasion" of France?)

Following the defeat of its regular armies, the French Government called for a revolt of the people, a *levee en masse*, which the Germans had to cope with until the French agreed to end the war in 1871. (It was in protest against French moves towards ending the war that the rebellion of the Paris Commune happened. And, when the War ended, the French Government carried out the massive slaughter of the Communards.)

Learning from the experience of their invasion of France in 1870, the German Army had been prepared to deal with irregular warfare of German civilians in 1914 by means of reprisals; and they carried out the reprisals even though the Belgian civilians did not behave as the French had done: that is what Horne claims to have demonstrated in 600 pages; and Larry Zuckerman in 300 pages (*The Rape Of Belgium*, New York University Press, 2004); and Jeff Lipkes in 800 pages (*Rehearsals: The German Army In Belgium, August 1914* (Leuven University Press, 2007), in the books recommended by the *Irish Times* Religion Correspondent to Eamonn Maloney as a corrective to Connolly on the question of the Great Power purpose which caused the Great War.

But all these are irrelevant to that question.

Connolly, as far as I know, did not discuss the conduct of the German Army in Belgium in August 1914 after the Great War had been launched by the British declaration of war on Germany and Austria, and by the seizure of two Turkish battleships, signalling the campaign of conquest in the Middle East which began a few months later. What he said was that Britain had launched a prepared war on Germany, making use of Belgium in order to do so, because British capitalism was becoming incapable of competing with the more socially advanced German capitalism.

There is little that can be said with indisputable certainty about the cause of the World War, but one thing that can be said is that German conduct in Belgium after Britain made its European War a World War was *not* the cause of the World War. Britain did not wait long enough for the Germans to perpetrate atrocities on Belgian civilians before declaring war on them.

It is curious that three large books about German military conduct in Belgium during the first few weeks of the War should have been published so close together (between 2001 and 2007), two of them in the USA and the third by an

American, the point of each being to suggest that the Germans acted under the influence of a national culture that might be called psychopathic.

A Belgian book was published in English translation as part of the British war propaganda in 1916: *Belgian Under The German Eagle* by Jean Massart. It begins:

"Bismarck was given to quoting, with approval, a saying which has been attributed to him, but which was, in reality, first made in his presence by a hero of the American Civil War, General Sheridan. It was, that the people of a small country occupied by a conquering army should be left nothing—save eyes to weep with! And we Belgians, truly, are weeping for our native country, invaded, in contempt of the most solemn conventions, by one of the signatories of those treaties."

Philip Sheridan is not one of the ogres of Western mythology. He does not appear in the conception of history as a series of Monsters compiled by John Bew of the Henry Jackson Society and son of Lord Bew. His laying waste of the Shenandoah Valley was not a war crime but was a contribution to the founding of democracy as a world system. It seems to me what the Civil War did was secure the development of the USA as a Continental Superstate with universal pretensions, and that the formal abolition of slavery was incidental to it. And the completion of the multiple genocide of the native peoples was undertaken systematically after 1865. But in the official order of our world it is a sacred event and General Sheridan was the opposite of a Monster—an Avenging Angel perhaps.

There are two ways of waging regular warfare: the American way and the British. The American way is to deploy maximum force at critical junctures unhindered by international law, with a view to rapid and overwhelming victory which stuns the population of the defeated state. That was denounced by the British propaganda in 1914 as Prussianism—and I seem to recall that there was a considerable Prussian input into US military doctrine. And, as to international law, President Wilson, who before he became President was a historian, was of the opinion that no such thing existed in the real world.

The British way of war was to do it slowly and inefficiently, prolonging the torment of it. Churchill summed it up neatly:

"the English are essentially a warlike, though not a military, people; that is to say they are always ready to fight though not always prepared to do so".

Britain established naval dominance of

the world after it relinquished France to the French and vacated Dunkirk. Its strategy thereafter was to maintain instability in Europe. This instability it called a balance-of-power. This meant that the European Powers should be balanced against each other so that Britain might determine the course of events by adding its weight to whichever side served its purposes. And it let it be known that it would not allow any major European Power gain control of what Pitt the Younger called "*the navigation of the Scheldt*", or the outlets of the Rhine. That was why it brought the restricted Belgian state into existence and subjected it to a Treaty that was negotiated about Belgium but not with it.

Britain, while operating an effective *realpolitik* over the centuries under the ruling class, was suffused at the popular level with a spurious morality derived from the theocratic revolutions of the 17th century. The ruling class could act out of a rational calculation of interest but the populace, which was its means of action, had to be fed with moral tit-bits to stimulate it. Belgium was the moral tit-bit in August 1914.

Britain could declare war on a European Power without having ready-to-hand an Army on a Continental scale prepared for battle. Its naval dominance of the world made it safe from incursion as it raised an Army appropriate to the war it declared. The unusual thing about 1914 was that it had an Expeditionary Force of 100,000 prepared well before the event, with detailed arrangements made with the French for placing it in the battle line in France.

But there was also an opinion that long wars without definite, limited, aims were more advantageous than short wars fought for a particular aim. The disruption of the world by long wars was likely to throw up unexpected opportunities for the extension of British influence.

There is a partial exception to what I said above about these three books not dealing with the Cause of the War, and therefore having no bearing on Connolly's views. Jeff Litkes wrote:

"Without the invasion of Belgium, Britain would not have entered the war when it did" (p21).

Therefore Germany caused the World War by giving the British Government the means of causing it!

Then he speculates, obviously in the

light of the course of military events in the Autumn of 1914, that if Germany had let Belgium be, it would probably have held the French at bay and defeated the Russians anyway, and would have won the war by Christmas. It isn't a wildly improbable speculation, apart from the proposition that Britain would not have entered the War, but for Belgium, while Germany was establishing itself as the dominant Power in Europe.

And if Germany had won by Christmas:

"It's not likely we'd have heard of Hitler, Lenin and Stalin. Tens of millions of Europeans, starved, shot, gassed, blown apart, and incinerated, would have survived into the second half of the 20th century:

—if Germany had not enabled Britain to launch a World War!

*

The Economist, a magazine for capitalists in 1914, very unlike the chattering magazine it is now, didn't want war. But

English capitalism had not made the State under which it flourished. It had been looked after by a ruling class of aristocracy/gentry. That ruling class still determined foreign policy in 1914. It had decided around 1900 that war on Germany had become necessary in the capitalist interest. The working capitalists grumbled about the interruption of trade, but there was never any question of a capitalist strike against the War. (A capitalist strike is not an unthinkable event. The threat of such a strike forced the 1832 Reform from the ruling class). But *The Economist*, in the only letter it published on the decision to make war on Germany, said, through William Clarke of Somerset:

"In the present state of affairs I wish to make no comment beyond this: that later on it may be regretted that Sir Edward Grey made no response to the urgent request of the German Ambassador that he should formulate conditions for English neutrality..." (August 15th, 1914).

Brendan Clifford

descendants of the IRA of the War of Independence."

But perhaps it is as much a mistake to look for logic in Sheehan's historical essay as it is to look for integrity in his reporting of Adams's blog. Adams did not naively assume Collins's personal presence on the *Indo* raid, and perhaps it would have been grammatically clearer if he had inserted the word "they" before "held". It is, however, the Collins 22 Society itself that is being naïve in the extreme in **not** "linking him to the incident". Michael T. Foy has related the following in respect of the personally hand-picked assassination Squad run by the IRA Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins:

"Although the Squad was still finding its feet, Collins wanted to strike a spectacular blow... Among the plans Collins considered was assassinating (Lord) French on the review stand at College Green during an Armistice Day march-past on 11 November 1919... (But Minister for Defence) Cathal Brugha had vetoed the operation because it endangered civilian bystanders... Finally on the morning of 19 December 1919, after a tip-off... that French's train would return just after midday from his Roscommon estate, fourteen men {from an augmented Collins Squad—MO'R} armed with revolvers and grenades cycled out to Ashtown railway station close to Phoenix Park" (*Michael Collins's Intelligence War*, 2006, pp 31-32).

As we know, the assassination attempt failed, Martin Savage was killed in action, and Dan Breen was wounded. Breen further related:

"On the morning after the attack the *Irish Independent* published a leading article in which we were dubbed 'assassins'. The article was liberally interspersed with such terms as 'criminal folly', 'outrage', 'murder'. This was the very paper which depended on the support of the people who had voted for the establishment of the Irish Republic. It had not even the sense of decency to withhold the expression of its views until the inquest had been held and Martin Savage laid to rest. The other Dublin papers we did not mind. The *Irish Times* was openly a British organ; the *Freeman's Journal* was beneath the contempt of any decent Irishman. But we could not allow an avowedly Irish paper to insult our dead comrade. I was confined to bed and had no direct part in subsequent events. I heard that some of the boys favoured the shooting of the editor of the *Independent*. Another course was eventually adopted. It was decided to suppress the paper... Twenty or thirty of our men, under the leadership of Peadar Clancy, entered the building and held up the staff with revolvers. They informed the editor that his machinery was to be dismantled; they

When Fine Gael Leaders Championed A Smashing *Indo* Action

Does the November 10th denunciation by *Irish Independent* political correspondent Fionnán Sheehan of Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams—for his "it's the way he tells 'em" account of the IRA smashing of the *Irish Independent* printing machinery in December 1919—also imply that Sheehan is nonetheless a "sneaking regard" of that smashing *Indo* action? What other sense can be made of the following elements in Sheehan's line of reasoning:

"The IRA's failed attack on the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord French, took place at Ashtown in west Dublin, where Martin Savage was killed and Dan Breen wounded. After the incident, the *Irish Independent* published an editorial condemning those who took part in the attack. Action was taken as a warning to the proprietors of all newspapers 'that such unpatriotic comment at the height of the fight for freedom would not be tolerated'. A group of 30 IRA men raided the offices and smashed the print works with 'sledge hammers and crow bars and heavy wrenches'—aided by members who worked in the pressroom who knew what equipment to break to cause the most damage. During the raid, the editor was reputedly held at gunpoint by an unmasked Bill Judge while Paddy Kelly covered the rest of the staff... Gerry Adams has twisted this incident from the War of Independence into a veiled threat about holding a newspaper editor at

gunpoint as he attacked this newspaper group over the coverage of Mairia Cahill's IRA sex abuse allegations. Adams justified his claim by attributing the action to Michael Collins—even though Peadar Clancy and Michael Lynch are more often associated with the organisation of the printing press raid—as he joked to guests at his lavish \$500-a-plate fundraiser in New York that he was 'not advocating that'. But he dropped the gag a day later when he wrote: 'And when the *Irish Independent* condemned his actions as 'murder most foul' what did Michael Collins do? He dispatched his men to the office of the *Independent* and held the editor at gun point as they dismantled the entire printing machinery and destroyed it.'... Collins was a wanted man by the British authorities and experts have pointed to the naivety of linking him to the incident. 'There's no way Michael Collins would have compromised the intelligence operation by being there in person', said Gerry O'Connell, Honorary Secretary of the Collins 22 Society... On a wider level, what's even more insidious is Adams's attempts to draw parallels between Collins's IRA and the action of the Provos during the Troubles. Adams attempts to rewrite history by ignoring **the mandate of the overwhelming vote for the then Sinn Fein in the 1918 general election.** {My emphasis; making the 1919 smashing of the *Indo* printing machinery all right, then, with Sheehan? —MO'R}. Rewriting history, he attempts to portray the Provos as the direct

smashed the linotypes with sledges and left the place in such condition that it was hoped no edition could appear for some time. But with the assistance of the other Dublin printing workshops the *Independent* was able to appear next day. However, we had taught them a salutary lesson; somehow, we were glad that nobody was thrown out of work, because many of the staff were members of the Irish Republican Army. Never afterwards {during the War of Independence, that is—MOR} did the *Independent* or any other Dublin newspaper refer to members of the IRA as murderers or assassins. In later days the *Independent* was of much service in exposing British atrocities, even though it never supported our fighting policy. The proprietors got £16,000 compensation for the raid" (*My Fight for Irish Freedom*, 1964 edition, pp 94-95).

An extreme partisan of Michael Collins like John A Pinkman was not, however, as liberal or as forgiving towards the *Irish Independent* as Dan Breen. Proud to be an officer in Collins's newly-established Free State Army, and no less proud of his own role in ensuring the death-in-action of Cathal Brugha at the outset of the Civil War, Pinkman was also proud of having been part of a Collins Squad team, seeking out a non-combatant de Valera for assassination, only weeks before Collins's own death-in-action, and he further rejoiced at the Cosgrave Government's war crime execution of Erskine Childers. In his 1960s memoirs, Pinkman recalled the Free State Army's Civil War occupation of the *Irish Independent* premises:

"On Thursday morning, 6 July 1922... our small party of troops... was sent to occupy Independent House in Middle Abbey Street and protect it from being seized by anti-Treatyites. The staff of the *Irish Independent* clearly resented our presence and did everything they could to make our stay as uncomfortable as possible. They resented us not because we were soldiers or because they were sympathetic to the anti-Treatyites; they resented us simply because we were *Irish* troops. Today, most readers of the *Irish Independent* ('Ireland's most popular newspaper') {Pinkman's own interpolation} probably don't realize how reactionary and pro-British that newspaper once was. Under the proprietorship of William Murphy it not only tried to break Larkin's and Connolly's Transport and General Workers' Union in 1913, but in 1916 its editorials called for the execution of the leaders of the Rising!" (*In the Legion of the Vanguard*, 1998 edition, p 10).

This October 26th the *Sunday Independent* Pope-in-residence, John-Paul McCarthy, made the following *ex cathedra* pronouncement:

"In his powerful memoir of the Mc Carthy-era in post-war America, *Witness* (1953), Whittaker Chambers insisted that communism could only be beaten via a process of implosion. 'The final conflict will be between the Communists and the ex-Communists.' This insight helps explain the crisis that is currently engulfing Gerry Adams. Mairia Cahill's allegations—that is to say, allegations that emanate from the core of republicanism—have probably done more damage to Sinn Fein than all the recent external critiques combined. There is something peculiarly Irish about this sequence of affirmation and negation that ex-communists like Chambers analysed. Michael Laffan's handsome new Royal Irish Academy book on WT Cosgrave suggests that in many ways our infant state owed its life to a group of men who tunneled through the other side of their ancestral republicanism... Cosgrave notoriously instituted a policy that had been perfected by Trotsky, namely summary executions of prisoners. Our first cabinet was convinced that they were dealing with an enemy that was best understood as a cocktail of all the worst aspects of the post-Famine world... Cosgrave would become one of only a handful of Irish prime ministers who branded their names irrevocably on to the flesh of a big idea."

John-Paul's McCarthyite invocation of Cosgrave as another stick with which to beat Gerry Adams backfires on the *Sunday* and *Irish Independent* hysterical wave of indignation at Adams retelling the story of what happened to the *Independent* printing machinery in December 1919. The problem for the *Indo* is that Cosgrave regarded any Government of which he was a member as a lawful authority entitled to do whatever it liked, irrespective of whether one of his Governments was waging war to defend the Irish Republic or another was waging a second war to destroy it.

The issue of the smashing of the *Indo* printing machinery came up during a Dáil Éireann debate on 27th April 1922 concerning the smashing of the printing machinery of the *Freeman's Journal* by IRA volunteers, following a vicious post-Treaty attack on de Valera in its issue of 5 January 1922, at a time when Dev still held office as President of the Dáil. The April Dáil debate took place in the *inter-regnum* limbo between Treaty and Civil War. The future Fianna Fáil Tánaiste Seán MacEntee objected to the Dáil paying a sum of £2,693 in compensation for the *Freeman's Journal* smashing action, describing it as hypocritical. The hat worn by Michael Collins in this debate was that of Minister for Finance. He confined

himself to justifying the technicalities of the *Freeman's Journal* compensation, without making any reference at all to the *Irish Independent* action for which he had been responsible. He did not need to. It had been unequivocally justified by his confederates—W.T. Cosgrave, the Minister for Local Government, and Dick Mulcahy, the Treatyite Minister for Defence who had previously been IRA Chief-of-Staff during the War of Independence. The only TD to question the *Indo* action was the man who had been Minister for Defence during that War, the "diehard" Republican anti-Treatyite Cathal Brugha, as the following Dáil exchanges illustrate.

"SEAN MOYLAN: I should like to know if the *Irish Independent* was compensated when the *Irish Independent* called Martin Savage a murderer and an assassin? Was Dáil Éireann the Government of the country in 1919?

MR. MULCAHY: As far as any action against the *Independent* is concerned, that was taken in order to save life purely and simply.

MISS MARY MACSWINEY: Explain!

MR. MULCAHY: There were members of the *Independent* staff who, it was very seriously considered, would lose their lives if something was not done to relieve the excitement and to relieve the anger of certain members of the Volunteers in Dublin City, if some kind of outlet had not been opened to them. The outlet that brought the smallest loss to the country was allowed in that instance.

MR. W.T. COSGRAVE: And allowed by the responsible authority in this country, which is a very different thing to unauthorised reprisals on the part of individuals or collections of individuals. There is no similarity whatever between the two cases except to those who do not wish to see. In one case you had responsible officers and soldiers of the Republic operating under the orders of a responsible authority and operating in the interests of the country... We all remember the expression of the ex-President when he said the authority of the Dáil is sovereign in the country...

CATHAL BRUGHA: I am not going to speak at all in connection with this attack on the *Freeman*. But the Minister for Local Government has very dogmatically stated that the attack made a couple of years ago on the *Independent* was done by a responsible authority. Before I say anything further, I would like to have the opinion of the present Minister for Defence on that statement of the Minister for Local Government.

MR. MULCAHY: That attack was allowed by responsible authorities.

CATHAL BRUGHA: That attack was not allowed by any responsible authority in this country. I did not allow it. I did not know anything about it until it was done. I do not like to give the proper name to the men who destroyed that property or made

that attack without consulting the person in authority.

MR. MULCAHY: There were many, many acts done in the country on the authority of responsible officers who could not go to the Minister of Defence for authority and the Minister of Defence was not the only responsible authority in the army during the war. Every battalion, brigade, divisional and G.H.Q. officer had a certain responsibility, and stood up to that responsibility and in the carrying out of these responsibilities in different places during the war they had to undertake actions for which the Government itself never accepted responsibility.

CATHAL BRUGHHA: We now see the conception of authority by some of those who have allowed an usurping Government to be set up.

MR. MULCAHY: These were responsible officers acting under the general authority given to them...

MR. HARRY BOLAND: The same authority as is alleged to have dealt with the *Independent* also dealt with the *Freeman's Journal*; that is the Executive of the Irish Republican Army.

MR. MULCAHY: That is not so."

It is pure hypocrisy on the part of Fine Gael to criticise Gerry Adams for recalling the smashing *Indo* action of December 1919, given that it was championed in the Dáil by two of that Party's honoured icons, the second and third leaders of Fine Gael, Cosgrave and Mulcahy. Second and third? Well, the first leader of Fine Gael was the Fascist Eoin O'Duffy.

Manus O'Riordan

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Unpublished letter to *Irish Times*

Whitewashing Liam Cosgrave

In last Saturday's *Irish Times* Liam Cosgrave was interviewed about his father WT Cosgrave and his role in the Civil War (WT Cosgrave: the simple life of a state's architect. 18.10.14). There is a degree of dishonesty over the way the policy of executing republican prisoners is treated.

Stephen Collins introduces the topic saying "Liam Cosgrave reflects on the challenge faced by the government of the Free State when republicans issued a manifesto claiming the right to shoot political opponents."

This is a reference to the order by Liam Lynch, the then commander of the IRA, that certain TDs and Senators were now targets. This order was made on the 30th November 1922.

Liam Cosgrave refers to this and the subsequent murder of Sean Hayles TD by the IRA on the 6th December.

"This action resulted in a strong reaction from the government, in that they took four prisoners and executed them the following day. That evoked widespread criticism, but the government weren't going to allow the irregulars to execute whom they wanted and expect that there be no reaction."

The impression given is that this was the first "strong reaction" which was forced on the government in response to the order made by Lynch and the subsequent murder.

However the executions started weeks before this. The Public Safety Bill was passed on September 27th, which legalised the execution policy. Four relatively unknown prisoners were then executed on November 17th. This was done quite cynically so the government could then execute their real target, Erskine Childers. They were reluctant to execute him first for fear of being accused of singling out such a well known figure, and possibly making him a martyr.

This created intense bitterness on the republican side which led to Liam Lynch's order that any politician who supported the Public Safety Bill could now be shot.

Liam Lynch's order was of course completely wrong and increased bitterness and division even more. But it was in fact a reaction to the policy of executions, not the other way around as the article implies.

Neither side in the Civil War has much to crow about. But each tradition should look at how they contributed to making a bad situation much worse, and not try to whitewash themselves.

Owen Bennett

PS

About a week after this, there was an official book launch, with Enda Kenny present. Liam Cosgrave was given the opportunity to repeat this calumny, which was again reported by the *Irish Times*.

Unpublished Letter to *Irish Times*, 11th November

Irish Bookends To WWI

A whole month elapsed between the 26 June 1914 murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in Sarajevo and the next shots fired in anger in Europe.

Then, on 26 July 1914 Britain's King's Own Scottish Borderers shot down unarmed civilians on Dublin's Bachelor's Walk, killing four and wounding many more. Nine days later Britain was at war, allied to the Serbian state whose agents armed and inspired the murderers at Sarajevo.

On the evening of 11 November 1918, to celebrate the Armistice signed that morning in France, a mob smashed into Sinn Fein's Dublin Headquarters and assaulted an unarmed man who died as a result three days later. He was an acclaimed author and had been Ireland's youngest Editor, when with *The Southern Star*. His name was Seumus O'Kelly.

It seems to me that a narrative of the Great War, in the West, might be book-ended by remembrance of those incidents.

But between those book-ends the story might be told of the three unarmed Dublin journalists, including Ireland's most prominent Pacifist, shot on the orders of a Captain of the Royal Irish Regiment, on 25 April 1916 in Rathmines.

Considering that two of the murdered journalists were supporters of the Union with Britain, it's remarkable that they can be forgotten today. Perhaps their names should live for ever more on the Rolls of Honour of some publications today?

Donal Kennedy

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

The War of Independence— Kilmichael

REDMOND

In 1066 AD the Normans invaded England and by 1189 had become established in Wales. Dermot MacMurrough wanted them to help him in Ireland with his domestic problems but the Normans were tightly controlled by Henry 11, the Duke of Normandy who titled himself King of England. So Dermot had to go to Normandy in France where Henry lived. He was given permission by Henry to enlist the Welsh Normans and in 1189 they landed in Country Wexford. From that time to now, the Normans, the English and the British held various parts of Ireland by force of arms as a colony. A colony which produced rich pickings for the British governing class for eight hundred years.

It was outrageous and no generation of Irish people passed without rebellion against the tyranny of it. The Irish attempted peaceful protest during the 1880s and 1890s but Bloody Balfour would not have it—he turned the protests into The Land War. The MPs elected to Westminster by Irish constituencies tried to use peaceful parliamentary methods to secure Home Rule for Ireland and failed. By 1902, John Redmond had to speak up. On Saturday, August 9th 1902 on the day when King Edward VII was being crowned king of England in London, the Irish Nationalist representatives were simultaneously meeting in Dublin where Dublin Corporation had placed the City Hall at the disposal of the Irish Party for the occasion. The Chairman of the Irish Party was John Redmond, MP and he said:

"This Meeting of the Nationalist Representatives of Ireland in the capital of our country on the day when the King of England is being crowned in London is an event of national and historic importance. This party, as a body, had formally withdrawn from all participation in the Coronation celebrations, and we are assembled here today to place once more upon the record the protest of our people against the usurpation of the government of Ireland by the English Parliament. Gentlemen, the event which is being celebrated today is one of great historic significance and importance.

"The Monarch of this mighty empire is being crowned, and there are assembled in London the representatives from all parts of the Empire to acclaim Edward VII as the Constitutional Monarch of these realms. There is only one absentee—Ireland. Gentlemen, in Ireland Edward VII is not a Constitutional Monarch. No English Sovereign has been a Constitutional Monarch of Ireland since the Union, and today the Nationalist representatives of Ireland renew the protest—which has never been allowed to die for one hundred years—against the destruction of our Constitution and the usurpation of the government of our country by England. One of the unfortunate facts of the political situation of the day is that, notwithstanding the discussions on this Irish question which have been going on continually—going on for the last twenty years at any rate in England—I fear the bulk of the English people, and many of the most powerful of England's statesmen, do not yet understand the true nature of the Irish demand or the grounds upon which it rests.

"Now, we claim that Ireland is not bound, morally or legally, by any laws which are not made by the Sovereign, Lords and Commons of Ireland. We specifically deny the moral or legal and constitutional right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland. Never for one single hour since the Union was passed has Ireland been a constitutionally-governed country. Never for one hour has the Sovereign of England been the Constitutional Sovereign of Ireland. Ireland in effect, has since 1800 been governed as a Crown Colony, with certain empty form and pretences of Constitutionalism. Never for one hour has the English government of Ireland obtained the assent or approval or confidence of the people of Ireland. Never for one hour have the elected representatives of the majority of the Irish people had the control or even a potent voice in the government of this country. Never for one hour since then has the English government of Ireland rested upon anything but naked force and unabashed corruption. Never for one hour since then has the British Constitution been in force in this country whose own Constitution was destroyed. The mere fact that in one hundred years eighty-seven Coercion Acts have been passed by the English Parliament for Ireland, in spite of Irish protest, is sufficient to establish the facts.

"Martial law, Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, suspension of trial by jury, suppression of free speech—these have been the permanent blessings conferred on Ireland by the destruction of the Irish Constitution. No single reform, large or small, has ever been obtained by purely constitutional methods. Let any Englishman who questions that, answer this question. Let him point to any single act of justice or reform which has not been extorted in one way or another from the British Parliament by force or by fear. Catholic Emancipation, falsely promised

before the Union, granted in the words of Wellington, to avoid civil war. The Church Act and the Land Act produced by the influence of Fenianism."

Mr. John Redmond then referred to an article written by the late Lord Derby. Lord Derby said:

"... it is to be regretted that for three times in the past century an agitation accompanied with violence should be shown to be the most effective instrument of redressing Irish wrongs."

John Redmond continued:

"The Land Act of 1881 was carried by the agitation of the Land League and what is our experience today? English rule today rests solely on force and corruption and we, the Nationalist representatives of the people, decline to stultify ourselves or abate our principles by participating in the Coronation of King Edward VII as a Constitutional Monarch..."

FREEDOM

So said John Redmond in 1902, and he said a lot more, all of which was reported in the newspapers of the time. And so is it any wonder that when the Irish patriots of the 1916-1921 period saw John Redmond changing his tune, they decided his earlier advice was correct and the patriots decided they had enough and they came out in 1916 and fought for freedom of their people and some were judicially murdered by the British Army drum-head courts martial as a direct result.

In 1917 and again in 1918 we tried the peaceful way. Eamon de Valera was democratically elected for Clare in 1917 in a by-election. In the General Election of 1918 a great majority of Nationalists were elected and they met in Dublin as the first Dáil Eireann. British forces arrested them as they met. So much for the "*freedom of small nations*" and so much for British democracy.

The British decided to force Ireland into submission by organised terrorism. Ex-British Army officers were recruited into the Black and Tans and into the Auxiliary Royal Irish Constabulary with the mandate to terrorise the people of Ireland. These British forces burned whole towns, tortured men, women and children, robbed and murdered at their will. They would travel on fast Lorries and arrive in a town or village shooting their guns. On more than one occasion they got all the local men out and stripped them naked in front of women and their children and beat them with rifles. A Cork woman told me that, as a young girl living in Ballyhooley Road, she witnessed the local priest undressed and being goaded up the hill to Dillon's Cross on his hands and knees while he had to sing: "*God Save the King*".

People do not easily forget these things.

General Tom Barry in his book *Guerrilla Days in Ireland* says:

"The Auxiliary force had been allowed to bluster through the country for four or five months killing, beating, terrorising, and burning factories and homes. Strange as it may appear, not a single shot had been fired at them up to this by the IRA in any part of Ireland to halt their terror campaign. This fact had a very serious effect on the morale of the whole people as well as on the IRA. Stories were current that the "Auxies" were super-fighters and all but invincible. There could be no further delay in challenging them."

There wasn't any further delay.

On the 21st November a Column of thirty-six riflemen were chosen for a week's training preparatory to opening an attack on this "super-force". General Tom Barry trained them for a week and on the 28th November 1920 they were at Kilmichael before dawn having walked all night in the cold and rain. Tom Barry continued:

"All the positions were pointed out to the whole Column so that each man knew where his comrades were and what was expected of each group. There were six groups. The lie-of-the-land looked like open desolate countryside".

As Tom Barry said: "... it was bad terrain for an ambushing unit because of the lack of roadside ditches and cover".

It was deceptively innocent-looking because thirty-six riflemen and three unarmed scouts managed to hide in the rushes and the furze bushes. Unseen until they started to shoot.

'Kilmichael: A Battlefield Study.' Seán A. Murphy. Four Roads Publication. 2014. Skibbereen, Co. Cork.

A recently published book by Seán Murphy *Kilmichael: A Battlefield Study* purports to analyse the Kilmichael Battle. Seán Murphy tries to show why the IRA should have failed. General Tom Barry tells us why it succeeded. In his efforts to prove it should have failed Seán Murphy uses his limited imagination to cover not only the artificial controversy introduced by the late Peter Hart but also a newly imagined scenario of Seán Murphy's own about some men being killed in a lane!

It was all over very quickly. The Auxies, called ADRIC by Seán Murphy, were on a terrorising mission all that day. There was a war on. People who engage in war may be killed. The Auxies did kill and were themselves killed. Hey! What is there to analyse?

Does Seán Murphy turn his ballistic expertise on to why there were 20,000

killed by the German Army on the first day of the Battle of the Somme? Or on how many German soldiers were killed by the British Army? Or on how the leaders of the British Army were safe and sound twenty-five miles behind the "killing zone" (in France) when Seán Murphy criticises Tom Barry for being a number of yards from the action!!

Why does Seán Murphy quibble over whether Kilmichael was or was not a "battle"? He tries to ridicule the terminology by saying "in Ireland the final classification is often more dependent on how the local population or remembrance committee decides to categorise the engagement rather than the scale of the action itself". Seán Murphy quotes the definition of "battle" in the Oxford English Dictionary on page 27 of his book. Having read his book this far, I would not trust Seán Murphy to shake hands without counting my fingers afterwards so I looked at Chambers Dictionary which is published in Scotland and Nuttall's Standard Dictionary of the English language—each of which gives meanings of the word "battle" which could be applied to the Battle of Kilmichael. Then I examined The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary so as to use the weapon chosen by Seán Murphy and I found his given definition is not as stated by him. The nearest of the nine uses of the word "battle" in that dictionary to the one given by Seán Murphy is "A fight between (esp. large organized) opposing forces". Sean Murphy is selective: he ignores "A fight, fighting" and "A fight between two people" and "Fighting: a conflict between enemies" and "a war" and so on. Why was Seán Murphy selective? I will leave it to my readers to judge, as he puts it himself at the end of his very judgemental and, in my opinion, pre-judged book.

Nearly every statement relative to the Battle of Kilmichael in Sean Murphy's book is slanted against General Tom Barry and his men. They should not have won according to Murphy. There must have been some magic on their side! Seán Murphy's military mind is clearly unaccepting of the fact that trained British soldiers were perhaps cowards, probably drunk—they had been out all day robbing and plundering and were reported to be singing as they came around the bend in the road—incompetent with their guns and 'out for the day' enjoying themselves terrorising the Irish. They had gotten away with it for months "without a shot being fired against them" as Tom Barry said. They were out of control and off guard and incompetent.

Against them were the Irish countrymen

who had suffered enough of terrorism and who were fighting for their freedom, for their homes and for their people. Tom Barry had laid it on the line that morning—there was to be no retreat, it was kill or be killed. They knew their enemy was ruthless and they were expecting the enemy and they were ready.

Seán Murphy quotes approvingly on page 159 a British "open letter" to the IRA about the laws and customs of war:

"the war between white men should be carried out in a sportsmanlike manner and not like fights between savage tribes".

He, Seán Murphy, further quotes from this patently ridiculous "open letter" from the British by apparently endorsing the British use of the expression "murder campaign". The British letter does mention "murdering" and "common murderer" but the expression "murder campaign" seems to be Sean Murphy's own invention and its use by a retired Irish Defence Force Officer about the legitimate activities of the Irish Republican Army is very objectionable not to say highly questionable. The Irish Volunteers, the Irish Republican Army and the Irish Defence Forces all have the same lineage/history—each morphed into the other.

This peculiar attitude of Seán Murphy's comes out in his questioning on page 161 of: "Were members of the flying column lawful belligerents?"

He also then writes:

"Whereas the IRA would lay claim to being the legitimate army of the Irish Republic, the de jure position remained that the Irish State wasn't in existence and the status of the IRA as an irregular force had little or no legal standing under the laws of armed conflict. The, as yet unestablished, Irish State could not be considered as a "contracting power" and therefore was not a party to the convention" (The Hague Convention of 1907, MS).

If the Irish State could not be a contracting party how then can the Irish State be bound by the Hague Convention? Seán Murphy does not explain his contradictions—he just throws muddy terms around and hope no-one catches him doing it.

In his book, Murphy uses a map which purports to be the British one drawn up of the Battle of Kilmichael site. Amazingly for a so-called Army officer, he has no coordinates on the map—we never know where is north or south and there is no scale which makes the whole thing highly suspicious. I accept Murphy's army credentials as pointed out in a blurb on the book cover but if this is the best the Irish

Army can do—well it is a very unprofessional one going by Murphy's tall tales. I can understand why the book was self-published but surely his former superiors had to know about what he was up to and yet it seems no-one called a halt to his bizarre goings on.

He also states:

"It is also uncertain if Barry's command of the column fulfilled the requirement that he as the commander was responsible for the actions of his subordinates. In order to satisfy British military law in force at this time, Barry would have to show that he was, regularly or temporarily commissioned as an officer... provided with certificates or badges granted by the government of the State to show they are officers, NCOS or soldiers..."

In the foregoing statement, Seán Murphy displays a breathtaking ignorance of Irish history and of what was going on in Ireland in 1920. It is difficult to believe that any Irish army officer could be so ignorant but the alternative is for us to think that Seán Murphy is intentionally trying to destroy the legitimacy of what General Tom Barry and his soldiers were doing for the Irish people, and ultimately trying to destroy the legitimacy of the Dáil and of the Irish State?

On page 163, Seán Murphy in questioning whether the "laws of war" applied to the Battle of Kilmichael or not—proves his own illegitimacy as a historian, whether military or otherwise. The arguments he uses are theoretical, specious and spurious in the circumstances in Ireland in 1920 when Ireland was being terrorised, pillaged and raped by the British forces. The forces of a foreign occupying power—lest we forget.

Dáil Éireann, Murphy acknowledges, did proclaim a state of war on 31st January 1919 in *An tOglach*—

"Dáil Éireann, in its message to the free nations of the world declares a state of war to exist between Ireland and England."

On the other hand England had been at war against Ireland for 800 years. Murphy states: "*The British never acknowledged being engaged in a war*". This is untrue. No less a person than Field Marshall Montgomery of Alamein said it was a war and he should know about wars. He fought England's wars all over the world including in Cork, Ireland. He wrote in a letter to his colleague Major Percival:

"My own view is that to win a war of that sort you must be ruthless, Oliver Cromwell or the Germans would have settled it in a very short time".

And Montgomery referred to the war in Ireland as "*a dirty little war*".

A war it certainly was, in spite of Sean Murphy's weak attempts at revising the history of it. He must know that, along with tricks like false surrenders, the British were well aware that if they did not "*declare*" a war, then they could avoid prosecution for war crimes committed by them in Ireland, in India, in Pakistan, in Iraq and in numerous other "*theatres of war*" where they have been and still are engaged.

Sean A. Murphy's sole contribution in this book to the history of Kilmichael is his self-styled ballistic expertise, where his extensive reading of the subject of ballistics has enabled him to show that the wounds suffered by the Auxies were typical of wounds from high velocity rifles such as the Lee Enfield and were not "*axe wounds*" as described by British propaganda in 1920.

I would recommend reading this book as inadvisable for anyone seeking the truth in Irish history—military or otherwise. It is simply not to be found here and one is only left wondering as to why this book was ever allowed to be published.

Michael Stack ©

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GUILDS continued

of parents should not be deprived of the opportunity of learning and making progress in letters, let a complete benefice be assigned in every cathedral church to a schoolmaster, who will teach clerics and poor scholars for nothing."

The Fourth Lateran Council extended this decree to all countries. By this a perfect system of free public schools was ordained. The democracy of learning as of industry was the natural result of the genuinely democratic spirit of the Catholic Church which has never changed since the Galilean fisherman was made the Rock on which Christ constructed it: "*Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.*" The seal of the Popes is the seal of the Fisherman.

REVALUATION OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Only revaluation of the Middle Ages is thus steadily progressing and entering into the final stage of popularisation through the daily press. Particularly in the field of sociology will these ages be of constantly increasing interest and profoundly practical instruction for our times. That the common workingman was then better provided for than in the days when capitalism reached its climax before the outbreak of the World War, is now universally acknowledged by all who may be trusted to speak with authority upon this question.

LABOUR AND GUILDS

The advantages of labour were all secured to it through the potent influence of the Guilds, but in particular of the Craft Guilds as based on the religious principles of the Catholic Church with which they were integrally connected. Separated from her, they were left as a body reft of the soul, lifeless, inefficient, passing slowly into inevitable decay. With their religious spirit intact they might have confidently faced the period of economic reconstruction. This too we find admitted without hesitation.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACIES

It was due to the struggle of the Craft Guilds alone, as was shown in a previous article, that the world was not sunk into a state of uncontrolled capitalism half a millennium before the coming of the Industrial Revolution. Through the struggle of the Guildsmen the nascent cities, beginning with the 11th century, won their enfranchisement from the feudal lords who then had too often outlasted their usefulness. In the same way they

overcame the formidable power of the merchant corporations that threatened to establish their oligarchy of wealth. So too, through the efforts of the Guilds the first modern Christian democracies were formed. Many of the mediaeval cities grew into independent States. In Italy particularly, sprang up those marvellous Catholic republics, like Genoa, Lucca, Pisa and Florence.

Thus, in the latter city, the *consules* of the Merchant Guilds first appear in 1182 and from this time on no important transaction takes place without their cooperation. In Pisa, besides three Merchant Guilds, there existed after about 1260 a union of seven *artes* or Trade Guilds consisting respectively of such different elements as notaries, smiths, and wine dealers. They were governed by two *capitanei* chosen in turn from different Guilds and seven other officers, one from each Guild. The widest autonomy was enjoyed by each organisation. (9)

Oligarchy and class-rule, it is true, began again in proportion as the Guilds themselves deteriorated in their spirit of religion and democracy, or their influence declined, but their results lived on in the magnificent efflorescence of art stimulated through the powerful incentives offered by the Church. These are some of the facts that now again are receiving their due valuation.

(To be continued)

- (1) "The Substance of Gothic," Preface, p.p. viii, ix.
- (2) May, 1917, p.234.
- (3) "The Substance of Gothic," xiii-xviii.
- (4) Ibid.

- (5) "Medieval and Modern Times," p.251.
- (6) "The Rise and Early Constitution of the University."
- (7) May 3, 1919
- (8) Educational Supplement, January 2, 1919
- (9) Alfred Doran, "*Entwicklung und Organisation der Florentiner Zunft im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert.*"

Impact Trade Union On Water Charges

The following motion was passed at the IMPACT Conference in May:

'This Conference calls on IMPACT to support a Trade Union national campaign of opposition to the introduction of water charges for households unless the Government commits to retaining the service in public ownership'.

The *Water Services No. 2 Act 2013* provides that Irish Water and its assets will remain in State ownership and prohibits Irish Water's Board, the Minister for the Environment or the Minister for Finance from selling their company shares. The Minister recently announced further protections relating to the requirement for a plebiscite if this were to change. This will require legislation.

IMPACT was involved in the negotiation of the service level agreements between Irish Water and local authorities. It represents the Local Authority staff who now deliver that service to Irish Water. These workers continue to be employed under the same Local Authority terms and conditions. The Union organises members in Irish Water and has secured a recognition agreement for IMPACT from the company.

In these circumstances IMPACT will not support the December demonstration against the Water Charge.

DUMB INSOLENCE

I could understand
if the West was peaceful
and all violence was damned
that explosives were only a tool
then you had the right
to moralise
about those daisies under the scythe
those heads that cannot be deodorised
but you sent the bombers
sent the drones
and not a murmur
from you death's chaperone
about those nameless victims
the family wipe-out
your public lacks a
prim
and proper attitude
caring nowt
until they
some day
also become
prey.

24 November, 2014

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

Don't They Know It's Christmas'
down in the deserts of Mauritania
where Muslim camel-trains bypass
the pop world of megalomania.
Ask a genetically-modified knight.
Dublin-born,
a multi-millionaire, he incites
with images of the forlorn
and shouts:
Give us yer fuckin' money!'
Without a doubt
the public is a bee with honey.
Pity then
he berated the besieged Six-County Catholic
as a lout.

21 November, 2014
Wilson John Haire

GUILDS continued

REFORMATION

With a new sense of freedom, after the passing of the abhorrent Reformation doctrine of the Divine right of Kings, against which the voice of the Church had thundered through the centuries, men can now better realise her services to humanity as the champion in all times of the poor and the disinherited. Referring to Cardinal Mercier the *New York Times* believed that it could pay him no higher compliment than simply to pronounce him worthy of the great tradition of his Church, which was the only Church of the Middle Ages. "This valiant priest", it wrote, "recalls the best things in the Middle Ages, when the Church never feared to speak out, at any cost or danger, on behalf of the oppressed" (April 20, 1919).

HYNDMAN AND KROPOTKIN

We recall the glowing passages in President Wilson's "The New Freedom", describing the Catholic Church as the perennial fountain-source of the spirit of freedom and democracy throughout the Middle Ages. It was this same spirit which she infused into the guilds, wherever they remained responsive to her teachings and direction. Men even of such extreme views as Hyndman, in his "Historic Basis of Socialism in England", and the Russian anarchist writer, Kropotkin, in his "Mutual Aid a Factor in Evolution", grow eloquent when discoursing upon the Middle Ages.

Without understanding the inwardness of the true Catholic devotion to Mary, which never confuses her with Divinity nor hopes for pardon where sin is unatoned and unrepented, Mr. Henry Adams passes into an ecstasy of admiration in his "Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres". Almost at random Ralph Adams Cram (3) covers page after page with references to modern works filled with the deepest appreciation of mediaevalism. The authors, it is true, are not seldom at fault in their interpretation, owing to the want of that Catholic Faith which holds the key to its own past, and is in all its essence the same today, as in the days of Dante or the days of the inspired writers of the books of the New Testament, while always admirably adapted to every change of social life the centuries may bring.

"Medievalism is the study of a life-time, for it is that great cycle of five centuries wherein Christianity created for itself a world as nearly as possible made in its own image, a world that in spite of the wars and desecrations, the

ignorance and the barbarism and the "restorations" of modernism has left us monuments and records and traditions of a power and beauty and nobility without parallel in history" (4).

EDUCATION FOR ALL

It is with the democracy of the Catholic Guilds of these ages that we are particularly concerned, and it is interesting to notice how this is recognised to have extended even into the field of education. Besides charity schools, like our modern parochial schools, and largely supported by the Guilds, there were also Guild Schools proper. Our word "university" itself, as the Columbia University Professor, James Harvey Robinson, explains, is merely a mediaeval synonym for Guild:

"Before the end of the 12th century the teachers had become so numerous in Paris that they formed a union, or gild, for the advancement of their interests. This union of professors was called by the usual name for corporations in the Middle Ages, universitas; hence our word, university. The King and the Pope both favoured the university and granted the teachers and students many of the privileges of the clergy" (5)

UNIVERSITIES

So during the following centuries numerous universities sprang up in France, Italy and Spain. Oxford and Cambridge were founded and great centres of learning flourished everywhere. University life attained a prominence it has never equalled since. Oxford alone is said to have numbered about 10,000 students. Other universities are claimed to have numbered even 20,000 and 30,000 students. "Monasteries", says Professor Laurie, "regularly sent boys of thirteen and fourteen to university seats. A Papal instruction of 1335 required every Benedictine and Augustinian community to send boys to the university in the proportion of one in twenty of their residents" (6).

Travelling scholars, as the writer adds, were accommodated gratuitously, in the houses of priests or monastery hospitals, and even local subscriptions were offered to help them on their way. Here was the true democracy of learning. Higher education was not confined to the clergy except only when the energy of the Church was necessarily absorbed in the teaching of the very rudiments of civilisation and of the first principles of religious life to the races emerging from savagery.

In the establishment of these early seats of learning the influence of the Guilds was predominant. Regarding the origin of the three great universities at Paris, Oxford

and Bologna, Father Cuthbert is thus quoted in the *London Tablet*:

"They started without charters or even buildings of their own, and were at first simply a group who formed themselves into a closed gild, and borrowed private houses, churches or public halls. Both scholars and masters were subject to gild authority. At Bologna it was a Scholars' Gild which ruled and appointed the authority to which the masters were responsible; but eventually the masters allied themselves with the town authorities, and so the university became subject to the civic power. At Paris and Oxford the Masters' Gild elected the Council and officials who governed the universities. Later on the two gilds combined, that is the gild included both scholars and masters" (7)

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Thus these early Catholic universities were in the strictest sense popular and democratic institutions. Later it became the fashion to ask for a Papal or royal charter. "That given to Oxford in 1214 by the Legate Otho is probably the earliest." These facts are now fully acknowledged by non-Catholic authorities and even the *London Times* was able to launch forth upon a eulogy of the Papacy in the work of elementary and higher education during the entire period of the Middle Ages:

"The organisation and control of the universities of Europe was an achievement that is a deathless laurel in the Papal crown. In educational matters there was universal confidence in the judgment and justice of the Papacy from the days of Eugenius II in the 9th century to the days of the Counter-Reformation in the 16th century.

"But it was not only in university matters that the educational activity of the Papacy was so remarkable. Whether we regard Canon 34 of the canons promulgated at the *Concilium Romanum* in 826, or the decrees of the Third Lateran Council in 1179, of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and of other Councils, such as that of Vienna in 1311, we always find that the medieval Church is seeking to advance learning of all grades, and to coordinate educational effort of all kinds. And the efforts of the Central Conference were amply supplemented by what were, in effect, diocesan conferences" (8)

The decree of the Third Lateran Council, in 1179, to which the *London Times* refers is itself a complete refutation of the calumnies that, through ignorance, had long been spread against the Church in the Middle Ages. It reads:

"Since the Church of God, like a good mother, is bound to provide so that the poor who can get no help from the wealth

continued on page 28



LABOUR

Comment

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MONDRAGON Part 36

Re-evaluation of the Middle Ages

(Joseph Husslein, SJ, PhD, *Democratic Industry, A Practical Study in Social History*, New York, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1919)

Among the most hopeful signs of our time is the changed attitude regarding the Middle Ages. This was brought about by three causes. First came the failure of the capitalistic system. Concentrating the ownership of the means of production in the hands of the few, it deprived the millions of any voice, or share in the regulation of what most vitally concerned them. Against the arbitrary use of this tremendous power the minds of men naturally revolted and they reverted to the days preceding the great Industrial Revolution and the Reformation. Here, in the Catholic Middle Ages, they found realised, for the first and last time in history, the ideals of industrial democracy which to them were of far greater importance than any outward forms of government or mere national prosperity that left their own lives unaffected. "To-day," E.T. Raymond wrote in *Everyman*,

"the most earnest minds are looking to a revival of the gild system as the only alternative to a new servile State."

WORLD WAR I

But the thunder of the cannons, too, in the great World War helped to recall the fact, which had so long been studiously overlooked, that the highest achievements of human skill and intellect had after all been accomplished in the ages once accounted "dark"; the ages which produced the world's most wonderful art and architecture, its greatest poetry and richest thought; the ages of which Shakespeare was but the lavish heir, spending prodigally the legacy whose full greatness had been attained in Dante and the Angelic Doctor, in Raphael and Michelangelo, in the beauty of Rheims Cathedral and the statelyness of Notre Dame. To quote Ralph Adams Cram:

"It has needed this war to drive men back and beyond the form to the matter itself, and to give them some realisation

of the singular force and potency and righteousness of an epoch which begins now to show itself as the best man has ever created, and one as well that contains within itself the solution of our manifold and tragical difficulties, and in fact the model whereupon we must rebuild the fabric of a destroyed culture and civilisation. (1)

"The great productive scholars of the present day", wrote Lane Cooper in the *Nation* for 7th June 1919, "are medievalists."

MEDIAEVALISM

Comparable entirely with the supreme triumphs of art and architecture, was the social wisdom displayed in the mediaeval guilds at their highest stages of perfection. The brush of a Titian or the pen of the great, Florentine himself never gave expression to a deeper knowledge of human nature than we find reflected in these masterpieces of social thought and experience, transfused with profound religious conviction and touched with an artistry of the spirit that singer and painter have never surpassed.

"DARK AGES"

Lastly, there has taken place a revival of

historic knowledge. To the long-continued school boy repetition and the learned-byrote recitation of half truths and entire falsehoods regarding the Middle Ages, on the part even of otherwise most reputable authorities, there succeeded a more direct and sympathetic study. Men gradually began to drop the misnomer "dark", applied to those ages of brilliant thought and magnificent achievement. It was an epithet best suited to qualify the mind of the writer who still so sadly misused it. Who knows but at some future period of history men may suggest for our own materialistic centuries the title once so unjustly applied to those ages of vigorous youth and lofty aspiration. To those times the world now wisely reverts for lesson and inspiration. In the third of his articles on "*Prospects in English Literature*", published in the *London Athenaeum*, "Muezzin" thus pictured the modern situation as it was to be more fully revealed in the aftermath of the Great War:

"To-day, it is the Middle Ages that claim our interest and understanding, for there are signs everywhere that the era inaugurated by humanism and Protestantism, and carried forward on the two great tidal waves of industrialism and the French Revolution, is already passing away. We have gained much in the way of intellectual freedom, political privileges, and the creature comforts from these changes; but it is beginning to be realised that we have sold a large measure of our birthright for this appetising mess of pottage. Above all the temple of the human spirit lies in ruins, its altars are overthrown, and the wild asses pasture undisturbed within its walls. And though, as we must, we bring all the appliances of a scientific civilisation and the fruits of accumulated knowledge to assist us in the task of reconstruction, we can learn much from the men of the Middle Ages, for they were supreme architects in this manner of building, and the temple they set up lasted a thousand years." (2)

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