

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

September 2014

Vol.29, No.9 ISSN 0790-7672

and *Northern Star* incorporating *Workers' Weekly* Vol.28 No.9 ISSN 954-5891

Albert Reynolds

Albert Reynolds was a doer and implementer, who as Taoiseach saw through to near completion the Haughey revolution in Northern policy, EU re-alignment and economic re-development, issues seen by their creator as a single, inseparable whole. This strategy had overthrown the catastrophic legacy of crises in all three fields inherited from the Lemass and Lynch Governments of 1960-70s, that had incapacitated the state for two decades.

Reynolds, after just two years as Taoiseach, was unseated in a still mysterious *coup* in 1994, in which the Labour Party, egged on by *The Irish Times* (whose Editor, Conor Brady, proclaimed that "*public life will not be greatly the poorer for his departure from office*") played an unsavoury role as messenger. Reynolds, who entered politics as a supporter of Haughey following the Arms Conspiracy Trial of 1970, deserves to be remembered and praised for completing the Haughey transformation strategy, achieved in the face of the unbridled hostility of the Dublin political and media Establishments.

Lemass had famously reorganised the Irish State on the principle that trade and business were the cure for all ills and that the business of politics was business. In his final Government he had acted on the basis that the role of Government was to remove politics as a barrier to business, a delusion in which he was greatly encouraged by the then leaders of the Free World in London and Washington (who rewarding him with a patronising *TIME* cover), irritated as they had been since Irish wartime neutrality at the continued anomalous existence of the De Valerite state in their midst. Reynolds' achievement was to complete the overthrow of Lemass's legacy.

De Valera had created a sovereign, autonomous State acting operating in the world in association with other "free nations" and nations yet to be free, and on this basis dealt with the reluctantly withdrawing Imperial Power, with the WW1 victor Powers organised as the "League of Nations" and, notably, in the construed crisis over Danzig that was used to cause yet a second World War. These were concepts and strategies in which Lemass

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The Mystery Of Rural Ireland

The *Irish Times* has done a series on rural Ireland and as per usual it does get far until de Valera's famous speech is quoted as the starting/finishing point on the topic.

It editorialised :

"We all know what Éamon de Valera's vision of Ireland was—"a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contest of athletic youths and the laughter of happy maidens..." His was a quintessentially anti-urban vision and, to a considerable extent, it has actually been realised. Thanks to a liberal planning regime, we now have half a million individual houses dotted over the countryside—the majority urban-generated and dependent on cars even for basic everyday needs. This has not only scarred Ireland's landscapes, but also sucked the life out of our towns and villages." (20 August).

This begs the question—what does the *Irish Times* mean by rural Ireland? De Valera did not create this way of life—he

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Gaza

Ariel Sharon promised that Israel would hit the Palestinians until they begged for mercy. His successors have done their best to deliver on his promise, but they seem to be no closer to achievement than they were when he fell into his coma.

In the last large-scale operation against Gaza they killed 1400 Palestinians at the cost of 14 Jews. That was an attrition ratio of 100 to 1 in their favour. This time they killed 2,000 at the cost of 60: a ratio of

about 30 to 1. And, as this is being written, they are negotiating on the terms of cease-fire, through the medium of their friends in the elected military dictatorship in Egypt—a military dictatorship which ordered the electorate to vote for it, or else!

They are negotiating while pretending not to because the alternative is to keep on killing, the begging for mercy being nowhere in sight.

A retired Israeli diplomat gave a long

interview to *Al Jazeera*. The interviewer was polite but well-informed on the detail of the Israeli/Gaza relationship, as Western interviewers of Israeli spokesmen never are—or if they are they don't let it show. Being continually checked on attempted misrepresentations of recent events, he suddenly blurted out that, if all Israel wanted to do was kill Palestinians, there were easier ways it might do it than by invading Gaza. But are there?

Israel is a protégé state. It was conceived

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

Labour Guilds And Industrial Democracy

Mondragon, Part 33

(back page)

Correction to last month's editorial on Gaza:

On page 2, column 2, para 1: Change 1947 Border to 1967 Border
Below that change 1049 to 1949

had little involvement or notion of, as he kept diligently to his remit as Minister for Industry and Commerce. Later as Taoiseach he acted in a continuation of that Ministerial role, willing to undertake any political concession abroad that appeared to benefit his trade-and-business agenda. But he was in tune with the times in this attitude, and with a majority of the young cubs of Fianna Fáil and, despite assertions to the contrary by Lemass's many hagiographers, de Valera not only never impeded him but, accepting the right of a new generation to change course, assisted him on his rise to power.

On the North, De Valera had been convinced that the manner in which "Northern Ireland" had been established, with its unique form of semi-detachment from the British state and the role imposed on the reluctant Unionists to act as subjugators of the Catholic minority, was purposefully designed as a lever for British control over the Free State, and a curb on its potential sovereignty. Britain taunted the new State with the "unity" it could have if only it ditched its adherence to "full sovereignty". De Valera came to the

unavoidable conclusion that he had to ignore the North and to minimise any leverage its politics gave Britain to disrupt the establishing of Irish state sovereignty. This included ruthlessly excluding any role for the State in assisting the Northern Catholics in their predicament of imprisonment in the Northern entity. In establishing southern sovereignty he was undoubtedly right in this.

Lemass, for his part, as Taoiseach, appears to have naively pursued a political *rapprochement* with Stormont on the 'principle' that joint business dealing would wash away the political problems of the statelet. In encouraging Captain O'Neill to start running the place as if he was the actual Prime Minister of an actual State—a fantasy activity his Unionist forebears had scrupulously avoided—Lemass, intentionally or otherwise, unleashed a period of autonomous "Northern Ireland" Government behaviour, which soon ended in the catastrophe of 1969.

Having stirred up the catastrophe, the southern State could no longer absolve itself from the fate of the North. But the contrary manner in which Lemass's

protégé, Jack Lynch, sought to deal with the subsequent crisis, through incitement followed by disengagement, and culminating in the great lie of the Arms Conspiracy Trial, disoriented the State for a decade and a half. Its constitutional disorientation caused the unmasking of the Lemassian delusion of the business of politics as business, as the brief decade in the economic sun gave way to stagnation and economic crisis. Lynch had pursued EEC membership on the basis of the Lemassian business maxim, despite well-founded warnings from the then very substantial Irish Trade Union movement that adequate arrangements for economic convergence, social policy catch up and political security were not being provided for. Within a decade, with both FF and Coalition Governments blindly following in the Lynch line, Ireland found itself locked into an unparalleled spiral of social and economic crisis, along with being incapacitated politically by the ongoing Northern 'situation' which had the effect—as predicted by De Valera—of a substantial growth of British influence in Dublin affairs.

Charles Haughey broke the cycle of economic decay and the creeping return to British dependency of the 'non-political' southern State. His highly contested and viciously lampooned Governments of 1979-81 and 1982-83, with the Dublin media elite closely aligned with carefully nourished internal FF "heaves" against his leadership, represented a first run at overturning the two decade experiment in Lemassian non-political Government.

For Haughey, the issues of the Northern War, the Republic's sovereignty, and the chronic economic underdevelopment of the South were inextricably inter-related: indeed were all parts of the same thing. To the outrage of the opposition and Dublin media, he took the then tiny secretariat known as the "*Department of the Taoiseach*" and turned it into the all-dominating Chancellery of the southern State. "*Strategic*" matters of foreign policy, Northern policy and—critically—the management of the Social Partnership on the German model he was attempting to kick start, were removed from subordinate Departments and centralised under his leadership at the Department of the Taoiseach.

To much noisy criticism, he renovated the dilapidated Government Buildings, expelled subordinate offices from them and made them into the Chancery of the new Department. He declared "*Northern Ireland*" a "*failed entity*" and opened

negotiations with British Premier Thatcher designed to bring it to an end, through bilateral agreement in concert with the actual forces on the ground in the North. In foreign affairs he broke with the EEC's "solidarity" with Britain over its war on Argentina, but also followed a strategy of 'leap frogging' over Britain and deeply aligning the Irish state with France and Germany, something he carried out with considerable aplomb by nourishing close political friendships with Francois Mitterand and Helmut Schmidt. Irish diplomats—Fine Gael by inclination—were ordered against their better judgement to support every initiative towards deeper European integration proposed by France or Germany regardless of any antagonism this caused with Britain.

But *The Irish Times*, at the moment of its greatest influence in the State, was to have its day. The Haughey Government was unseated in November 1982 in the midst of a chaotic "GUBU" atmosphere largely generated by the newspaper, despite the best efforts of its then Editor, Douglas Gageby. Four years of acute economic decline and continued Northern war ensued. But when Garret Fitzgerald launched the "Forum for a New Ireland" in 1984, based on the precise principles with which Haughey had engaged with Thatcher in 1981-82, he participated enthusiastically. However, under Fitzgerald and Labour, the Social Partnership arrangements carefully put in place in 1980-83 were abruptly dismantled, the Department of the Taoiseach was broken up, and the European agenda—despite the best efforts of Frank Cluskey of the Labour Party—reverted to a trade agenda pure and simple, personified in the appointment of the Anglophile civil servant and later multi-millionaire chairman of Goldman Sachs International, Peter Sutherland, as Ireland's Commissioner with the brief for "Competition".

Haughey in opposition vigorously opposed Fitzgerald's Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 as a purely bi-Governmental arrangement to the exclusion of Northern forces, a view eminently justified considering the Unionist grass roots rebellion and escalation in violent confrontation that ensued. But later, on returning to power, he retained it, while nourishing the nascent Hume/IRA coalition to give the Agreement a potential substructure for future development. On that return to Government in 1987, he also immediately put in place a Partnership Agreement with Trade Unions and employers which he had been quietly building while in

Remembering 1918

On 11th November 1918 a pro-British mob broke into Sinn Fein HQ in Dublin's Harcourt Street and left the unarmed Seumus O'Kelly, once Ireland's youngest Editor (*Skibbereen Eagle*) and author of the novella, *The Weaver's Grave* injured and dying. O'Kelly was editing the party's paper whilst its regular Editor, Arthur Griffith, was in a British Gaol after being rounded up for the fabricated "German Plot".

I believe that Remembrance Day should be used every year to bring these considerations to the notice of everyone in these islands.

Donal Kennedy

opposition in continuation of his previous government efforts.

This was based on a formula of Social Partner agreement to a debt reduction priority in return for growth-led wage increases, tax reductions and participation in the economic management of the country. One of the leading architects of the Agreement on the Trade Union side, Phil Flynn, was also Vice President of Sinn Féin, whom Fitzgerald had barred Government from dealing with. Flynn shared Haughey's view of the nascent 'peace process', EU integration and Social Partnership as all aspects of the same thing.

In EU affairs Haughey formed a close alliance with the Commission leader and prophet of a deeply integrated "Social Europe", Jacques Delors, to whom Sutherland was deeply hostile. Haughey replaced Sutherland and restored the Irish coalition with France and Germany, supporting their EU integration strategy to the hilt and famously breaking the British-instigated deadlock at the Council of Ministers meeting he chaired in 1990 by forcing through a Council decision in support German Unification.

Haughey's composite Northern-EU-Economic strategy was the framework for the Partnership-supported "Programme for National Recovery" (PNR) of 1987, and subsequent 3-year Agreements. Within a decade, this had led to a doubling of Irish GDP, a reduction of the national debt to insignificant levels, a workforce grown by 80%, living standards raised from 60% of the European average to over 100% and the Good Friday Agreement starting a new dispensation in the North.

The Lemass boom of the 1960s had failed to produce what is euphemistically known as a sustainable "indigenous sector", i.e. a substantial native Irish bourgeoisie or business class that was more than a servile supplier to the British

economy. Most industries at the time were British subsidiaries or what was politely referred to as "old money", i.e. Protestant capital, mainly of the rent-seeking unproductive kind. The boom of the 1990s was a profoundly different affair, and for the first time an "indigenous sector", which acted confidently on the world stage was created, and flourished under the tutelage of the State.

Irish politics was deeply divided at this time between Haughey's Fianna Fáil and All-the-Rest, with All-the-Rest cheer led by *The Irish Times* and its derivative Dublin media. This ultimately produced a string of Tribunals designed to array Fianna Fáil as a criminal conspiracy, but in the end came up with little more than speculative opinions at enormous cost to the exchequer. In one of the interminable heaves against Haughey's leadership, Albert Reynolds replaced him in 1992 in what was really a compromise move to keep the anti-FF wolves from the door following a rebellion on an alleged point of 'principle' by the Lynchite remnant, the PDs, fundamentalists in the business of *politics as business*. For Reynolds there was no political disagreement with Haughey, but purely the need, dictated by intolerable circumstances generated around the Government, that to save the party Haughey would have to step down.

But Reynolds, a tough businessman from Longford whose family's businesses provided thousands of jobs for Irish workers, knew well the Irish bourgeoisie created by the Haughey revolution, and also that their prosperity depended on continued State supervision of their nourishment. As Minister for Industry and Commerce he took seriously the national strategies—set out in the Telesis Report and elsewhere—of the need for the State to "pick champions" in Irish industry and scale them up to internationally competitive standards, an approach that later made him the focus of "corruption"

allegations at the "*Beef Tribunal*".

When Reynolds the businessman became Taoiseach in a new regime that included as coalition partner the Irish Labour Party, which had opposed and then just carped at Social Partnership as a "*Fianna Fáil racket*", Trade Union leaders in near panic sought a meeting with the new Taoiseach for an assurance that the system would continue. Reynolds made it very clear that he had no intention of doing anything otherwise. Had he not been Haughey's chief Minister (Finance) for over three years of the process?

Reynolds also turned his attention to Northern affairs, where the emergence of what Sinn Féin the Workers Party (SFWP) and Independent Newspapers jointly decried as the "*pan-nationalist front*" had continued to be nourished through the Haughey years and was now bearing fruit through the Hume-Adams process. This was denounced at the time virtually unanimously by the Dublin media.

Reynolds, as his obituary writers have agreed, also saw the Northern and economic (i.e. Social Partnership) questions as one and the same thing, and have had to acknowledge that the "*Downing Street Declaration*" of 1993 encompassed the principles established at the time of Haughey's "*failed entity*" speech and his meetings with Thatcher.

There is much make-believe and fantasy in the eulogies written on Reynolds on his death, including an absurd claim in *The Irish Examiner* by Fergus Finlay, former *eminence grise* of the Spring/Quinn Labour Party, that Reynolds had "*confronted*" the IRA in no uncertain terms and forced them into a ceasefire! In fact it was Reynolds' position that there could be no "*process*" without the involvement of Sinn Féin-IRA, whose leadership for its part had been working for a decade to produce just such a process as the Downing Street Declaration enabled them now to unleash.

In his short period as Taoiseach, brought to an end in November 1994 by an unclarified palace *coup* in which the Labour Party acted as messenger, Reynolds had so embedded both the Social Partnership process and the Northern Peace Process that they were continued, however reluctantly at first, by the FG/Labour/DL regime that ruled for the subsequent three years. Reynolds had also continued the EU strategy of the Haughey years, securing very large tranches of EU structural funds which bankrolled the

economic take-off of the 1990s. This was the payback by France and Germany for Ireland's consistent support for their strategy of European integration.

From 1989 Reynolds, as Minister for Finance and then Taoiseach, was involved in two Coalition arrangements with hostile parties, first the Lynchite remnant, the PDs, and then Labour, the thrust of whose programmes was the need for the elimination of Fianna Fáil from Irish politics. This necessarily made for tense coalition relations. When the leader of the PDs, while in Government, used the "*Beef Tribunal*" to attack the Taoiseach as corrupt, Reynolds responded by calling Des O'Malley a liar and precipitating an election in which the PDs were virtually obliterated. He then formed a new and apparently more stable coalition with Labour, which had campaigned on a programme of the unsuitability of Fianna Fáil for power.

The "*Spring Tide*" of 1992 saw nearly a doubling of Labour support from its usual 12% on an idealistic and impossible programme of "*open and transparent*" government and a rolling wave of liberal reform that had no apparent end-point. Not having an end-point, such a programme could only sustain itself by ever more radical demands or collapse. Despite high unemployment and widespread poverty, socio-economic issues played little role in the Spring Tide—on these matters there were few real differences with Fianna Fáil which was already in a close alliance with the Trade Unions. Labour negotiators were amazed in 1992 when Reynolds met all their demands and simply incorporated them as the "*Programme for Government*".

But, egged on by a triumphalist press saturated with Tribunal coverage and an assumption that Government business should be a free range to which the press had total access, the mis-handling of an extradition case by the Attorney General led Labour, under intense media pressure driven by a version of events somehow leaked through UTV and the BBC, to walk out of Government. In the end the impossibilist liberal expectations raised by Labour—which were no more realisable under its subsequent coalition with Fine Gael and Democratic Left—meant it returned in 1997 to its traditional 12%.

The obituary writers following Reynolds' death have been at pains to achieve two things—firstly to hermetically seal off his period in power from any continuity with the preceding Haughey Government

and deal with it as a Kantian 'thing in itself', and secondly to describe him as a "*pragmatist*", which is code for a non-political and therefore worthy type of Fianna Fáil Taoiseach, a leader who dispenses with "*ideology*" (an accolade usually reserved for Lemass and Lynch, for the same purposes). On both counts they are wrong.

It is no coincidence that what decided Reynolds to enter politics was the "*Arms Trial*" of 1970. He had been a very successful businessman in the entertainment world with no political background. But the Arms Conspiracy Trial convinced him of the central need for Irish development of a successful 'resolution' of the abomination that was "Northern Ireland". He was elected to the Dáil in 1977 and aligned himself closely with the Haughey group against Lynch's disastrous leadership. He served as a Minister in all subsequent Fianna Fáil-led Governments, including in Finance from 1988, and was much praised for his efficiency and his personal decency in these roles.

Reynolds was a Catholic of the type common in Ireland at the time, and of the Fianna Fáil variety that took its religion from Rome but its politics from home. He supported the general pro-Life mood of the early 1980s but later, in Government, sought to deal with the inextricable legalisms of the abortion controversy through a referendum to bring about the level of change acceptable to a majority of the population. His Government without a fuss also decriminalised homosexual practice. His appointment of Harry Whelehan as President of the High Court at first raised no objection from Dick Spring, and was probably intended as a type of conservative check-and-balance on the overall liberal trajectory of ongoing constitutional change, and only subsequently was construed as a controversy.

But Albert Reynolds deserves to be remembered and valued particularly for implementing to completion the Haughey revolution in overturning the disastrous Lemass-Lynch legacy of a "*non-political*" State, through the continued implementation of the Haughey revolution in policy towards the North, EU alliances and Social Partnership. These were balls that in less sure-footed hands could easily have dropped. This in the last resort was his greatest achievement.

Next month *Irish Political Review* hopes to carry an article about the *Irish Times* role in bringing down the Reynolds in 1994

Just Society?

This book is about Fine Gael's social policy from the 1960s to 1980s. Ciara Meehan is a lecturer in history currently at the University of Hertfordshire and formerly at University College Dublin. This is her second book on Fine Gael: the first was *The Cosgrave Party: A History Of Cumann na nGaedheal, 1923-33* (2010).

In this book Ciara Meehan skates over Fine Gael's personalities and programmes. Her basic thesis is that, while declaring he was implementing Declan Costello's 'Just Society' proposals, Garret FitzGerald in fact had a different agenda when he became a Minister and then Taoiseach. His concern was with building a pluralist, rather than just, society, while Costello wished to build a just society in conjunction with the Church.

Meehan does not go into this but FitzGerald—like much of his generation—believed that the objections of Northern Unionists to a united Ireland were based on the "special" position of the Catholic Church in the Constitution. Reducing Church power would remove the main obstacle to a United Ireland. But events have proved otherwise. With Church power in abeyance, Unionist resistance has continued. Similarly with economic factors: where Unionists declare they could not possibly accept a lower standard of living. Their industrial base disappeared and the Celtic Tiger arrived. But the years of Irish prosperity made no difference to Unionist attitudes. Nor does the fact that Irish welfare standards continue to be more generous than those of the UK.

Northern Protestants have their own heritage. It is no use pretending that it is part of the Irish heritage: *fau*Sommetry and Poppyism cut no ice with them. Making this culture part of Irish culture will not reconcile Protestants to a United Ireland. They just want to be let be: and they maintain their link with Britain purely for that purpose. In June of this year I heard Glenn Barr (a leader of the 1974 Constitutional Stoppage) say that he entirely distrusted Britain. But he thought Ulster Protestants were better off as second class citizens in Britain than a third-class minority in a United Ireland.

In recent years Irish Governments have more or less washed their hands of the North—a policy which will not work either because, at the end of the day, there is a

steadily increasing Catholic Irish minority in the Six Counties. Where conquest failed, demographics may continue. And, if the Northern Irish Protestant nation is to be brought to acquiesce in an eventual united Ireland, it will only be on the basis of recognition of their national distinctiveness: a united Ireland would have to be a multi-national state. But the way to try to bring that about with some prospect of success is not FitzGerald's way.

GERALD SWEETMAN

Ciara Meehan's thesis relates to two decades starting from the mid-sixties, but she has an introductory chapter dealing with the earlier situation. She mentions that Gerald Sweetman became Minister for Finance in 1954 at a time when Ireland went into economic crisis. She says that Sweetman feared "*Ireland's economic independence was at stake, such was the depth of the crisis*" (p9).

An interesting article which gave some history of the currency after independence appeared in the *Irish Times* on 13th August.

It's the only substantial piece by Mark Hennessy that I am aware of. It traces Ireland's money arrangements from Independence onwards (*Sterling Centre Stage In Debate On Scotland Independence Vote*).

Since the 1840s, six of Ireland's nine banks had the right to issue notes. So, at the time of Irish Independence, Irish banks were issuing currency and continued to do so. The notes were backed by bank assets: by gold and by bank foreign exchange reserves held in the Bank of England.

A Currency Commission was established in 1927 to supervise the Irish currency and it remained in being until replaced by the Central Bank of Ireland in 1943.

The late Pat Murphy used to say that the role of Irish banking used to be to funnel money to the City of London—and that this remained the case until it was taken in hand by Charles Haughey. It was at that point that the Irish currency and financial arrangements took on a life of their own.

There can be little doubt that labour and economic activity follow capital. While Irish capital was exported to Britain, so was Irish labour and Irish enterprise.

Haughey's policy was directed at developing the Irish economy, with financial separation from sterling a part of the strategy. A British Cabinet Memorandum of 28th November 1978 by Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey expresses the extent of Irish interconnection with Britain, and the fear that Ireland would go into a European currency union without Britain. Here is a taste of what he was saying:

"1. The creation of a European Monetary System could cause the link between Sterling and the Irish Pound (the punt) to be broken... They are very worried at the prospect of joining the exchange rate regime without us. However, if we decide to stay out of it the indications are that the Irish might well go in without us.

2. ...a recent survey of Irish businessmen found that two-thirds favoured the retention of the link with sterling. Furthermore the Republic has always looked to the United Kingdom as a centre for short-term liquidity, depositing funds here as well as borrowing short term; similarly it has looked to the United Kingdom as a source of long-term capital. In both cases, the parity link has eliminated the exchange risk. After a split, the attractions of the United Kingdom as a centre would be much more uncertain..."

This interesting document is marked "*Secret*". It will be reproduced in full in a future issue of *A History Magazine, Church & State*. Its essential purpose is to seek Cabinet authority for imposing Exchange Controls on Ireland in the event of the currencies separating. As it happened, Sterling entered the ERM under the Tories in October 1990, but was forced to leave by the City of London on Black Friday, 16th September 1992, while Ireland remained within the ERM.

While Ireland was under the aegis of Sterling, though having its separate currency, this state of affairs was taken very much for granted in Ireland. Governments pursued their economic policies—including Protectionism—despite the Sterling link. All through that era the Irish pound retained parity with Sterling.

One downside of this, as Mark Hennessy reminds us, was that the Punt was subject to the crisis of the mother currency. Sterling was devalued in 1949 and 1967—and Ireland had to follow suit.

Ireland would also follow changes in the British bank rate. In February 1955 the British bank rate was raised from 1.5% to 4.5%. However this time Gerald Sweetman, now Minister for Finance in the

Coalition Government, did not follow suit. He persuaded the banks to leave the lower rate in being. Hennessy says:

"Capital fled. Bank credit to companies with credit lines in Britain jumped substantially. Prompted by the low real interest rates, imports increased and meat exports fell. Early the following year, the Government imposed heavy import duties. Imports quickly collapsed but so did much of the domestic economy. Emigration surged. In 1957, 1.8 per cent of the population left."

Ciara Meehan does not appear to be aware of these developments. She merely says that Ireland's recovery after the 2nd World War was weakest of all European economies, except for Spain. Irish national income grew by 8% between 1949 and 1956, compared to British growth of 21% and Continental Europe's 40% (p9). But these figures surely must reflect the fact that the Irish industrial base was not damaged in the same way as Europe's was during the wartime period? Nor does Meehan mention that Britain starved Ireland of vital imports, such as coal, in the immediate post-War period: a move which led to the collapse of some Irish industries.

Incidentally, it was Sweetman who made T.K. Whittaker Secretary of the Department of Finance in 1956.

These economic difficulties led to the economic *rapprochement* of Ireland with Britain of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the eventual establishment of Free Trade between the two countries.

FINANCE

All that was the pre-history of the independent economic development of the Irish economy which Haughey brought about in conjunction with European leaders, primarily the *gallant allies* in Germany. It should be said that Germany—which is blamed for the austerity policy of recent years—did not bring about the economic crisis which set in around 2008. That crisis was entirely one created by the excesses of Anglo-American finance capitalism.

Britain and America have been able to use their weight as reserve currencies to mitigate the effect of that crisis for themselves, by creating new money: *quantitative easing*. The effect of quantitative easing is to put 'new' notional money into the banks. The idea is that they will lend it out to the public and thereby raise demand. It seems that an inflation rate of 2% is desired by Anglo capitalism—a rate which inspires economic confidence.

An editorial in the *Irish Times* has

criticised the European Central Bank for not following the Anglo example. It contrasts the Eurozone bloc with American and British practice: "*in the US and the UK growth has been far stronger, unemployment is lower and inflation remains under control*" (18.8.124, *Time Running Out For The ECB*). It is strange to read this description of the British economy. Despite copious amounts of *easing* over the last few years, Britain has been undergoing the longest recession in years. In desperation Chancellor Osborne brought in a raft of mainly non-monetary measures this year to stimulate economic activity. Amongst these was the easing of planning laws to stimulate home owners to make improvements to their houses. There has also been a scheme to encourage first time buyers. It is these practical measures which finally lifted the economy.

The fact is that, when capitalism is stagnant, State use of direct levers to promote growth is more effective than simply throwing money at the problem.

The *Irish Times* editorial concludes that the general economic interests of the Eurozone—

"are best served by attempting what has not been tried, but has already worked in the US and the UK—a programme of quantitative easing. The ECB would buy government bonds to help revive the economy, lower the value of the euro and check deflation. Time is not on the side of the ECB."

However, as the *Irish Times* itself recently reported, the ECB has been intervening in practical ways to lift the Eurozone. It has bought Government Bonds from traders. The effect of that has been to reduce borrowing costs for States, which had formerly been paying high rates.

That "*easing*" trend is confirmed by *Market Watch* which reported on 5th June:

"Global government bond yields fell on Thursday, with the U.S. 10-year Treasury yield snapping a five-day rise, after the European Central Bank unveiled a package of monetary easing measures.

"The ECB said... that it would lower its deposit rates into negative territory, charging banks 0.1% to park their money at the central bank. That move, part of a broader package of rate cuts and other easing measures, is meant to stimulate the euro-zone economy and increase the slow pace of inflation.

"[Governor] Mario Draghi also said the bank is prepared to take further action if need be, including large-scale asset purchases...

"After the announcement... the Irish 10-year yield was down 5.5 basis points...

"Other peripheral yields also benefited in the wake of the ECB move..."

"The bonds of European struggling nations have fallen sharply in recent years amid investor hunger for riskier securities..."

As the *Financial Times* noted on 22nd August, further ECB measures have since been announced. There are to be more cheap bank loans, totalling €400 billion. And the ECB "*would no longer withdraw about €165 of liquidity each week from the region's markets by 'sterilising' government bond purchases it made between 2010*".

Financial manipulation of markets to stimulate production is a tricky business if market confidence is to be maintained. It requires a strong State to do it as Germany discovered in the inter-war period. The Eurozone is slowly finding its feet in this respect. If stimulating production were simply a matter of printing money, the capitalist world would be a very different place!

AUSTERITY

It is commonly said on the Left that the Irish working class did not benefit from the Celtic Tiger years. But that flies in the face of reality. Living standards underwent a sea-change. Welfare provision was also transformed; Poor Law attitudes disappeared; and a culture of expectation came into being.

With the slump of financial capital of 2008 came the need to retrench. Ireland has done a lot of this, painfully. It continues to do so, and it still is borrowing to maintain standards, spreading the cost of the crisis into the future. The ethos of the State has ensured that welfare standards have been retained substantially intact. Some wrong decisions were made. I am particularly thinking of Child Benefit. Whatever other cuts were made, it was a mistake to diminish Child Benefit at all at a time of stringency. (Though it must be admitted that the Benefit remains substantial in comparison with Britain and other countries.) The correct way would have been to maintain the Benefit in full but to subject it to taxation.

Property Tax has been another bone of contention. However, a capitalist tax system does need to tax property. (In a socialist society taxes would become irrelevant. Social resources would be allocated as required.) Britain in the 1940s had Schedule A taxation, which taxed home owners on the deemed rental value of their properties. There is something to be said for this, as equalising the position between those renting and those owning their homes.

Thomas Piketty, the French economist,

has criticised the Irish Property Tax. He has pointed out that it takes no account of any mortgage that has to be paid: despite nominally owning their property, someone might in fact own only 10% of it, with the rest owned by the mortgage holder.

The trouble with taking mortgages into account when calculating such taxes, however, is that society rewards property ownership at the expense of those who do not own property.

One way of proceeding would be to make the real owners of property liable for the Property Tax, with it being levied on the mortgage holders along with the mortgagees on a *pro rata* basis.

Piketty's solution is to replace Property Tax with a Wealth Tax.

The protests about Property Tax address real anomalies, but look in the wrong direction for solutions. It is not the Tax that is at fault but the lack of good affordable housing. Ireland has no adequate social provision of housing—particularly since it has followed the Thatcherite route of discouraging Council socialised provision. This means people are forced onto the property ladder, merely to obtain secure and (eventually) affordable homes.

Things are organised differently on the continent, where social institutional funds are directed into the provision of substantial low-rental housing, which is availed of across society. And housing is subject to legislative rent controls—and indeed there are controls on a whole raft of conditions of urban living. Germany is the premier example of this approach. There the rights, and duties, of tenants are far-reaching and set out in law.

What is needed in Ireland, along with a tax on property (not necessarily the Property Tax as it currently exists), is provision of low-cost housing for the populace. This cannot be left to market forces.

Jack Lynch pre-empted a Fine Gael election policy of abolishing Local Rates. It was a cheap vote-getting move with detrimental social effects.

The Rates included a charge for water—and this arrangement remains intact in Northern Ireland. While it is true that providing water to households costs money—even in Ireland where there is ample rain—it is wrong to charge separately for water. This tax is particularly hard on families.

The Irish water authority has been established by removing this service from Local Authorities and centralising it under a separate management. The whole

exercise has been overly costly and the new structure looks to be top-heavy with expensive administration.

No doubt the ultimate objective has been to privatise this authority, following Britain's Thatcherite example. British thinking is to gradually make all public services part of the capitalist profit-system—in other words, to replace the service ethos with a profit motive. It seems that patients, customers, travellers have all disappeared: all are customers now.

Incidentally, there is also a clear case for reform of the Irish Pensions industry. State subsidy should be removed from private Pension Funds and the funds directed into providing a proper, compulsory, pay-as-you-go earnings-related scheme for the benefit of all. If people also want to waste money on Pension schemes, that is their own choice.

The electorate is likely to vote against Irish Thatcherite developments at the next General Election. But any future Government will be faced with the problem of raising revenues—and property ownership of various kinds is a clear target for such taxation. The trick will be to encourage social provision of housing and other amenities whilst raising sufficient revenues to do so.

Angela Clifford

Rural Ireland

continued

reflected what existed and what people wanted. But living the way people do in rural Ireland is clearly the wrong choice as far as the *Irish Times* is concerned. People should live in towns and villages. In other words, people should urbanize themselves and stop 'scarring' the countryside. For whose benefit? People and their houses are a blot on the landscape to the *Irish Times*. But these people are incorrigible.

In short the IT has no concept of rural living at all despite all their talk about it.

There are two options in its eyes—a "scarred" country with people and their houses and sensible urbanization of people living cheek by jowl in urban situations.

The *Irish Times* has no concept of the missing link in all this, the key to any understanding of rural Ireland—the *townlands* of Ireland. This is a way of life since time immemorial of how people have chosen to live in rural Ireland. It is a form of living that encompasses a unique combination of socialized and individual living that is clearly unknown to the *Irish*

Times but comes with their mothers' milk to people in Ireland.

"Given the challenges facing towns and villages, it is surely a misdirection of resources that most of the €2 billion in funding for rural development under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy over the next five years will go directly to farmers. This ignores the traditional role of towns as marketplaces and centres of economic activity in rural areas and their potential to contribute to creating employment and relative prosperity."

There is valid criticism to be made of how CAP funding is distributed, but what bothers the *Irish Times* is that it is money going to the people in rural Ireland and thereby encouraging them to continue to behave as they are. The reality is that towns in Ireland may decline but the countryside can thrive at the same time. This is not supposed to happen in the model of the modern world that the *Irish Times* believes in. It appears oxymoronic but it is happening. The paper admits this in a backhanded way when it says life is being sucked life out of our towns and villages. The countryside is sucking the life out of the towns! This means the countryside is the more powerful element in the situation. But this defies all current thinking on planning and living. It could be regarded by some as defying a law of nature but this is the unique thing about rural Ireland. And the *Irish Times* cannot allow such a thing to be even thought of!

Jack Lane

Gaza

continued

as a practical proposition by others, armed to the hilt by others, and provided with markets by others. It serves the purposes of others, and its game is to see how far it can go in achieving its own particular projects while remaining securely under the patronage and protection of the others without which it could not continue to exist.

Apparently it is still not the case that it can just go about the necessary business of killing Palestinians without providing the patrons with the means of saying that it is doing something else.

It was obvious from the start that Palestine could only be made into a Jewish State if the Palestinian population could not be got rid of in one way or another. An initial pretence that a Jewish state could be established without prejudice to the rights of the existing population was

dismissed as nonsense in the 1920s by what was called “Revisionist” Zionism, whose main spokesman was Jabotinsky. These Zionists faced facts squarely and said Jewish colonisation as the foundation of a Jewish State could only be done in the usual way.

Maybe God had given the Jews perpetual title deeds to Palestine, but they left it for two thousand years, and God could not be relied upon to inflict a suicidal mania on those who had inhabited Palestine during the long Jewish absence when the Jews decided it was time to come home again. The return would be of a kind with Joshua’s invasion, and the instructions set out by God in *Deuteronomy* still applied.

The Moses of the return was Weizmann, but he was an opportunist Moses in his dealings with the Empire that was to make the return possible and engaged in all the expedient pretences. The clear-eyed Joshua was Ben Gurion. But the opportunist make-believe of the one and the realism of the other worked well together in practice.

Weizmann sold Zionism to the British Coalition of Unionists and Liberals during the Great War. Britain adopted it both as an immediate war measure and a long-term Imperial strategy. As a war measure, its purpose was to turn the Jews against Germany and bring them onside with the British Empire against Germany—Jews then being widely regarded in the British world as a kind of Germans. The Imperial strategy was to establish a Jewish State in Palestine as a kind of British colony in the Middle East—a “*little loyal Jewish Ulster in the sea of Arabs*”, as somebody put it.

The first book written in support of Britain’s Imperial Zionist project was *England And Palestine: Essays Towards The Restoration Of The Jewish State* by Herbert Sidebotham, a *Manchester Guardian* journalist (Constable, 1918). Sidebotham, who knew the history of Jewish statecraft, was aware that this was a dangerous project:

“The treatment of its Arab neighbours by the revived Jewish State [i.e. of 2,000 years ago] was possessed by a cruelty only possible to religious bigots. The same spirit of fanaticism... ruined the chances of a second restoration under the Roman Empire” (p241).

But: “*A Jewish State that is a dominion of the British Empire... would be saved from the dangers that ruined it in the past...*”

Then, in 1947, having arranged for

large-scale Jewish colonisation in Palestine for twenty years, Britain surrendered Palestine to Jewish nationalist terrorism and washed its hands of responsibility for the project it had set in motion.

The Gaza slaughter is the epitaph of the British Empire.

Gaza: Some Home Truths

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

When *Private Eye* deigns to criticise the BBC’s reporting on Gaza you know that something serious has gone wrong at the BBC. *Private Eye* has never been known for its coverage of the Israel-Palestinian conflict and rarely ventures anywhere near the subject. In this instance, however, even it has felt obliged to comment on a particular report published on the BBC Online earlier in the month. I posted a Facebook comment on this BBC report on 8th August along similar lines as those contained in Chris Guinness’s quoted criticism in the *Private Eye* article. The point here is not only the disgraceful nature of that report but how it was picked up by the media in Israel and pro-Zionist outlets in the US to build up the credibility of Israeli Defence Force’s version of its role in Gaza. In effect the BBC acting as a part of the IDF Press Bureau.

My comments on Facebook on this BBC article on 8th August were commented upon by my daughter Victoria Al-Sarsak in which she describes how the young men in her husband’s family were the ones venturing outside during the Israeli onslaught and these also are included below. Victoria is married to Mahmoud Al-Sarsak, a Palestinian professional footballer from Gaza who was arrested by the Israeli Defence Forces on 23rd July 2009 at the Erez Checkpoint and imprisoned for three years before being released on 10th July 2012 after a prolonged hunger strike (for more information about Mahmoud see: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/press-release-me-let-me-go/football-falafel-palestinian-footballer-mahmoud-sarsak-prison>).

PRIVATE EYE

PRIVATE EYE. No. 1373. 22 August – 4 September 2014

“ MEDIA NEWS: Stat Attack

A BBC report questioning the casualty statistics for Gaza gathered by the UN high commissioner for human rights was

quietly amended last week after being seized upon by the Israeli media as evidence for backing the country’s military action.

The BBC withdrew one of the most contentious claims by its “head of statistics” from the article without following its own guidelines that “when material change is made to an item of content, the change should normally be indicated to users”.

The article, posted to the BBC website on 8 August, divided the civilian casualties up by gender; and its author Anthony Reuben, billed as “head of statistics, BBC News”, offered the opinion: “If the Israeli attacks have been ‘indiscriminate’, as the UN Human Rights Council says, it is hard to work out why they have killed so many more civilian men than women”. He went on to quote an Israeli Defence Force spokesman’s explanation for the disparity: “When militants are brought to hospitals, they are brought in civilian clothing, obscuring terrorist affiliations. Hamas has also given local residents directives to obscure militant identities.”

Chris Guinness of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees was quick to complain, and to encourage others to contact the BBC. He told the *Eye*: “The most obvious explanation of why male civilians are being killed in Gaza is because they are the ones going to the shops to buy food, they are the ones clearing rubble to find dead relatives, they are the ones who are out in public spaces for a whole variety of reasons like putting out fires, dealing with the power station being hit, digging graves and burying relatives.”

A quotation from an academic making a similar point was later added to the BBC report, while Reuben’s contentious sentence was toned down to read: “*The proportion of civilian men over 18 killed seems high and it is not immediately obvious why.*” However, other than an altered date stamp (to 11 August), neither of these editorial changes was acknowledged in the article, as is recommended in the Corporation’s editorial guidelines (“an effective way of correcting a mistake is saying what was wrong as well as putting it right”). By that point Reuben’s now-vanished opinion had been approvingly quoted and credited to the BBC in outlets including the Times of Israel, Ynet, Walla and Glen Beck’s US network the Blaze.

“It was an appalling piece of journalism and typical of what happens when armchair statisticians are allowed to pontificate”, Guinness told the *Eye*. Certainly Reuben’s qualifications to comment on casualties from war zones seem unclear. Appointed to a newly created role as “a champion of statistical robustness across BBC News” in February, his online CV shows he has spent his entire career as a financial reporter—save for one summer internship, 20 years ago, at the Jerusalem Post.”

FACEBOOK

My Facebook posting in response to the original BBC report, 8th August 2014:

"BBC at it again. They are scraping the barrel to neutralise the fact that so many civilians were killed in the Israeli massacre. To this end they have wheeled out their BBC Head of Statistics to make the following statement:

"If the Israeli attacks have been 'indiscriminate', as the UN Human Rights Council says, it is hard to work out why they have killed so many more civilian men than women"—Anthony Reuben, BBC Head of Statistics.

That appears to be the best slant he can put on it. As a Head of Statistics at the BBC one would have thought that he would apply some cognitive reasoning to understand this apparent discrepancy instead of rushing to the judgment that he believes he is being paid to make. There is a very simple reason for this discrepancy. In the prevailing culture of Gaza it is viewed as the man's duty to protect the women and children. They therefore are at the forefront in attempting to ensure the safety of their families and because of that will end up in many instances in more dangerous situations where they are more likely to be killed. By claiming that this discrepancy does not tally with the belief to the UN Human Rights Council, i.e. that Israeli attacks have been indiscriminate, Mr. Reuben is implying that these attacks were discriminate. In other words that the victims were in most cases Hamas fighters. However, he does not have the courage to come right out and make such a statement and instead hides behind imputation and insinuation.

The same cultural context is omitted by Mr. Reuben when he attempts to address the issue of the numbers of women and children killed. In this he conflates the numbers of both categories stating that women and children under 15 years of age are the most unlikely to have been militant fighters. Together these categories make up 71% of the population of Gaza. He goes on to imply that because women and children only constituted 33% of the deaths somehow this confirms the discriminatory nature of Israeli bombing and shelling.

However, if one looks beyond the figures and views these figures as representing real people in real situations behaving to real cultural *mores*, we can see that the same impulses which explain the high preponderance of young male deaths also explain the relatively low percentages of women and children deaths when viewed as a ratio of the overall population. There are statistics and there are statistics but unless these statistics are placed in the context of the nature of the society from which they are derived all we are left with, Mr. Reuben, is propaganda."

ADDENDUM

Further comment by Victoria Dyas Al-Sarsak:

"The men are the ones leaving safe neighbourhoods in order to attempt rescues and make journeys for essential supplies, the men are the ones driving through dangerous streets trying to collect family members who are stranded in their homes in neighbourhoods that are under the heaviest attack. When Mahmoud's older brother and his family were stranded in Shejaiya his brothers made 3 attempts over 3 days to drive from Rafah into Shejaiya to rescue them, each time they had to turn back as it was impossible, they would certainly have been killed. In the end his brother's family ran for it at

dawn through shells raining down around them, dead bodies lying in the streets. He and his wife were carrying a child each, their young daughter running alongside them, the smoke was thick, the noise deafening, then they realised their daughter was no longer running with them, they couldn't find her but they had to press on to save the other 2 children, just praying all the time that their daughter was safe. When they reached the edge of the neighbourhood it was of course Mahmoud's brother who turned back to find their daughter. He found her cowering and crying in a doorway, surrounded by death, devastation and the never ending sound of bombs. She'd been alone there for 2 hours. This is how more men die than women. Obviously."

Eamon Dyas

The Republican Ceasefire

Twenty years ago, on 31st August 1994, the Republican Army announced a complete cessation of military operations.

That remarkable development of the Northern Catholics—the new Republican Army—was a product of the working out of the departure in Catholic politics that had been originally prompted from the South, from the office of the Taoiseach Sean Lemass, when he introduced an activism into the political system in the North that the political concoction called 'Northern Ireland' could not cope with.

The Taoiseach encouraged the leader of the Northern Nationalists to get his party to take up the role of Her Majesty's Opposition at Stormont—a thing that Eddie McAteer himself had a few years earlier described as tantamount to "*taking the soup*". But the Nationalists went up to Stormont on the Taoiseach's bidding and supped with the devil.

The new Republican Army came about after the Catholic community challenged the pretensions of the 'Northern state' (of being a state) and it was inevitably found wanting.

It was specifically formed under the impact of the Unionist military assault of August 1969 on West Belfast. That produced a Catholic—rather than a Republican—insurrection. But when nothing was done in London to take the momentum out of that insurrection, by altering the thing that it caused it, the momentum developed into a war.

The organisers of it were people who had been expelled from the Republican movement, or marginalised within it, during the 'modernisation' of the 'progressives' in the 1960s. These 'progressives',

having rendered their army dysfunctional and been confronted with the consequences of their actions, fell away to political irrelevance or became *amadáin** at the trauma of what they had done.

There was a small Republican core which had existed from the meltdown of the Northern IRA in 1922—when it had fallen apart after being used by Michael Collins as an instrument of his zig-zagging policy in relation to the Treaty he signed the previous year. This bare core was the only survival of what was left when Churchill did for Collins in 1922.

Up until 1969 this Republican core engaged in periodic escapades that enlivened the life of the nationalist community. But it had been politically inconsequential. And the bulk of the membership of the new Republican Army after August 1969 were people who had taken no part in Republican affairs before the Unionist assault on nationalist West Belfast and Derry in August 1969. They had simply experienced life in 'Northern Ireland' and the events of the previous year in particular.

Within the new Republican Army the Northern Catholics began to assert themselves in independent substance for the first time. Thrown back on their own resources, they were confident enough to no longer take orders from Dublin, as they had done in the past. What other choice had they after Jack Lynch's *volte face* in 1970 during the 'Arms Crisis'? They constructed a power centre among themselves and maintained it for nearly three decades until it had to be taken

* Fools

account of by Whitehall. And, having proved imperious to pressure for 28 years, they began to direct their momentum southward, much to the alarm of the Establishment there.

The ultimate objective of this new Republican Army produced by the events of August 1969 was a full British declaration of intent of withdrawal from Ireland. That ultimate objective was utopian and it proved militarily unachievable—although it was given its best shot in a year between 1971 and 1972.

A War came to be fought with the nominal object of abolishing Partition. This happened because British politics was seen to be closed to the populace of the Six Counties, and because there were old Republicans who took the community in hand and ensured that life in 'Northern Ireland' would never be the same again.

It was not the effects of Partition as such that ensured the rapid growth of the new Republican Army. It was the conditions of life in the Six Counties and the effects on the devolved regime of communal Unionism, which the Westminster Government interposed between itself and the populace of the Six Counties, that gave the War its momentum and edge.

The 1969 pogrom produced an upheaval that led a great many people to believe anything was possible and the Republican War was an extraordinary event out of this interregnum that required a belief in all possibilities being realisable.

But wars also need realisable purposes. The War of 1969 was given a false purpose by the circumstance in which it began, a purpose which did not relate to its effective cause. But then it was given a realisable purpose, related to its cause, which enabled it to be ended through a disciplined retreat into politics rather than in military disarray.

One of the hardest things to accomplish in war is an organised retreat. Accomplishing an organised retreat is often the difference between complete defeat and the ability to fight another day or to continue to be able to advance the strategic objectives of a campaign in a different form.

The Republican Army completed its withdrawal from the battlefield in such a competent manner that it actually enhanced the overall position of the community it stood for and itself. It preserved itself intact for a new campaign of a very different type. And there was a wide realisation within the community that the most important thing was its preservation intact rather than its going down in glorious defeat.

There was to be no more 1922s.

So out of the War, and the effective retreat from the War, came something that was not an explicit objective but was always implicit in its cause and character—a great transformation of the Catholic community. A profound social and political evolution occurred in the nationalist community in conjunction with the War and through that process things were made tolerable and there developed a degree of self-confidence within the community that had not existed since the catastrophe of 1921.

Mass support for the War the Republican Army waged was primarily based on the conditions of life that the British Government imposed upon the Catholic community as a result of the perverse system it established in 1921. As a result there was a substantial and meaningful secondary objective implicit in the character of the Provos (who were momentarily and superficially Anti-Treatyite in their leadership in the formative stage) which constituted a practical possibility on the way to the ultimate objective.

The new Northern Republican leadership from around the mid-1970s began to increasingly pursue this secondary objective, though careful to maintain their wider and ultimate demand as part of the Republican bargaining position in maintaining the War. This was discernible to the Southern Anti-Treaty element which had associated themselves with the new Republican force that had emerged in the North in the aftermath of the events of August 1969 and they disassociated themselves from it as a result in 1987.

The War was fought to a position of stalemate. Stalemate was not a position conducive to a breakout from 'Northern Ireland'. So the problem was to end the War on favourable terms from a position within which political advancement for the community was possible.

It has been suggested by some republicans critical of the Ceasefire that what was on offer in 1994 had been on offer in 1974. And that has become a familiar hand-me-down idea parroted by Unionism. (A kind of symbiotic relationship grew up between dissident republicanism and Unionism after the Ceasefire in which the disgruntled ex-Provos supplied ideas for those who had none and Unionism, well, remained Unionism.)

Mitchell McLaughlin said that the Provos learnt lessons from the 1970s that made them much more politically-savvy in 1994:

"It could be argued that the IRA was at the height of its powers in the mid-1970s, and much more active than it was when it eventually declared a Ceasefire in 1994. But that is a mistaken analysis both from a military, and more important, from a political point of view. In 1974 the IRA was in military decline. It retained a vigorous capacity, but had lost the military ascendancy to the British. In late 1974 British Army commanders believed that they were close to defeating the IRA—more so than they ever were subsequently. So, while the 1975 truce was called from what the British saw as a position of disadvantage by an IRA in fast decline, by 1992 there were no such illusions as to the substance of what was being dealt with."

Politically, Republicanism had not proved its powers of lasting endurance in the middle of the 1970s. Endurance in war is the quality that Britain respects most since endurance is what it itself is all about. It has always played the long game in war due to its island position and the strength of its Navy, and presumed that the more stylish continentals would produce short flurries of brilliance before they bowed to the inevitable British attrition that just won't go away.

Certainly, the IRA had put up an intense effort over 2 or 3 years in the early 1970s. But every year it had claimed '*Blián an Bhua*' (Victory Year), as if one more last push was all that was needed, and by the same token, all that was left in it. A year is a mere blink of an eye in British warfare so the proclamations of '*Victory Year*', year after year, indicated to the British that the IRA was reaching the end of its tether.

It wasn't unreasonable for the British Government to suppose in the mid-1970s that a short war was all that the IRA had in it. After all they were Irish rather than British and so they would have their frenzy of excitement and then burn themselves out while Britannia would still be there, playing the long game. And when the Irish had exhausted themselves, things would settle down again.

In 1994 the IRA called a Ceasefire with more well-placed confidence in a favourable political outcome than in 1974-5. It had taken everything the British State could throw at it and was still standing. And its battle-hardened political expression made it confident enough to believe it could see a political process through to fruition over an extended period of time.

It was said by republican opponents of the Ceasefire and the subsequent Good Friday Agreement that Sinn Féin was stabilising 'Northern Ireland' by entering

government within it. But an inherently unstable political entity like 'Northern Ireland' is not easily stabilised. And it has entered one of its periodic crises again—what's new?

One thing that Sinn Fein has accomplished since the Ceasefire is the narrowing down of alternatives for 'Northern Ireland'. Unionism has become increasingly dissatisfied with having the share of power with Sinn Fein as a prerequisite of being allowed to govern their wee Ulster. Sammy Wilson recently said, when challenged on the Nolan Show about why he was up in government with those he condemned as terrorists, that it was only because the system forced him to be. This was the system established as a consequence of the Ceasefire.

But the only way out for Unionists is Direct Rule—and that is something Britain dearly wants to avoid.

Sinn Fein's intention seems to be the management away of 'Northern Ireland' in the most orderly fashion possible, with the minimum bloodshed. It remains to be seen if that can be accomplished. However, there is no better alternative. And no one else offers one, least of all, London and Dublin.

Martin McGuinness recently noted: *"We are in government with unionists because we want to be. They are in government with us because they have to be."* When the Republican Ceasefire of 1994 was declared, the then leader of the Unionist Party, James Molyneaux, took people by surprise by proclaiming it as a disaster for Unionism. He said it was *"the most 'destabilising event to happen to Northern Ireland in 70 years'"* (Sunday Business Post, 30.4.06). This was an echo of Faulkner's view over 30 years previously that a Catholic reform movement would be much more dangerous to Unionism than the standard Nationalist approaches—'constitutional' or the straightforward unconstitutional.

The Unionists seemed uncomfortable in the unfrozen politics and what they wanted then was an unconditional surrender of an undefeated army.

Unionism has been trying for twenty years to extricate itself from that disaster, without success.

Equality, it seems, has finally been achieved in 'Northern Ireland'.

Pat Walsh

Report

"Caught in a trap

By Anthony Neeson

One of the first events as Féile an Phobail began yesterday was a talk given by historian Pat Walsh on the *Catholic Political Predicament in Northern Ireland*, to coincide with the launch of his book, *Catastrophe*.

Held in St Mary's University College, the talk covered the Catholic plight post-partition as nationalists found themselves cut off from the Irish state and the United Kingdom, and imprisoned in the 'pseudo state' of Northern Ireland.

Walsh argues that in 1920 both Catholics and Protestants didn't want a 'Northern Ireland'. Carson had never asked for a Parliament for the six counties and envisaged the dangers of unionists being cut off from the rest of the UK. That, he says, has manifested itself in the unionist insecurity that we see today as regards to flags and parades.

On the declaration of War in 1914, as West Belfast MP Joe Devlin called for men to enlist in the British Army, Walsh says the Falls Road was covered in Union Jacks. The unionists don't know what they lost, he argues, by opposing Home Rule. Around this same time Joe Devlin's Hibernians from Belfast were used to smash up Sinn Féin meetings as far away as Munster. West Belfast was a very different place.

However, what was important to Britain in 1920 was not the new Northern Ireland, it was the whole island. Northern Ireland is a false front, he says, where the South had to be on good behaviour to attain it.

In 1921 Michael Collins arrived in Armagh and promised to smash Northern Ireland. As a result northern nationalists republicanised and an IRA HQ was set-up in St Mary's Hall in Belfast with northern officers put on Collins' payroll. The promised northern offensive was a mess when the southern IRA failed to show up, the Civil War began in the rest of the island, and Collins was soon dead. Catholic Belfast bore the brunt of unionist violence that followed, and while many of the IRA in the north still held Collins dear, others like Cahir Healy, who would become MP for Fermanagh and Tyrone and who had been a close associate of Collins, would never forgive him for raising Catholic hopes and in the end leaving them to the mercy of the Orange state.

Walsh argues that Catholics sought escape on several occasions over the following decades, first by looking to merge the Nationalist Party with Fianna Fáil (which was rejected by De Valera)

and then with the British Labour Party (which Labour rejected). With eight policemen to every citizen of the North at one time—something which even Nazi Germany didn't have—the state could cope with intermittent IRA campaigns, however, it could not cope with the Civil Rights campaign, bringing unwanted media attention to the Catholic plight in the North, eventually overheating and exploding in war in 1969.

Walsh says that Taoiseach Seán Lemass must take blame for setting off a chain of events that led to the conflict by involving himself in the North after De Valera had effectively ignored it, having stated that he would rather have partial independence than unity. Paradoxically he also blames British Labour for the opposite reason—they ignored the North when in office and did not try to reform it.

But by then it was too late. Nationalists had been bottled up for so long, but by now the Catholic genie was out. After being let down by Collins in 1921 and Taoiseach Jack Lynch in 1969 Catholics were no longer waiting for deliverance from the South. For the first time since the founding of the state Catholics were organised and looking after themselves.

This was a very interesting talk and discussion that followed, and considering it's only a taster of his book, Pat Walsh's *Catastrophe* should be well worth a read."

IS THAT A ROCKET IN YOUR POCKET OR ARE YOU JUST DISPLEASED TO SEE ME

When you have the EU, the USA,
Russia, Eastern Europe, yeah,
and an uninterested population
all in incestuous copulation
then Gaza the Israelis can bomb
with a shalom.
(In the Old Testament genocide brings peace)
Two prison camps without release,
the West Bank and Gaza
potential tabular rasas,
except,
the ruins fight back
as families wish their dead to attack
those obese rabbis,
mountebanks,
bowing and swaying in prayer shawls
in the shadow of tanks.
Is this a holy war
of the carnivore.
But traumatised children grow up
and flower in Zionist muck,
and that's why they kill them,
that's their stratagem,
pregnant women,
husbands, parents
are vermin.
When thought of like that
it can only be rat-a-tat,
and thereupon you grow
when you can take the blows.

Wilson John Haire
26 July 2014

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRACY

The Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban in a speech to ethnic Hungarians in Romania advocated an "*illiberal State*" along the lines of countries such as "*Russia, China, Turkey, India and Singapore*".

Orban and his party are described as "*centre right, populist*". But what does "centre right" mean? Orban has:

"...nationalised private pensions, imposed tough taxes on sectors with strong foreign involvement, and boosted state involvement in an economy that has brought strong profits to politically loyal businessmen" (*The Irish Times*, 31.7.14).

Apart from the suggestion of political cynicism, this sounds like a left-wing programme. At the very least the following extract from his speech indicates that, unlike Margaret Thatcher, he believes that there is such a thing as a society or "*community*":

"The Hungarian nation is not a mere pile of individuals but a community which needs to be organised, strengthened and built".

The Irish Times report quotes from Viktor Szigetvari ("co-chairman of the Hungary's main centre-left opposition alliance") who thinks:

"...serious and active means are needed to put an end to the demolition of Hungarian democracy".

But how is Hungary not democratic? Orban's party obtained a two-thirds majority in the national parliament in 2010 and this year retained that level of representation. Szigetvari—the centre left candidate who meets with the approval of *The Irish Times*—appears to wish for outside intervention to save Hungary from herself!

The newspaper's editorial of that day (31.7.14) was of the opinion that Orban's political agenda was incompatible with EU membership and concluded in its usual mindless, magisterial tone:

"The door is open Mr Orban if membership is so oppressive".

But there is a real problem in the European project, which is not confined to Hungary. Even a europhile like the Long Fellow recognises that ordinary people no longer see the point of Europe. The CAP

and European Social Fund have diminished in importance. The EU intervention in Ukraine is likely to have damaging economic consequences. And for what purpose! It is very understandable that people across Europe should seek to fall back on the security of the nation state.

THE SECURITY OF THE STATE

The Long Fellow can't remember ever agreeing with the ex PD leader Michael McDowell on anything, but there is a first time for everything. McDowell believes that the State should not be bounced into a knee-jerk reaction to recent allegations concerning the Gardaí. The proposal to have an independent police authority will have the effect of reducing democratic accountability. It will have the same effect as the HSE for our health service, except in a much more sensitive area of the State. The Minister for Justice will not be accountable for the performance of the police if there is an independent police authority.

Another important point, which McDowell makes, is that the Garda Síochána is not only responsible for combating crime, but also counteracting subversion of the State. McDowell doesn't elaborate on the subversive threats, but it would be a big mistake to think that the threat is confined to, for example, dissident Republicans. There is some evidence that the effectiveness of the Gardaí to protect the State in the early 1970s was undermined by infiltration. The Dublin-Monaghan bombing of 1974 exposed the inability of the Gardaí to counter subversion from a foreign state. There has never been any definitive explanation as to why Jack Lynch sacked the Garda Commissioner Edmund Garvey in 1977, but there was a widespread belief that the latter was working for the British (see *In My Own Time* by James Downey, Gill & McMillan, 2009, p180).

It appears there is going to be an international competition to appoint the Garda Commissioner. The idea that someone from outside the State could be appointed to this highly sensitive position beggars belief.

JOHN BRUTON

The Long Fellow can't remember ever agreeing with the ex FG leader and Taoiseach John Bruton on anything and ... probably never will. Unlike McDowell, he has no concept of the State.

Even Professor Ronan Fanning of UCD finds it difficult to take Bruton's call to celebrate the 1914 Home Rule Bill seriously. The professor thinks the Bill was "*an exercise in hypocrisy*" by the

British (*The Irish Times*, 16.8.14).

Labour TDEamon Maloney's assertion that John Redmond was a warmonger is accurate. In response Bruton said the heroes of the 1916 Rising:

"went to war on behalf of the old German, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish empires and asked whether Mr Maloney would call for any stamps celebrating them to be withdrawn".

Bruton does not seem to grasp that some international alliances (even informal ones) might serve the Irish national interest, while others are inimical to it.

The 1916 leaders were acutely aware of the international situation and hoped to leverage it for their political advantage. Britain—the Empire suppressing Irish nationalism—was at war with other countries whose interests were not antagonistic to Irish nationalism. Unlike Redmond the 1916 leaders did not go to war "*on behalf*" of a foreign power with the vain hope that their subordination would be rewarded if that power was victorious.

Redmond's policy was a catastrophic failure resulting in the deaths of up to 50,000 Irishmen. The 1916 Rising, on the other hand, set in train the movement for independence in the 26 Counties which broke the tradition of Irish people being used as cannon fodder for the Empire.

A recent RTE documentary noted that 40% of soldiers in the British Army in 1911 were Irish born and half the soldiers in Waterloo were Irish born. If independence had achieved nothing else than breaking this tradition it would have been worth it.

LEGACY BANK DEBT

The economic policy spokesman for the German Christian Democrats, Joachim Pfeiffer, says there is "*no chance*" of Ireland obtaining a deal on legacy bank debt. The 60 billion earmarked for the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) will only be used for future bank rescues. On Ireland's economic crisis he commented that it:

"...did not fall from heaven... there were bubbles in the real estate sector, there were bubbles in the banking sector and all of this was home-made" (*The Irish Times*, 25.7.14).

It is difficult to counter this argument. Certainly, the current Government parties blamed the previous Government for the crisis and the Irish people in the 2011 General Election agreed with the proposition that the crisis was "*home-made*". What other explanation is there for the electoral collapse of Fianna Fáil and the Greens?

Even if many voters felt that external

factors might have played a part, the results of the 2011 General Election and this year's European Elections do not suggest that they blamed the EU or the Euro. Unlike in the UK or France, no political party—not even Sinn Féin—is calling for either leaving the EU or the Euro.

So, if the Irish people do not hold the EU responsible for our banking crisis, it is difficult to see why our EU partners would take it upon themselves to compensate us "retroactively" beyond the concessions already given: the extension of loans and the Anglo Promissory Note deal.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Government has hardly come out with all guns blazing in response to Pfeiffer's views. The European Stability Mechanism will become operational in November of this year. However, Minister for Finance Michael Noonan is quoted as saying that the Government's application for "retroactive funding" will be made "but not necessarily this year".

More interestingly, a spokesman for the Department of Finance appears to be reserving the Government's position on the matter:

"Any application for retrospective re-capitalisation will be considered in light of the potential returns to the State from alternative options for realising the value of the State's bank holdings" (*The Irish Times*, 25.7.14).

This suggests that the Department of Finance thinks that there is a possibility of obtaining a greater return by selling its share to the private sector. It is likely that the application for compensation for the 25 billion euro put into AIB and Bank of Ireland will be quietly dropped.

AIB

AIB, which is 99.8% owned by the State, made a profit of 437 million euro for the first six months of this year. This compares with a loss of over 800 million in the corresponding period last year. A large part of the improvement relates to a reduction in impairment charges from 738 million to 92 million. There has been a reduction in arrears and a less dramatic increase in bad debt provisions.

The AIB Chief Executive David Duffy thinks that all of the 20.5 billion that the State has ploughed into the bank will be repaid. It has already received 2 billion in fees from AIB and the most recent valuation of the State's investment is put at 11.5 billion, which looks conservative.

BANK OF IRELAND

Surprisingly, Bank of Ireland, which is 14% owned by the State, showed a smaller

profit than AIB for the first six months (327 million). This was largely due to the fact that Bank of Ireland took a bigger hit on impairment charges (374 million compared to 92 million for AIB). With its higher net margins, Bank of Ireland's long-term prospects look better than AIB's. It is possible that the State will make a profit on its investment in Bank of Ireland.

LUMPEN BOURGEOISIE

It would be interesting to know if the *Sunday Independent* thinks the economic crisis was "home grown". Certainly, it does not seem to blame the developers who lost billions, leading to the financial crisis. The newspaper, which has become the organ of the *lumpen bourgeoisie* has been conducting a relentless campaign against NAMA for at least a year.

NAMA, unlike the newspaper's heroes, is likely to make a profit. And yet we have headlines like "Fraud squad deepens its probe into NAMA leaks" (*Sunday Inde-*

pendent, 27.7.14). The article begins with a suggestion of insider trading by someone who acquired a property from NAMA. It is only in the third paragraph of the article that we learn "the sale is not the subject of a Garda inquiry and there is no suggestion of anything improper about the transaction"!!! So, where's the story?

The front page headline of the newspaper's edition of 15th August blamed NAMA for the current housing shortage. Apparently, NAMA should have let the people who bankrupted the country continue business as usual.

But, as has been pointed out in this column before, NAMA CEO Brendan McDonagh and Chairman Frank Daly requested a hearing from the Public Accounts Committee, one of whose members is Shane Ross TD, who is a prominent columnist in the *Sunday Independent*. The normally voluble Ross was practically struck dumb when the hearing took place earlier this year.

The Ghosts Of Arbour Hill

Above, in the heights of Arbour Hill, there is a stirring. Something is happening. The wind rustles. Leaves scrape metallicly along the streets. Ghosts begin to move about, quietly. Below the Liffey flows. Loud mouths break the silence. Beyond, in Islandbridge, they declaim, unchallenged. Masters of the universe. Strutting.

"War - - - War. Glory - - -." Chests pumped up like pigeons

Orders are issued. Heels click. Toy soldiers move mechanically. Medals jingle-jangle. These strange men. With their strangely-sounding Gaelic names. They hold the stage. Masters of the day. Flags unfurled. The ghosts of Arbour Hill are puzzled. What is this? Who are they? These interlopers. Whence come they? These noisy men with bemedalled chests. Them and their exaggerated names. Often hyphenated Galls! Some sort of Galls: Gael-Galls.

Listen! Their accents jar too. Plummy. Not racy of the soil. Big-House accents. "Tradesmen's Entrance to the side." And where are they normally? Did anyone ever bump into them? Anywhere? Do they speak to people? Do they go to Croker? Or Dalry? Do they ever take to 54A to Tallafornia?

Where do they go to? It's a mystery. Like Fatima Mansions. All dolled up. Another miracle. Their well-fed faces bedeck our newspapers. All so serious.

Speaking down to us. They never go to the chipper for a "wan and wan".

They speak of battle. They prate about sacrifice. They talk of freedom. Their minds in chains. Nearby, in his cell in the Royal Barracks, Wolfe Tone weeps. His throat is bleeding, festering. Beads of sweat bubble on his fevered brow. But he lies there, unchained. His mind free. "The French are on the sea, said the Sean Bhean Bocht." Still hoping, as life ebbs away. The jailer quietly peeps in the Judas Hole. Not long to go. He'd make it to the tavern in time. Metal keys hung heavily from his waist-belt, as he turned to go. He quietly cursed, as a rat scurried. The jailer's kick was too late. His lantern clanged off the wall. For a moment, darkness fell, before the lantern's mad dance see-sawed along the stair-steps and steadied again. Slowly he descended, treading heavily, holding the stair-rail. He stopped momentarily and listened. Then he resumed his descent. Down, down. A 'hot-drop' awaited. Above him he could hear a heart pumping. Thump, thump, thump. Why do they hang on? They'll never see the tavern-lights again. The thoughts of it. He tried to move more quickly. Still he could hear it. Thumping away. He slipped, stumbling. His temple struck the wall. Dazed, he had to sit. Breathing heavily. He put his hand to his forehead. It came away wet. He stood up

slowly. Carefully he continued. Lifedays ahead were fraught. The Establishment was full of surprises. He wouldn't make the same mistake again. Down, down, he continued. Foot after foot, before reaching the landing. He'd made it. He could still hear the thumping. Louder. Only this time the thumping heart was his own. Getting faster and faster. He felt weak. He fumbled for his keys. Which one? This one. He put it in the keyhole. Wouldn't go. He'd try the next. The tavern-lights were getting dimmer and dimmer. Wrong key, again. He had to sit down on the steps of the stairs. His eyesight had become blurred. His forehead ached. "Where am I? What am I doing? Something about tavern-lights. I must go home. I want to go home. Where's home?" Both of his hands held his head. He began to sob. His body was heaving. "Help me! Please help me! Forgive me, for I have sinned."

The Ghosts of Arbour Hill are empathising as they look on. *He's doing his best. Trying to earn a crust.*

"What am I doing here", wondered the jailer. "Where will I go?"

Twilight begins to softly fall,
The evening chokes back the unshed tears,
In the wind comes a whispered call,
Freedom's song instead of mean men's fears.

At Arbour Hill ghosts come to flit,
One tilts his strawboater, nonchalant,
The fools, they lacked the wit,
To see that which is held sacrosanct.
Lists are writ long in Islandbridge,
But this is not Banba's hallowed ground,
Fore Empire ne'er storm the next ridge,
Not there will Ireland's freedom be found.
The Proclamation on the wall,
Minted in his mind, etched on others,
Disowned in death, the stranger's call,
The last thoughts of him were his mother's.

The Ghosts look down on a great monument. This is the British Army War Memorial Gardens (BAWMG). Everyone memorialised wore the Khaki. Some 50,000 of them died. Some 200,000 in toto partook. They all took the shilling. Each held up a Bible and took an Oath. An Oath to Empire. Off to war. To kill and be killed. All resembling a grouse-shoot in the manor. Bang, bang. Another for plucking.

Their reasons were varied and many. Hunger, a wage, adventure, "Home Rule" (whatever it be), tradition, the glamour of it all. The shiny buttons. The swagger. Glory, glory, glory. HMK or Q. The white man's burden. Though now it was a white man who stood in the way. (The Kaiser and the King were cousins.) The

ment was all for it. "Go on, you boy, you." The poppies will be flowering in the streets. Buddleias will draw the butterflies. Bees will still seek honey. But the poppies—open the gates—let in the goats.

The Gardens are a kaleidoscope. Beds of roses. (If only they could breed a black rose!) Lawns like golf-club greens. Lovingly trimmed. A sylvan setting. Everything expertly tended. All beautifully maintained. Pillars expertly scaled. All done with an artist's eye. A symmetry unequalled. Nowhere surpassed.

They paid for it, with their lives. All about war. Rejoice. Guns and more guns. Let the blood flow freely. Irrigate Flanders' fields. Liquid for the poppies. Let men fall and meadows grow. Rat-a-tat. One's Maxim, another's Vickers.

It's hard to take. All these 'pop-up' historians. It's their Bonanza-time. Me! I'd prefer no war. But no chance. Turn on your TV. All blood and guts. All so sick. Killing, as they say, on an industrial scale". Mongers of violence are rampaging. Old ghouls are being resurrected. It's all Ypres, Givenchy, the Somme. It's become a litany. Messines Ridge. That Gate. I've had my fill. Where are Laurel and Hardy? Or Morecombe and Wise? Is Buster Keaton dead? What happened to Roy Rodger's horse? Trigger. I think 'twas Trigger. I wonder how is Roy? Does anyone sing White Christmas anymore? I must be dreaming.

Anyway, I should have known. That night in Wynn's Hotel. Remember? [See January's *Irish Political Review* for Amigos.ed] When the Minister addressed The 1916-1921 Club. The Easter Rising participants were equated with the Poppy Boys. The Liliium was planted amongst the Papaver. A flower amid weeds. I knew it then. We were in for it. Now Dublin Fusiliers. King's men. I should have stood and left. Yes, I have regrets. I erred. I didn't hear what he was saying. Inattentive. Or I didn't think I heard what he thought he meant to say. Maybe he got his jerseys mixed? Maybe he thought we were Fusiliers. Or did he not know? Too late. Now I'm sure. So is he. As the cowboys say?—"Vamoose". He's gone. But there will be another. There's always another. Watch out for daggers. Place your shoulder-blades up against the wall. A good poker player always has his back to the wall.

It can't be good for you. All that

violence on the TV. All so graphic. In black and white. Some in slow-motion. Grainy. Sometimes rapido. Bodies lying about. Grotesque. Apocalyptic. Man's inhumanity to man. Blood splashing about. Severed limbs. "Suffer the little children." So morbid. So relentless. On and on. And more and more. They're all gone mad.

Always somebody's grandpa. How he suffered. Nightmares down the years. He never said. The things he saw. The medals in the biscuit-tin. Did his bit. Had to do it. Killing Germans. Turks, too. Why? The fat bankers were OK. Quaffing brandy. On either side. But, Paddy. He had to do the fighting. That's what Paddy is for. Fighting. Good on you, Paddy. A right little belter. That's why they sound off in BAWMG. That's why the trumpets blew in BAWMG. That's why your betters place wreaths in BAWMG. That's why they'll do it again. That's why little Paddies do what little Paddies have to do. Thanks!

The undertones are racist. Some Hitler of to-day could be moved. As one was before. Who's that? Who? What? Your man! Who? Him! Yes. Him with the moustache. Holy Cow! You're right. Yes, yes. He's very like him. "Heil." A tentative raising of the right hand. "Hi - - - heil!"

Everywhere they are lecturing us. Every paper. Every Channel. Especially the Irish ones. Hot and heavy. They are laying it on. They know it all. These pofaced men. All those wreaths. All those speeches, lectures. Honouring the glorious dead. Homage to the fallen. They did their duty. Someone had to do it. They fought for the freedom of small nations. Little Belgium. (How Leopold must have laughed.) Never mind the Big Boys. They fought for themselves among themselves.

Always the Khaki. Khaki, khaki everywhere. "Pack up your Troubles." "Tipperary." But, "The Soldier's Song!" Forget it. Bellicose anyway. Now it's "Ireland's Call" or "Danny Boy". A new Anthem. Unthreatening. HMQ will be back. As what? Wait and see. It's all about timing. That damn *Bunreacht*. The Long Fellow's legacy. Power to the people. It's a winding road. Re-Anglicisation is on the way. Gradualism. But those pillar-boxes. Have to be painted red. Blood-red.

I'm dodging, ducking, diving. Watching the TV. Our lovely Great War. So much shooting. You're supposed to take I.A. (Immediate Action). Take Cover. Crawl. Observe. Return fire. Me! Always copped it. Now they're firing

on me. Both sides. I'm being hit from everywhere. I'll have to ditch the TV. Must go back to the 'fillums'. Must be a Charlie Chaplin 'fillum' somewhere. How I loved the melodrama. There's no melodrama about anymore. *"Tuppence worth of melodrama, mister, and some 'all sorts'."*

Last night [5th August] an uncomfortable looking John Bowman chaired *"The Forgotten War"* on RTE. His eyes swivelled out of synch, more than once. A young historian, Edward Madigan, took part [lecturer in First World War Studies at the University of London and co-editor of *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution, 1912-1923*]. Lord Bew was on the panel. As was Robert Ballagh. An English lady academic, named Catriona Pennell, participated [University of Exeter and author of *A Kingdom United: popular responses to the outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland*]. Very verbose. She was no shrinking violet. More Poppy.

Madigan said his father had been a barman in Rathmines. I was not sure what that was all about. Maybe he had ambitions—Madigan—regarding politics. On the left, I guess. But, a barman in Rathmines! Very posh, I felt. Pennell said all the Brits are informed about the Lovely War. They were taught in school. The Irish knew nothing about it. The Lovely War had suddenly become cuddly. The Irish were moved by the fate of Catholic Belgium. Bew re-echoed this. It was all news to me. The Belgians, I'd thought, had been divided into Walloons and Flemings. Anyway, all that chocolate; their atrocious behaviour in Africa. Maybe they had it coming. Give me Cadbury's any day. Good Quakers. A workers; town, Bourneville. Philanthropists. None of this war stuff. No cutting off offenders' hands.

The Proclamation appealed to Madigan. But, that reference to "gallant allies in Europe" was a pity. He said it referred to German Imperialism. I thought this to be a giant leap. Olympian. A hop, step and jump. Very poor scholarship, I felt. Gasping for air. Grasping at straws. He did not make much sense.

Robert Ballagh made some telling points. Very incisive. Lucid. He demolished the myth of Leopold. The Belgians might have got what they deserved. Imperialists. Ask Roger Casement. BAWME impressed Robert. Especially when it was more neglected. It then had a *"Gothic"* look. This appealed to him, as an artist. Maybe now it's too neat, I began to think;. Prettified, maybe.

Pennell went on a bit. Maybe she's a rising star. Or a shooting star. Plummeting silently. No: Not silently. Bowman looked discomfited. He hadn't his usual settled look.

Anyway, whatever. Have a lovely war. Go home when you're bombed. Keep your rifle slightly oiled. Keep your heels together when your betters speak to you. Never disagree. Yes, sir; no, sir. Three bags full. Keep your eyes open, your mouth shut and never volunteer for feck-all.

The last words rested with a Capt. Poulter. He was shown on film. He is now deceased. I felt, not a regular. Had served in British Army in the lovely war. Spoke like GBS. Hadn't been to Sandhurst or Camberley, I reckoned. He referred to those executed after the Easter Rising:

"Surely they deserved to be executed. Treason!"

He'd said it all. Lights out. *Kaput* What a lovely war. "Trigger. Here, Trigger, here. Good boy, Trigger. And where's Gene—Gene Autrey? Anyone seen Gene Autrey?" Must get rid of that telly.

Top of the morning to you. And all your relations in Amerikey. No one mentioned jealousy. It was all about jealousy. One banker resenting another. How lovely it is, jealousy. Controlling the seas. Controlling people. Plenty moolah. More of it. More and more. Plenty of every thing you need, or didn't know you needed. Poulter is coming. I can hear him coming. Here he is. The one and only Poulter. He enters, breathlessly. He mumbles, *"Tre - - - Tre - - - Treason. Ha - - - ha - - - hang 'em all!"*

John Morgan (Lt. Col. Retd.)

John Bruton's Fantasy World

John Bruton says the people of 1916 should have trusted in Home Rule and waited for it as it was on the Statute book. He seems not to have noticed a few things. They *did* trust in Home Rule. Pearse shared a platform with Redmond in 1912 in support of Home Rule. Bruton should ask himself why he changed his mind. Keynes famously said *"When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?"*

Pearse followed that advice—before it was given by Keynes.

Shortly after 1912 it became clear that Home Rule was not going to be implemented. Some facts emerged that made that clear. The Curragh Mutiny in 1914 was one, allowing the Larne Gun-running was another. But the most important factor of all was the great non-event of 1915—the General Election that should have been held but was not. This is another centenary event that is not being commemorated though it was a crucial decision, as it brought the Unionists into Government and it was clear then that it was bye-bye Home Rule.

People like Bruton, who are always ready to cast themselves as great upholders of parliamentary democracy, never seem to reflect on that non-event and its significance. Bruton himself became Taoiseach without an election but it was quite constitutional as the Parliament had not run its course. A century ago British General Elections should have been held within five years of each other, but the British Constitution is a very flexible commodity and the election that was constitutionally due in 1915 was

suspended because it might not favour the Government. So a deal was done with the Unionists, the Opposition, whereby they were brought into government instead.

These Unionists had prepared for civil war rather than have Home Rule and now they were in government: they were not going to change their minds. They had won! There was not going to be Home Rule—period.

The Unionists had brought the gun(s) back into Irish politics and they had won.

Hence Pearse and his friends, not being slow learners, learned the lesson that it was physical force that made the British Government react to Irish issues. Hence 1916.

Bruton has been continuing this line since he gave a talk at the Irish Embassy in London to mark the centenary of the Home Rule Bill. He began that talk by praising Ronan Fanning's recent book, *Fatal Path*. Fanning was in the audience and rebuked him on his interpretation of the Home Rule Bill. Fanning stated that Home Rule was never implemented, was never intended to be implemented and that was made clear by the UK Government at the time. He wondered what they were commemorating that evening! Fanning was agreeing with Pearse and the others.

Bruton simply ignored the points made and carried on regardless into his fantasy world of what could have happened and might have happened etc, etc.

Whenever I see Bruton I am reminded of the saying about the cream of the country being rich and thick.

Jack Lane

The Soiree At The Embassy

Somewhere there's another land,
Better than this place below
Far more mercifully planned
Than this cruel place we know.
Innocence and peace are there.
All is good that is desired.
Can we ever find that
Lovely Land-of-might-have-been?

Ivor Novello said it all a long time ago,
around the time of the Great War.

Discontented natives gathered at the Irish Embassy in London on 2nd July to celebrate an event that never happened. It could not be commemorated, because it did not happen, but the fact there were was, for a moment, at least the illusion of a possibility that it might have happened, could be celebrated.

It is not quite a case of *recherche du temps perdu*. It was a retrospective anticipation of a time that never was but might have been, and would have been a good time if it had achieved being in time.

A touch of class was added to the proceedings by the presence of Lord Bew. (Class seems to be what is most missed by an aspirational element in the Ireland that the natives made for themselves.

Lord Bew explained that the Ireland that might have been was all there in 1914, ready to enter into being. John Redmond had made the necessary preparations. But it somehow managed not to happen. Something quite different happened instead. This turn of events wasn't explained.

The customary explanation of the failure of the Government provided for by the Third Home Rule Bill to be actually established is that Redmond and the Home Rule Party would not agree to Home Rule with Partition while the Ulster Unionists raised an illegal Army to resist the imposition of Irish Home Rule on them, and the British Government couldn't, or wouldn't, use its Army to compel the Unionists to submit to the Home Rule Act.

Redmond, under considerable pressure, had reluctantly agreed to the exclusion of six Ulster Counties from the Home Rule system for six years. Carson dismissed this as a death sentence with a stay of execution for six years and rejected it. Then Britain made war on Germany and other things happened.

But Lord Bew revealed that this was not the case at all—that Redmond agreed

in July 1914 to the exclusion of the Six Counties without a time limit, and that he was opposed in principle to the coercion of the Ulster Unionists into the Home Rule system even by the British Government.

So why didn't we have Partitionist Home Rule then? That was the unasked question at the *Soirée*.

The revelation that Redmond agreed to permanent Partition was not questioned. Lord Bew's statement was:

"I believe that basically the matter was resolved before the war broke out. That, essentially, after the Buckingham Palace Conference, if you believe Professor Gilbert, the Irish Party leadership accepted the— what the Unionists would not accept from Spring through to late Summer was the idea of temporary exclusion. And the Irish Party dropped the idea finally, in the aftermath of Buckingham Palace, that any exclusion for the Northeast would have to be temporary. After that you're only talking about the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone. It's inconceivable that there would have been a civil war either in Ireland or in Britain over such a small— The question is now narrowed down to something so small it's inconceivable. I don't think it's necessary for the 1st World War to break out:

—meaning, I assume, that it wasn't necessary for Britain to have a World War as a diversion from civil war over Home Rule.

The only Professor Gilbert I know of is the biographer of Lloyd George. What he says about July 1914 is that Prime Minister Asquith thought for an instant that he had got Redmond to agree to permanent Partition, but soon found that he hadn't:

"In the afternoon of 24 July [1914], Asquith, Lloyd George, Redmond and Dillon met at No. 10. Now Asquith announced that he intended to go on with the Amending Bill [i.e. for Partition] without a time limit. Dillon and Redmond, the Prime Minister wrote, 'after a good deal of demur reluctantly agreed to try & persuade their party to assent'. The Cabinet met immediately afterwards—and agreed to permit the Ulster counties to renew their exclusion by plebiscite at the end of the six year period. Exclusion would be permanent... Carson had won, as he always expected he would do. But this was not quite the conclusion. The measured acquiescence in a renewal of exclusion that Asquith thought he had obtained from Redmond and Dillon disappeared almost immediately..."

The Howth gun-running and the killings in Batchelors Walk happened two days later. News came from Dillon that they could not now support the Amending Bill, and Asquith postponed it. The Government was in crisis. The Irish Party could put it out of Office if it proceeded with the permanent Partition Amendment. And, if it decided to push ahead with the unamended Bill, it understood that the King would insist on a General Election as the price of signing the Bill into the Statute Book. Either way, it was done for. "Then suddenly the horror disappeared, reduced to only a remembered nightmare, swept away by the danger of alarm from Europe" (p106).

Gilbert has a strange Endnote on this:

"Neither Lyons's nor Gwynn's excellent biographies of Dillon and Redmond refer to this monumental if temporary change of position by the Irish leaders" (p441).

Monumental! A change of position which, assuming that it happened, never saw the light of day, being cancelled almost simultaneously, just like the Home Rule Act.

There were ghosts at the Embassy event: William O'Brien and Canon Sheehan. But they were very pale ghosts. The job of forgetting that is said to have been done on Redmond was actually done on them. They have been disappeared. But Lord Bew is aware of them. I directed his attention to them in the early 1970s in Belfast and they appeared at the banquet in a cryptic *caveat*. The Lord was explaining that Redmond's position was not seriously challenged in nationalist public opinion between the start of his war-recruiting in September 1914 and the 1916 Insurrection, although in the by-elections "there is a significant dissident vote, which had not been there before at all before 1910 or 1912—Well, there was one famous case, one famous exception".

He did not specify the exception. And it is no longer famous, having been struck out by a well-organised piece of forgetting. It was the loss of 10% of the Irish Party's seats in nationalist Ireland to a movement of Independents in the first of the 1910 Elections, which was consolidated in the second 1910 Election by the Independents, now organised into the *All For Ireland League*, with a Manifesto written by Canon Sheehan, and a literary foundation with O'Brien's *Olive Branch In Ireland*.

The AFIL case against Redmond was

that he had introduced a Catholic Ascendancy element into Home Rule politics by building a Catholic secret society, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, into the structure of the Party, and was driving the situation towards Partition; and that in his Parliamentary tactic of playing the British parties against each other, allying himself closely with one of them against the other in the internal British dispute over the Budget, in the hope of being given Home Rule as a reward, he had profoundly mistaken the nature of the British political system.

O'Brien's analysis of possibilities was proved by the course of events. The Liberal Party put itself in Government, and carried its British programme, with Irish votes. It then went through the motions of legislating for Home Rule in Ireland in order to keep itself in government for three more years. Then, when it came to enacting and implementing the Bill, it was not willing to incur the fundamental rupture with the Opposition which this would have entailed.

Home Rule did not happen. What happened was that the Unionists agreed with the Liberals to put the Home Rule Bill in the Statute Book for the duration of the war on Germany which Britain found it convenient to declare at that point, with a guarantee that it would not actually be implemented at the end of the War. This was done so that Redmond, pursuing the Will-o'-Wisp of "*Home Rule in the Statute Book*", might become the master of recruiting for the British Army in nationalist Ireland.

O'Brien insisted that Ulster Unionism was not bluffing, and that all-Ireland Home Rule could not be got through Irish participation in British Party antagonisms. It was necessary to prioritise. O'Brien preferred to go for unity, putting an Irish Parliament on the long finger for the time being. The establishment of an elected central authority over local Councils had been suggested by both British parties, and therefore it seemed that it might be got with cross-party support.

As things were, the unity of Ireland was incidental to the British Government. But an elected Irish Council authority would establish a layer of Irish unity on which further development could be based. He therefore supported the Council Bills of both the Unionists and the Liberals. Redmond opposed both, as prejudicing Home Rule, and they were dropped. From first to last he refused to prioritise.

He got Home Rule into the Statute Book so that he could recruit for the War.

But it was put there under a Liberal/Unionist agreement that it would not be implemented.

In 1916, after the Rising, the Government (which now included the Unionist Party) tried to get Nationalist/Ulster Unionist agreement to implement the Home Rule Act immediately with the six counties excluded. The Unionists withdrew their opposition to Home Rule on the condition that the Six Counties were excluded. Lloyd George negotiated a deal with the two sides, meeting them separately. Joe Devlin persuaded Six County Nationalists to agree to Partition on the ground that it would end after a few years. A triumphant Nationalist pamphlet was published in Belfast, *Ireland's Path To Freedom: Why Lloyd George's Proposals Should Be Accepted*. It was barely published when it was overprinted on the front page with a stamp in red ink: "*The Cabinet violated the terms of Lloyd George's Proposals as accepted by both Irish Parties, and the agreement broke down. Monday July 24th 1916.*"

It was quickly followed by another pamphlet entitled: *The Broken Treaty*.

The Redmondites claimed that the Ulster Unionists had agreed to the implementation of the Home Rule Act with the temporary exclusion of the Six Counties and that the Cabinet had struck down the deal.

It was in the circumstances an incredible claim. The Unionists denied that they had agreed to the sentence of death with a stay of execution. A long debate was held in Parliament about it on July 24th, in the course of which O'Brien said that Redmond—

"has apparently found no resource except to pick a quarrel upon any pretext, in order to extricate himself and his friends from their mess by a pitiful hairsplitting... I really thought we had heard the last of this miserable plea that the amputation of Ulster from the body of Ireland was to be a mere temporary or provisional operation... Lord Lansdowne has only brought to a head, to a test, a system of deceit that has been going on in Ireland for the past two years. The Irish people have been shamelessly assured that the moment the War was over the Home Rule Act would come into operation automatically for all Ireland. That assurance was given by gentlemen who heard the Prime Minister solemnly pledge himself that it could never be brought into operation without an amending Bill, and that the notion that Ulster could ever be brought into obedience by coercion was absolutely unthinkable. As the Minister for War {Lloyd George} has recalled tonight, before Lord Lansdowne's speech at all

we had the Prime Minister in this House announcing that six counties, with three Irish boroughs, would be definitely struck out of the Home Rule Act, and that they could never be replaced except by a new Act of Parliament..." (col. 1453).

Carson said that in the negotiations—

"I made it perfectly clear that Departments would have to be set up here in Ulster under the Home Office or some Secretary of State, Departments in every branch of government... I drew attention... to every branch of government, from the judiciary down through to the Post Office and the various different Departments which govern Ireland, and I made it quite clear... that all these separate Departments were to be set up, and that no office or no Department which had anything to do with the new Irish Parliament was to have any jurisdiction whatever of an executive character or an administrative character in the six counties. Does anybody suppose that that was set out... as a matter that was merely to continue for a few months, and then that these six counties were automatically to come in? The thing would be ludicrous..." (Col. 1448).

So 26 County Home Rule was all ready to go in July 1916, but it could not go because, although we are told by Lord Bew, on what was a kind of State occasion (it was broadcast on the BBC *Parliament Channel*), that Redmond had agreed to the indefinite exclusion of the Six Counties in July 1914, he vetoed it when it was presented as a practical proposition. Redmond claimed that the Ulster Unionists had agreed to exclusion for a set period, at the end of which they would come in. And the story was that Lord Lansdowne had broken that agreement with a threat of resignation. And, because Parliament backed the Government position that there could not be compulsory unity on a fixed date, regardless of Unionist opinion, the deal was off—even though Redmond declared that he was against "*coercion*" of a single County into an Irish Home Rule system.

Did Redmondism engage in deception, or self-deception, or lose itself in a maze of verbiage?

*

There were other Professors and VIPs, alongside Lord Bew, at the Soiree—Michael Laffan, John Bruton, Ronan Fanning, and an English Professor whose name escapes me, but they had no historical revelations to make. But some of them wondered why somebody hadn't told them about the Ulster Protestants much earlier. Well *we* tried. Over forty years ago a group of Belfast Protestants

and Catholics went to Dublin, chained themselves to the External Affairs building, and spent a night in Mountjoy. They included David Morrison, the late Eamonn O'Kane and Tommy Dwyer. Placards were displayed and leaflets handed out, demanding the repeal of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution, so that the Protestant North would be put in a position to listen to what the Catholic South had to say to it—supposing it had taken enough interest in the Protestant North to have anything to say to it.

The response of the political and

academic Establishments was slightly embarrassed and slightly resentful indifference. If they had tried to think then as they are trying to think now it would have meant something in terms of North/South relations. It means nothing now. And anyway the North is not its object. The *Soiree* was only an incident in the West Britishising craze of a politically barren middle class.

Brendan Clifford

Editorial Note: The Autumn *Church & State* will carry a full report of the *Soiree*.

Centenary Articles No. 1

James Connolly: Ruling By Fooling

[*"Home Rule on the Statute Book"* (1914)]

The greatest strategic move by the British Forces this week took place, not on the fields of Belgium or France, but on the floor of the House of Commons. In that fortress the forces of the enemy are too firmly entrenched to fear defeat, and therefore their strategic move was crowned with brilliant success. The problem was not how to defeat a nation in arms battling for all that makes life worth living, but how to fool a nation without arms into becoming the accomplice of its oppressor. And the strategic move in question is already being hailed as a great landmark of national progress.

As the reader guesses I am alluding to the great debate on Home Rule, to the great fight between Home Rulers and Unionists and the dramatic march-out of Mr. Bonar Law and his followers. And as the reader must also guess I believe the whole thing to have been a carefully-staged pantomime to fool Nationalist Ireland. All the evidence points in that direction. Listen. To any reader of the *Irish Worker* who can point out any real difference between the proposal of Messrs. Asquith and Redmond on the one hand and that of Bonar Law and Carson on the other I will give the first brass farthing with their name upon it I find floating down the Liffey on a grindstone.

Carson's Proposal: That the Home Rule Bill should not be put on the statute book until the end of the war, and should then be considered along with an Amending Bill.

Asquith-Redmond Proposal: That the Home Rule Bill should be put on the statute book, but "no steps taken to put it

into practical operation" till the end of the war, when an Amending Bill will be passed to "alter, modify and qualify" its provision.

Again I ask, will some person tell me please what is the difference? There is none! What, then, was the reason for the great 'scene' in the House of Commons?

The reason, simpleton, why the reason is plain. When Carson consented to encourage his Volunteers to enlist in return for a promise on the part of the Government that the Home Rule Bill would be hung up high and dry he had to agree not to betray the fact of the compact to the public lest it destroy the chances of recruiting in the Nationalist district. And for the same reason it was necessary that the Tories who are delighted at Asquith's surrender should pretend to be indignant. The scene in the House and the alleged disappointment of the Tories will be a great help to recruiting. Lord Crewe declared

"He was quite confident that when the Government of Ireland Bill had been placed on the Statute Book there would be a rush to enlist in the army on the part of the whole of Ireland. (Ministerial cheers)."

And the matchless leader of the Irish race, John E. Redmond, alluding to the recruiting mission of Mr. Asquith, hastened to hold out the same hopes of an inexhaustible supply of Irish food for powder. He said

"The Premier had announced that he was going to address a meeting in Dublin. Let him beg him to go soon. He hoped to have the honour to stand on the platform beside him, and he could promise him that he would have an enthusiastic response to his appeal."

The great American humorist, Artemus Ward, declared during the American Civil War that he was prepared to sacrifice all his wife's relations in the sacred cause of the American Union. Our leaders are better than that. They are prepared to sacrifice all the sons of the poor, and all the soul and honour of their nation for the deferred promise of a shadow of liberty.

And so the great scene in the House of Commons was but a fresh staging of the old game of treachery and intrigue making its own price with compromise and weakness. That is understandable, but that compromise and weakness should masquerade as patriotism and statesmanship is for Irishmen a humiliating confession.

Home Rule is postponed until after the war. After the war the game will be entirely in the hands of Sir Edward Carson, according to the following words of Mr. Asquith

"It might be said that those whom Sir Edward Carson represented had been put at a disadvantage by the patriotic action they had taken. The employment of force for what was called the 'coercion of Ulster' was an absolutely unthinkable thing. As far as he and his colleagues were concerned it was a thing which they would never countenance or consider."

These words were a plain intimation to the Orange forces and their leader that if they stand firm they will win. A hint they are surely wise enough to take.

Meanwhile the official Home Rule press and all the local J.P.'s., publicans, land-grabbers, pawnbrokers and slum landlords who control the United Irish League will strain every nerve in an endeavour to recruit for England's army, to send forth more thousands of Irishmen and boys to manure with their corpses the soil of a foreign country, to lose their lives and their souls in the work of murdering men who never harboured an evil thought of Irish men or women, to expend in the degradation of a friendly nation that magnificent Irish courage which a wiser patriotism might better employ in the liberation of their own.

Yes, ruling by fooling, is a great British art—with great Irish fools to practice on.

Irish Worker, 19 September 1914

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Man(sergh) Overboard!

Oh dear! Some might say I asked for it. In the July issue of *Irish Political Review*, although referring to the fact that in the February issue I had strongly criticised Martin Mansergh for nonsensical remarks on the War of Independence, I nonetheless complimented him for his common-sense take on the Gerry Adams arrest. I was not naïve enough to think that I would never again find him spouting off some more historical nonsense which would require a response, but I was certainly quite naïve in believing that he would at least give us all some time to draw breath beforehand. But no! This past 14th July Mansergh crossed over the Rubicon to the British side of history.

Brendan Clifford has written as follows of Martin Mansergh's father:

"Germany... was destined to live as a hundred kingdoms big and small until the late 19th century because English destiny required that it should be so, as did French destiny... Bismarck united Germany by means of two small purposeful wars and a successful defence against a French invasion. And Nicholas Mansergh, a busy administrator in the service of the British Empire at war, made time to come to Queen Alexandra College in Dublin in 1944 to lecture about the origins of the 1914 War and to tut-tut about Bismarck's two little wars" (*Church and State*, First Quarter, 2011).

Irish-born Nicholas Mansergh had been educated in his native Tipperary as well as in Dublin, before going on to do the British State some considerable service, not least during the Second World War when, as Head of the Ministry of Information's Empire Division, he engaged in several dirty tricks operations against the Irish State. Not least because of my own family history, I have never held with telescoping fathers and sons, and I have never done so in the case of Nicholas and Martin Mansergh. Martin, the English born—as well as English reared and educated—son of an Anglo-Irish father and an English mother, opted to become an Irishman. Proceeding from being a political advisor to three successive Fianna Fáil Taoisigh—Haughey, Reynolds and Ahern—Martin was eventually elected to the Dáil for Dan Breen's old seat of Tipperary South, and was elevated to the office of Minister for State at the Department of the Taoiseach, during the course of which, as I have always acknowledged, he did the Irish State some significant service at the time

of the 1998 Peace Agreement.

In his "*Dan Breen successor*" days, Martin was always careful to espouse a Republican stance of formal neutrality in respect of both World Wars. While sometimes sailing close to the wind, he would always pull back just in time to avoid slipping overboard from the Republican ship, as can be seen from the 2003 collection of his speeches and essays, *The Legacy of History*. Yet a line of his father's actually came to his rescue for his Address at the Sologheadbeg Ambush Commemoration on 25th January 1998 where, as he put it on the occasion, "*here the first shots were fired in the War of Independence*". Martin was facilitated in coupling his own homage to "*men of resolution and ruthless courage like Dan Breen, Seán Treacy, Seán Hogan, Seamus Robinson and the other men present at Sologheadbeg*" with a sentence from Nicholas Mansergh who had been no less clinically ruthless in pronouncing: "*For the policemen who died at Sologheadbeg there was reserved the melancholy fate of having fallen on the wrong side of history*". (pp 257-8).

Martin Mansergh's lecture, *Pádraic Pearse and the Creation of an Irish Democracy*, delivered to the Ireland Institute on 5th November 1998, contained some elements of the aforementioned sailing close to the wind, before regaining his footing:

"Essentially, by the outbreak of the First World War, nearly a generation of constitutional action had failed to achieve tangible results. The situation in 1914 was that Home Rule, if it came, would be very restricted, much more so than originally proposed in 1886... Redmond through his support for the war and for British imperialism seemed to have abandoned the cultural and spiritual roles, to which Pearse and fellow members of the Gaelic League were deeply attached... Pearse is seen as the fount of modern Republicanism. Yet 'Republicanism' is a concept that he almost never deployed prior to the 1916 Proclamation. 'Separatist' is how he described his own philosophy. The substance was more important than the form. Some historians have picked out a fleeting passage from the memoirs of Desmond FitzGerald, concerning discussion amongst those occupying the GPO about the possible interest of a Hohenzollern prince in the throne of Ireland. It was speculative banter about possible German designs not Irish designs, of the type that Wolfe Tone engaged in about French intentions in the

Paris of the 1790s. Weighed against the solemnity of the Proclamation, this piece of distraction has been invested with a ludicrously exaggerated importance by some historians and commentators mostly unsupportive of the 1916 Rising and the Republican tradition... {But (which is my interpolation of that qualifying word—MOR) I have always felt that the alignment with the Kaiser's Germany was a pity. Pearse would have related to the fine humane Celtic scholarship of German scholars, like Kuno Meyer. But there was nothing particularly more gallant about the Germans than other participants in the First World War. The earlier Connolly-inspired slogan, '*We fight for neither King nor Kaiser*' {sic; '*serve*' was that slogan's actual verb—MOR}, was more principled..."

"The question of how we should regard those Irish people who fought in the First World War has to this day been somewhat fraught. Important distinctions require to be drawn. John Redmond's support for the war and for recruitment at Woodbridge in September 1914 was arguably his most fatal political error. But the position of those who answered the call is a different question... The question of John Redmond's position is fairly easily disposed of. He put his faith in Britain, indeed freed up its flank to fight a world war, without getting anything tangible in return. He was not rewarded, and there is no evidence to support the notion that the camaraderie of the war would have sorted out the Ulster problem and recruited Unionists to Home Rule... Pearse, as we know, admired, indeed was enthusiastic that thousands were prepared to die for their country in the battlefields of Flanders, whatever reservations he had about Irish participation. He has often been roundly condemned for those lurid remarks, though Thomas Jefferson made almost identical ones a century earlier {during the American War of Independence—MOR}. His choice of words was undoubtedly unfortunate, but the sentiment was near universal. What is hypocritical, however, is to laud those who took part in the mass slaughter in the battlefield of Europe, while condemning those who struck a decisive blow for Irish freedom. There are few serious historians who defend the thesis that independence would inevitably have occurred without any need for a military struggle. If Britain had been prepared to respond differently, the story might of course have been more benign and peaceful... For some, the success of the War of Independence superseded 1916. On the analogy that the United States was founded on Independence Day, 4 July 1776, and not in 1783 or 1787, most of us would see Easter 1916 as the founding date of this State. But there are other possible dates, January 1919, when the first Dáil met, the establishment of the Provisional government in January 1922, or even 6 December 1922, when the Irish Free State

became a recognised entity in international law in a form that had the agreement of Britain. The main parties in the State, including Labour, can all point to their part in the events of 1916. If we take Irish constitutionality rather than British constitutionality, then 1916 was the foundation date of an Irish national democracy, even if it was the beginning of a long struggle."

Phew! Martin almost wobbled in the direction of 1922 British constitutionality, before regaining his Republican balance:

"Looked at more dispassionately from today, the settlement negotiated under the Treaty was a major advance on Home Rule, but it was unsatisfactory in denying the Irish people the form of government which they preferred and had a right to, and it attempted, unsuccessfully in the long-term, to fix Ireland's status permanently. The British were delighted that they succeeded in passing on to Irishmen the task of facing down Republicans" (pp 233-9).

Further on in the book, but chronologically earlier as to when his speech had actually been delivered, Martin put it far more bluntly:

"The Civil War was precipitated, above all, by the duplicity of Lloyd George, the bullying of Churchill, and the rigid and pedantic dogmatism of the imperial ideologue Lionel Curtis, who repressed the slightest heresy *vis-à-vis* his conception of the Treaty. Free Staters were cast in the role of curbing Republicans. Ireland was rendered impotent by being divided not only between north and south, but within the south. Despite strenuous efforts on both sides to avert civil war, in which Liam Lynch played a constructive role... both sides fell eventually into the trap. The Republican side in the Civil War was far more constitutionally minded than they are given credit for. They were pledged to defend the constitutional legitimacy of the Republic declared in 1916, proclaimed again, this time with a massive popular mandate in January 1919, and reiterated in 1921... In a physical sense, the Free State prevailed... (but) the ideal of the Republic had much greater popular appeal." (p 300).

Mansergh could hardly have said anything else! Under his "mantle of Dan Breen" *persona* at that time, he was, after all, delivering the oration in honour of the man he described as "*A Fallen Republican Leader, General Liam Lynch*", at the annual commemoration held on 19th April 1998 for Lynch as the Chief-of-Staff of the Anti-Treaty IRA. A year previously, on 1st March 1997, when delivering a paper on "*The freedom to achieve freedom?—The political ideas of Collins and de Valera*", Mansergh had also related:

"Lloyd George, in his reply to de Valera of 7 September 1921 stated: *The principle of government by consent of the governed is the foundation of British constitutional development, but we cannot accept as a basis of practical conference an interpretation of that principle which would commit us to any demands which you might present—even to the extent of setting up a republic and repudiating the Crown.* **It was not until December 1993 that the British government, albeit in a way qualified by the concurrent consent of the two parts, finally recognised the principle of the self-determination of the people of Ireland, north and south, in the Downing Street Declaration, a catching up on one of the omissions of the Treaty**" (p 275; my emphasis—MOR).

Mansergh continued:

"Tom Garvin has speculated why in the long term the Free State side won the battle but lost the war. The obvious reason is that people never especially liked the Treaty, but accepted it because they liked renewed fighting even less. They had little difficulty with a political strategy for dismantling the Treaty by constitutional methods, by either Collins or de Valera. The Labour opposition in the Dáil in the autumn of 1922 also tried to remove the king from the constitution. I do not subscribe to the notion that the Treaty won a *de facto* Republic... In general, the Free State side tended to argue that the Republic had always belonged to the realm of fantasy... **The fact is that the British and specifically JH Thomas, a National Labour Minister, fought the economic war to try to prevent the dismantling of Dominion Status and the establishment of a *de facto* Republic from 1937** {My emphasis—MOR}. The first Governor-General, Tim Healy, was put on look-out for any legislation contrary to the Treaty, to alert the British, if not in the last resort, to exercise the right of veto... The second reason why the Free State side lost out in the long term was the extra-judicial executions of the autumn of 1922 by the government of the Free State after Collins' death, which horrified independent opinion... While great stress is laid as an historical figleaf on the kidnapping of a Free State General rather than the British ultimatum as the trigger of the Civil War, the choice as far as Collins was concerned, when he rejected Liam Lynch's overtures in August 1922, was between the return of the British and the anti-Treatyites sending in their arms... Mulcahy admitted the decision to attack the Four Courts to prevent them attacking the British had practically been taken before General O'Connell was kidnapped. But rather than castigate either Free Staters or Republicans for what turned out to be tragic errors, mostly committed out of patriotic motives, **we should never lose sight of the fact that the root, indeed sole, cause of the civil**

war, and why so many attempts to avert it failed, was the adamant, but ultimately futile efforts of Britain, which continued well into the 1930s, to deny twenty-six-county Ireland the full attributes of sovereign independence {My emphasis—MOR} ... Aided and abetted by the pedantry of Curtis' intellectual crusade to reform the empire, Churchill's involvement in Ireland belongs along with the Dardanelles, the Gold Standard and India, to the litany of disasters on the debit side of a great statesman's public record {I will refrain from commenting in this article on Churchill's support for Fascism in both Italy and Spain—MOR}... The mess created in Ireland was undoubtedly a deserved factor in the collapse of the Lloyd George coalition in October 1922" (pp 281-3).

As regards an Irish historical narrative, so far so good, more or less; or is it? I have not yet commented on Mansergh's invocation of Connolly's slogan of "*neither King nor Kaiser*", in his 1998 Pearse lecture, as a "*corrective*" to Pearse's "*alignment with Germany*". But Mansergh himself has now given that issue renewed contemporary significance. Under the heading of "*King or Kaiser, we serve neither*", a letter was published in the *Irish Examiner* this 4th July from a Mark Duggan, which stated:

"I am in agreement with Donal Kennedy's letter of June 26—*Ireland should not honour warmongers*!—as I believe this to be very true of the First World War celebrations. All of the most advanced and progressive thinkers internationally opposed the First World War bitterly. For whose benefit was the First World War fought but the rich and powerful of Europe, and it was more than a tragedy that so many Irishmen died serving the British Empire which had carried out genocide during the Famine. In a strange way it is 'back to the future' now as regards 'official Ireland' fully supporting and kowtowing to the British monarchy while unemployment and poverty stalk the land. Will another James Connolly step forward to tell us that *'we serve neither king nor kaiser but Ireland'*?"

There was no guile involved in this letter, as there had been in Mansergh's invocation of that Connolly slogan in 1998. Martin was not, however, doing his father's work on that occasion. Nicholas Mansergh was, after all, a British Imperialist who served as Head of the Empire Division in Britain's Ministry of Information during the Second World War, and who had taken time out, as Brendan Clifford has pointed out, to come to Dublin to give a series of lectures in November-December 1944, in which he argued the British

Imperialist case for the First World War ("*The coming of the First World War; a study in the European Balance, 1878-1914*"). Martin's 1998 position differed from that of his father. Martin argued the case for formal neutrality in the Imperialist War. He had, after all, characterised Redmond's "*support for the war and for British imperialism*" as "*his most fatal error*". But, in seeking refuge in a Greavesite reworking of Connolly for his own position of neutrality, Martin was bluffing, and he knew it.

At the Dr Douglas Hyde Conference in July 2001, in a paper entitled "*James Connolly Reassessed: The Irish and European Context*" (republished as a pamphlet by the Aubane Historical Society in 2006), I argued:

"Connolly should neither be deified nor have myths constructed around him. But what of issues such as Connolly's stand on the First World War? His principal biographer CD Greaves maintained that '*Connolly's thought ran parallel with Lenin's*' (*The Life and Times of James Connolly*, 1961, p 285). But this was simply not true. Twenty five years ago (1976) a controversy raged in the columns of the *Irish Times* during which I challenged the Greaves School on that issue and, in particular, the prevailing view that Connolly's position in respect of the First World War was one of neutrality. I pointed out that it was not Lenin who appealed to Connolly, but rather Lenin's life-long opponent, the Polish Socialist leader Josef Pilsudski. Connolly in fact applauded Pilsudski's Polish Legion for fighting alongside Germany against Russia, as a contingent of the Austrian army. (*Workers' Republic*, April 15, 1916). In 1976, while holding that the 1916 Rising was justified, I had nonetheless gone on to criticise Connolly for not ideologically differentiating himself to a sufficient degree from his allies and for violating the 'pure' socialist principle of neutrality in respect of the Imperialist War. A re-assessment of Connolly on my part also involves a re-assessment of what I myself previously wrote about him. The more I re-read Connolly the more convinced I am that I got it right as to where he stood on the First World War. It was, however, when I held Connolly to have been wrong for taking such a stand, that I myself got it wrong. The more I now read Connolly in conjunction with the actual history of the First World War itself the more I appreciate his reasons for rejecting neutrality in that conflict and for preferring a German victory over a British one. Those who wish to remain convinced of Connolly's neutrality always allude to a particular slogan of his—'*We Serve Neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland*'—that Connolly hung as a banner from Liberty Hall and used as the masthead of the *Irish Worker*

from the end of October to early December 1914. This, in my view, was little more than another example of a Connolly pose, a device that he adopted as a public stance in order to enable him to operate more effectively with a different (and from the very outset, a pro-German) agenda... Only a month short of the Easter Rising, in the *Workers' Republic* of March 18, 1916, Connolly argued in an article entitled "The German or the British Empire": '*We do not wish to be ruled by either Empire, but we certainly believe that the first named contains in germ more of the possibilities of freedom and civilisation than the latter.*'.."

In 2001 itself I forwarded my paper to Martin Mansergh. But, when taking refuge behind that aforementioned Connolly pose in 1998, Mansergh already knew it for what it was. He at least knew it as far back as 1976. Martin's Anglo-Irish pedigree would have already predisposed him to be an avid reader of that self-styled "*paper of record*", the *Irish Times*. As a rapidly promoted Irish public servant, who advanced from the rank of Third Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974 to that of First Secretary in 1977, it was also his professional responsibility to be such a reader. So Martin was perfectly well aware that from April to August 1976 a controversy on the Easter Rising, which I had initiated, raged in the letters columns of the *Irish Times*, in that brief 1970s period, long gone, when uncensored open debate was tolerated by the paper. In my letter published by the *Irish Times* on 27th May 1976, while holding that an Easter Rising had been justified, I nonetheless pointed out: "In October 1914 Connolly further proclaimed:

'I believe that the German nation is fighting a necessary fight for the saving of civilisation in Europe.' This line of propaganda was pursued by Connolly for the remainder of his life."

And I went on to provide chapter and verse in considerable detail, despite being threatened with the sack by the then ITGWU General Secretary for engaging in such a controversy. The respective analyses of the Imperialist War by Lenin and Connolly were utterly irreconcilable, and it was as a Marxist-Leninist that I had assailed Connolly's analysis. As I made clear in my 2001 lecture, I have long ceased to hold my 1976 perspective. I am no longer a Leninist Communist (although I am proud of having been one). I don't like labels, but if it helps, the shorthand description of a Jack Jones/James Connolly/Michael O'Flanagan Socialist Republican might be given to the political beliefs I now hold. Connolly's views on

the First World War did not change, but mine have, insofar as I now hold with Connolly rather than Lenin.

It is a pity that Martin Mansergh did not see fit to announce that, as he now emerges as an "*Allied victory*" triumphalist in respect of that Imperialist War, he has consequently disavowed his 1998 self-presentation as a "*neither King nor Kaiser*" neutralist. Martin crossed the Rubicon this 14th July when, under the heading of '*Historical reality of 1916 leaders*', the *Irish Examiner* published a letter from him where, after at least 38 years' knowledge of Connolly's actual position, he 'bravely' emerged from under his previous neutrality stone to finally 'expose' Connolly as pro-German. This, however, was not from an anti-Imperialist perspective, but from a Wilsonian 'Allied victory' one:

"While the words on the banner hung in front of Liberty Hall ('We serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland') still resonate a century on, representing the values of a patriotic anti-imperialist neutrality, they mask an historical reality that was a good deal more complex than is generally allowed (Letters, July 4). While James Connolly regarded the Great War, as it was called then, as barbaric, and would have wished the labour movement across Europe to have refused to participate, he also took the view that the war having started he wished the British Empire to be beaten, and that, if forced to choose between the two, the German Empire was 'a homogeneous Empire of self-governing peoples' (Poland, German South-West Africa?) and contained 'in germ more of the possibilities of freedom and civilisation'. The reality is that the leaders of 1916 were neither neutral nor anti-imperialist. They were anti-British imperialism. The Proclamation referred to 'our gallant allies in Europe', which were principally Imperial Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which incidentally was Arthur Griffith's and the early Sinn Féin's model for Irish independence. Undoubtedly, German support for Irish revolution turned out to be a mirage, apart from the guns landed at Howth and Kilcoole in the summer of 1914, which were a fraction of those landed at Larne for the unionists, but it was enough to facilitate the rising. Even after that, as Michael Collins told the American journalist Hayden Talbot in 1922, in his estimation, the Rising and the subsequent national revival 'were all inseparable from the thought and hope of a German victory', on which they were counting to gain a place at the peace table. Certainly, one can be sceptical about the notion that the First World War was started for the sake of small nations, such as Serbia and Belgium, but the fate of Catholic Belgium was the issue that

had greatest impact on recruitment in Ireland in the early months of the war. In terms of war outcomes, four defeated empires collapsed, others were weakened, and about a third of the countries that now make up the European Union directly or indirectly gained their freedom, including Ireland. France, which would have lost the war but for the British Expeditionary Force which included thousands of Irishmen, regained Alsace-Lorraine, taken from them in 1871. The principle of national self-determination enunciated in 1917 by President Woodrow Wilson, however imperfect and difficult to apply, has led in the longer run to close to 200 members of the United Nations. **One can certainly argue that Ireland's freedom came about not just because of the Rising and the struggle for independence, but also because it fitted into the new international order created by the Allied victory.** {My emphasis—MO'R}. Most people, and all main political parties, now accept that it is right to commemorate Irishmen who gave their lives in World War 1, but perhaps we could accept that their sacrifice also contributed to the freedom we enjoy today...."

Martin Mansergh knew full well that, as far as US President Woodrow Wilson was concerned, the principle of self-determination did not apply to Ireland. As Jim Maher related:

"De Valera decided to go to America to bring Irish-American pressure to bear on President Wilson to push Ireland's claim at the Peace Conference... At the session of Dáil Éireann on 10 April 1919, de Valera ... spoke about President Wilson of the USA and his self-determination principles based '*upon the consent of the governed*' and he appealed for Wilson to stand by those policies as they applied to Irish independence: '*If President Wilson does not stand by his principles the Irish race will stand by them, and if no other people will lead the way the Irish people will do so and see that justice and right is done.*' Dev referred to the goal that Dáil Éireann had in mind—the establishment of an Irish Republic... On 23 June (in New York)... de Valera began by saying, '*From today I am in America as the official head of the Republic established by the will of the Irish people, in accordance with the principles of self-determination.*' ... The efforts to procure a hearing of Ireland's case before the Peace Conference in Paris failed. President Wilson said that there was an agreement among the Committee of the Big Four in Versailles that no small nation should appear before it without the unanimous consent of the whole committee and England had vetoed the hearing of Ireland's claim. All future efforts to have Ireland's case heard at the Peace Conference were fruitless. The Treaty of Versailles was signed on 27 June and closed a chapter on Dáil Éireann's effort

to seek a hearing of its case." (*Harry Boland: A Biography*, 1998, pp 77, 80-1, and 94-6).

With consummate cynicism, Professor David Fitzpatrick of Trinity College Dublin's History Department, also related:

"Even before Harry Boland's arrival (in the USA), the possibility of winning a hearing for the Irish case in Paris was remote, being formally eliminated just before the signature of the Versailles Treaty when (French Prime Minister) Clemenceau, President of the Peace Conference, emphatically rejected the American Senate's request for a hearing. (*Intervention in the affairs of Allied States seems to me a question which the present Peace Conference can in no way consider under any circumstances whatsoever.*' See George Clemenceau to Robert Lansing, US Secretary of State, 25 June 1919, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*)... Harry and his comrades faced the even more formidable challenge of justifying their furious opposition to the Allied cause and to Conscription in Ireland, which, like American War fever, had peaked in 1918. This was achieved by expressing admiration for Wilson's War-aims, while denouncing Ireland's exclusion from his principle of national self-determination. Such casuistry did not impress the American Legion, which used its extensive influence among War veterans to disrupt Irish meetings and oppose civic receptions for de Valera... Many loyal Americans remained justifiably sceptical of Irish and Irish-American patriotic credentials" (*Harry Boland's Irish Revolution*, 2003, pp 136 and 140-1).

In her 2003 book, an American historian, Joanne Mooney Eichacker, was yet more enlightening:

"Early in January 1918, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington received a petition from the women of Cumann na mBan, along with a request that she deliver it personally to President Wilson... Accompanied by a delegation of thirty-eight, Hanna met with President Wilson on 11 January 1918 for approximately an hour... She presented him with a petition signed by all the members of the Cumann na mBan Council. According to Hanna, the petition '*put forth the claim of Ireland for self-determination and appealed to President Wilson to include Ireland among the small nations for whose freedom America was fighting*'... Although not at liberty to divulge the contents of their conversation, she could say she had discussed Ireland's rights, American support and his commitment to small nations... She commented that when she reminded the President of his Irish ancestry, he bantered back '*Scotch-Irish, Madam!*' ... Hanna spoke (in San Francisco) on 17 April 1918... She insisted that Ireland's case depended on being liberated at the end of the war and referred to President Wilson's remarks

on '*the principle of self-determination of nations upon which the modern world insists*'. She said she had to believe the President; otherwise she would have to accuse him of the '*grossest hypocrisy*'..." (*Irish Republican Women in America: Lecture Tours 1916-1915*, pp 81-2 and 84-5).

"The President agreed to meet the Irish-American delegation at the New York Metropolitan Opera House on March 3... The President informed the delegation that he was unable to intervene in the domestic policy of other governments. Referring to the Irish question, he later told Ray Stannard Baker, a close friend, '*they (the Irish-Americans) were so insistent that I had hard work keeping my temper*'. He later told David Hunter Miller, an American staff member of the Peace Conference delegation, that his first impulse was to *tell the Irish-Americans to go to hell*'. On the other hand, when it became clear that Irish-Americans were suspicious of the League of Nations and unenthusiastic about the League of Nations, the President began to worry about their power in both the House and the Senate. Prudently, he agreed to send an emissary, George Creel, formerly head of the War Information Bureau, to Ireland in February to investigate conditions. **However, at the same time the President stated he was not prepared to quarrel with wartime allies over seating Ireland at the Peace Conference**" (*ibid*, pp 49-50; my emphasis—MO'R).

"The members of the American Commission for Irish Independence (inclusive of attorney Michael J Ryan, Public Service Commissioner in Philadelphia, Edward F Dunne, former Governor of Illinois, and New York Attorney Frank P Walsh) were granted passports to travel from Paris to meet with the leaders of the Irish Republic in order to later '*enlighten American opinion*'. They arrived in Dublin on 3 May 1919 and traveled throughout Ireland. Generally they spoke on '*Irish Independence from Britain, on an Irish republic, on the American model of republicanism, on the Allied war aims concerning small nations and self-determination, and on the powers of the Dáil Government derived from the 1918 election*'. Their comments on these subjects produced strong adverse reactions from the British. The American Ambassador in London, John W Davis, reported that '*Michael Ryan ... once or twice advocated action similar to that adopted in Easter Week in 1916. Messrs Walsh and Dunne ... although they did not advocate armed rebellion, missed no opportunity of stating that they represented over 20,000,000 of American people, all ready to help to their utmost in assisting Ireland to achieve its objective, i.e. an Irish Republic.*' (Davis to the US Secretary of State, 28 May 1919). **Wilson and his administration now had evidence to justify their refusal of**

support for Irish self-determination. And they once again succumbed to British pressure to stay closely allied to England's position that the problems with Ireland were internal ones. {My emphasis –MO'R}. When the Irish-American delegation persisted in their requests to meet with the President, Frank Walsh and Edward Dunne were granted an interview with him on June 11 during which he made the following 'fork-tongued' statement concerning Irish self-determination: *'You have touched on the great metaphysical tragedy of today. When I gave utterance to those words I said them without the knowledge that nationalities existed which are coming to us day after day. Of course, Ireland's case, from the point of view of population, from the point of view of the struggle it has made, from the point of interest it has excited in the world, and especially among our own people, whom I am anxious to serve, is the outstanding case of a small nationality. You do not know and cannot appreciate the anxieties I have experienced as the result of these many millions of people having their hopes raised by what I said.'* On 28 June 1919 the Peace Treaty with Germany was signed at Versailles. The Friends of Irish Freedom had appointed John A Murphy of Buffalo, NY, as a supplementary member of the Commission; however, he arrived in Paris after the signing. On July 22, he requested an audience with Premier Clemenceau, but never received an answer. The work of the Irish delegation was complete." (*ibid*, pp 52-3).

If President Wilson spoke with forked-tongue, what are we to say of Martin Mansergh? For he knows only too well that Irish independence owes nothing to Wilson. Quite the contrary; the Irish War of Independence had to be waged **against** that Allied victory which kept Ireland in thrall. As he has now come out to acclaim the Anglo-American victory in the 1914-1918 Imperialist War, Martin can no longer be said to be aboard the good ship "Service to the Irish State". But he has not slipped overboard; he has taken a conscious decision to jump ship. Or, to borrow from Nicholas Mansergh's imagery, Martin has finally volunteered to fall on the wrong side of Irish history. And what "history" is that wrong side now seeking to teach us? This past 31st July the Commonwealth War Graves Commission marked the centenary of the First World War in Dublin's Glasnevin Cemetery with a memorial brochure which, under the heading of "Ireland and the two world wars", told us how our new "reconciliation history" should read:

"At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. Both Nationalist and Unionist leaders initially supported the

war and men from across the island, from both Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, enlisted. Over 210,000 Irishmen served in the British forces during the First World War, while many others of Irish descent served with the forces of other Commonwealth nations or those of America. As many as 50,000 Irishmen died in the war. In the Second World War, as many as 100,000 Irishmen served and some 10,000 killed."

At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Ireland was, well, what? If, as Martin Mansergh has argued, Britain finally recognised an Irish right to self-determination in 1993, that message has failed to get through to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, which recognises neither Irish sovereignty nor neutrality, and certainly not the right to be neutral. It clearly would have stuck in the CWGC's gullet to have conceded anything such, and the Commission eschewed a form of wording which might have otherwise read: *"In the Second World War a sovereign Irish State pursued a policy of neutrality, while as many as 100,000 Irishmen served in the British forces."*

The CWGC figure of 100,000 Irishmen (from both North and South) serving in the British armed forces in the Second World War also reminds me of a particular dirty tricks operation against Ireland which Nicholas Mansergh had been responsible for disseminating, when Head of the Empire Division of Britain's Ministry of Information. Mansergh is not a name to be found in either the narrative or the index of Professor Brian Girvin's 2006 *magnum opus: The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45*. You will, however, find Nicholas in a noteworthy footnote. Girvin related:

"In late April 1995, almost fifty years after the end of the Second World War, Taoiseach John Bruton made an emotional speech at the Irish National Memorial Park at Islandbridge in Dublin in which he paid tribute to the 150,000 Irish people who had 'volunteered to fight against Nazi tyranny in Europe, at least 10,000 of whom were killed while serving in British uniforms'... Someone as level-headed as Seán Lemass told one British visitor in 1943 that there were 100,000 Irish men in the British armed forces and a further 150,000 in civilian work... The estimates escalated as the war came to an end. In Dublin (British Minister) Maffey came to the conclusion that Frank Gallagher, head of the Government Information Service and de Valera's confidant, was orchestrating a campaign to present Irish neutrality in the best possible light... Gallagher promoted the view that Irish neutrality had not dis-

advantaged the British or the United States in any way, indeed that its impact had either been even-handed or positive for the Allies. British officials believed that this Irish campaign during 1945 had been effective... The Dominions Office sought to counter Irish nationalist assertions but found reliable figures hard to come by... The (Dominions Office) totals for all men and women in the army and air force come to 41,950 for Éire and 40,600 for Northern Ireland {plus a further 3,000 each for the Royal Navy—MO'R}... **The Dominions Office remained unsure how to proceed with the matter, though it was decided to work through the Ministry of Information to deflate the Irish numbers being circulated... It was also decided that Britain could gain little from publication but that informal circulation might temper the Irish case. This was thought an appropriate task for the Ministry of Information, which was authorised to confirm that volunteers from Éire numbered no more than 50,000 and that this was a generous estimate. The intention was to counter Irish exaggeration. (Dominions Office, Costar to Mansergh, February 1945).** {My emphasis—MO'R}... {Yet} Richard Doherty (in his 1999 book *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War*) ... uses the accepted formula... This gives an overall figure of 120,000 Irish military personnel serving during the war... Further calculations lead Doherty to conclude that 78,826 service personnel were from Éire and 52,174 from Northern Ireland" (further undermining Nicholas Mansergh's dirty tricks statistics and bringing the combined total to 130,00, pp 256-274).

On 14th July last, the very same day that the *Irish Examiner* had published Martin Mansergh's letter, I submitted, under the heading of 'War of Independence the only foundation stone of this State', the following short reply:

"I do not question commemoration, as distinct from celebration, of those Irishmen who died fighting in Britain's Great War of 1914-18. How could I? My maternal grandfather's first cousin, John Sheehy of Clonakilty, perished on a little changing Somme front in February 1918. His sister Maire, while mourning his loss, mourned still more his death in the wrong uniform. I fully agree. I cannot for one moment accept the argument of Martin Mansergh (Letters, July 14) that *'Ireland's freedom came about not just because of the Rising and the struggle for independence, but also because it fitted into the new international order created by the Allied victory'*. What that Allied victory facilitated was Britain's attempt to overthrow the democratic will of the Irish people, as expressed in the 1918 election, and the imposition of a Crown regime that was *'nothing more or less*

than a Fascist dictation cloaked in righteousness', to quote the Auxiliaries' Brigadier General Frank Crozier. Only a War of Independence could have overthrown that Allied victory's 'Fascist dictation'. Notwithstanding the painful loss of his own British Army brother in that World War, the Irish Free State's Minister for Justice, Kevin O'Higgins, would also have found Dr Mansergh's reasoning quite unfathomable. Rejecting the proposal for a Great War memorial in Merrion Square, O'Higgins told the Dail on 29 March 1927: 'You have a Square here, confronting the seat of the Government of the country... I say that any intelligent visitor not particularly versed in the history of this country would be entitled to conclude that the origins of this State were connected... with the lives that were lost in the Great War in France,

Belgium, Gallipoli, and so on. This is not the position. The State had other origins, and because it had other origins I do not wish it suggested, in stone or otherwise, that it has that origin.' Once again, I fully agree."

But, in contrast to the openness of the letters columns of its sister paper, the *Evening Echo*, to free debate on the First World War, the *Irish Examiner* did not believe that Dr Mansergh's erudition should be challenged, and so it refused to publish my reply.

Manus O'Riordan

James Connolly Re-Assessed, The Irish And European Context by Manus O'Riordan. 26, £5

Report of launch of Pat Walsh's *Great Fraud*, held on Friday, 8th August

The venue, a substantial room in Gresham Metropole Hotel, MacCurtain Street, Cork was full, with attendance of over 50. The author Dr P. Walsh gave a *tour de force* account of the origins of 1914-18: (1) Balkan War, (2) European War, and (3) World War—this concatenation of events being the prism through which the *Great Fraud* can be understood. By using slides to provide focus, Dr Walsh was able to provide an analytical framework for his account of the origins of these linked wars, all within the limitations of a 40 minute talk. It was quite an achievement to hold together a mixed audience, many of whom seemed relatively new to the subject. Many parts of the talk actually consisted of newly unearthed information. An important debate is emerging.

A lively audience discussion followed the presentation. Many contributed their family experiences of the Great War. Most expressed appreciation of the understanding of the Great War which they had gained from the talk. There is also a view that, in some way, the Great War experience is sacred, and somehow beyond analysis and understanding. This view was expressed by a member of the audience, presumably as a criticism or reproach, which was respectfully heard.

The following is a summary of Pat Walsh's talk.

The Great War: The Great Fraud, 1914-1918

Dr. Walsh gave a detailed account of the background and build-up to the Great War to establish that the Great War was Britain's Great War.

From 1904 to 1908 there was a revolution in British Foreign policy in which England made a strategic readjustment to direct its Balance of Power strategy away from its former enemies, France and Russia, towards a new enemy, Germany.

Germany was singled out as the Carthage to Britain's Rome largely for reasons of commercial rivalry.

David Owen in his recent book discovered the following assessment by Lord Grey as early as January 1903: "I have come to think that Germany is our worst enemy and greatest danger". German goods were outselling British goods in the world's markets and it was capturing a greater and greater share of world commerce. Its goods had a competitive edge over British products both in price

and quality and it was felt that Britain could not compete in the free market with the Germans.

In response to the increase of its commerce and in joining the world market in which it became necessary to import food to supply its industrial workforce, Germany began to construct a navy. It was a much smaller navy than Britain's but England saw this as a threat to its command of the seas. There were public threats made by Royal Navy men, such as Admiral Fisher, to "Copenhagen" the German naval development—i.e. destroy it in port before a formal declaration of war was made, as Nelson did to the Dutch fleet a century before. In response to German ship-building, Britain doubled its spending on naval construction until it reached a quarter of all State spending and represented three times what Germany was spending.

An *Entente Cordiale* was signed with France in 1904 by the Unionist Govern-

ment. In January 1906 Sir Edward Grey, the incoming Foreign Minister in the new Liberal Government, sanctioned ongoing military conversations between the British and French General Staffs concerning cooperation in a future war with Germany. These were organised by Colonel Repington and General Henry Wilson but were done behind the Prime Minister's back and only known about by Grey and Richard Haldane, the Secretary of State for War.

The *Entente Cordiale* gave the French hope of recovering Alsace/Lorraine in a future war with Germany, aided by Britain and Russia.

The Liberal Imperialists, Grey, Haldane, Henry Asquith and Winston Churchill, had the intention of organising preparations for war on Germany behind the back of both the Cabinet and Parliament, knowing that the bulk of the Liberal Party would be greatly opposed to such measures.

War planning, including Royal Navy contingencies for economic warfare and a starvation blockade on Germany were planned with meticulous detail. The overall strategy was coordinated through the Committee of Imperial Defence, a cross-party body containing military specialists. Plans were also devised for war on the Ottoman Empire, including an attack on the Dardanelles and landings in Mesopotamia. As Captain Grenfell noted "Preparations for war against Germany had been in progress for ten years; intensively for three years at least" (*Sea Power*).

Haldane reformed the British Army and created a British Expeditionary Force of 160,000 that could be transported in 2 days to the left of the French line for engaging in a war with Germany. This was a revolutionary change in British military affairs. The biggest army England had put on the continent was at Waterloo in 1815 of 30,000 men. It had been a long-standing strategy not to commit large numbers of soldiers to the Continent but to leave allies to do the fighting there. The Navy was concerned at this military intervention, since it implied a commitment to continental warfare in conjunction with allies and a relegation of the senior service to a support role. It signified a definite and innovatory plan for war that bound Britain in to continental warfare at the French insistence. Haldane also militarised British society through the promotion of gun clubs, territorials, popular military lectures etc.

In 1907 Britain concluded an agreement with Tsarist Russia involving a settling of

accounts in the Great Game and the partition of Persia between England and Russia. Edward Grey promoted the agreement in England as a peace policy and that was music to the ears of the Liberal backbenchers who, despite their detestation of 'Russian autocracy', were prepared to celebrate the agreement as securing the peace of the world.

An alliance with France was, by itself, of no use to England against Germany. The great prize was also an understanding with Russia coupled with the *Entente Cordiale*. Britain was an island nation and it was primarily a sea power. It did not have a large army and it had opposed conscription. Therefore, it would have been impossible for Britain to have defeated Germany by itself. It needed and wanted the large French army and the even larger Russian army to do most of the fighting on the Continent for it. The Russian Army was particularly important and it was seen to be like a 'steamroller' that would roll all the way to Berlin, crushing German resistance by its sheer weight of numbers. Britain's main weapon of war and her instrument for the strangulation of Germany was the Royal Navy. A British blockade of Germany could only be effective if Russia was at war with her at the same time and sealing off her supply of food from the east. If not, Germany could derive an inexhaustible supply of food and materials from eastern Europe and could not be strangled by the Royal Navy—despite its immense power. And even an alliance between England and France could not achieve the crushing of Germany since only one frontier could be blocked.

The agreement with Russia gave the Tsar the chance to expand into the Balkans and possibly to the Straits at Istanbul where he desired an exit point for his fleet—a desire of Russia's for centuries and the Tsar's first strategic priority which Britain had up till then taken great care to prevent. Half of all Russian trade went through the Straits and grain exporting was essential in creating the agricultural reforms necessary to produce a stable class of Russian peasantry. Britain forbade Russian naval entry into the Mediterranean and war involved the closure of the Straits to shipping. So the Tsar was desperate to secure this outlet with British consent.

Grey turned the foreign policy of a century around to organise the war alliance against Germany. In doing so he made war on and the destruction of the Ottoman Empire a prerequisite.

All these secret plans, conversations

and arrangements were not revealed to the Cabinet until 1911 when they were partially revealed in response to the Agadir Crisis and not fully until July 1914.

Asquith, Grey and Haldane denied all knowledge of such arrangements continually to Parliament using language that was very careful but conveyed the impression that nothing was in place that committed England to a war on Germany in conjunction with France and Russia.

John Dillon of the Irish Party subjected the Government to scrutiny on the matter but the necessity of the Home Rule alliance encouraged him, and Liberal backbenchers who were suspicious, to drop it.

The fleet was mobilised to battle positions prior to the declaration of war on Germany. The British Expeditionary Force was landed in less than 48 hours in France after Asquith's orders.

The Royal Navy cut the German undersea cables on the opening day of the War, making the Germans reliant on the British cables for communicating across the Atlantic and to other parts of the world.

On 5th August 1914 the British war plans were revealed in a series of Royal Proclamations on the day after war was declared: It was made an act of treason for any British subject to trade with any German individual or organisation; owners of British merchant ships were warned that their ships would be confiscated if they carried 'contraband' between foreign ports; exporters were warned not to sell 'contraband' to any foreign buyers.

The War Room which had been monitoring and plotting the position of every German naval vessel and large merchantman at eight hourly intervals since 1907 communicated its information to the Royal Navy. Within a week all German maritime trade was driven from the seas.

Lloyds of London issued an order for all ships to proceed to the nearest British port or lose insurance cover. Any carrying foodstuffs and proceeding east were seized and their cargoes confiscated and declared 'prize'. All German-owned ships were declared 'prize'.

Neutral ships were prevented from leaving British ports unless they surrendered their cargoes.

The Blockade of Germany and Europe as a whole began.

There were 3 wars that culminated to make up the Great War but they were distinct and did not need to develop from one to the other. War number 1 was the only unavoidable and justifiable one—a Balkan War involving Austro-Hungary

and Serbia. Serbia was responsible for this War. As a matter of prestige, Austro-Hungary had to react forcefully to the assassination of the heir to its throne by terrorists on **28th June**. This was a massive provocation that had to be dealt with. Austria believed that Serbian intrigues and ambitions constituted a deadly menace to the continued existence of the Empire, and was aware that she must either curb the capacity of Serbia for further provocations or see the Empire perish.

The British press was sympathetic to Vienna with the most popular paper in England saying "*To Hell with Servia*" and demanding it be wiped from the face of the earth, lest this rogue-state endanger the peace of Europe. The *Manchester Guardian* suggested the country be towed out into the Atlantic and sunk. Captain Grenfell (RN) says this about the Serbian reply:

"It has been the fashion among British historians to describe the Serbian reply to the Austrian note as extraordinarily conciliatory, all but two of the Austrian demands being conceded. The present author does not take that view. The two rejected demands were the key ones that alone could have made the rest effective. All the remainder, even if nominally complied with, could easily have been evaded in practice and reduced to nullity by the Serbs. The Serbian reply, which was unquestionably drawn up with the advice of France and probably Russia, could therefore be regarded as a very skilful one designed, without making any genuine concession, to put the onus of war guilt on to the Austrians."

Both Austro-Hungary and its German ally wished to confine war to this local Balkan context. It was in Germany's interest to localise the Austro-Serbian dispute, so that the Serbs might be suitably dealt with by the Austrians without anyone else being involved. Russia, on the other hand, was interested in the support of Serbia and also resolved to use the Sarajevo assassination to bring on a general European War, as her actions during the crisis clearly indicate. Russia was in no way endangered by an Austro-Hungarian victory over Serbia and was assured that Vienna had no inclination toward including any more troublesome peoples in its Empire.

This Balkan war would have been the only war in 1914 if Russia did not enter it. Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia on **28th July**. This was the start of the Austro-Serbian War *not* the start of World War I. It was not until **August 6th**, 2 days after the beginning of the World War, that Austro-Hungary declared war on Russia,

and Serbia declared war on Germany. France did not declare war on Austro-Hungary until **11th August** and Britain until **12th August**. This tends to suggest a disconnection between the *Entente Cordiale* and the Balkan War and that the real war was the one against Germany.

War number 2 was a European War involving the Balkan participants plus Russia, France and Germany. Russia was mainly responsible for this war since it depended entirely on Russian mobilisation. Russia began mobilising on the day of the Serbian reply to Austria, **25th July**, and the Tsar ordered full mobilisation on **30th July**. Germany clearly warned Russia (and France) of the implications of its mobilisation and only begins mobilising itself on **31st July**, the day after the full Russian mobilisation began. France was also responsible because it refused to restrain its ally Russia and actually encouraged its mobilisation. Poincare assured Russia that it could count on France in any war on Germany, no matter the issue, since it wanted to engage in a European war to recover the mixed-nationality provinces of Alsace/Lorraine it had lost to Germany in the French aggressive war of 1870/1. Germany was tied by Treaty obligations to Austro-Hungary and could not allow its ally to be crushed by an inherently expansionist state which had no concept of borders. Once Russia refused Germany's demand to stop mobilising its massive forces on Germany's eastern frontier and France mobilised as Russia's ally, Germany had to mobilise to protect itself from encirclement. French mobilisation began on **26th July**, 5 days before Germany began, and the French ordered full mobilisation on **1st August**, an hour before German full mobilisation is ordered). Germany declares war on Russia on **1st August** and France on **3rd August**. This is the start of the European War but not the World War.

War number 3 was the World War or Great War. This was Great Britain's responsibility. If Britain had not entered the European War it would have remained a European war. The World War officially began on **August 4th** when Britain declared war on Germany. The Royal Navy was secretly mobilised between **23rd and 29th July** by Churchill and took up pre-arranged battle stations off the German coast on **August 2nd**, 2 days before war was declared. The British Expeditionary force of 100,000 men was ordered to be despatched to France by Asquith on **August 5th**. It arrived complete in France less than 48 hours later on **August 7th**.

The Great War was Britain's war

Paper Of Record Suppresses Record Of World War Casualties

Under the heading of "*War and commemoration*" the following letter was submitted to the Letters Editor of the *Irish Times* on August 11th, but was refused publication:

This week marks the centenary of a vicious mob attack on the family home of two Dublin youths serving in the British armed forces. Augustine Lang was serving in the Royal Marines, while his kid brother, Frederick Jnr, was serving with the Royal Navy. Described as "Boy 2nd Class" in the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Fred perished on HMS "Impregnable" on 16 October 1914, but a lad of 16 summers.

Two months previously on 15 August, feast day of the Redmondite Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Lang family home and shop on Dublin's Wexford Street had been sacked, looted and everything breakable in it broken. Why? Because Frederick Lang Snr was a German-born pork butcher. Although Lang had been resident in Dublin for over 23 years, with two sons serving in Britain's war against Germany, his own German blood made him the target of a baying Redmondite mob. The racist attack on the Lang family premises, as well as the further attack that same night on the Leonard's Corner premises of another German-born pork butcher, George Reitz, was led by a newly-enlisted British soldier, John O'Neill. Lang and Reitz were each denounced in court by the Redmondite Dublin Corporation as the "alien enemy" who should be denied any compensation, and the court agreed. Both Lang and Reitz were subsequently interned for the duration of the war, and their families impoverished, notwithstanding the sacrificed life of the 16 year old "Boy 2nd Class".

There was hardly any Irish family left untouched by that war. John Sheehy, my grandfather's first cousin, perished on 15 February 1918, on a Somme front that had shifted little in two years. I was present at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission ceremony in Glasnevin cemetery on 31 July, maintaining my silence throughout, out of respect for the dignity that should be accorded the war dead and their relatives who were present. At the close of the ceremony I raised two placards which read: "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.

Manus O'Riordan

because Great Britain made it what it was. It would not have been the Great War it was without Britain's participation. It was a war of gigantic scale and long duration. The only 2 previous world wars were also British wars (i.e. the Seven Years' War of 1756-63 and the War on France of 1783-1815). The following factors provided distinctly by Britain gave the Great War its distinct character:

- * The globalised maritime character was provided by the Royal Navy which had the objective of seizing German shipping and trade on a world-wide basis. No other European navy had this capacity or intention.
- * The globalised land character was provided by Britain's Imperial ambitions to seize German territory in Africa, Ottoman territory in Asia and facilitate its Allies to do likewise—something which would have been beyond their capacity to do without the help of the

Royal Navy and Britain acquiescence.

- * The moral character of the war which made it unstoppable was provided by Liberal England (and Redmondite Ireland). The war was proclaimed to be about Good versus Evil, civilisation against the barbarian, Europe against the Hun, Democracy against autocracy etc. This gave the Great War its distinctive character which made peace attempts very difficult since their could be no negotiating with Evil.
- * The last element was Britain's insistence on concluding secret treaties with its allies and neutrals to draw them into the War. Parts of the Middle-East, Europe etc. were promised in secret deals with France, Russia, Italy, Greece, Zionists, Arabs etc. that made peace negotiations proposed by the US and Germany on the basis of *no annexations* impossible to accept by Britain and its allies. ■

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

1916 AND ALL THAT. . .

The British are bad losers. They declared war on Germany in the two World Wars and they cannot accept that they did not win. The winners were Russia and the USA and the British national psyche demands of them that they must be winners whether they were or not. Why else would the British be engaging in this over-the-top-Commemorations of the Great War which they declared over 100 years ago? Are the commemorations to cover up the fact that the Great War led to the demise of the British Empire? Or is it to cover up for the UK being one of the most indebted nations on earth?

The British declared war on Germany in August 1914 and made such an appalling bloody mess of organising the war that Britain had to be rescued by the USA. Britain again declared war on Germany on 3rd September 1939 and had to run away from Dunkirk. But then they got lucky—Hitler's Germany got involved in war with Stalin's Russia and the USA again stepped in on the British side but on its own terms—this time the USA and Russia would take charge of operations, with the latter's might pushing the Germans back all the way from Stalingrad to Berlin.

The US had its eye on the British Empire and no one can deny that it made the most of its opportunities opening bases, not only on British sovereign territory in the UK itself and Northern Ireland, but elsewhere throughout their other great dominions, even in Australia. In the heyday of its Empire, Britain fought in well over 100 countries around the world and the US is rapidly approaching that dangerous and very expensive record. The US is an expert at using other nations as a cloak for its Imperial activities. And it uses the UK—which must stomach it but which nevertheless cloaks it in that overworked term, "the special relationship", which it propagandises to the world in the hope the world will not call them on the realities of them being really the tail of the dog. And then the UK has to also frenetically propagandise itself as being the standard bearer of 'The Great War' which was in reality 'The Great Fraud'.

In Ireland, this 'Great War' propaganda is being used to cover up the celebrations of Ireland's War of Independence which was partially successful in separating

Ireland from British rule and in the course of which the British forces were defeated (i.e. not to be remembered and certainly not to be publicly celebrated!).

The British propaganda machine is working overtime in Ireland just now, trying to convince us that we did not remember the Irish who died in the Great War, that they were "airbrushed out of history". The facts are the opposite: every family in Ireland remembers those who died in the Great War, and they were too many. And it was Britain which airbrushed out the Irish from British history. How many monuments are there in Britain to the Irish who helped Britain in the Great War? Britain never treated the Irishmen serving in Britain's armies with anything but utter contempt. It is only lately that the British War Graves Commission erected headstones to 69 Irish ex British Army graves in Glasnevin cemetery. How's that for forgetting?

BRITAIN AND HISTORY

In the *London Review of Books*, 21st August 2014, there is a review of Lawrence Goldman's biography of R.H. Tawney by Susan Pedersen. The latter teaches British and International History at Columbia University and her next book will be the history of the mandates system of the League of Nations. While the usual business of Tawney's life is dealt with—his association with the Worker's Educational Association, his socialism and his time as lecturer in economic history in the London School of Economics, and of course his Christianity which was "deepened by his war service". And here Pedersen kicks in with the 'Great War' propaganda that is now raging not only in Britain but here also in Ireland. According to Pedersen's theory, Tawney held the view that:

"the war was not an inevitable crisis of industrial civilisation but a specific calamity forced on the world by Germany's militarism and cavalier disregard for international law—a position much scorned in the interwar years but forcefully rehabilitated in Isabel Hunt's recent work 'A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the 'Great War'."

Pedersen went on to state that she will be reviewing this new book "in the not too distant future" and any readers of the *Irish Political Review* might want to look it up and see for themselves how Germany broke this so-called international law?

Interestingly in the *Times Literary Supplement*, August 1st 2014, there was also a review of another biography—this time John C.G. Rohl's *Wilhelm 11: Into the abyss of war and exile, 1900-1941*. This English language edition is the third

and final volume of Rohl's biography and, like its two predecessor volumes, is a massive work: almost 1300 pages of text and 200 endnotes. The reviewer is Jonathan Sperber who is "Curators' Professor of History at the University of Missouri". For Sperber:

"The origins of and the responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War stand at the heart of the volume, making its publication in the year of the war's centenary a fortunate coincidence. ... The historian's verdict on the Emperor is devastating and confirms much of contemporary and later opinion... Wilhelm was very much a significant ruler. Contemporaries called it "personal rule", not just absolutist contempt for parliamentary institutions, but a domination of his ministers and subordinates, an insistence on setting policy himself."

Rohl regards the Emperor's opinions—

"as a toxic brew of religious fanaticism, anti-Semitism and mental instability, containing all-too-evident links to a pernicious future. One cannot help but make comparisons with Hitler, whose power as a ruler put Wilhelm's in the shade, and whose manias make Wilhelm look distinctly sane."

But, from presenting Wilhelm as an absolutist ruler, suddenly the book's thesis turns—or else the reading of it by Sperber does—because we find the following observations now coming in to play.

"Rohl shows very clearly how in the crisis of July 1914 Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg and Chief of the General Staff Helmuth von Moltke consciously sidelined the Emperor, sending him off on his yacht to Norway, leaving him uninformed, or carefully editing official documents they sent him. They perceived him as an obstacle to their aggressive policies leading to the brink of war and beyond. On closer examination, one version or another of this way of dealing with Wilhelm had been going on for at least a decade, starting with the Moroccan Crisis of 1905, the first of the great pre-1914 diplomatic crises. *Rather than a determined absolutist ruler driving his country to war, the impression is of Germany's leading state officials trying to pursue a consistently aggressive foreign policy and finding ways to take a vacillating and erratic monarch with them. The biography only reaches the First World War on p 1,106 and Rohl must admit that Wilhelm played little role in that conflict. As Germany lurched towards a military dictatorship, the Emperor was the least of the obstacles in the way of the General Staff.*"

Sperber then contends that when facing defeat the Generals had no compunction about sacrificing Wilhelm "in a final attempt to save German power structures". And

Sperber also now takes issue with Rohl's "portrayal of Wilhelm's sudden descent to ignominy between 1914 and 1918 and raises questions about the accuracy of his description of the Emperor's previously dominant position". Yet Sperber ends his review with the old restated myths about Wilhelm which so serves British propaganda. "The Emperor was mentally unstable as well as an adherent of an aggressive and militaristic foreign policy, which led to the catastrophe of 1914."

It really is as simple as that, and Sperber gives one final gleeful kick to Wilhelm by stating that "the Treaty of Versailles officially named him a war criminal, the first person to enjoy such a dubious distinction".

GAZA AND PROPAGANDA

In the *London Review of Books*, 31st July 2014, Mouin Rabbani wrote a very powerful article called 'Israel mows the lawn'. Rabbani is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut and co-editor of 'Jadaliyya'. He begins his article with a horrific quotation from Dov Weissglass, *eminence grise* to Sharon, which he gave to an interviewer from *Haaretz* in 2004:

"The significance of the disengagement plan is the freezing of the peace process... And when you freeze that process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and you prevent a discussion on the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem. Effectively, this whole package called the Palestinian State, with all that it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda. And all this with... a US presidential blessing and the ratification of both houses of Congress... The disengagement is actually formaldehyde. It supplies the amount of formaldehyde that is necessary so there will not be a political process with the Palestinians."

In 2006 Weissglass was just as frank about Israel's policy towards Gaza's 1.8 million inhabitants: "The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger". He was not speaking metaphorically: it later emerged that the Israeli Defence Ministry had conducted detailed research on how to translate his vision into reality, and arrived at a figure of 2279 calories per person per day—some 8% less than a previous calculation because the research team had originally neglected to account for 'culture and experience' in determining nutritional 'red lines'. This wasn't an academic exercise. The screws on Gaza were turned tighter and tighter until in 2007 Gaza was effectively sealed shut. All exports were banned, and just 131 truckloads of food-stuffs and other essential products were permitted entry per day.

Israel also strictly controlled which products could and could not be imported.

Prohibited items have included A4 paper, chocolate, coriander, crayons, jam, pasta, shampoo, shoes and wheelchairs. In 2010, commenting on this premeditated and systematic degradation of the humanity of an entire population, David Cameron characterised the Gaza Strip as a 'prison camp' and—for once—did not neuter this assessment by subordinating his criticism to proclamations about the jailers' right of self-defence against their inmates.

And so to July 6th 2014 when Israel launched its latest military campaign against the people of Gaza which as this article goes to press has left at least 1,900 Palestinians dead and over 10,000 injured with the whole infrastructure of Gaza itself condemned to rubble—homes, schools, hospitals, UN buildings, water-works, electricity grids *et al.* And the on-looking world Governments have in the main, especially the US/EU, stayed silent or even as David Cameron, UK Prime Minister, now as 'lily-livered' as the rest of them "howled about Israel's right to self-defence and in the face of the categorical rejection of the Palestinians' equivalent right, the fundamental point that this is an illegitimate and massively disproportionate attack is often lost".

Once again Israel is 'mowing the lawn' with impunity, states Rabbani. "Human Rights Watch has criticised both sides but, true to form, has accused only the Palestinians of war crimes". It seems to me that people power by boycott and public protests will move our Governments to seek redress from Israel but this is going to be one long battle needing all our dedication and commitment.

Alarmingly, in of all places *The Irish Catholic*, 31st July 2014, carried an article by Martin Browne *osb*, titled 'A surreal peace in Jerusalem'. As a monk from Glenstal Abbey, Co. Limerick, one of our elite schools, Martin Browne revealed that he decided to go on a mini-sabbatical in January to a monastery of his congregation in Jerusalem whose Abbot was a monk of Glenstal for many years. So he knew that he would be guaranteed bed and board and a warm welcome at Dormition Abbey. But he had second ideas when Israel launched its war on Gaza but, as he goes on to state:

"news reports of rockets being aimed at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv did make me more than a little anxious. But I consulted the people here in Dormition Abbey and they encouraged me to travel so in the end I went. Nothing could have prepared me for what I experienced when I got here. You might expect that what followed will be a tale of high security and high tension on a grand

scale. That's certainly what I was expecting. But it is not what I have experienced.

"In fact, I experienced the opposite. Airport security in Tel Aviv was no more demanding than it would be in Dublin or Shannon. It was after midnight when I got out of the airport, and the car journey from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and into the Old City via the Jaffa Gate, was as pleasant a trip as one could ask for. I thought I heard gunfire the next evening and inquired among the brethren if we should be concerned. But they explained that what I heard was actually the sound of fireworks being let off by Muslims at sunset, to signify the end of the day's Ramadan fast. A few mornings later I woke with a start at about 4.30 a.m. sure that I had heard an explosion. I immediately went to my computer, to check the Twitter feeds of the Israeli news outlets, to find out if the conflict had spread to Jerusalem. There was no such news. It turns out that what I heard was actually the Ramadan cannon being fired, signalling the beginning of the day's fast to the faithful of the city. Having spent the days before I was due to travel dithering about whether I should cancel my trip or not, I now find myself in a city where life is very much going on as normal. On one level this is great. I have settled in well at Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion—the traditional site of Mary's death. I have also visited Dormition's dependent priory at Tabgha in Galilee, the traditional site of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish. There I served as deacon alongside the bishop at a memorial Mass for a deceased monk at a hauntingly beautiful outdoor altar on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Back in Jerusalem, I have been exploring the Old City, including the Jewish and Muslim Quarters, and I have felt completely safe. I have walked the Via Dolorosa with the Franciscans and I have donned a kippa and prayed at the Western Wall of the Temple. There, seeing me struggling to take a 'selfie' with my phone, a friendly Jewish man from France took my photo. I've sipped coffee in the sunshine outside trendy bars in the New City, and I've haggled with traders in the souqs of the Old City. I've been posting regular updates and photos on Facebook. A friend commented last week: "They are amazing pictures Martin, but I am kinda stunned at the normality of it all." She was right to be stunned. It's great to be safe, and it's great to see people getting on with their lives and not letting conflict control them. But having a good time so close to what is effectively now a theatre of war is discomfiting. It is surreal. What to do? I can't do much, but I can pray.

"For the peace of Jerusalem

Pray:

Peace to your homes!

May peace reign in your walls,
in your palaces, peace!"

Only not for Gaza—Martin—right?

Michael Stack ©

An Awful Film

I wrote this review because something has to be said about this film to show how lowdown some aspects of Irish humour has become. I was inveigled into seeing it by someone who will remain nameless. You could say I was bribed by having my ticket bought for me, not an inconsequential sum of money. We saw it at a fairly central London cinema complex. With the both of us there, and one other person, the cinema-goers amounted to three. To be fair there wasn't much business going on at the other cinemas in this complex.

Well, what am I to say about the lead—a man in a frock who has to keep reminding you he is only a-fickin'-man-in-a-frock by his macho swearing and head-butting of walls and pretend head-butting of his opponents. It seems a nasty Russian oligarch is in Dublin to buy up Moore Street market by all means fair and foul. I don't want to give a detailed account of the plot not because you might be going to see it but, because it is too terrible for words with its unfinished scenes, and with its blind Ninja warriors (wasn't Ninja done to death in the 1990s) led by a mock Chinese man from Finglass who has the Chinese accent of the old Hollywood Charlie Chan, the private-eye and his Number One and Number Two sons. Then there are the Russian thugs with accents similar to that Meerkat-plagued advert on UK TV. Then there is the much-abused granddad in the Brown household who wears what look suspiciously like War of Independence active-service medals. (surely he would be over 100 now if he served during that period)

The granddad has some similar elder duffer friends, one of whom still knows someone who know how to make a device, which is duly place in a car and driven to a coffee house conveniently (or for those with difficulties in learning) marked Russian Coffee House (or something similar). The car-bomb of course goes off prematurely killing the old duffer and making his duffer friends run away. The Gardaí don't seem too interested in this explosion, by the way it is just edited out of the film. So these veterans of the War of Independence adding up to a millennium were just a load of silly owl buggers as was the founding of the Irish nation by association with them.

Guilds continued

were known as "*morning-talks*", and often were simply called "*Guilds*". Social conviviality was of course indispensable for the public gatherings of the Guildsmen.

RELIGIOUS ASPECT

Religion, charity and good fellowship were all carefully provided for within the Merchant Guild. Regulations regarding the appointment of a chaplain, the offering of candles for altar and shrine, the celebration of Masses for the intentions of the Guild, the prayers for departed souls and similar ordinances were carefully drawn up and every Guild was dedicated to a patron Saint. Sick members were to be visited, those who had fallen into poverty were to be relieved, and daughters dowered for the wedded life or for the convent. Banquets played an important part and often were held on the occasion of business meetings. Even the sick Guildsmen who could not attend were remembered, and special portions were set aside and sent to them. So too, according to statute ten of the Southampton Merchant Guild:

"If a gildsman was in prison in any place in England, in time of peace, the alderman, with the seneschal and one of the echevins, should go at the cost of the gild to procure his deliverance. If any gildsman strike another with his fist and be thereof attained, he should lose his gildship, but might regain the same for 10s. and a new oath. A stranger (with gild privileges) striking a gildsman, to lose his privileges of the gild and go to prison for a day and night; a stranger not of the gild so offending, to be imprisoned (since he had no gild privileges to lose) two days and nights. A gildsman reviling or aspersing another gildsman to be fined 2s., or in default lose his gildship" (Cornelius Walford, *Gilds*, p.116).

Where there is question of delivering or defending a Guildsman his innocence is presumed, since Guild regulations do

The Catholic Church also take a battering but for all the wrong reasons. It seems Mrs. Brown want to portray Ireland as now a modern nation. I don't think the gay community will be too pleased by the portrayal of one of Mrs Brown's sons nor will some Catholics at the swearing at priests and at the swearing in their presence.

Mrs. Brown has not taken the Irish

not shield the guilty, nor is impunity given to the Guildsmen against non-members, unless a Guild should be in its decline, religiously and socially.

CIVIC POWER

What at first glance must strike the reader is the extensive civic power delegated to the Merchant Guilds. So great was their influence at times that the impression has been created that not infrequently the entire control of the municipal government rested with the Town Guild. Whatever may be said of various continental Guilds it is certain that the English Merchant Guild was dependent, as such organisations should be, upon the civil authorities and had its vast powers duly delegated from them or even directly from the King himself.

The early city charters usually embodied the privilege of establishing such a Guild, a privilege early coveted by them, since not only the prosperity of the city but even the development of its constitution was greatly determined by Guild influence. The very establishment of a Merchant Guild was of such significance that legal writers have commonly mistaken it to have been equivalent to municipal incorporation. Such therefore was the status of this important institution during its most flourishing period, in the 12th and 13th centuries. (Joseph Husselsin, SJ, PhD, *Democratic Industry, A Practical Study in Social History*, New York, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1919).

To be continued.

Seneschal: Steward of a household of a mediaeval prince or nobleman; a Cathedral official.

Thane: In Anglo-Saxon England, a member of an aristocratic class who held land from the king or from another nobleman in return for certain services.

Villeins: A peasant personally bound to his lord, to whom he paid dues and services in return for his land.

Wotan: The supreme god in Germanic mythology.

nation forwards but backwards. It is imagined, I gather, that an English audience will love this film. Well, I didn't hear the other member of the audience laugh once or even titter. There was also an embarrassing monologue by Mrs Brown about the wonders of Dublin. I suppose that is why he and his family live in Florida.

Wilson John Haire

Guilds continued

sense of the word, including the craftsmen of the town who formed the overwhelmingly great majority of the original membership.

If nevertheless, there always remained a number who were not members of the Guild, and consequently were excluded from its public privileges, the reason is not difficult to see. It was upon the Guildsmen, even though not citizens, that a large portion of the burden of taxation fell. They therefore demanded likewise the advantage of special privileges not to be accorded to strangers and others who had no share in paying the municipal expenses and answering the royal obligations placed upon the town. Such a demand was justified, provided it was not carried to excess.

The first duty of the Guildsmen was to pay *scot and lot*. This implied that they were to be assessed in proportionate shares whenever money was required not only for public improvements, but likewise to meet the exactions of the King. In the latter case particularly, there was question of forfeiting the dearly bought and jealously guarded franchises of the town itself, should they fail in their duties. The Merchant Guild therefore was the last resource and the great strength of the municipalities with which it was identified. The town developed and prospered along with it. Not only did the Guild pay the imposed taxes, but it often undertook considerable works for the common good. The municipal welfare and the unsullied reputation of its borough was the main concern of the Merchant Guild.

PROTECTIONISM

That there were likewise serious disadvantages to be dreaded from excessive protection, and from abuses of power, leading to selfishness, need not be insisted upon. Like all purely human institutions, the Merchant Guilds had their defective side due to mere misjudgment, to faulty social customs and traditions not yet cast aside, or to other human frailties. Even in the most ideal earthly state we shall never be able to ignore the fact of the original fall. Civic injustice and domestic grievances will, to a greater or less extent, always crop up anew owing to human selfishness. Religion alone can successfully attack this evil at its root.

CONSUMERS

Another vital difference between

Merchant Guild and modern monopoly lies in the fact that the right of the consumer was constantly kept in sight. The object of the Guild was to set a fair price which should be neither exorbitant for the purchaser nor unjust for the tradesman. All trafficking above or below this just standard was certain to bring severe penalties upon the offenders. Heavy fines moreover were imposed for all dishonesty in weight, measure and quantity. The numerous records which remain show that these laws were duly enforced. Here indeed is one of the first demands made upon the producer in any system of industrial democracy worthy of the name. Both profits and wages must be kept within a reasonable limit that will effectively ward off from the consumer the menace of a high cost of living.

MONOPOLY FORBIDDEN

Lastly, all monopoly, such as the term implies at present, was not only strictly forbidden, but stringent regulations were drawn up to make it impossible. No individual or group of individuals could monopolise any product. Attempts to buy up goods, nor indeed control the market—an offence so heinous that it was utterly unimaginable to the mind of the mediaeval Guildsman—but to conduct a larger sale than was possible to others, was likely to meet with instant and absolute confiscation of the goods purchased for this purpose. The genius of the individual was to manifest itself, not by accumulating a vast fortune and by employing the greatest number of men, but by producing the most perfect article for the market. Each Guildsman was to earn an honest income. No one was to monopolise or even partially control any industry.

INDIVIDUALISM

While therefore under the later system of oppressive individualism the Merchant Guilds were naturally condemned as destructive of free competition, and we may readily concede that their protective measures may at times seem irksome and excessive, they nevertheless prevented the far greater evils that were to follow under capitalism. These truths are being admitted more freely every day. Even Mr. Henry C. Vedder, Professor of Church History at Crozier Theological Seminary, confesses no less in a column written the very year of the outbreak of World War I. He says:

"The despised Middle Ages were in many respects, marked by a social justice superior to our own. Society then tried to prevent unfair competition, to give every

man a chance in his own rank. Rising capitalism was from the beginning impatient of all such restraints, and insisted that they should be removed, so that competition might be made free and every man find his level. It proved strong enough to carry its point; restraints were removed; competition was without limit. What followed? We have but to look about us and see" (*The Gospel of Jesus and the Problem of Democracy*, p.72)

COMMERCIAL VICES

The three great commercial vices against which the Merchant Guild statutes are directed were then known as "*forestalling*" or buying articles before they could be offered in the open market on equal terms to all Guildsmen; "*engrossing*", or making large-scale purchases in order to corner any product; and lastly "*regrating*", or buying goods in order to retail them above the market price.

The main objection which can be argued against the Merchant Guilds is the discrimination against the non-Guildsmen, the reason for which we have already explained. The civic and national responsibilities and burdens as well as the commercial privileges were equally the share of the Guildsman, who was ordinarily a labourer, practising his trade and selling his ware upon the market. The non-Guildsmen, in the beginning, were mainly, as would appear, the half-free population of the towns whose condition the Rev. J. Malet Lambert, a Protestant divine, holds: "*Was in many respects as prosperous, compared with the rest of the population, as that of the artisan class of the present day*" (*Two Thousand Years of Guild Life*, p.88).

We are dealing here with a stage of social development which was the historic status of the time, and which, under the influence of the Church, was constantly developing into a more perfect form of industrial democracy.

ORGANISATION

A word must here be said of the Guild officials. According to the various constitutions each organisation was usually presided over by an alderman, steward or master, assisted by two or four wardens or *echevins*. Sometimes two officials were at the head of the Guild. Other special officers were appointed for particular functions, such as provost, sergeant and bailiffs. In later times there existed a council of twelve or twenty-four members who were most influential in the control of the organisation. The meetings

continued on page 29

Guilds continued

Guild. Each craftsman, at this period, was likewise a merchant. He personally manufactured his wares and personally sold them in the market, at the fair, or in his own shop and home. He not only directly purchased the raw material of his trade, but at times even bartered with it. Thus the brewers of Hamburg are said to have been the principal corn merchants of their city. Similar instances might readily be given in illustration from English history.

All the burgesses, or citizens, of these primitive communities could therefore be members of the Merchant Guild of their respective town or borough. Since, however, the possession of a *burgage*—the ownership of a town lot, apparently with or without a tenement, according to different regulations—was in some instances at least required for the right of citizenship and of the ballot, there would necessarily be many who could not fulfill this condition. Others again were not strictly resident inhabitants, while lastly there was a large unfree population, known from this time on as *villeins*. In many boroughs members of all these grades could enter the Guild. Special clauses in favour of villeins were even to be found in not a few instances. The exclusiveness of later Guilds became more absolute as the town population grew, and the gradual emancipation of the unfree classes filled the cities with men who were often almost on a footing with the free burghers, although still in a nominal state of villeinage.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

The Merchant Guilds were a protection against the feudal Lord, and the bondman who had fled from the land was to be recognised as a freeman after he had lived in the town a year and a day. This certainly applied where he held land, paying "*scot and lot*". But even before the expiration of that time he could be a member of the Guild. It is evident therefore how the spirit of industrial democracy was gradually developed by these free institutions.

In illustration we may quote the answer made by the mayor and community of Bedford to the crown attorney who by royal authority had asked to know what inhabitants were admitted into their Merchant Guild.

"Both burgesses (i.e., citizens) of the town," they replied, "*and any other dwelling in the same*, from the time that

they take the oath to preserve the liberties of the town and the king's peace and to maintain all other privileges touching the aforesaid Town and Guild, are admitted into the Guild, so that they can then sell all kinds of merchandise by retail, and everywhere enjoy the aforesaid immunities and liberties, just as the burgesses themselves."

It is evident, therefore, that citizenship and Guildship were not synonymous, as has often been assumed.

The specific object of the Merchant Guild is likewise clearly defined in this quotation. It is briefly expressed in the words, "*so that they can then sell all kinds of merchandise by retail*". While a certain liberty was allowed to foreign merchants in disposing of their goods by wholesale in so far as this could not harm domestic trade, no one except a Guildsman might in general deal in retail merchandise without being subject to tolls from which the members of the Guild were free. The sale of certain products was moreover strictly a Guild monopoly. It is probable however that the necessaries of life was not ordinarily subject to such restrictions.

"No one shall buy anything in the town of Southampton, to sell again in the same town", reads a local gild statute, "unless he be of the Gild Merchant, or of the franchise; and if any one does it and is found guilty, all that he has thus bought shall be forfeited to the King."

Even in making purchases the Guild Merchant of this town was to take precedence over all others who might wish to buy:

"And no simple inhabitant nor stranger shall bargain for nor buy any kind of merchandise coming to the town before burgesses of the Guild Merchant, so long as a Guildsman is present and wishes to bargain for or buy it; and if any one does it and is found guilty, that which he buys shall be forfeited to the King" (Southampton Guild, A.D. 1327).

Thus we read that the Abbot of Buckfastleigh, to enjoy the Guild privileges of purchase, entered into the following agreement with the citizens of Totnes about the year 1235:

"That the said burgesses received the said abbot and monks into the Guild Merchant, i.e., that they be allowed to make all purchases like other burgesses, excepting all sales in the name of trade."

For this privilege a yearly tollage was paid by the abbot.

To judge fairly of these regulations we must bear in mind that, at least in their best

period, the English Merchant Guilds were generally open to every merchant and craftsman in the town. Even foreign merchants not belonging to the Guild might sell their wares at the great fairs and on market days, when the main purchases of the year were made. Merchants of neighbouring towns might moreover receive the liberty of the Guild, and an interchange of privileges took place. In some charters express mention is made of freedom from toll throughout the realm. It is even believed that this was a general privilege of the Merchant Guilds.

"FOREIGNERS"

In every case strict provision was made in the Royal Charter, or by the town authorities, to protect the Guildsmen from the unlicensed competition of non-members or foreigners. The latter title was applied to all who were not townsmen. The isolation of the individual boroughs, the dangers often encountered in passing from one to the other, made the separation between town and town perhaps as great as that which now exists between country and country. Every stranger, though coming from the nearest city, was a "*foreigner*". The Guildsmen therefore could not permit him to carry away at pleasure the wealth of the little community. Many exceptions, as we have already seen, were made in this mediaeval protective system.

The retail selling of merchandise by non-Guildsmen was forbidden, not only within the borough, but likewise within the immediate neighbourhood, so that there might be no possibility of circumventing the law. Thus the Charter given by Henry II {1154-1189} to Oxford lays stress upon the privilege of the Merchant Guild, "*so that no one who is not of the Guild shall presume to deal in merchandise either within the city or in the suburbs*". Frequently only certain classes of articles are specified as subject to such restrictions.

MONOPOLIES

Although the Merchant Guilds were therefore, in a wide sense, trading monopolies, they cannot even remotely be compared with the monopolies of our day, or with any that have sprung up since the Reformation. They are essentially different. This is at once evident from the fact that so far from seeking to bring about a concentration of trade in the hands of a few their object was to embrace all who could be considered Merchants in any

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LABOUR

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 32 No. 9

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

MONDRAGON Part 33

Labour Guilds and Democratic Industry

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

A new epoch in the history of labour opens with the Merchant Guilds. Seen in their best aspect, they are the first approach towards an adequate expression of industrial democracy that the world had known. To appreciate the progress implied in these early "town guilds" we need but cast a single glance backward into the past.

Far in the distance lies the arid waste of ancient paganism. In the famous cities of classical antiquity the oppression of labour reached its height amid the culmination of art and wealth, while the fair countrysides, that once had been held as the possession of sturdy freeman, were filled with gruesome prison dens whence the branded slaves went forth to toil beneath the lash and till for heartless Roman masters the earth that God had made for all alike. In such a world was sown the great doctrine of human brotherhood. Judaism had never been able to practice it perfectly.

Christianity realized it for the first time within its own early community. But bitter and ceaseless to the end was the Church's struggle with Roman vice and heartlessness and greed, though great and many were the saints she reared. Then came the hurricane of the barbarian invasion laying waste all the earth. One institution alone remained. It was that same Church of Christ which had sought to Christianise the Roman as it now laboured to convert and civilise the rude hordes that fell upon him as the scourge of God.

Again amid the new paganism of the barbarian conquerors sprang up the beauty of the Gospel teaching of human brotherhood and the Fatherhood of an all-loving God. The fierce and bloody Wotan disappeared before the fair Christ, born of the lowly virgin and reared in the humble carpenter's shop, Himself the Carpenter

of Nazareth. No wonder that, with the growing power of the Church, labour too should rise into dignity, should develop its new-found freedom and should finally attain to the perfection of industrial democracy in the days when the great Catholic Guilds were at length to reach the summit of their usefulness.

MEDIAEVAL LABOUR

With the *gilda mercatoria*—as the first of the new institutions we are now to study was called in the Latin documents of the day—the economic chapter of the mediæval labour associations properly begins. Various known as the Guild merchant, Merchant Guild or Town Guild, this organisation is peculiarly interesting to us from many points of view. It appeals alike to the historian, the lawyer, the social worker, the inquirer into the origin of corporations, the student of municipal government or popular civic activities, and to all who are following the moment-

ous development of economic organisations in our day. Previous societies had been exclusively civic, social and religious in their scope. The new institution embraced all these purposes, although it was predominately commercial in its nature.

No trace of any Merchant Guild can be found previous to the records of the Norman conquest in England. It was in this country that it received its most complete development and exercised a greater influence than in Germany, France or any other European land. A reason for this fact may not improbably have been the comparatively late expansion of industry in England, which made commercial intercourse with the continent peculiarly necessary. Even in the Anglo-Saxon days the merchant who thrice crossed the ocean was raised to the dignity of a thane.

Whatever cause we may assign, it is certain that with the Norman Conquest a new era of commercial and industrial expansion opened up for England. Not only was foreign trade stimulated by the close relation of the Norman merchant with the Continent, but a new impulse was given to domestic trade and industry. Probably the first clear reference to a Merchant Guild is found in a charter granted to the burgesses of Burford by Robert Fitz-Hamon (1087-1107).

LABOUR GUILD

The name given to the particular form of association which we are here considering is apt to prove misleading to the modern reader. The term "Merchant Guild" only vaguely implies the meaning it would convey to-day. It was in reality a Labour

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1 Sutton Villas, Lower Dargle Road
Bray, Co. Wicklow or

33 Athol Street, Belfast BT12 4GX or

2 Newington Green Mansions, London N16 9BT

or *Labour Comment*, TEL: 021-4676029

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