

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Home And Away

The Irish State has decided, in a decision taken without political opposition—and with the help of a large financial input from an American billionaire along with partisan social media messages from their multi-national owners—to abolish marriage as a social institution designed for facilitating the reproduction of the human race. That is the meaning of the Constitutional Amendment, insofar as meaning is to be found in the words on the paper.

The pretended purpose of the Amendment, as stated by the All-Party collaboration which brought it about, was to give Constitutional back-up to the legal coupling of homosexuals who, in the nature of the case, could not produce children. Such coupling had been given legal status by the Dail, but, it was suggested, what the Dail had done, the Dail could undo. There was not, as far as we know, any hint of political opposition to homosexual civil contracts. But, if the Party Leaders thought that there was a possibility that needed to be guaranteed against, they might have given Civil Contract Constitutional status, under the section Personal Rights, without altering the status of the heterosexual couplings on which the continuation of the race depends.

The state has a fundamental interest in the historical institution of marriage as a means of producing and rearing children. It can have no more than a fanciful concern, or a propaganda concern with an ulterior purpose, in sexual affairs which have nothing to do with reproduction.

Homosexual coupling was criminalised by the British State when it ruled Ireland, without affecting the reproduction of the population over the centuries. The criminalising, and effective policing, of heterosexual coupling would reduce the population to zero in a few generations.

That essential difference has now been abolished in the Constitution, whose function is to state essential facts of life which are important to the state. Heterosexual coupling, whose purpose is to produce and rear children, now has the same essential status in public esteem as homosexual couplings which cannot have that purpose. The two have been put on a par verbally, even though they are utterly different in kind. They have been made equal in the

*continued on page 2*

## Election Result

### Labour Disaster in Carlow-Kilkenny

The Carlow-Kilkenny by-election was held the same day as the Same Sex Marriage referendum, with a turnout over 65.4% (down a marginal 5.5% on the last General Election). The constituency voted "Yes" by 56.2% to 43.8% in the referendum.

An interesting blog posting by Paddy Healy (<https://paddyhealy.wordpress.com>) breaks down the Carlow-Kilkenny by-election result on the basis of the Labour tallies, and tells an interesting story, which must be quite alarming for Labour. A tally is the calculations made by party workers watching votes being opened and counted, and in Ireland is something of a fine art of extraordinary accuracy. Healy is a former President of the Teachers' Union of Ireland and brother of Séamus Healy, the Independent TD for Tipperary South, elected on the platform of the Clonmel-based Workers' and Unemployed Action Group. Below is information from the

*continued on page 5*

## Banking Inquiry

### Hurley bats Honohan

In an astonishing turn of events on 21st May, former Central Bank Governor, John Hurley, who was very much present on the night of the Guarantee, completely upended current Central Bank Governor Patrick Honohan's version of the events that took place that night. Honohan of course was not present on the night but, in his evidence to the Inquiry, he asserted that Brian Lenihan had been in favour of nationalising Anglo-

Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide and issuing a guarantee for the remaining banks. According to his version, Lenihan must have been overruled because "*he was not the most senior politician in the room*". That of course was the then Taoiseach, Brian Cowen. So the blame for the crisis, the particular terms of the Guarantee, and all that has flowed from it was assigned by the Governor of the Central Bank to one man.

That has now been contradicted by his predecessor, John Hurley, who actually was present on the night. In his evidence he stated that:

"The option of nationalising Anglo together with issuing a guarantee for the remaining banks was considered on the night. Overall it was considered that the signal effect of nationalising Anglo would be more negative than positive and could raise market concerns about the systemic weakness of the Irish financial system and, as with ELA [Emergency Liquidity Assistance], threaten the credibility of the guarantee."

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

[John Swift on the Guilds](#)

Mondragon, Part 42 (back page)

way the 2 + 2 could be made to equal 5 by changing the meaning of the word *five*.

It is gibberish, but it is Constitutionally binding gibberish which must now be enacted as law by the Dail. And, however this is done, the effect must be to abolish marriage as it has hitherto existed. The gross fact that heterosexual couplings produce children and homosexual couplings don't, must be overridden if the "*equality*" that was sloganised about all through the campaign is to have any practical effect.

The first practical effect was already legislated for before the referendum. The right of homosexual couples in civil contract to adopt on terms of equality with heterosexual couples was established by law. But it was felt that this right would be probably found to be unconstitutional if it was appealed against. But now that homosexual couplings are to be called marriages that can no longer be done.

If this distinction between heterosexual and homosexual couplings is abolished in adoption law, the hitherto-existing norm that a child should as far as possible have

a mother and father is abolished.

This fact was not allowed to be discussed during the referendum campaign. The all-Party consensus of political leaders, combined with the 'whipping' of Dail members of the parties, ensured this. "*Conscience*", whatever it means these days, was not allowed to operate in the political campaign.

BBC Radio carried an interesting item on the day after the vote. Gerry Buttimer of Fine Gael appeared on it for the Yes side. It seemed that no public figure in Ireland was available to speak for the No side, so an Irishwoman working for the London *Evening Standard* spoke for it. She said that a friend of hers, a Fine Gael TD, was threatened with expulsion from the party if he broke party discipline by making the case against the Amendment. Buttimer denied this, but he was obviously in a condition of spluttering ecstasy in which a detail like that, true or false, was beneath his notice.

A day or two later the fact that Fianna Fail TDs had been cowed into silence by

Micheal Martin was brought out by the resignation of Avril Power from the party. She was an enthusiast for the abolition of marriage as a reproductive institution, and one of her reasons for resigning was that her political colleagues in the party had refused to take part in the campaign.

Martin himself was a pioneering enthusiast for homosexual marriage, but he failed to enthuse the party for the project. He could only silence it. And, by doing so, he split the Fianna Fail enthusiasts— himself and Avril.

We do not know whether it was a Fine Gael or Fianna Fail farmer who put up a slogan by his farm gate saying that two bulls do not make a herd. It could have been either. And it expressed the inescapable commonsense of the matter.

The *Evening Standard* woman explained to the British audience that all the conventions of democratic public life had been cast aside by the party elites in an exercise of authoritarian manipulation. It was a fair enough description. The Gardai were made political for the occasion in order that their representatives might support the campaign. The head of the Industrial Development of Authority spoke out in favour, as did the head of the Immigration Council. And a former President, Mary McAleese, revoked the convention that Presidents do not engage in political partisanship by active campaigning for the Amendment. (She has a personal interest in the matter, and it has long been evident that, though she now purports to be a Canon Lawyer, she is incapable of distinguishing between the personal and the public.)

The broadcasting and print media too were of course committed to the Amendment, with only a formal technical compliance with impartiality rules.

And the Chair of the Referendum Commission, Justice Kevin Cross, also joined the Yes campaign by stating authoritatively that the Amendment would have no effect whatever on the status of marriage.

This was something he could not know, as it would only be determined when cases relying on the Amendment are brought to law.

Labour leader and Tanaiste Joan Burton was particularly emphatic in asserting that the Amendment had no implications beyond itself. The change it made would be hermetically sealed off from all other possible changes. And, above all, it would not change the status of marriage—even thought that is what it was for! She was the most active campaigner amongst the party

leaders, and so it was in her campaigning that the evasiveness and mindlessness of the campaign was most evident.

Then, a couple of days after victory was gained, she wondered whether the momentum could be transferred to a quick Referendum for abortion.

It came out during the campaign that an American billionaire, Chuck Feeney, had put millions into the movement. In this instance, Burton was entirely at ease with foreign finance being brought to bear on internal politics. And, anyway, she said, the money did not go to the campaign.

All this meant, however, was that the millions were not put in during the three weeks of the official campaign. They had been put in well beforehand to generate the momentum for the campaign. (Influencing internal developments in small states by the massive funding of 'Voluntary' groups by discreet methods is something that the USA has done with great skill around eastern Europe during the past twenty-five years.)

The Fine Gael and Fine Fail leaders set up the Referendum, arranged for various public institutions which should have been impartial to be partisan, silenced their parties, took a back seat, and let the well-funded movement have its head.

The wording of the Family Law Bill which preceded the Referendum, as originally drafted by Justice Minister Alan Shatter, included provisions on surrogacy. When Shatter had to resign this was taken out of the Bill by his successor Frances Fitzgerald, and the line during the campaign was that the Amendment had nothing to do with anything but itself. Patsy McGarry, Religion Correspondent of the *Irish Times* and authoritative biographer of President McAleese, said that the attempt to drag it in was an attempt at intimidation by the No campaign—which was itself thoroughly intimidated.

Renting the wombs of women in the Third World in order to make children for wealthy homosexuals—and making up those children by advanced technological devices—would not have played well in Ireland et. Shatter, whose primary allegiance lies elsewhere, can be excused for not knowing that.

Homosexual adoption was also taken out of the campaign by the pretence that it had already been legislated for. Last month we suggested that the legislation might be open to Constitutional challenge if homosexual marriage was not established. But now it turns out that there

continued on page 4

## Lusitania - A War Ship!

With regard to the Lusitania Gerry Docherty and Jim MacGregor have discovered some interesting and enlightening material that confirms the Ship was a weapon of war in more ways than one. It can be viewed at [www.firstworldwarhiddenhistory.wordpress.com](http://www.firstworldwarhiddenhistory.wordpress.com)

Gerry and Jim have found that "*by the fifth month of the war, virtually every wireless signal sent by the German Navy could be intercepted*". Also "*the captured SKM codes and their use in the decryption of intercepted orders to submarines*" meant the British Admiralty "*could follow the movements of the German fleet and knew the disposition of the U-Boats; which... were currently active*".

However, Admiralty communications and telegrams have gone missing, so we will never know if the British sacrificed the Lusitania for its propaganda value.

Gerry and Jim note that the Lusitania was built through an agreement in 1904 between the Admiralty and Cunard that provided a special low interest loan from the Government on the condition that the ship and its sister version, the Mauritania, would be constructed to Admiralty specification so that she could be converted into an auxiliary cruiser in time of war (which means in time of the war that would come). They write:

"While she was being built, secret compartments were constructed to carry munitions and immediately war was declared the *Lusitania* was requisitioned as an Armed and immediately war was declared the *Lusitania* was requisitioned as an Armed Merchant Cruiser, as indeed was the *Mauretania*. Though it was denied in public and in parliament, the *Lusitania* doubled as an Admiralty transport ship carrying passengers as part of her cover when she crossed from America to Liverpool."

Gerry and Jim also provide an account of the discovery of the Lusitania's cargo:

"In 2012 the *Lusitania's* 27 page supplementary manifest, which had never been previously mentioned in any document, report or newspaper, nor referred to at Lord Mersey's later enquiry, was unearthed in the Franklin D Roosevelt Presidential Archives. Its discovery was due entirely to the persistence and resilience of researcher Mitch Peeke... Listed on page 2 of the supplementary manifest are the 1250 cases of shrapnel—not cartridges—shrapnel sent from Bethlehem Steel to the Woolwich Arsenal, together with 90 tons of lard destined for the Royal Navy Weapons Testing Establishment in Essex. Taking even the boxes of cartridges from Remington and Union Munitions Company alone, 4,200 cases weighing over 125 tons were consigned to the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich. In addition, large quantities of aluminium, nickel, copper, brass and rubber were stowed inside the cargo hold."

One consignment of wool was interestingly destined for Erskine Childers, who was working for Royal Navy Intelligence at the time. One can only guess what he needed it for.

It seems that the Lusitania was really a weapon of war, carrying contraband behind some American millionaire human shields. If it got through, it helped the Allied war effort and when it finally got its just deserts, as a weapon of war, it aided the war effort in a different way. Winston Churchill described this understanding privately:

"It is of the utmost importance to attract neutral shipping to our shores, in the hope of especially embroiling the U.S. with Germany. The German formal announcement of indiscriminate submarining has been made to the United States to produce a deterrent effect on traffic. For our part, we want the traffic—the more the better; and if some of it gets into trouble, better still" (Martin Gilbert called *Churchill on America*, p.57)

How cynical and calculating were the men who organised the Great Fraud of 1914 and how little did they care about sacrificing human life in their war to destroy an honest commercial competitor?

Pat Walsh

**The Great Fraud Of 1914-18**

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was no legislation. The Bill was put through all its stages, except the final one. It was held ready to be signed into an Act by the President when homosexual marriage was established.

\*

On the day after the vote, as the results were coming in, Radio Eireann had the Editor of the *Independent* and Gerry Adams on the programme to comment on it. But this was an issue on which no mileage could be got against Sinn Fein, which was the only party genuinely at ease with the Amendment.

The interviewer therefore sprang the Mairia Cahill affair on him. An investigation into the handling of the matter by the Northern police had just reported. It found that the police had been at fault in the way Cahill's complaint was dealt with. The RTE interviewer seemed to think that told against Sinn Fein, and she asked Adams for his response. He said he agreed that the police had handled the matter badly. She then tried to find a way of making the report play against Sinn Fein, but found herself at a loss.

She then brought the Editor of the *Independent* in to help her. He could do no better. Adams dealt with every question—and every tirade—factually. And he made a number of definite statements which they could not dispute. He said that he had advised Cahill, when she came to him at the start, that she should take the matter to the police. He said that the abuser was her uncle. He said that rape in Ireland today was largely a family affair, without political bias, and had certainly happened in the families of members of all parties. He said he had spoken to Joe Cahill, the patriarch of the Cahill family, with a view to helping to limit the damage the matter was doing to the family. And he said that the *Independent* had been obliged to pay him damages on a number of occasions because of statements it made about him in the long campaign against him.

The fact that Cahill had not taken his advice and gone to the police was not discussed. Nor was the fact that she had not been dragged to a "Kangaroo Court" but had chosen that course. Nor was the fact that she had been active in the Provisional movement until it recognised the Northern police, and then turned against it and was active in a dissident Republican agitation against the Agreement. Nor was the fact that when, belatedly, she went to the police, and swore a witness statement which led to a prosecution being brought, she then withdrew her statement and caused the trial to collapse.

Dublin media creatures, like Free State politicians, when they try to use Northern

matters against Sinn Fein in the South, quickly run out of their depth. They had never taken the trouble to understand what Northern Ireland is, therefore they can have no sense of its political dynamic, and of what particular things mean in terms of that dynamic. This was perhaps understandable during the decades when the Constitutional position was that the British structure in the North was illegitimate because it was British, and that the Six Counties should be governed from Dublin. But the Constitutional claim was repealed 17 years ago. That approach is no longer defensible. But resistance to an understanding of what Northern Ireland is has not weakened. Therefore comment is usually ignorant.

The rise of Sinn Fein in the South has coincided with the decline of Fianna Fail into Free Statism. Two issues are involved: Partition, and the founding event of the Irish state. Fianna Fail, down to the 1990s, regarded Irish independence as having been founded democratically and legitimately by the 1918 Election and the Declaration of Independence of January 1919. Fine Gael was bound by its origins to locate the legitimate origin of the Irish state in the 'Treaty' dictated by the Crown under threat of an all-out British war of reconquest. Under Martin Mansergh's influence, Fianna Fail has been nudged around into that view.

And Fianna Fail now seems to recognise Northern Ireland as a legitimate and democratic system, and Micheal Martin has condemned Sinn Fein for introducing "sectarianism" into it. But, if that word is to be used, then it must be said that the Northern Ireland system, imposed by Britain as the means of enacting Partition, was essentially sectarian from the start. In exclusion from the democracy of the (British) state it could have been nothing else. The 1998 system institutionalised that sectarianism and equalised it to a considerable extent.

If Martin thinks he would do better than Sinn Fein in the North, what is stopping him from doing it? He can contest Northern elections if he wants. He has token party organisation there, but he keeps it manacled. He prefers to be the hurler on the ditch—well, on the ditch of another field.

\*

The Government waited until the Referendum was safely in the bag before announcing the sale of Aer Lingus, accompanied by a carefully-prepared chorus of approving voices from various officials and public bodies.

The 'guarantees' given by British Airways/IAG are not worth the paper they are written on.

Labour will enable the sale to go through. With the party at rock-bottom with its base, it might have been thought that it would attempt to retrieve its fortunes by preventing the sale—which makes no sense in socialist or in national terms. British company law makes a firm's directors responsible for maximising shareholder profits. No other consideration matters. The combined shareholders of the new entity will be largely British and international. In the long term the decision to maximise their returns will adversely affect Irish connectivity and economic development. It could also mean the company having its head office outside the EU, if Britain decides to leave.

This flagship company of Irish State Enterprise, built up by the efforts of nationally-minded personnel over decades, will be lost to Ireland—and for a pitiable sum of money.

James Connolly must be turning in his grave.

\*

As we go to print, President Obama has decided to disrupt an autonomous world organisation that has developed outside US control: FIFA.

FIFA, under Sepp Blatter's leadership, has made football a world game. This has been done by giving the Associations of all countries an equal say in the running of things, and an equal distribution of profits. That democratic principle gives the Third World a majority influence. The Anglo-Saxon world has long been complaining about this. Its candidate in the 2015 Election for the FIFA Presidency was a Sandhurst-educated Jordanian Prince.

There is a latent split waiting to happen. A dispute between Palestine and Israel might have precipitated it. The Israeli State has been interfering actively, by various means, and by right of conquest, with Palestinian football to prevent it developing and having an international profile, and Blatter was trying to negotiate a compromise when Obama struck.

Israel, as a European state imposed by Imperial force on the Middle East, is a member of the UEFA region of FIFA. It was the business of the self-righteous UEFA to deal with Israeli interference with Palestinian football by bringing European pressure to bear on Israel. It did not do so.

An issue is being made about slave labour in Qatar. It is suggested that it should not have been given the World Cup because of it. But Qatar, a British Imperial construct, has always had this slave labour, and it is only since it was awarded the World Cup that the 'world' has taken any notice of it.

Russia says Obama's move to disrupt FIFA is a Cold War move against Russia. Can anyone really doubt it? ■

# Labour

continued

post, which we use with his permission.

The Labour candidate, Willie Quinn, lives near Bagenalstown (Muine Beag) in Co. Carlow, and in that one small area he won 21.6% of the vote. This accounted for almost 50% of his constituency-wide total

result. He was also the only candidate of a major party from Co. Carlow. Without his local Bagenalstown vote, he would have dipped substantially below 5%.

In Co Kilkenny, including Kilkenny City—where Minister of State Phelan is a sitting Labour TD—Labour received just 2.8% of the vote (c. 1,500 first preferences) in 96% of the boxes tallied. The Labour tally breaks down as follows by area:

Area	Total poll	Lab. vote	Lab. %
<b>Co. Carlow:</b>			
Muine Beag	9,694	2,094	21.6%
<u>Carlow Town</u>	<u>9,341</u>	<u>738</u>	<u>7.9%</u>
<b>Co Carlow total</b>	<b>19,035</b>	<b>2,832</b>	<b>14.9%</b>
<b>Co. Kilkenny:</b>			
Castlecomer	11,528	415	3.6%
Kilkenny west	10,625	170	1.6%
Kilkenny East	11,088	377	3.4%
Ferry bank	10,708	257	2.4%
<u>Postal votes</u>	<u>513</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>7.8%</u>
<b>Co. KK total</b>	<b>44,462</b>	<b>1,259</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
<b>Constit. total</b>	<b>63,497</b>	<b>4,091</b>	<b>6.44%</b>
<b>First preference votes</b>	<b>66,834</b>	<b>4,673</b>	<b>7.0%</b>

(Note: the tallies above can be "fitted" to the actual outcome by increasing area totals by 5% and Labour totals by 11%, to compensate for the 4% of boxes not tallied and for a standard tally error of missing 1 in 20 of votes cast for Labour, a not unusual discrepancy where Labour vote numbers are so small. )

Sitting Governments invariably do badly in By-elections. Healy points out, however, that in this one both Government parties did *very* badly, though the media was silent about this. In the 2011 General Election Fine Gael and Labour combined in Carlow-Kilkenny won 55.47% of the vote (FG: 39.22% Lab: 16.25%)—almost identical to the national result (FG 36% + Lab 19.4% =55.4%)—but fell by nearly 30% in the By-election to 27.6% (FG: 20.6% Lab.: 7.0%). The new *Renua* party, ahead of Labour with 8.5% of first preferences on tallies, provided 2,263 transfers on elimination mostly to FG.

## NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Healy's prognosis for the constituency on the basis of the By-election result is that Labour will probably lose its existing seat (Phelan), Fine Gael will definitely lose 1 of its 3, Fianna Fáil will hold its new seat but maybe take another at FG's expense, and Sinn Féin, which won 16.2% of the vote (up from 9.54% in 2011) "*will definitely take a seat*" (the quota will be just 16.7%).

On the basis of national Opinion Polls, the Labour vote nationally is now just 6%. A Maynooth University Professor predicts just two seats for Labour in the next Dáil, with Fine Gael at 55, Fianna Fail 36, Sinn Fein 33 and Independents/Others 32. "*Adjusted*" results allowing for local factors etc. could—as other polls indicate—raise the Labour total to a maximum of 5-8 seats.

## OPINION POLLS

Healy's blog provides very interesting and detailed information on how the various Opinion Polls operate, especially in how results are "*adjusted*", "*filtered*" and "*weighted*", intrinsically favouring sitting Government Parties and most under-recording SF support. One factor is an inbuilt bias that the "*poor don't vote*", but Healy contends that this is unlikely to apply in next year's General Election, when poorer groups "*will be highly motivated to vote*".

He also extracts the Opinion Poll data on party support by social category, which shows Labour between 5%-8% across *all* categories, from the wealthiest to the poorest. FG support is highest, at 43%, in the two uppermost strata and SF support is highest, at 36%, among the two poorest strata. Labour, meanwhile, is on just 8% among the two poorest strata, the lowest for any party or independents.

Philip O'Connor

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## Who gained what in the British election?

It seems to me fairly obvious what happened. Not so much a question of the Lib Dem Faithful as of tactical voters. Lots of people in the previous election, in seats where the Conservatives were strong but Labour was weak, voted tactically for the Lib Dems to keep the Conservatives out. They then felt betrayed by the coalition. And, given the way the opinion polls were showing a hung Parliament was in prospect, they thought the Conservatives would only be able to form a Government with Lib Dem support. So a vote for the Lib Dems looked like a vote for the Conservatives. This backfired, so they ended up getting the Conservative red in tooth and claw. This is what happened in my constituency, Brecon and Radnorshire.

I don't think Labour did as badly as everyone is suggesting. They didn't do well but they gained seats in England and, even with the wipeout in Scotland, they increased their share of the vote by a larger percentage than the Conservatives. Had the Lib Dem vote held up, they might have been able to cobble something together with the Lib Dems, and SNP support (despite ruling it out in their typical mode of giving in to Conservative propaganda tricks). But it was a totally characterless and lacklustre campaign. I suspect that the strongest card for the Conservatives wasn't fear of the SNP but their success in pinning the blame for the 2008 financial crisis on Labour. Which was absurd. But to answer it Labour would have had to point out the faults of the overall financial system. Which would have required proposing a policy for doing something about it.

Peter Brooke

**Editor's Note:** Labour's vote suffered from the rise of UKIP and the Scottish National Party. UKIP's vote rose to 3,881,099 votes (12.6%), and the Scots Nats won 1,454,436 votes (4.7%). Blairism assumed that the working class vote had nowhere else to go if Labour shifted to the right. That calculation has been proved wrong.

## Hurley bats Honohan

continued

The much messier solution, or rather solutions—proposed by Patrick Honohan, with the benefit of hindsight, over six years later—were something like: (1) Nationalise Anglo and Irish Nationwide (2) Guarantee the remaining banks (3) Do not guarantee subordinated debt (4) Do not guarantee existing debt.

Such a hodge-podge when announced the next morning would have sent the financial markets into a complete panic and deposits would likely have flown out the window from all the banks. It might satisfy some abstract need to avoid moral hazard now, but it would have been a disaster then.

Thankfully nothing like it happened as, according to John Hurley—

"there was a strong view on the night that the Government had one opportunity to assuage the markets. If the decisions taken were considered inadequate and failed the consequences for the banking system would be devastating and lead to very serious economic and social fallout for the country as a whole.

"I supported the decision taken as being the one most likely to ensure that these consequences for the banking system and the country would be avoided."

This seems eminently sensible. And Patrick Honohan's intervention is beginning to seem overtly political, aimed more at discrediting the Government which appointed him than at shedding light on what happened. The news that he is to resign is very welcome.

Sean Owens

**Banking Inquiry 2**  
**Former Governor of ECB's view**

## Jean Claude Trichet at IIEA

**"the house of cards of global finance  
... was collapsing"—Trichet**

Holding the Trichet address to the Institute for International and European Affairs at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham was a well worked out compromise which allowed him to give evidence which was admissible to the Inquiry without actually formally appearing before it. The lecture, chaired by Brendan Halligan, was the vehicle by which Trichet's 'opening remarks' were delivered, and this was followed by questions in alternate segments from both IIEA members and the Banking Inquiry Committee of the Oireachtas.

It should be noted that the former ECB President was under no obligation to appear before the Committee. The ECB is technically accountable to the European Parliament only and a formal appearance before the Committee in the Dail would have set an impossible precedent. During the Question and Answer session which followed the lecture this matter was put to Mr Trichet by Ciaran Lynch, the Chairman of the Committee, and he was politely but firmly put to rights on the matter. With what appears to be reasonable sincerity and sympathy for the efforts Ireland has made to put its finances back in order however, Mr Trichet and/or the ECB agreed that this hybrid event could take place to enable the Committee's objectives to be achieved.

In his lecture Mr Trichet emphasised the global nature of the crisis as it unfolded between August 2007 and September 2008 with the initial US subprime crisis, the consequent failure in March '08 of Bear Stearns—a New York investment bank with heavy exposure in the subprime securities market—and the later catastrophic collapse of Lehman Brothers in September.

Regarding the European background to the crisis, he noted the pre-crisis incompleteness of the structural architecture of the Eurozone, the absence of bank resolution mechanisms (for 'burning' bondholders and winding up failed banks) and the failure, in France and Germany in particular, to implement the Stability and Growth Pact, which limits Eurozone Government deficits to 3% and overall debt to 60% of GDP. This latter point is almost never mentioned by anyone: both France and Germany have been in breach of one or other or both of the above limits pretty much continuously since the introduction of the Euro as a physical currency in 2002. Their refusal to allow implementation of the pact in 2003/4 enabled other even more delinquent countries, such as Greece, Portugal and Italy, to flout it also, leading to huge structural imbalances over the Eurozone as a whole. These imbalances were somewhat sustainable as long as there was no crisis, but proved disastrous when one did, inevitably, arrive.

There were no mechanisms either to draw attention to, or manage divergences in, unit labour costs within the Eurozone. Where countries operate their own currencies, such divergences can to an extent be accommodated by means of currency revaluations. Within a single currency area they cannot. This point was

to prove a particular issue in Ireland as the boom became boomier and was resolved eventually by severe cuts in both public and, in particular, private sector wages which exacerbated the downturn.

Two other factors impacted on Ireland's situation after the storm broke. At the macro level, low Eurozone interest rates fuelled a credit boom, which combined with the rise in unit labour costs to produce higher inflation than the Eurozone average. The higher inflation meant that real or effective interest rates were actually lower than the Eurozone average and produced a toxic feedback loop which led to even more borrowing and an even boomier boom. This could possibly have been offset by fiscal policy, but by 2006 50% of tax revenues were derived from capital taxes relating to construction and Government spending had expanded dramatically, again much more than in the rest of the Eurozone. This was to cause a dramatic rise in the deficit when the tax revenues from construction evaporated and unemployment rose.

On the micro level, the supervision of the banking sector was a '*principles-based*' approach (i.e. light touch regulation) favoured in Britain and the US, which assumed that banks, acting in their own self-interest, would curb their risk-taking as long as they were properly governed. This again contrasted with the more intrusive '*rules-based*' approach favoured in Europe.

Finally, regarding the Guarantee (technically the 'Credit Institutions Financial Support' scheme—CIFS) it is worth quoting him in full:

"As I said, this was to a significant extent a response to mounting, dramatic funding pressures on the Irish banking sector. And I must admit that, given the very difficult situation at that time, one could understand why such a decision was taken—also taking into account that all the big countries, after the sub-prime crisis and bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, were about to give at that time some kind of blanket political guarantee to their own systemic banks, to make the private sector aware of the fact that they were behind their systemic financial institutions. But it is also important that the guarantee was introduced by the Irish Government without any co-ordination with the ECB or with any other European partners, and I was the witness of that, or any other international partner. The ECB, shortly after the fact, was critical of some aspects of the guarantee, as can be inferred by reading our legal opinions at the time. As we know, the guarantee triggered later an intense negative spiral between the banking sector on the one hand and the sovereign creditworthiness."

He went on to speak about the ending of the two-year guarantee in September 2010 and the "wave of debt" issued under it which matured in September 2010, the 'CIFS cliff'. This, together with the 'Deauville Declaration' by Merkel and Sarkozy, which said that lenders to banks would potentially have to take losses in future bailouts, ensured that Ireland was frozen out of the financial markets and was itself bounced into the Troika bailout. Concerning losses to bondholders (and shareholders), he said:

"it should not be overlooked that over the period 2009 to 2011 the holders of subordinated debt issued by Irish banks incurred substantial losses, what we now call burden-sharing, in the order of €14 billion. In the same vein, shareholders' write-downs exceeded €29 billion. As such, the private investors in the Irish banking system endured, of course, considerable losses, as is normal."

The decisions not to bail in senior bondholders at this time were taken because it was felt that the risks to financial stability were greater than the potential gains from further burden-sharing and this was a consensus view in Ireland, Europe and worldwide:

"All in all—and I have referred to the consensus in Europe, the consensus in the world—the ECB assessment at the time was, and with the benefit of hindsight still is—that the repercussions from bailing-in senior bondholders may have far outweighed the gains, or the potential gains. This is the reason why I think that the Government of Ireland was right to take this difficult decision. More generally, the actions taken by the Irish authorities during the programme laid the foundations for the significant and rapid rebound in confidence in the Irish banking system, in the Irish sovereign and in the Irish economy. And this confidence is a whole ... confidence was shared by the three, I would say, constituencies I have just mentioned. And it is that confidence which makes, clearly, Ireland the major success of the very dramatic adjustment through which a number of countries had to go through in the crisis. And, again, in the crisis that did not start here but came here dramatically."

It is refreshing to hear a balanced, authoritative, non-party political view of things from time to time. Which is not to say that Mr Trichet does not have axes to grind, it's just he does not insist on grinding them into our thick Irish heads like the British and West British media and political establishments. He quotes from Brian Lenihan's letter to him of 4th November 2010, which was one of an exchange involving four letters. The first, from Trichet to Lenihan on 15th October 2010 begins –

"As you know the ECB greatly appreciates the recent commitment of the Irish government to develop, in close cooperation with the Commission in liaison with the ECB, a multi-annual economic and fiscal adjustment strategy. Given Ireland's convincing track-record in fiscal adjustment, I am confident that your medium term strategy will be successful in restoring fiscal sustainability and financial sector soundness"

—but he goes on to state in no uncertain terms that there are grave concerns about the level of liquidity the ECB was having to provide to the Irish banking system and that, due to the ECB's rules, "the Governing Council cannot commit to maintaining the size of its funding to these institutions on a permanent basis".

A key element relating to the decisions the Governing Council would take would be "its assessment of implementing the four-year economic strategy that the Irish government envisages to announce in early November".

He concludes:

"I trust that the four-year strategy will target a fiscal deficit of below 3% in 2014 and a decline in the public debt-to-GDP ratio from 2012/13 onward based on cautious growth forecasts as well as a strong structural reform programme. Future decisions by the Governing Council of the ECB regarding the terms of liquidity provision to Irish banks will thus need to take into account appropriate progress in the areas of fiscal consolidation, structural reforms and financial sector restructuring."

Essentially in this letter Trichet is setting out the terms of a 'programme' similar to that which would be imposed subsequently by the Troika, except that it would not be called a 'bailout' and would be administered by the ECB and the Commission without the involvement of the IMF and the associated international humiliation. The four-year strategy would have to be announced by the Irish Government in early November and would have to be stuck to.

But it was not to be. On October 18th Sarkozy and Merkel met in Deauville and announced that they wanted to see changes to the Treaties that would involve private sector haircuts in future bailouts, the involvement of the IMF and the suspension of voting rights within the EU for any country that seriously violated the rules of EMU. There is no small irony in the fact that they themselves were in breach of the rules at the time and that it was Sarkozy as Minister of Finance in 2004 who refused to submit France to existing EMU discipline.

At a time when the Eurozone desperately and urgently needed stability, to suggest that the remedies for borrowing

problems in the periphery were the imposition of lender haircuts and a reopening of treaty negotiations that would require the agreement of 27, by now thoroughly pissed off, countries was ludicrous in the extreme. The involvement of the IMF underscored the fact that the Eurozone was unable to handle its problems on its own.

Irish borrowing costs started to rise again. On 4th November the letter that Trichet quotes from was sent by Brian Lenihan. The section quoted in the lecture runs as follows:

"it is very noticeable that over recent days the widening in spreads {the difference between Irish bond yields/ interest rates and those of a benchmark such as German Bunds S.O} has accelerated on the basis of speculation on the conditions that may be necessary to apply to the debt of countries accessing the European Financial Stability Facility and reported *policy comments of senior political figures. It is the case that many market commentators attribute these comments as being the primary driver of the increased spreads of peripheral countries, including Ireland, in recent days.*"

The situation continued to worsen in the bond markets and it was clear that by the middle of November only a full-fledged bailout with IMF involvement could be contemplated. On 18th November the Eurozone central bankers met in Frankfurt but before that meeting took place, Irish Central Bank Governor Patrick Honohan, who was attending, called RTE's *Morning Ireland* and said that Ireland would be entering a bailout programme. On 19th November Trichet sent another letter, this time the formal ultimatum, that Ireland's banks and therefore the country itself would be cut off from ECB liquidity if it did not submit to a bailout programme forthwith. The last letter in the exchange was sent by Brian Lenihan to Mr Trichet on 21st November and, after explaining something of the work already completed, and the reasons for the ongoing difficulties, a formal request was made to apply for external support.

There had been much speculation about the existence of these letters and their contents in the media before they were eventually leaked/released and published by the *Irish Times* in November 2014. The commentary was similar in terms of the spin put on it to the speculation about the Guarantee, suggesting that the ECB 'ordered' the then Government to save the banks 'at all costs' in order chiefly to save the French and German banks. It is a plausible enough thing to believe especially if you have a Eurosceptic bent and wish to do down the EU and all its



works, but the Germans and French were not the main creditors, that honour belonged mainly to the UK and US.

The media were looking forward to seeing the Committee grill Mr Trichet on these and other subjects and first up was the Committee Chairman, Ciaran Lynch TD:

" Mr. Trichet, if you could just clarify, in the period of .... prior to September 2008, were the ECB engaged in any way with the Irish Government or the Irish Central Bank or Irish financial services in any manner related to the implementation or the design or the structure of a guarantee?"

**Mr Trichet:** " No contact between the Irish Government and either me or the ECB or, to my knowledge, other governments, because I had myself the other governments calling on me and saying, "What's happening?" Because at the time, you know, it's extraordinary in this time of crisis, the simple fact that the Irish Government had given the guarantee was considered by the global market a much better guarantee than any private signature and so the money was affluent *{flowing in S.O}* and you can imagine which marketplaces were absolutely appalled to see that the money was getting out their marketplaces and going in Dublin."

So, the Irish Government took a sovereign decision regarding the solvency of its banks, recognising, as Mr Trichet states often elsewhere, that matters concerning regulation and solvency are a sovereign, not an ECB matter, according to the treaties, i.e. by EU law. The marketplaces most appalled to see the deposits flowing to Dublin because of the Guarantee would be those in competition for deposits in the first place, namely London, Edinburgh, Frankfurt and maybe New York.

Senator Sean Barret came back with a variation on the theme:

"Did the Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland brief you or your officials in the ECB on the liquidity-solvency situation and the options being considered?"

**Mr Trichet:** " In September 2008 we had the collapse of Lehman Brothers, and we had again a problem, which was not an Irish problem at all, it was the house of cards of global finance which was collapsing. And after a sequence of events that were not on this side of the Atlantic, but were on the other side of the Atlantic, you had Bear Stearns, Freddie Mac and Fannie May, Lehman Brothers, after Lehman Brothers, AIG; you name it. This was the sequence of drama that we were observing. And we had at the level of the major central banks of the world to cope with that in a few half days and, as you might remember..."

He goes on to say how ALL the central banks worldwide decided to provide

liquidity through dollar swaps with the Fed as necessary and then:

" I would say ... Ireland was one of all the advanced economies, one of course of the 15 I already mentioned in Europe, and we had the same, I would say, message for all, "We are in the worst crisis since World War II, make no mistake, it is exactly the situation, it is absolutely dramatic, you have to take that into account. On our side we are doing all that we can on the liquidity basis, you are responsible, your governments, for the solvency basis." No different message for Ireland than for any other country at the time. And they were all, I have to say, in a dramatic situation."

**Senator Sean D. Barrett:** "And did your officials give any advice to the Irish Government, or the Governor of the Central Bank on the decisions that had to be taken to deal with that situation in September 2008?"

**Mr Trichet:** " I mean, again, I did not provide particular advice on the situation in '08 because there was dramatic advice across the board for all nations, all governments. We were not kept abreast of any development in Dublin by the Irish authorities, and as regards the guarantee, we learned the guarantee through the media. So that was the situation. I don't blame anybody, I don't blame anybody. You have to understand that Ireland was one of the ships in a terribly agitated sea or ocean where, you know, everybody could sink, and the decisions were taken, again, at a global level. My main responsibility was to discuss with Ben Bernanke to see what we could do at the global level in order to avoid the drama."

**Senator Susan O'Keefe:** "The late and former Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan, recalled in an interview that he did in September 2010, that he had picked up a message on his telephone, his own mobile telephone, from you on Saturday, 27 September 2008 that said, "You must save your banks at all costs." Can you tell us what your recollection is of that phone call, and what communication either preceded that or followed that, or what was going on at that time"

**Mr Trichet:** " ...I have not said that to Brian. We have said, all my colleagues and myself, not to Brian, to all governments, "Be careful." We had drama coming from Lehman Brothers. It's bankruptcy, it's an absolute drama, and all Heads of State and Government, to my knowledge, said there will not be a new Lehman Brothers in my courtyard. It was said by the Council European. It was said by the President of the US, it was said by Gordon Brown in the UK, it was said by all Heads of State and Government, and there was absolutely nothing peculiar for Ireland at that time—nothing. Ireland was particularly aware of the fact that it was very vulnerable, and I guess that it is the reason why the guarantee was decided."

**Senator Susan O'Keefe:** "So, just to clarify, Mr. Trichet, you or the ECB never gave any message to Ireland in September 2008 that no bank should be allowed to fail."

**Mr. Jean-Claude Trichet:** "No message to Brian, no message to the Government of Ireland, but, if you read the papers at the time, all central bankers of the world were telling all governments, "Don't do again Lehman Brothers." So, put that in your mind. There was no call from me to Brian. It would not have been, you know, in line with what we were doing at the time, again, as I explained..."

The exchange goes on a bit longer, and Trichet does say that the Irish government gave a blanket *legal* guarantee that the ECB criticised, where elsewhere governments gave blanket *political* guarantees, but:

**Mr Trichet:** "...so, the possibility would have been, perhaps, a total collapse of the Irish economy at that time, and we would not be here to discuss the recovery of Ireland and the success story of Ireland because there would be something totally different—a dramatic depression—in Ireland.

"Again, we are speaking of a Government which is not there anymore. We are, unfortunately ... and I am very sad that, speaking of a Minister of finance that passed over ... I think that he did what he thought was the best in absolutely dramatic circumstances...."

So there it is: the government was faced with a horrendous situation, partly but not entirely self-inflicted, leading to a particular vulnerability. Without a general catastrophic liquidity crisis there would still have been problems—Anglo and one or two of the smaller banks might still have gone to the wall. There would have been a recession, house prices would have fallen, unemployment and emigration would have risen, public spending would have been cut and the much hoped for soft landing might or might not have happened. But the trigger and large part of the cause of what actually did happen was a huge international liquidity crisis originating in the United States, arising out of 'principles-based' regulation, in which almost every government had to take extraordinary measures. In the Irish case the government chose the most comprehensive solution possible and thereby avoided immediate collapse."

Another question came up concerning a disagreement between the ECB and IMF regarding repaying bondholders, another common media meme:

**Deputy Eoghan Murphy:** "Mr. Trichet, I don't mean to interrupt ... if I could take you back to 2010 though.



These were unsecured, unguaranteed senior bonds and there was not consensus with the IMF on whether or not they should be repaid. Is that correct? Did the ECB and the IMF have a different view on whether these bonds should be repaid in 2010—Q3, Q4?"

**Mr. Jean-Claude Trichet:** "I'm sorry, I have no memory of anything that would have been a difference of views between the IMF and the ECB. Absolutely. In '10."

**Deputy Eoghan Murphy:** "In '10. Prior to the bailout and coming in to the negotiations of the bailout, did the ECB and the IMF have the same view on burden sharing in the course of those negotiations in relation to unsecured, unguaranteed bondholders?"

**Mr. Jean-Claude Trichet:** "Again, I was myself not in touch with the IMF, it was my collaborators. So, I don't think, again, that in '10 there was, at least I have not in mind the fact that there was not a broad consensus that burden sharing was unwise. Perhaps a collaborator of the IMF thought otherwise, certainly not the IMF, certainly not the board of directors of the IMF, certainly not the MD of the IMF. I cannot discuss with individuals, you know/ You are asking the question, perhaps you could give me the name of the individual who said to you that, that would help."

So someone at some level in the IMF may have had the view that bondholders should have been burned, and that is indeed part of the IMF playbook in most sovereign distress cases: cut Government spending drastically, sell off state assets, give haircuts to existing creditors and lend just enough cash at high interest rates to tide things over until a return to the bond markets is possible.

But this was not a case of 'most cases', it was an extraordinary global event with potentially catastrophic consequences and there is no indication from Trichet that there was any distance between him and the board or MD of the IMF, and given the high degree of international coordination at this time, it is absurd to think that there would have been.

And again:

**Deputy Eoghan Murphy:** "Did you threaten to withdraw European assistance to the Irish national sovereign if we decided to-----{burn the bondholders S.O.}"

**Mr. Jean-Claude Trichet:** "No, certainly not. No. You know exactly what were our relationship. We have published our letters. Full stop. You have to know ... you know with the adjective, the comma, the full stop, exactly what was our relationship with Ireland. You have the letters ... the four letters that have been published. The rest of it I can only ... I assume totally the fact that the

Governing Council of the ECB considered it was not appropriate for Ireland in the situation in which Ireland was, which was one of the worst you could imagine, to go along this burning and that you would have had probably a lot of very adverse consequences. It was finally what was decided by the Government, if I'm not misled. The decision was not taken by the ECB."

The letters again. We can perhaps assume that these letters were the formal setting down and clarifications of positions that had already been thoroughly discussed if not actually agreed between the ECB and the Irish Government. Brian Lenihan would have needed the two letters he received to put before the Cabinet to show clearly what the position was in each case and what needed to be done. The notion that they were 'threats' to cut Ireland off from funding is absurd. You can break the Eurozones's rules indefinitely, it seems, if you are big and otherwise solvent. But if

you are small and became insolvent by applying moronic Anglo-Saxon regulatory models, then the rules will be applied. Big time.

The letters from Lenihan to Trichet serve a slightly different purpose. The first is basically a formal complaint to the ECB about the reckless behaviour of Merkozy in Deauville and its consequences. Trichet was apparently livid with what they did, at least according to the *Wall Street Journal* and other sources. The second served to show that Ireland, given its situation, was serious about its responsibilities to the Eurosystem, that it had no intention of burning the poor, wretched, bondholders as desperately hoped for by the British press, and that it would not crash out of the Euro into, as Ambrose Evans Pritchard put it in the *Telegraph*, "the clammy embrace of Sterling".

Sean Owens

## P s e u d s Corner-Boys

(Corner Boy: a Low Blackguard, a Kinatt a Scumbag, a Toe-Rag)

### No.5 Stephen Collins

A few years ago *The Irish Times* reprinted a Cumann na nGaedheal poster of the 1920s which must have told the world that the party was intellectually and morally bankrupt and reduced to school-yard bully invective against their Fianna Fail rivals. But the paper's Political Editor, Stephen Collins thought it was brilliant.

The poster was designed like a Circus poster and advertised "*Devvy's Circus, featuring 'Senor de Valera' and 'Monsieur Lemass'*". It echoed the wretched "*Weekly Summary*" issued to the "Auxies" during the Tan War in abusing de Valera for having a Spanish father. Cumann na nGaedheal, to its credit, had earlier established diplomatic relations with Spain, France and other countries and now had sunk so low as to attack fellow Irishmen and recent comrades for having a Spanish father or a French Great-Grandfather. And, into the bargain had a go at Sean T O Ceallaigh, whose aboriginal Irish lineage was undisputed, by calling him "*Shanty Kelly*" or some such description which did nothing to demean Sean T. but much to demean Cumann na nGaedheal.

Duffy's Circus was then long

established and it long outlived Cumann na nGaedheal. If Stephen Collins knows how the party morphed into Fine Gael, he is singularly devoid of irony. For the party, when thrown out of office by the voters, grew a paramilitary and uniformed wing, adopted the Fascist salute and other trappings of Continental Fascism and might well have been caricatured as "*O'Duffy's Circus*"

So much for the political judgement of the Political Editor of *The Irish Times*. Now for a sample of his grasp of political history. He has asserted that the Irish Labour Party is the oldest party in the Dail. and his paper has not published a correction.

Not only did Sinn Fein found Dail Eireann in 1919, but both W. T. Cosgrave, who was to lead Cumann na nGaedheal, and Sean T. O Ceallaigh contested and won seats for Sinn Fein in Dublin Corporation years before the Labour Party was founded. Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and Clann na Poblachta were or are off-shoots of Sinn Fein. Even the Labour Party in its current guise or disguise is an off-shoot of off-shoots of Sinn Fein. It might even be said

that Sinn Fein stuck to its ..... principles, longer than those offshoots and ricochets.

Incidentally, the Editor of *Weekly Summary*, Major Hugh Pollard of British Intelligence, in 1936 flew a plane to the Canary Islands where General Francisco Franco had been posted to keep him from doing his country a mischief. He then flew Franco to Tetuan in Morocco from whence

the mutineer launched his assault on Spanish Democracy. General O'Duffy, whose Irish Political Circus had flopped, gathered volunteers to aid Franco's mutineers, in a comic opera escapade that recalls W.S. Gilbert's *Duke of Plaza Toro*. Perhaps Major Pollard helped Cumann na nGaedheal with their election literature?

Would Stephen Collins know?

**Donal Kennedy**

## A Neglected Centenary—May 1915

The centenary of a most important event passed by unnoticed in Ireland. And yet it was an event that more than anything else went into another famous event which will be commemorated next year, Easter 1916.

An understanding of what happened in Ireland in Easter 1916 is impossible without an understanding of what happened in Britain in May 1915.

That, of course, is handy. Our current breed of Oxbridge-trained historians see things from the British viewpoint and like to ignore those events in Britain that are unhelpful to the British narrative in Ireland. Or perhaps they are so far removed from the traditional study of history and implicated in sociological themes that they have forgotten causation entirely. Anyhow, they dearly wish that Easter 1916 be seen as an undemocratic event and thus are willing to let important events in the chain of cause and effect pass by lest they spoil their story.

F.S. Oliver, a writer and businessman prominent in the *Round Table* movement, noted that, by mid-1915, the Liberal Government was "supported by a House of Commons which is nervously self-conscious of having exceeded its statutory term of life" (*Ordeal By Battle*, p.li.). The mandate of the Liberal Government elected in December 1910 had begun to run out in 1915. But, instead of seeking a fresh democratic mandate, the "sovereign" Government extended its life by arbitrary parliamentary action. The Government, therefore, re-constituted itself. From this point Parliament was unelected and the Government ruled without an electoral mandate until December 1918.

1915 was the first occasion such arbitrary action had been taken since 1715—when Parliament extended itself beyond its electoral mandate. Such a thing had not happened for 200 years, despite all the wars that England had fought

during this long period.. Because Parliament had become "nervously self-conscious of having exceeded its statutory term of life", it had therefore become a subservient institution. "The main power", wrote Oliver "does not reside in the House of Commons".

The operation of parties in the House of Commons had given way to the operation of coteries within the administration because Parliament had become quiescent in the face of matters which lay totally outside its experience, but which had to be dealt with. The Coalition was, in effect, a coalition of the Front Benches which purposed to keep the backbenches quiescent and govern the country through the stifling of Parliament.

The change of Government in 1915 was a change not enacted through the democratic process. Party politics had been suspended even before the Coalition was formed and elections had been called off when the War had begun. John Redmond had chosen not to offer himself up for re-election with his colleagues when he had supported the British war in 1914. So his mandate for doing so was never tested democratically. Neither did they stand down in 1915 when the mandate of 1910 was expired and seek re-election.

The Home Rule conflict, which reached near catastrophic proportions for the British State before it availed of the European War to escape it, gave a powerful stimulus to the new mode of governing. The Liberal Government that launched the War gave way in a political struggle conducted outside of the democratic process in a kind of internal *coup d'etat*.

H.C. O'Neill put it like this in his *History Of The War*:

"The formation of a Coalition, or 'National', Government came as a great surprise almost to everyone... A Coalition Government would command the loyalty of no one necessarily, and in its formation it was really an abandoning of democratic

rule altogether. Mr Asquith's coup d'etat was admitted by no Liberal as a necessity. A number of men who had done good service had to be jettisoned, and others, who had no mandate from the people, were to be included. With the party system the democratic system had fallen through, since so far as the country could speak it had spoken in favour of the Government which had passed. Yet the party system still existed for one thing, and that was to levy its share of public monies... the party system had never seemed so cynical a thing as in this sharing of offices... It was the first coalition in later British history. The positions seemed to have been portioned out on the rough ratio of parties..." (pp. 377-81).

John Redmond's miscalculation about the direction of the new arrangement in England came about as a result of his alliance with the Liberal Party. The Redmondites believed that Liberalism had regained the ascendancy in British politics in 1906 after a temporary hiccup and the winning of the democratic battle against arbitrary Tory authority in England was mirrored in the triumph of constructive Liberal doctrine in the administration of the Empire.

The formation of the Coalition Government in 1915, which marked the effective ending of party-politics in England was only the culmination of a process that had been gaining momentum in British politics since the end of the Boer War. Tendencies towards all-party concentration of the forces of Social Imperialism developed from around 1900 and The Coefficients, The Compatriots, the National Efficiency Movement, *The Round Table*, The National Defence and Maritime Leagues were all expressions of this trend.

There had been significant moves within British ruling circles, by prominent politicians and influential writers over the previous decade, to restrict the effects of the expansion of the franchise and concentrate power in the hands of those they felt could be trusted with governing the Empire properly. The anti-democratic notions of colonial government were increasingly imported by the Pro-consuls and the Imperial administrators into English domestic politics from 1902, until they achieved their objectives, partially in 1915, and more fully in 1916. Prominent Unionists like Milner and F.E. Smith and Liberals like Lloyd George and Churchill, saw the future in this way.

Lloyd George had made a coalition proposal in October 1910 and Churchill had made one in July 1914 to overcome the sharpening Irish Home Rule crisis. In some ways these moves were a pre-

fascism—meaning that the system would reconstitute itself as a monolith to ward of elemental democratic forces that were threatening to undermine the State.

They both failed and, despite all the efforts prior to the War, coalition of "*the men with push and go*" could not be put together before the national emergency of May 1915—because of the fundamental issues which divided and antagonised the rank and file of both parties. The men pushing for coalition/proto-fascism, however, actively welcomed the War as a kind of revolutionary situation in which they could impose their agenda on the country in the moment of national crisis—over the persistence of party conflict. And there is evidence in their personal correspondence that they actually hoped the War would keep going so that they could bring down Party government altogether and achieve their wider objectives of oligarchic administration within a democratic façade, since England was the Mother of Parliaments, after all.

There were those in England who had warned, years earlier, that the course of English political development was not the way the Redmondites understood it, but the other way about. J.A. Hobson, who resigned from the Fabians, published his famous book, *Imperialism*, in 1902. In it he warned that the domestic political impact of the new Imperialism would be inevitably "*a series of processes of concentration of power*":

"Representative institutions are ill adapted for Empire, either as regards men or methods. The government of the great heterogeneous medley of lower races by departmental officials in London and their nominated emissaries lies outside the scope of popular knowledge and popular control. The Foreign, Colonial, and Indian Secretaries in Parliament, the permanent officials of the departments, the governors and staff who represent the Imperial Government in our dependencies, are not, and cannot be, controlled directly or effectively by the will of the people. This subordination of the legislative to the executive, and the concentration of executive power in autocracy, are necessary consequences of the predominance of foreign over domestic policies. The process is attended by a decay of party spirit and party action, and an insistence on the part of the autocracy... that all effective party criticism is unpatriotic and verges on treason" (*Imperialism*, pp. 145-6.)

Hobson saw that the effect of the new Imperialism would be the defection of Liberals—and socialists—from the democratic tradition to the new development of Liberal Imperialism. The majority of influential Liberals had "*fled from the*

*fight which was the truest test of Liberalism*". by presiding over the extension of democratic institutions and the enfranchisement of the masses only to then frustrate the democratic process and prevent those same masses from gaining the substance of political and economic power.

Hobson was proved right in his interpretation of the anti-democratic effects of Imperialism on democratic politics in England. And the English Radicals, and their Irish Party allies, were proved wrong in their estimation of the beneficent effects of the Liberal electoral triumphs in 1906 and 1910.

F.S. Oliver summed up the significance of the formation of coalition government in England in his *Ordeal By Battle*, published in 1915:

"What has happened... is a revolution upon an unprecedented scale—one which is likely to have vast consequences in the future. The country realises this fact, and accepts it as a matter of course—accepts it indeed with a sigh of relief. But in other quarters, what has just happened is hardly realised at all—still less what it is likely to lead to in the future... An idea seems still to be prevalent in certain quarters, that what has just occurred is nothing more important than an awkward and temporary disarrangement of the party game; and that this game will be resumed, with all the old patriotism and good feeling, so soon as war has ended.

"But this appears to be a mistaken view. You cannot make a great mix up of this sort without calling new parties into existence. When men are thrown into the crucible of war such as this, the true ore will tend to run together, the dross cake upon the surface. No matter to what parties they may have originally owed allegiance, the men who are in earnest, and who see realities, cannot help but come together... Liberal and Conservative, Radical and Tory have ceased for the present to be real divisions. They have recently become highly artificial and confusing; now they are gone—it is to be hoped for ever" (pp. xiv-xvi.).

Oliver was correct. The Coalition precedent was one that continued after the War—when the Home Rule Bill was supposed to come into operation through the Liberal Government—which had been elected to enact it prior to the War.

In late 1918 the British ruling class constituted itself into a giant monolithic coalition in order to rule the world it had conquered and sort out the Irish problem, free from party conflict. Liberals who refused to play ball were sidelined and the Liberal Party smashed to achieve this. We have Atatürk to thank for smashing the proto-fascism apart in 1922 when he broke Lloyd George's Coalition at Chanak and

party conflict was restored in Britain as a result. However, most of the period between England's first and second wars with Germany was taken up with Coalition Government as the precedent rapidly became the normal mode.

An editorial in the *Freeman's Journal* (paper of the Irish Party) of 26th May 1915 entitled, '*The War Cabinet*', noted that the two major issues that were used against the Liberals by the Unionist Press to encourage coalition/proto-fascism were not actually addressed by the actual Cabinet changes made. Kitchener remained at the War Office, despite all the criticism of munitions shortages. And, although Churchill was turned out of the Admiralty in favour of Balfour, to facilitate Admiral Fisher, the First Sea Lord still ended up resigning:

"Efficiency' was... not the object of those who forced the change, but party advantage. The whole business is a scandal of the first magnitude at the present moment, and most discreditable to the patriotism of those who forced it on. The crown of the scandal is the appointment of Sir Edward Carson. Here is a gentleman who a few months ago was threatening to break every law upon the Statute Book, who was challenging the guardians of the law in Ireland to put him in the dock, who assailed the present Lord Chief Justice of Ireland because from his place on the bench as one of his Majesty's judges he attempted to see justice done on the Belfast rioters, and he is selected as the chief administrator of the criminal law of England. The appointment is a party outrage by gentlemen who are clamoring to all and sundry to sink party... The whole transaction from beginning to end is unsavory. Upon what moral pedestals can the authors of it land a footing to lecture the strikers on the Clyde, the loungers in the arsenals, or the shirkers in the streets?"

The *Freeman* saw the Coalition as a Unionist *coup* over the Liberal Government. But it was actually a much more substantial change that was far worse than the Redmondites imagined. It was the end of party politics through an alliance of the Front Benches for the purposes of inaugurating a different mode of future government in Britain. And that had fatal implications for the so-called "*Home Rule Act*" that was passed but lay suspended on the Statute Book to do with what a future Government in Britain desired.

The Coalition Government was not only undemocratic, it also included as a major component the Unionist Party, which between 1912 and 1914, had denied the constitutional legitimacy of the policy of

the elected Government, and had carried the State to the brink of civil war by supporting the use of violence to prevent the implementation of an Act of Parliament. It included in senior Cabinet positions people who defied the law with impunity because of their ability to bring substantial force into the equation to overrule the verdict of the electorate.

The same men who raised and armed an illegal private army in Ulster to defy the law and overrule the democratic process by the threat of force in 1914, were Cabinet Ministers a year later. These people, who might have been put on trial for treason or sedition in 1914, as far as the law was concerned, but were able to defy the law with impunity because of their capacity to unleash violence, were now members of the Government and represented law and legality at the highest level of State.

How could Ireland's confidence in the "great English democracy" be sustained in the force of such outrageous double standards as these? While Home Rule was on the Statute Book, those who had sworn a Covenant against it, to destroy it by force if necessary, and who kept saying they would consign the "scrap of paper" to the dustbin of history when the War was over, were now in power. And those who had been elected to put it on the Statute Book and bring it into operation after the War were being pushed out.

The first Unionist *coup d'etat*, of 1915—and the second, more thorough one in 1916—had enormous ramifications for Ireland. The formation of the Coalition might have been seen in England as a reluctant necessity of wartime or indeed a progressive development, as F.S. Oliver viewed it. But the casting aside of the democratic process in Britain as a wartime expedient had serious implications for Ireland and Home Rule. Redmond's mandate was effectively shattered.

The formation of the Coalition was the effective end of the Home Rule alliance on which the Redmondite project depended and on which the Irish Party claimed would be effective in getting self-government for Ireland. The usefulness of that alliance had been illusory since August 1914 but now that fact became wholly apparent in Ireland.

The most immediate effect of the demise of the "great English democracy" was the effect on the Irish willingness to participate in the war on "Prussianism". Up until April 1915, 1500 Irishmen on average were enlisting in the British army per week. In the months following the

formation of the Coalition this reduced to 750. It only picked up again at the end of the year to 1100 a week when Redmond began a vigorous new recruiting campaign—in defence of the Coalition.

Warre Wells summed up the consequences of these events for Redmondism:

"From May 1915, Mr Redmond began to fight a losing battle in Ireland. He laboured manfully throughout the following year to keep Ireland behind him in his war policy; but the circumstances in which, to use the words that he employed afterwards himself, he had been 'let down and betrayed' by the Government, were too much for him. In the second half of 1915 the number of recruits fell away in an astonishing degree, and simultaneously the Irish Volunteers

gained a great assertion of strength. The National Volunteers, under Mr Redmond's control, at the same time were allowed—largely by force of circumstances, and not without his own tacit approval—to fall into decay" (*John Redmond—A Biography*, p.172).

What happened in May 1915, therefore, had a great bearing on what happened in Ireland in Easter 1916. Easter 1916 was hardly undemocratic when it was conducted against a proto-fascist regime ruling Ireland, supported by a party in Ireland whose democratic mandate had expired but which clung to power in the hope that the throwing of Irish cannon-fodder around the world to kill and die for the Empire might yet result in Home Rule.

**Pat Walsh**

**UK Election**

## Northern Ireland Results

The United Kingdom General Election was held on 7th May 2015. During the campaign the hope of the Democratic Unionist Party was that there would be a hung Parliament and it would hold the balance of power at Westminster and it drew up a list of demands, prominent on which was a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU and maintaining a high level of defence spending.

Disappointed in these hopes, the DUP will nevertheless be satisfied with the Election results, in which it and the UUP benefitted by a Pact covering four marginal areas. Thus DUP won back East Belfast from Naomi Long (AP), and held North Belfast, a seat under threat from Gerry Kelly (SF). Fermanagh/South Tyrone, despite a Catholic majority in the constituency, was won from Sinn Fein's Michelle Gildernew by the UUP. The Pact, however, failed to enable the UUP's Danny Kennedy to wrest Newry/S. Armagh from SF's Mickey Brady (who replaces the sitting Sinn Feiner, Conor Murphy).

There can be no doubt that Unionism had a good election: the Unionist Pact heartened its electorate and there was an increased Unionist turnout across the board.

Faced with the Unionist Pact, Sinn Fein proposed a counter-pact to the SDLP, covering a number of seats. Alasdair McDonnell, the SDLP leader, rejected it. Such a Pact would have given North Belfast and Fermanagh/South Tyrone to Sinn Fein, but would it have cost McDonnell his seat in South Belfast? In

May's editorial *Irish Political Review* thought it would, because Unionism would counter by fielding a single candidate. However, the constituency has been rapidly changing its nature. As recently as 2001 there was a Protestant majority: 56,071 to 43,684. By 2011 Catholics were in the majority, with 48,630 Protestants to 56,071 Catholics. Local Government representation is SDLP 4, SF 3 (counting the bit in East Belfast, Pottinger), to DUP 3, and UUP 2. Alliance has one seat in the Constituency.

In the event, McDonnell got 9,560 votes (a 16.5% decline), while SF won 5,402 (increase of 13.9%), totalling 14,962. On the other hand, the DUP's 8,654 with the UUP's 3,549 equals 12,203. However, if Pacts were in place, it could be expected that there would be higher turnouts.

Various SDLP seats benefit by a fair Unionist wind. Knowing that helps to make sense of some strange decisions made by the SDLP in the Assembly over recent years, where it has on several occasions helped Unionism to pass critical motions against Sinn Fein, thus giving it some victories in the communal grind which is Northern Ireland politics.

The lack of a Nationalist Pact may have had a depressing effect on Catholic turnout, which appeared to have been down on previous elections. It has also been suggested that Sinn Fein's vote suffered from its support of the liberal sexual agenda, notably its championing of gay marriage. It is hard to say whether this is so, but certainly 'John The Optimist', a

Catholic economic commentator on Irish economic affairs, claims to have voted DUP over this issue. Incidentally it has been suggested that this issue may have contributed to the UUP winning a seat from the DUP; The UUP's Danny Kinahan took South Antrim from the DUP's William McCrea. This means that the UUP is back in Westminster with two seats. In the last Parliament it had none, as its sole MP Lady Sylvia Hermon became an Independent over the semi-merger with the Conservative Party, which was dropped for this Election. (She has retained her seat as an Independent Unionist.)

In West Belfast SF's Paul Maskey got 54.2% of the vote with 19,163 votes, a drop of 16.8%. *People Before Profit* came in second with 6,796 votes, 19.2%, pushing the SDLP into third place.

In Fermanagh & S. Tyrone, with the benefit of the Unionist Pact and the absence of a counter Nationalist Pact, Tom Elliott of the UUP took the seat from SF 23,608 to 23,078. The UUP majority was 530. The SDLP got 5.4% of vote; Greens 1.5%; AP 1.3%.

The SDLP vote of 2,732 would have been more than sufficient to elect Michelle. (It represented a drop of 842 on the last Election.)

Having refused to organise in Northern Ireland when the Campaign for Equal Citizenship was at its height and Catholics were demanding British politics, the Conservative Party entered Northern Ireland electoral politics as a Unionist force. In the last election, it acted with the Ulster Unionist Party. This time around it stood in its own right, but the Unionist bias was shown by the fact that the Party put up only 16 candidates. In the other two Constituencies Conservatives did not field candidates. Thus the Party informally joined the Unionist Pact by not fielding candidates in two of the Pact Constituencies most finely balanced between Unionism and Nationalism, North Belfast and Fermanagh/South Tyrone. Eleven of the Tory candidates were brought over from Britain.

The Party came last in 10 out of the 16 seats contested, and only kept its deposit in one seat (Strangford). Even former Euro-candidate Mark Brotherston failed to get over the 5% hurdle. In West Belfast the Party got just 34 votes. Its total vote in the 16 contested Constituencies was 9,055: 1.3%.

UKIP did well in this election, out-performing Traditional Unionist Voice.

Main results by Party:					
DUP	184,260	25.7%	+0.7%	8 seats, gain of 1, loss of 1	
SF	176,232	24.5%	-1%	4 seats, loss of 1	
SDLP	99,809	13.9%	-2.6%	3 seats	
UUP	114,935	16%	+0.8%	2 seats, gain of 2	
AP	61,556	8.6%	+2.2%	0 seats, loss of 1	
UKIP	18,324	2.6%	+2.6%	0 seats	
TUV	18,538	2.3%	-1.6%	0 seats	
Cons.	9,055	1.3%	+1.3%	0 seats	
Greens	6,822	1.0%	+0.4%	0 seats	
WP	2,724	0.4%	+0.4%	0 seats	
Electorate 1,296,683. Turnout 58.1%					

MPs Elected				
Name	Party	Constituency	Votes	Share
Brady, Mickey	SF	Newry and Armagh	20,488	41.1%
Campbell, Greg..	DUP	East Londonderry	14,663	42.2%
Dodds, Nigel	DUP	Belfast North	19,096	47%
Doherty, Pat	SF	West Tyrone	16,807	43.5%
Donaldson, Jeff..	DUP	Lagan Valley	19,055	47.9%
Durkan, Mark	SDLP	Foyle	17,725	47.9%
Elliott, Tom	UUP	Ferm/South Tyr.	23,608	46.4%
Hermon, Sylvia	Ind	North Down	17,689	49.2%
Kinahan, Danny	UUP	South Antrim	11,942	32.7%
Maskey, Paul	SF	Belfast West	19,163	54.2%
McDonnell, Alas.	SDLP	Belfast South	9,560	24.5%
Molloy, Francie	SF	Mid Ulster	19,935	48.7%
Paisley, Ian	DUP	North Antrim	18,107	43.2%
Ritchie, Margaret	SDLP	South Down	18,077	42.3%
Robinson, Gavin	DUP	Belfast East	19,575	49.3%
Shannon, Jim	DUP	Strangford	15,053	44.4%
Simpson, David	DUP	Upper Bann	15,430	32.7%
Wilson, Sammy	DUP	East Antrim	12,103	36.1%

## Community Divisions

Elections to the NI 'Super-Councils on 22 May 2014 produced the following community breakdown:

Belfast: 49% Nationalist, 42% Unionist, 9% Other  
 Ards & North Down: 13% Nationalist, 75% Unionist, 12% Other  
 Newry, Mourne & Down: 72% Nationalist, 24% Unionist, 4% Other  
 Antrim & Newtownabbey: 30% Nationalist, 61% Unionist, 9% Other  
 Causeway Coast & Glens: 40% Nationalist, 55% Unionist, 5% Other  
 Derry & Strabane: 72.2% Nationalist, 25.4% Unionist, 2.4% Other  
 Fermanagh & Omagh: 64% Nationalist, 33% Unionist, 3% Other  
 Mid & East Antrim: 19% Nationalist, 73% Unionist, 8% Other  
 Mid-Ulster: 64% Nationalist, 33% Unionist, 3% Other  
 Lisburn & Castlereagh: 24% Nationalist, 67% Unionist, 9% Other  
 Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon: 43% Nationalist, 52% Unionist, 5% Other

### Irish News letter, 18.5.15

#### "SDLP Presence Again Ensures Nationalist Defeat

Forty one years and three months ago (February 1974) the SDLP stood Ivan Cooper in Mid-Ulster and Denis Haughey in Fermanagh-South Tyrone in the Westminster election. Before the election both nationalist majority constituencies had been represented by Nationalist MPs (Bernadette Devlin and Frank McManus). The SDLP's intervention resulted in their displacement by anti-Sunningdale unionists (John Dunlop and Harry West). This was a really astute political move by the SDLP in the run-up to the anti-Sunningdale putsch three months later (sarcasm

intended). Again in the 1983 Westminster election the SDLP's Rosemary Flanagan ensured the defeat of another nationalist MP (Owen Carron) in Fermanagh-South Tyrone and the victory of the unionist Ken Maginnis. With the SDLP's cooperation in four subsequent elections Maginnis went on to hold the seat for 18 years—in fact as long as he wanted it.

In last week's election, again the presence of an SDLP candidate ensured nationalist defeat and unionist victory in Fermanagh-South Tyrone. The SDLP got a paltry 2,732 votes... Logic and common sense suggests that any policy pursued for more than 40 years must be giving the desired result... Perhaps the... SDLP does stand for Semi-Detached Loyalist Party. **John McQuaige**, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim."

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## THE FIANNA FÁIL LEADER

Micheál Martin gave a convincing and personable performance on the *Late Late Show* (17.4.15). It's a pity that in relation to the North he is stuck in a 1980s time warp in which the Peace Process has never happened.

Fianna Fáil is playing a difficult wicket. Its position as the party of the State, which it established in 1932, is in danger of being usurped by Fine Gael. Martin's case is that Fine Gael has moved to the right whereas Fianna Fáil is a left of centre party. He claimed that Fine Gael is only interested in satisfying the top 25% of the population and hoping that some of the remainder will carry it across the line.

The Labour Party should take note! If Fine Gael succeed in cutting the top rates of tax, Martin will be proved right. The consequences will be to halt any prospect of Labour making a recovery before the next election.

## SITESERV

Fine Gael has not been behaving as a party of State in relation to the controversy on Siteserv. The issue has been allowed rumble on for months because the Government has not been prepared to defend the actions of the State-owned IBRC (formerly *Anglo-Irish Bank* and *Irish Nationwide*).

It was left to a consultant, Walter Hobbs, to defend the deal on RTE's *Prime Time*. Originally Siteserv had numerous commercial interests. It ran into financial problems because of investments in property. A loan of 150 million was outstanding to Anglo-Irish Bank, which was not likely to be paid. 100 of the 150 million had already been written off. If the company had been liquidated, the value realised on the break-up of the assets would have been negligible, but the company had value as a going concern.

Selling a company in normal circumstances is a complicated business, but selling a company on the verge of bankruptcy is particularly fraught. If the sale is not expedited reasonably promptly, the company will cease to be a going concern and will have lost any value that could have been realised. In normal circumstances no entity will buy a company without conducting serious 'due diligence'.

This can be very expensive for the purchaser and extremely disruptive for the vendor. The vendor does not want numerous purchasers poring over its books, while the purchaser (if he is serious) does not want to go to the expense of conducting due diligence without a reasonable chance of succeeding. For this reason it is normal that, at a certain stage in the selling process, one potential purchaser is granted exclusivity.

Before granting exclusivity the vendor must decide which of the potential purchasers are serious. Sometimes a trade buyer (someone in a similar business) can offer the highest bid because there can be synergies which enable the combined business to be greater than the sum of its parts. However, in this case the vendor's business interests were diverse, which in Walter Hobbs' view made the company more suitable for a "*conglomerate buyer*".

A vendor cannot afford to take all potential bids at face value. There was a higher bid from a French company called *Altrad*, but in Hobbs' view this was designed to disrupt the bidding process because it was in competition with Siteserv. In other words *Altrad* had a vested interest in *Siteserv* going in to liquidation.

The bid from the Denis O'Brien-controlled company was initially the highest bid and consisted of a three page document, whereas the rival bids had numerous terms and conditions (whittling down the initial offer) which would have at best dragged out the process and at worst concluded with no sale.

The price paid by O'Brien resulted in 40 million being paid to IBRC and 5 million euro going to the shareholders of Siteserv. The media has focussed on the writing off by IBRC of over 100 million, but Hobbs insists that a more realistic view would be to see the deal as salvaging 40 million for the State owned bank. Many have queried the payment of 5 million to the shareholders, but the brutal facts of the matter are that they still owned the company and therefore had 'leverage'. They could have wound up the company resulting in any value left being paid to the liquidators as well as resulting in the loss of 1,500 jobs.

## THE POLITICS OF SITESERV

A remarkable feature of the controversy is the refusal of the Minister of Finance to defend the actions of IBRC. On the contrary Michael Noonan has distanced himself from the actions of the State-appointed board of IBRC, and in particular, the Chairman Alan Dukes (the ex FG

leader appointed by the previous FF-led Government). Redacted documents have been released on foot of FOI requests, which have added to public disquiet. In an outrageous statement Noonan suggested that there should be an investigation of any "criminality" and "malpractice" which might have taken place.

What is emerging is a conflict between the Department of Finance and the board of IBRC. Department officials were acting like backseat drivers, trying to second guess every decision of IBRC. In response to the released documents, Dukes accused one Department official seconded to the Board of being "*disruptive*", "*abrasive*" and "*destructive of discipline and good work practices*". He has also claimed that the former Secretary-General of the Department John Moran wanted to be appointed to the Board. He allegedly told Dukes that they could "*ready up*" decisions between themselves and avoid having so many Board meetings.

So far there is no evidence of impropriety by the IBRC board, but an outside observer might wonder whether IBRC was wound up prematurely as a result of personality conflicts with the Department of Finance rather than in the interests of the taxpayer.

## JEAN CLAUDE TRICHET

The former head of the ECB, Jean Claude Trichet gave a robust defence of his record on his recent visit to Ireland. He made the point that the ECB had pumped 140 billion in Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) to the Irish banking system (not far short of our annual GDP). It could not do this indefinitely without undermining the currency. Also, it could only do this if the banks were solvent. The only reason that the banks were solvent was because the State had agreed to underwrite their liabilities (the "*Guarantee*"). He added that Ireland had made an economic recovery because it saved the banking system. It was primarily in her interests to do so even if it was also of benefit to the rest of Europe.

On the question of the Guarantee he was a little disingenuous. He said that no pressure was exerted on the Irish Government and in any case it should have had a "*political*" Guarantee rather than a "*legal*" Guarantee. As the economist Alan Ahearne pointed out, a "*political*" Guarantee or a verbal commitment from politicians would have had no credibility. It might be sufficient for big countries, but small countries need to put their commitments down in writing.



## FIANNA FÁIL ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE

Fianna Fáil has made a mistake in advocating a "Yes" vote in the same sex marriage referendum. No doubt it feels that the tide of history is flowing in that direction and it should not stand against it. But a leading Opposition party has an obligation to represent the views of people who are opposed to Government policy. Even if it felt that it could not advocate a "No" vote, it should have at least facilitated the expression of such a sentiment. There is a substantial section of the population whose opinion has not been represented by the political parties. That cannot be good for representative democracy.

## LIBERALISM—THE NEW ORTHODOXY

The Long Fellow was part of the liberal vanguard in the 1980s. He opposed the 1983 Pro-Life amendment and supported the ending of the constitutional ban on divorce in 1986. In those far off days the orthodoxy was Catholicism. Any politician or activist who opposed the orthodoxy was taking a serious political risk. Indeed he was often subjected to hysterical abuse (especially during the 1983 referendum).

In the last thirty years the old orthodoxy has been replaced by a new liberal orthodoxy. And woe betide anyone who opposes this new orthodoxy! In the current campaign No supporters have been accused of being racist bigots and Nazis.

It could be said that the ability to hurl abuse at one's political opponents betokens political strength but, if the experience of the decline in the Catholic Orthodoxy is anything to go by, it might equally be considered a symptom of political brittleness.

## SAME SEX MARRIAGE - TAX

The Campaigners for the "No" vote on same sex marriage claimed (*RTE News*, 11.5.15) that if the referendum passed, same sex couples would marry for tax purposes. This points to an anomaly in our tax system.

Before 1982 married couples had the same tax allowances and tax bands as a single person. Married couples were considered one tax unit. So, if a woman married she would lose her tax free allowances and tax bands *even if she continued to work*. Up until the 1970s this was not considered a problem since most women left the work force on marrying. But with the ending of the civil service ban on married women working and the influence of feminism that position became unsustainable. A successful case (Murphy

V Attorney General) forced the Government to reform the system to avoid discrimination against married women who worked. The Haughey Government responded in a decisive fashion. The tax allowances and bands were doubled for married couples *even if only one partner was working*.

Arguably, this created a new anomaly: why should a married couple be entitled to double the tax allowances and tax bands, even if only one person in the relationship is working? The obvious answer is that marriage is a valuable institution, which facilitates the rearing of children. How-

ever, the tax benefits were granted to married couples *even if they did not have any children*.

An effort was made to remedy this during the Celtic Tiger era by increasing Child Benefit. The PAYE tax allowance (later credit), which applied to employees was also increased. About ten years ago Charlie McCreevy attempted to pare back the double tax band which was greeted with outrage by George Lee and conservative forces, who felt—ironically given the current debate—that the tax benefits to marriage should apply *even if the couple did not have children*.

## Some Sense About A Census

How many perished during what is called the 'Famine', a famine that occurred in a country full of food? There are a variety of answers to that question though nobody can know for certain because the dead were not counted. A recent, very grandiose publication, *"Atlas of the Great Irish Famine"* (2012), endorsed and with an introduction by the then President, Mary MacAleese, which gives it a very authoritative status, is a typical example of what is accepted nowadays by the great and good. It says: *"In terms of mortality, it is now widely accepted that over a million people perished between the years 1845-1852 and at least one million and a quarter fled the country"*.

The method for coming to these figures is by subtracting the census figures for 1851 from those of 1841 and it is used over and over again and has become axiomatic when dealing with 'the Famine'. But it implies some curious assumptions. One is that the Irish suddenly stopped breeding for six years. The relevant figure would be the size of the population in 1847.

Another assumption is that the 1841 figure is accurate. It is treated as a primary source and primary sources are regarded as sacrosanct. All historians, Irish and non-Irish, revisionist and anti-revisionist, have accepted this figure.

The figure has been questioned in this magazine. Now there appears to be a break in the consensus elsewhere on this. The current issue of *'History Ireland'* (May/June) has an article by the late Michael Moroney of the Irish National Teachers Organisation: *"The 1841 Census—do the numbers add up?"* It is probably no accident that he comes from outside the academic bubble.

Parts of his thesis coincide with points made in previous articles in this mag-

azine. These are, briefly: the Census Commissioners themselves did not believe their own figure of 8,175,124 for 1841. They realised that it was absurd to have to conclude from the information in the returns they received that the rate of population growth in Ireland declined during the previous decade, the 1830s, from the decade before that, the 1820s. The dogs in the street would have known that this was absurd. The Commissioners adjusted the figure to 9,018,799. But they insisted that the official figure remain at the 8 million + figure! And so it has. Our historians are obedient souls.

The tellers used to collect the census information were the Irish Constabulary. The population was very unlikely to be forthcoming to such officials—to put it mildly—with a lot of personal information requested by the Irish Constabulary at the time. It would be something like the co-operation that the Israeli police would expect to get from Palestinians if they set out to count them today.

Officials concerned with relief work in 1846-7 realised that the 1841 Census figures which they were using to calculate what was needed in relief were an underestimate of the current population by up to a quarter or a third.

However, Moroney does not draw some obvious conclusions from these facts. The most obvious being that, if it is conceded, as the Commissioners did, that the population in 1841 was over 9 million (and they were being as conservative as possible) and that the population was a quarter or third more by 1846-7 then the population before the Famine/Holocaust was in the region of 12 million. That blows a big hole in the idea that only a million or so perished and instead points to the uncanny figure of perhaps something



in the region 6 million for the total of deaths and emigration.

This should not be news. The London *Times* reported on 15 March 1847 that: "*The workhouses are full and only hold 100,000 while 4,000,000 are starving. The workhouses are mere charnel-houses. In one there is an average mortality of a death an hour, day and night.*"

There was no relief available for these 4 million. Starving people cannot emigrate and the situation got worse. It is inevitable therefore that these four million perished and this happened long before the blight had run its course.

Moroney also seeks to explain the rapid growth rate of the Irish population from the mid 18th century onwards as being due to better diet, less disease and fevers and more frequent and younger marriages. Better diet is questionable, as this was the period when the population had to depend

more and more on the potato. No disrespect to the marvellous tuber but the variety, quantity and quality of Irish food was renowned for centuries before this, when there were no potatoes available.

All the three factors he mentions are effects rather than causes of the population explosion. The real cause of this population explosion was the systematic breaking down of the traditional culture and way of life by the British State since Tudor times with the consequent destruction of the restraint and controls that the traditional society had to regulate such matters. It was a stable and evolving society for well over a millennium and like all such societies was not prone to irrational, self destructive behaviour.

Moroney's article is to be welcomed and it is very regrettable that he died as it was being published.

**Jack Lane**

## Captain Poulson For The National

Big John is piling up a few pounds. No, not with Paddy Power. His voice is deep, still, and sonorous. The occasional giggle. The heaving chest. His voice cadence is now more measured. He is more thoughtful. He is against all killing, especially of the RIC and DMP. There was the occasional eruption. Like during the Bolshie lock-out strikes. Red sails in the sunset. And the civilian killings during the Rising. Oh, foolish Rising. How his heart beats to that RIC rhythm. RIC, RIC, RIC. Most people killed were in civilian garb. Many had no garb. He may not have heard of the North King Street Massacre of the Innocents; or the South Staffs; or Lt. Col. Taylor. Maybe RTÉ's Joe Adenoids doesn't know either. Joe's sinus seems to be getting worse. More blocked. Terrible afflictions: adenoids and blocked sinuses.

Brutus was filmed in Arbour Hill, gazing down upon the grave etched, P.H. Pearse. He almost recoiled. His white mac grew paler. Where are the epaulettes? Mumbled something or other. He steadied up again. Holding on. Next, some shots (!) in Mount Jerome Cemetery of British graves. Four, maybe, were Irish, explained Brutus. Four others were pure, un-adulterated Brits, it seemed. All so heartfelt. All giving their young lives for our freedom. Makes me feel awful. But, then, it is awful.

I thought they might have shown the British Army War Memorial in Island-bridge (BAWMI) as it gives the 'fingers' to

the nearby Arbour Hill Memorial—a model of modesty and good taste—recently visited by Brutus. The over-the-top blowsiness of BAWMI was at once a recognition and a measure. Some 50,000 Irish dead are commemorated here. Here, too, are commemorated the thousands they killed. Not to mention those eliminated here, there and everywhere, by them, and by other Irishmen wearing the Red Coat of Britain. Wherever the Empire's sun rises and sets. Gravestone, after gravestone, after gravestone. But let us not forget all those Irish put to the sword by other Irish; the hunted, baited and brutalised by the nouveau hunters. Thomas Francis Meagher must have got it all wrong. Sixty Niners. Tell me. Let me know. When were the RIC armed? When were they unarmed? Why were they armed? Ditto for Tans and Aussies. Seems to me I have been taken for a ride all the while. Those Christian Brothers. I blame those Christian Brothers. *Stair na hÉireann; Cuid a hAon agus Cuid a Dhó (History of Ireland, Part One and Part Two)*. Codswallop! Poor Brian Ború! Blooming sentry. Asleep. Reveille! Blow Reveille. I can hear Brutus. In the distance. Blowing his own trumpet. Snort, snort, snort.

And there is Brutus, amid the Ghosts of Arbour Hill. One might put out a hand. Touch his shoulder. Say "*Imigh!*" (Go). He's gazing at the rebel graves; executed by the Brits. They'd asked for it. As Capt. Poulter said: "*It was treason. They should*

*all be shot.*" How he loved Capt. Poulter. All the Capt. Poulsons of this world. The more Capt. Poulters we had, the quicker world wars end. Good on you, Capt. Poulter.

Brutus seems taken aback at the killing of Brit soldiers: All those Sherwood Foresters. They thought they were going to France. They wind up in Dublin. Holy Cow! Was 'Cook's' closed down? They're thinking Calais and they get Kingstown. And they working on their French. They wind up in Monto. Is it any wonder how many travel agents go to the wall? And the first *Faílte* comes from De Valera. (Didn't know he worked for Bórd Fáilte.)

On the discussion TV panel was Dev's grandson, Eamon Ó Cuiv. Mary Lou also participated. She showed why SF was on the rise. Eamon seemed to display why FF was on the decline. They shared opinions during the night. There seemed to be the making of some accord. Brutus huffed and puffed. Mary Lou looked at him as if he had two heads. He spluttered and stuttered. His tongue seemed to be too thick. You can see him begin to stumble. He struck a fence. Down he came. All over the place.

Labour's acceptable face of reason Aodhán Ó Ríordáin, Minister for something or the other, seemed to admit that the Brit Royals (as they're called) were not coming to the celebrations at the GPO. Nor had they been invited. Some rebuff. He didn't seem to realise that a Prince had 'attended' at the GPO in 1916, in uniform. Armed, too (see *Irish Political Review* re Prince Alexander of Battenberg, ODC to Brit. GOC in 'A Royal Faux Pas', October 2014).

Well-known for his fence-straddling capabilities, Aodhán explained that some of his ancestors were Irish felons, whilst others had served the Brits. Quite pointedly, several times he nodded in agreement with Mary Lou, as she thumped a Rebel drum. Ó Cuiv seemed to be in alliance with Mary Lou during the debate. There seemed to be some *detente*. Maybe the makings of some coming together. (The audience seemed on the Mary Lou/Ó Cuiv side.) Ó Ríordáin seemed to be somewhat unhappy in his role as Government spokesman; he was wearing the wrong coloured shirt. Is there some *rapprochement* in the offing? Poor Brutus seemed the outsider. The Joker was not wild. But Brutus was. You could almost feel for him. But, such a nerd. I think he has blown a gasket. Spark plug blown, too.

Ó Cuiv informed us his grandfather had the British Officer Commanding, Boland's Mills area 1916, as an invited guest to the 1966 Commemoration. This was all kosher. British military have

always been welcomed when not bearing arms. As have others on suitable occasions. When they come in friendship they get respect. When their guns go silent, mutual regard is extended.

But Brutus does not seem to reckon with this. He won't be happy until the Union Jack flies above the GPO again. Things must be on his terms. He sulks in his corner. He won't be happy until the RIC are back on our streets. Cracking numb-skulls when required. God be with the days when Pearse Street was Great Brunswick Street. When Horatio looked down upon us. When Big Dan chuckled at the emancipated and emaciated. Watched over by G-Branch. The Great Unwashed. Each possessed of his own personal water-meter. Each possessed of his own suitably inscribed RIC baton.

Brutus had a final cut at *The Proclamation*. He castigated it for its reference to Central European Monarchies. This is a desperate Brutus. Grasping at straws. He has a bewildered look. I don't know who he represents. I don't believe he knows, himself. He has the look of a ship's captain who is ready to go overboard.

Mary Lou was looking at him with scorn. He has become a figure of some amusement. A stranger amongst his own. A Blueshirt isolated. Pining for his mother country. A lost soul, forever destined to search for its origins. Imagine! Once he was Taoiseach. Now a British lackey. Prepared to lead any fool back whence he thinks he came. How brutal you have become. You and your RIC diatribe.

**John Morgan, Lt. Col. (retd.)**  
Tallaght, 3.4.2015

PS

The other day I stood looking at the GPO. The Tricolour was fluttering in the breeze. Inside, things were busy. People stood about in groups. They were being briefed on family lore. The interior—as ever—is beautifully maintained by An Post, closely following its original layout. Quite unexpectedly, strange emotions ran through me. I knew I was standing where greatness had emerged. I envisaged Robert Ballagh's evocation of the great moment. I thought of Pearse's last words to the garrison before the final evacuation. I could hear the singing of *The Soldier's Song*; the last response. Next, it was Moore Street. The final meeting of the Military Council. The decision to save lives and surrender. I could feel it. I wondered, did Brutus still hate? Capt. Poulter? No, he knew better. But the Minister for Arts etc. Did she feel anything? Emptiness shouts loudest of all. A final tilt of the straw-boater. *Touché!*

## Two Lives: Gerry McKerr and Dessie O'Hagan

### GERRY MCKERR

Gerry McKerr died in April at the age of 71, at his home in Lurgan, he had been a PIRA Volunteer and was the elected O/C (Officer Commanding) of Cage 6 (the official designation), Long Kesh. It was in this capacity I knew him, as one of the minority of OIRA internees there.

There were a number of middle-aged and elderly men interned (this means imprisoned without trial) who had been in the IRA, or just Republican-inclined, or cultural nationalists, in the 1930s, '40s, or especially '50s. There were some people in their mid-teens, who were there because they were relations of the above. One, a 16 year old, was grabbed because his grandfather was on the Special Branch list which the soldiers who grabbed him were using. The man had been ten years dead. The point of this is to emphasise the fact that being O/C was a daily exercise in diplomacy. Gerry McKerr handled it dexterously and with good grace.

He appeared to be almost plump until one got up close and found he was chunky. He played football, when we were allowed to use the 'recreation' area, six months into our stay in the 'Lazy K': he was a ferociously competitive footballer—and very fast. It wasn't a surprise to find he played for his County (Armagh) at national level. He engaged in community work in Lurgan, but was never heavily 'political'.

The UK authorities, mostly by way of its servants, the BBC and 'Fleet Street', demonised both 'wings', as they put it, of the IRA. It was sardonically comic attempting to square this disinformation with a patently decent person like Gerry McKerr.

### DESSIE O'HAGAN

Dessie O'Hagan was a radically different character from Gerry McKerr, not a moral matter, despite Dessie's nickname being *'The Devil'* (not 'The Devil'). The name was due to his characteristic full black beard with white patches. Dessie O'Hagan was in Long Kesh early on. He smuggled out weekly articles for the *Irish Times*. They were well written and interesting (mainly as an insight into what gaol is like). It is not to belittle The Devil, but it wasn't that big a deal getting stuff out. The 'screws' didn't want trouble with 'politicals'. Eyes were averted when visitors came and went, CCTV was decades away, and the manufacture (in

effect) of Long Kesh memorabilia, wooden Celtic crosses, harps and decorated hankies, was underway early on. Shapeless parcels were the order of the (visiting) day, and all sorts of material was passed out and in. The Prison Officers, conscripted from the relatively cosy English prisons system, were even less inclined to irritate the internees.

It was 'on the out' where Dessie and myself found we were not on the same wavelength. I encountered BICO's 'Two Nations' idea prior to getting my collar felt. I assumed we were still in the state of flux consequent to the events of August 1969, and brought up the question of the Two {Irish} Nations. His response was to 'pull rank'—literally—he was the Adjutant General of the OIRA. He threatened violence and I assumed he was drunk. I was wrong. Some Big Sticks came to talk to the Workers' Association (for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland—a mouthful, but explicit): they were not pleased to see me there. I wasn't a person of any great consequence but the similarity between mine and Malachy McGurran's name was striking. The *Irish News* spelt Malachy's name 'McGouran' until, presumably, he objected.

Despite all this, I didn't leave the Republican Clubs—Sinn Féin's alias in Northern Ireland—after Bill Craig's use of the Special Powers Act to dissolve the party. He was dependent on Special Branch, who presumably wanted to keep their cushy, office-bound, number. Telling the Home Affairs Minister the IRA was disarming, and agitating about housing and jobs, would have been a path back to patrolling the streets.

I stayed on, under a cloud, and being the delegate from the Terence Perry Republican Club to the Comhairle Ceantair / District Executive, I annoyed The Devil, and others, on a weekly basis. I wasn't particularly aware of it, as the average age of members of the 'Terry Perry' was probably about 19. And we were 'the gunman's club'—quite why the latter was a criticism when the OIRA was still at war, the Abstract Entity only knows. I had to make myself heard, the Terry Perry wasn't made up of idiots, some were quite politically sharp. O'Hagan made sure he dominated the CC—when a former member of People's Democracy turned up he was simply expelled from the CC—

and the organisation—on the instant. This happened after I was replaced. The James Connolly Club (New Lodge, north Belfast) was told it could be expelled *in toto*, it turned itself into a PSF cumann..

O'Hagan was primarily responsible for turning a (potential) mass-party into a sect. He seemed impervious to argument, and boasted in the late 1970s about his 'legally held' hardware. The Sticky drinking club in the Market area barred him for firing out into the streets when he wandered in and demanded whiskey. The 1974 'split' and setting-up of what became the IRSP/INLA ('Erps': Irish Republican Socialist Party / Irish National Liberation Army,) led to the further dominance of O'Hagan, and that meant a confrontational attitude to the 'Erps'. The Erps in Belfast took over whole areas, like Divis Flats, which meant that actual confrontation was not that easy.

Part of the reason for the breakaway, in the North anyway, was the OIRA ceasefire, which seemed peculiar in a situation where the British Army, and the RUC, had been let off the leash. They were terrorising the Nationalist / Catholic community and the PIRA came to be perceived as not so much a defensive force for Catholics as being the people who could put manners on the 'Security Forces', as well as conduct an offensive war.

The Republican Cubs / WPI became a top-down Marxist (Moscow-oriented) party, which meant that much of its publicity was rendered incomprehensible to most people. The public felt that there was no special reason why becoming increasingly a communist party led to something like pacifism, a position compounded with a servile attitude to the Stormont and British authorities. The servility was well rewarded in the building of premises for every—surviving—Club. They were thrown open to the public, selling cheap booze, some of it stolen by the now 'non-existent' OIRA. The OIRA was used to intimidate any objectors to what the WPI was doing. A fair amount of the objections were to late night drinking and disorder in these clubs.

O'Hagan was told not to come to Belfast too often. He was fictively 'exiled' to Downpatrick, where a lot of Belfast stickies had been relocated. Their arrogant and aggressive behaviour did not endear them in the town. Dessie O'Hagan simply refused to rein them in, and had to withstand the backlash against them, which got worse when they were re-relocated back to new estates in The Market and Short Strand. He popped up on BBC Radio Ulster essentially talking nonsense,

but it was a Taig talking anti-Provi nonsense so it was acceptable—until Sinn Féin became the political force the WPI had never managed.

The last twenty years of O'Hagan's life must have been very odd, he was a big fish in a decreasingly small pond. He was clearly treated as a joke in the euphemised OIRA, and was told not to make statements on behalf of the WPI, which was diminish-

ing to vanishing point.

O'Hagan was the main author of these misfortunes. If he, and the WPI had spent less time in Moscow and Pyongyang and more on the ground in Belfast and Derry, the Stickies might not be the political nullity they are at present. They are a redundant party because the CPI (Communist Party of Ireland) is already in place and looks, comparatively, vigorous.

Seán McGouran

## Plugging The Gaps In A British Army Hero's Obituary: *Jack Harte (1920-2015)—A Later Larkinite Anti-Imperialist*

*"Tánaiste leads tributes following death of Labour Party senator Jack Harte"* was the heading in the *Irish Times* on March 9th, with the subheading: *"Tireless advocate for working people"*. The report continued:

"Tánaiste and Labour Party leader Joan Burton has led tributes to former Labour senator Jack Harte, who has died. Mr Harte was a former trade union official who entered politics when he was elected to the 12th Seanad in 1973. He served in the upper house for seven terms, retiring in 1992. Ms Burton said Mr Harte, who was also his party's national organiser, was a committed campaigner for social justice and an energetic public representative for two decades. She noted that he had led a very full life, serving with distinction as a member of the British army in Malta and the Middle East during the second World War. She said she was 'lucky enough to know Jack well and had the privilege to count him among my friends'. Ms Burton also said her thoughts were 'first and foremost' with his family."

This was a genuine tribute to a good friend, for I was in the company of Joan Burton on the occasion of the 2007 launch of Jack's memoirs, and the warmth of that friendship was evident. I too was glad to count Jack among my own friends. But there was one war which the Tánaiste chose to skip over, although Jack's own memoirs met it head-on. The SIPTU obituary in the March issue of *Liberty* did not avoid the "P" word, which would have been difficult, given how much "Liberty" is to the fore in Palestinian solidarity. But it mentioned it in a matter-of-fact non-judgmental way, which focused on how fine a Union man he became after his Second World War experiences. Simply entitled *"Union Man"*, it is worth quoting in its own right:

"JOHN (JACK) HARTE, who died on March 8th 2015, aged 94, was an active member of the union for most of his life.

Together with Jack Carruthers and Paddy Cardiff, he played a leading role in organising the Guinness workforce into the then Workers' Union of Ireland (now part of SIPTU) during the immediate post-war years. He was to remain a prominent figure in the wider union for more than 60 years. In 1973 he was elected to the Seanad and retained his seat for seven consecutive terms until he retired in 1992. He also served as National Organiser of the Labour Party, being particularly identified with party leader and trade unionist, Frank Cluskey."

"Born to a family of 11 in Dublin's north inner city in the turbulent year of 1920, Harte went on to live a challenging life. He always said timing was not his best attribute. At 16 he stowed away on the mailboat to Britain, lied about his age and joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers. He was posted to Malta and later Palestine."

"When the Second World War broke out his unit was deployed in the eastern Mediterranean. He was selected for the Special Boat Service running commando raids along the Greek and Italian coasts supplying partisans and agents. Later he was awarded the George Cross in recognition of his heroism in Malta. In 1943 he was captured by the Germans in the Dodecanese Islands. He was forced to march a long winter journey to Stalag 357, a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany, where he endured starvation and serious malnutrition until his release at the end of the war."

"The suffering endured during the war resulted in an great yearning across Europe for a new order of things and a fairer, more egalitarian world. Harte shared in this, resulting in his life-long commitment to the trade union and labour movement."

The gaps in that obituary, nonetheless, need to be filled in, not least because of the bizarre approach to the Second World War adopted by the *Irish Times* in its obituary of Jack Harte, entitled *"Labour Party stalwart, trade unionist and war hero"*, in its issue of April 11th:

"His father, Thomas, served in the British army during the first World War, and the themes of military service and trade union activism were to be key pillars of his son's life... He himself joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers in 1936 in Liverpool, after stowing away on the mailboat 'Leinster' and lying about his age. From 1937 to 1943, in the Middle East, North Africa and Greece, he saw service in some of the toughest fighting of the second World War."

So, according to this *"Irish Times"* obituary, the *"second World War"* commenced in 1937! And in some place *"in the Middle East"*, although the *"P"* word is carefully avoided! This was a problem I anticipated about Jack Harte's 'obituary' more than three years before his passing. In the May 2012 issue of *Irish Political Review*, as but one component of an article on anti-fascist volunteers and some other soldiers, I was determined to pay tribute to Jack himself for setting the record straight, and for the integrity of his account. I wrote how I personally had known only three Irishmen, and knew of a mere six others, where anti-fascist ardour had definitely driven them to enlist in the British armed forces at a certain stage of the Second World War. But, then, all nine of those Irish volunteers had been Communists. Most Irish World War Two veterans that I knew personally had joined up out of a family tradition of British Army enlistment, or for economic reasons, or a mixture of both. That was so in the case of Jack Harte. A retired Workers' Union of Ireland official and a protégé of Young Jim Larkin, Jack served as Chairman of the Big Jim Larkin Commemoration Committee and as a Labour Party Senator for almost two decades, following his first election to the Seanad in 1973. As a Second World War veteran, Jack still teamed up with old comrades-in-arms from the British Army and wore his poppy each November to commemorate fallen friends. Jack's father had served in the British Army during the First World War, but during the Second World War it was in his own National Army, that of an independent Ireland struggling to defend its neutrality against all comers, where the father next chose to serve. Jack's war service, however, was in the British Army. But not even a speck of anti-fascist consciousness lay behind his enlistment in that army, made patently evident from his 2007 memoirs, *"To The Limits Of Endurance: One Irishman's War"*.

Jack's motivation had been a mixture of economic incentives and a teenager's thirst for adventure. So, at the age of 17, he was to be blooded in a squalid imperialist war.

No, not against Germany, for this was the phase of Britain's *"peace in our time"* with Nazi Germany, at a time when any such peace did not, however, reign supreme within the British Empire itself.

There is a Fenian ballad attributed to Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, the centenary of whose death occurs this June 29th. The Fenian in question acquired his anti-imperialist consciousness through first serving that Imperialism in the British Army into which Famine, eviction and workhouse poverty had compelled him to enlist:

"I thought to be a pauper was the greatest human curse,

But fighting in a robber's cause, I felt it ten times worse.

I helped to plunder and enslave those tribes of India's sons,

And we spent many a sultry day blowing sepoy from our guns."

Jack Harte was no Rossa Fenian, but he did write candidly as follows of the victims of the particular British imperialist war that he had been sent to wage:

"On 27 September 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and other international leaders met with Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, and signed an agreement which, Chamberlain claimed, secured peace with honour. The following day, the Nazi jackboot stamped itself all over Czechoslovakia... Our orders were to leave for Palestine on 10 October 1938... As far as I could see, our only purpose in Palestine was to put down the insurrection by the Palestinian Arabs. I knew nothing of the history or geography of the Middle East, or the reasons behind the rebellion, and it seemed that none of my fellow soldiers were any wiser. As a soldier, I didn't need to know: I had to follow orders" (pp 23-4).

That classical 'explanation' of imperialist war crimes! And it was what—as a 17 year old boy soldier—he had been required to do in suppressing the Palestinian Arab revolt, that was to leave Harte with a lasting sense of shame:

"Although the insurrectionists were referred to as 'bandits' by our officers, it was stressed that we were not to assume that we were dealing with trigger-happy hooligans. They were determined to destroy anything that stood between them and independence for Palestine. Although I knew little about the background to their fight, to me it felt not unlike the situation back home, where for hundreds of years rebels had been fighting for their independence. I couldn't say I was pursuing a noble cause: orders had to be obeyed, no more, no less... Back in the billets, and weary from acting as target practice for the snipers, many men's

inclinations bordered on the Lynch Law philosophy—whereby summary justice, without the niceties of a fair trial, is the order of the day. Orders which led to us riding roughshod in the relentless pursuit and punishment of the so-called 'rebels', and those who were giving them shelter, resulted in some homes being demolished or burnt down, with little thought as to where the poor people were to find shelter... To my mind, our actions were high-handed and cruel... Back at our billets, the talk was of what would happen to these prisoners after we had handed them over to the local police, who transferred them to the medieval prison in Acre. Although we never had occasion to visit the prison, I later learned something of the horrendous conditions there at the time. With up to forty men to a cell, there was little room to move—never mind sleep. A bucket served as a communal toilet, which overflowed and stank in the hot fetid jail. Feeding time was like a zoo, when a guard came around with a large steaming cauldron of watery soup, into which each prisoner was 'allowed' to put his bare hand to extract a small piece of meat to supplement his soup. Many were scalded and didn't try it again, preferring to go hungry" (pp 28-33).

"Many years later, when I was a senator, I made the journey to Beirut together with a number of TDs from Dáil Éireann. While we were there, we met with Yasser Arafat, the then Palestinian leader, who was in hiding, wanted by the Israelis. He made us very welcome. As we talked, I told him of the time I had spent in Palestine during the Insurrection, and we chatted about it for a while. Eventually he said to me with a twinkle in his eye: 'You were probably shooting at my father.' With an even bigger twinkle in my eye, I replied: 'Well, I must have missed, or you wouldn't be here, so look what I've done for Palestine!' Arafat's slow smile quickly turned into a loud belly laugh, as the significance of my remark hit home. (The fact that his father had Egyptian origins was neither here nor there.) We remained friends and some years later, while we were at dinner in Jury's Hotel in Dublin, he made a point of telling my friends about the encounter, and didn't miss the opportunity of 'ribbing' me about how my 'bad aim' had helped the cause of Palestine" (pp 36-7).

The integrity of Jack Harte's position demands that it be fully recorded. Jack remained a PLO supporter ever since, and some years ago he passed on to me his collection of PLO publications. All the more reason for me to take that pre-emptive action three years ago, lest Eoghan Harris's *Sunday Independent* column, or its John-Paul McCarthy reflection, might seek to misrepresent him as one of *"Ireland's British Army heroes"* who had set out—not just in 1941, not just in 1939, but in 1938—to *"fight against fascism"*. But

where? In Palestine! As it happens, it is the *Irish Times* that has, in fact, since perpetrated that particular confidence trick. Jack went on to relate his January 1939 departure from that squalid Imperialist posting on behalf of perfidious Albion in Palestine.

But the outbreak of World War Two in September 1939 was not at all recorded in his memoirs. The "*phony war*" had no practical significance for him. His first mention of the World War was of the German siege of Malta commencing in June 1940, and of how he and his mates came under attack from Stuka aircraft in January 1941. His courageous exploits in Greece in November 1943 were rightly recorded in great detail, but even at that stage of the War there was nothing to indicate that he had yet developed any anti-fascist political perspective. The military outcome for Jack himself on the Greek island of Leros was summed up by the bitterly-worded chapter heading "FRIENDLY FIRE AND LOUSY LEADERS COST US LIFE AND LIBERTY".

The cost of such bad strategy on the part of the British Army's top brass was indeed high. Last July, I visited the British military cemetery on Leros, where 127 of Jack's fallen comrades-in-arms lie buried, sixteen of them from various and different backgrounds in Ireland, including Lt. Hugh Gore-Booth of Sligo's Lissadell House, a nephew of Constance Markievicz. Almost without exception, the inscriptions on these British Army headstones had only the standard variations to be found in such cemeteries. But there was one exception that caught my eye and particularly moved me, where family grief had insisted on inscribing a heartfelt Irish prayer. The headstone of Patrick Joseph Phelan, from Templemore, County Tipperary, stood apart with the simple Catholic invocation: "*Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on his soul*".

It was through what he was to observe as a prisoner-of-war, after being moved to Germany itself, that saw the development of an anti-fascist consciousness in Jack. His profound humanity was evident in the following account of the Nazi racist treatment of Red Army prisoners:

"It was immediately clear that the Russians, who made up the largest group, were being badly treated—they were so stick-thin and haggard that they almost made the other prisoners look healthy. Although the nationalities were segregated into different compounds, we ventured close to the Russian compound, and were surprised that the guards made

no attempt to stop us. We were shocked at the Russians' emaciated state. The camp medical staff, who had lost no time in cleaning us up, showed little concern for the poor Russians. After de-lousing and a wonderful shower—despite the fact that it was mid-December and temperatures were well below freezing—we settled into the wooden huts, with their triple-decked, rough-timbered bunks. It was sheer luxury after the last few weeks" (p 183).

"Turning the corner, I heard grunts and groans coming from three Russian POWs. They were struggling to keep their feet in the muddy slime as they pulled a high-wheeled wagon over the toffee-like ground. The wagon was overflowing with the contents of the cesspit, which had been pumped out of it. The men looked exhausted and forlorn, their long, filthy coats hanging off their starved frames, and the bottoms of their coats dragging along the mud- and cess-stained ground. Their fur caps, worn on the Russian front, had seen better days, and offered little protection against the elements. Their precious mess tins were tied to their waists, or around their necks, with a piece of string. Despite all the horrors I'd witnessed in this terrible war, I was shocked by their plight. I was furious to think that they could be treated like dogs by the Germans because their government had not signed up to the Geneva Convention. My gestures, an attempt at commiseration and support, were met by angry shouts from their German guard, who was well toggled out in waterproof clothing. There was nothing I could do to help them. Drowned to the skin, I made my way back to what I now saw as the relative comfort of our prison hut. I later learned that the Russians looked on this job as a reasonably cushy one, given some of the other work they were expected to do!" (p 201).

I have no doubt that Jack would, therefore, have greatly appreciated the following report in the *Financial Times* this May 21st:

"Germany is planning to pay €10m in compensation to former Soviet prisoners of war, signalling that present-day tension with Moscow has not damped its determination to atone for the second world war. The proposed payment recognises Moscow's colossal contribution to Hitler's defeat, and comes just days after ceremonies marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the second world war saw German leaders pay particular attention to the Soviet dead. Chancellor Angela Merkel flew to Moscow and foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited Stalingrad, scene of the bloodiest battle between German and Red Army troops... Germany is also acknowledging that the abuse of Soviet prisoners-of-war is perhaps the least well-known of the Nazis' crimes. During a visit to a Soviet war cemetery

this month, German President Joachim Gauck said that about half the 5.3m Soviet prisoners in German hands died, compared with 03.5 per cent of British POWs. 'They succumbed miserably to disease, they starved to death, they were murdered', he said. 'Unlike in the west, the war in the east was planned from the very start by the Nazi regime as an ideological war, a war of extermination and eradication.' Mr Gauck said that the mass murder of 6m Jews in the Holocaust had overlain other crimes. But he argued that these atrocities too must be seen for what they were. 'Just as the Jews, the Sinti and Roma were selected, humiliated and murdered, as were the handicapped and homosexuals, so too were the peoples of eastern Europe defamed as inferior', said the German president, during a ceremony at the Stalag 326 Senne camp, where about 300,000 Soviet prisoners were held between 1941-45, and 65,000 died. Nazi mistreatment of Soviet prisoners began shortly after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, when the German military corralled tens of thousands of captives in bare fields behind barbed wire in the open air. Others were shipped to camps in Germany where their conditions were far removed from those of British and other western prisoners-of-war. Historians have estimated that 57 per cent of Soviet prisoners died in German captivity. Even Germans imprisoned in the war-ravaged Soviet Union fared better, with only 36 per cent dying."

Jack Harte's end-of-war experiences made an anti-fascist out of him. And he also became an anti-Imperialist. In August 2006, in a series of programmes on RTÉ TV entitled "War Stories", Jack Harte was interviewed by Cathal O'Shannon. Jack told me how he had gone on to draw on his experiences of war in order to denounce the British and American war in Iraq, but that all of that section in the O'Shannon interview had been deleted from the programme when it came to be broadcast. And Jack also came to a realisation that, when he had been fighting for British Imperialism in Palestine in 1938, during that very same year there had in fact been an anti-fascist war waged in Spain by those whom, during World War Two itself, the US and UK authorities would seek to smear as "*premature*" anti-fascists. In the *Sunday Independent* on 11th February 2007, Eoghan Harris was to denounce a commemoration of the Spanish Anti-Fascist War that I had organised:

"Let me remind O'Riordan of the widely circulated oration which he gave at a memorial to Frank Ryan in Glasnevin Cemetery on October 25, 2005, in the course of which ... he paid tribute to Mrs Budge Mulcahy Clissmann {whose death would occur on March 20, 2012—MO'R}, whom {sic}, he told us, had



'attended to that final act upon Frank's death with the same loving care she had shown him in life, and who is present today in memory of that friendship'... Budge Clissmann is the widow of Helmut Clissmann who featured in Cathal O' Shannon's programme ('Ireland's Hidden Nazis') as a Nazi intelligence agent."

Needless to say, my subsequent reply was denied publication in the *Sunday Independent* by the Harris triangle, including my following point of information:

"Eoghan's account omitted to record some other words of welcome that I had voiced: 'We also have a Second World War veteran present, former Senator Jack Harte who, serving in the British army, fought against the Nazis in Greece. He subsequently became their prisoner-of-war... He is here today in order to pay his respects to the memory of Frank Ryan.'"

Indeed, Jack Harte was particularly pleased when I presented him with the December 2005 issue of *Irish Political Review*, with its front page photograph of him attending that Frank Ryan commemoration, taken by the late Conor Lynch, and showing Jack seated in front of the grave of Kevin Barry, alongside Spanish Anti-Fascist War veteran Jack James Larkin Jones.

I was privileged to attend the funeral of my union comrade and friend Jack Harte—both the Requiem Mass in St. Nicholas of Myra Church and the cremation service in Mount Jerome cemetery. Apart from the display of the medals for bravery that Jack had so courageously earned, there was no other military aspect to the funeral of that war hero. An Irish harp provided the instrumental music at the Mass, where an oration by SIPTU General President Jack O'Connor underscored the pragmatic socialism that Harte had acquired from his mentor Young Jim Larkin, with the older Jack advising the younger: "*You can decide either to make noise or make a difference!*"

At Mount Jerome, three songs were played, and we were told that the ceremony had been designed in advance by Jack himself. There was indeed one song from World War Two. But it was one totally devoid of any aspect of militarism—a recording of Vera Lynn singing "*We'll Meet Again*". The entrance procession featured a recording of Luke Kelly singing the anti-militarist Derry anthem by Phil Coulter, "*The Town I Loved So Well*". But, most noteworthy of all, was the song chosen by Jack for the committal of his remains for cremation: Paddy Reilly's recording of Pete St. John's unofficial footballing Irish anthem, "*The Fields of Athenry*", with those anti-imperialist lines:

By a lonely prison wall,  
I heard a young girl calling:  
'Michael they have taken you away,  
For you stole Trevelyn's corn  
So the young might see the morn,  
Now a prison ship lies waiting in the bay.'

By a lonely prison wall  
I heard a young man calling:  
'Nothing matters, Mary, when you're free.  
Against the Famine and the Crown,  
I rebelled, they cut me down  
Now you must raise our child with dignity.'

I salute the memory of my comrade and friend Jack Harte. **Manus O'Riordan**



**Jack Harte with Jack Jones, in front of the graves of Kevin Barry, Roger Casement and other Irish Republicans, October 2005**  
Photographer: Conor Lynch

## Results Of Referendums

Two Constitutional Referendums were held on Friday 22nd May: on Same Sex Marriage Referendum and the age of Presidential candidates.

The following wording was carried, adding a new subsection 4 to Article 41, *The Family*:

"Marriage may be contracted in accordance with law by two persons without distinction as to their sex".

Yes	1,201,607	62.07%
No	734,300	37.93%

Valid votes:	1,935,907	99.29%
Invalid votes	13,818	0.71%

Total votes: 1,949,725. Turnout: 60.52%  
Electorate 3,221,681

The following amendment to Article 12.4.1 was rejected:

"Every citizen who has reached the age of 21 years of age is eligible for election to the office of President".

Accordingly the present provision that a candidate must be over 35 years of age remains.

Yes	520,898	26.94%
No	1,412,602	73.06%

Valid votes:	1,933,500	99.18%
Invalid votes	15,938,	0.82%

Total votes 1,949,438. Turnout 60.51%  
Electorate 3,221,681

## 'John Bowman' and the WA

In last month's *Irish Political Review* we published a picture of activists from the *Workers' Association for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland* after they had been charged with chaining themselves to the railings of the Department of External Affairs. One of the defendants was listed as *John Bowman*, repeating the newspaper report. However, we are informed that 'John Bowman' is not his name. If anyone can give us the correct name, we will publish it.

In fact, some of the information in the newspaper report is inaccurate. Probably some of the people concerned gave wrong names and/or addresses.

## Seven Easter 1916 Widows

There are numerous photographs from the period. The author says it has taken her twenty years, on and off, to get this book together. There are plenty of notes, a bibliography and a substantial index.

People who like their legendary figures in marble or bronze, denoting they have achieved something great and are now mute about the inner workings of their lives and will not be sinning in the future, will find some difficulty with one or two founders of the Irish nation. This book is very well researched and is documentary-like and backs up what it reveals with letters and notes from various archives. I was at first cautious as there are so many biographies being written today where imagination takes precedence over facts that might seem too dull. The legend must not be seen desperately trying to make a living for his family while working at some dull and dreadful job like carting human excrement for disposal as James Connolly had to do at one point in his life, much like what his father did.

The seven widows each have a chapter to themselves under the headings:

Kathleen and Tom: Kathleen Daly and Tom Clarke

Maud and John: Maude Gonne and John MacBride

Lillie and James: Lillie Reynolds and James Connolly

Fanny and Edward: Fanny O'Brennan and Edward Kent (Eamonn Ceannt)

Agnes and Michael: Agnes Hickey and Michael Mallin

Grace and Joe: Grace Eveleen Gifford and Joseph Plunkett

Muriel and Thomas: Muriel Gifford and Thomas Stanislaus MacDonagh

They come from various social backgrounds and the book weaves them all into one entity in the end that lays the foundations of the Irish Nation. They are shown at their most vulnerable, some as lovelorn, sending almost cringing love letters to their future spouses and other seemingly reluctant to bond in any way as their work at trade unionising or the furthering of Irish culture takes up so much of their time.

Further chapters are headed:

The Rising

Not Like This

Widow's Weeds

Beginning Again

Mournful Mothers  
Work For Freedom—  
The War of Independence  
A divided People  
Civil War  
Aftermath.

This book is such a mine of information, with so many interesting facts that it is difficult to know where to begin and how much of it to put into a review. But generally a pattern appears that makes the 1913 lock-out and the brutality of the RIC who cause 50 deaths, the '16 Rising, with the anti-WW1 protest, mingling with a resurgence of Irish culture in the theatre, music and poetry, into one grand cry for freedom. The terrible agony is that here are people leading what is a normal life, with wives and children, and the everyday worry of making enough money to keep them while planning the Easter Rising which will leave them, the main participants, dead.

Also tragic are those with a minor role who happened to relatives of the main players, like for example Willie Pearse, brother of P.H., who also faced the firing squad. It all comes together as one entity with the '16 Rising, not as a separate action but as just part of the whole, leading into what is sometimes called the *civil war* with Free State soldiers raiding the homes of some of the widows of the '16 Rising, doing not even what the Black and Tans did, when they destroy artefacts to do with the Rising and in one case defacing a photo of Joseph Plunkett, a man of permanent ill-health, who ended in a freezing cell, awaiting British bullets. You get a feeling that the descendants of these elements who did this are still with us to this day. If you think the '16 Rising shouldn't have happened, then, nor should the 1913 Lockout have happened or the resurgence in Irish culture.

You also get the sense the Northern Catholics are to be abandoned long before that signing away of them in London. Later in the early months of 1922 there was the problem, as the author says:

"The immediate and ongoing problem of nationalists who had made their way South."

"Maud witnessed women half demented and children sick with terror. She went to Arthur Griffith seeking help,

but none was forthcoming as Griffith blamed the IRA for encouraging the refugees to come to Dublin. He sent Maud to Paris to publicise the formation of the Irish Free State. While she was there she also highlighted the plight of the victims from the North despite it being against Irish Free State policy."

These people were fleeing from anti-Catholic pogroms. Maude Gonne, who ran the White Cross charity for victims of the struggle, distributes funds on a 32-county basis. But generally everything points South, possibly because of the complications in the North with its dual nationality.

The North is mentioned briefly as James Connolly is organising Trade Unionism up there and when Lillie goes there to live. Connolly isn't feeling too comfortable up there but the reason why is not gone into by him, though it isn't hard to guess with his background. Lillie is living among the Catholics of the Falls Road, but also feeling uncomfortable. Still, James wanted one of his sons to be an apprentice engineer in Belfast. I think he realised that the heavy industry then in Belfast was the place to learn a trade. Unfortunately I still can't see the Northern Protestant of today following his teachings. In fact a memorial to him in Cowgate, Edinburgh—a once Irish ghetto where he was born—is placed high above and out of reach of anti-Connolly clubbers and Ranger supporters staggering home in the wee hours.

James Connolly has to be especially applauded for including so many women into his scheme of things. The new Irish Government was not so considerate and the females elected had to shout to make themselves heard against the solid barrier of males who always seemed to be on the defensive against the women. Even De Valera, in a later Government, had very few females with any authority in his Government.

It should also be remembered that all the women in the second Dáil chose the Anti-Treaty side and lost their seats including Kathleen, the wife of Joseph Clarke. But in 1939 she became the first female mayor of Dublin.

"Her first action was to remove the Royal portraits from the Mansion House, including one of Queen Victoria saying: 'I felt that I could not sleep in the house until she was out of it.'"

She also refused to wear the Mayor's chain, as it had been presented to the city by William of Orange."

In the end the sole survivor of the seven widows is Kathleen, widow of Tom Clarke: she lives long enough to learn of



Internment in Northern Ireland in August 1971 and also learns of Bloody Sunday in Derry in 30th January, 1972. Her response:

"She was sad but not surprised by this new Bloody Sunday."

She died on the 29th of September, 1972 at the age of 94, in Liverpool. She was given a State funeral in the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, after being widowed for 53 years. All in all a book sympathetic to the Irish struggle for freedom that must put the revising academics to shame.

Wilson John Haire  
23 February, 2015

## BEFORE WAR BECAME PEACE

How simple life seemed  
one time  
there was an answer  
to everything  
on the grapevine  
always something on the wing  
for example  
how many lives  
should be lost  
how many deaths  
would be ample  
to save  
a work of art  
what can be the cost  
without breaking hearts  
as many as you like  
of bourgeois  
your turn for  
the abattoir

## WHEN WAR BECAME PEACE

She is the curator of an American museum  
and it may seem  
urbane  
for  
Palmyra  
is on her mind  
those ancient ruins  
in Syria  
she asks her  
airforce  
not to bomb  
should ISIS  
with all its  
vices  
captures  
the UNESCO World  
Heritage site  
the might  
the wellspring of  
global

civilisation  
the 2nd millennium BC  
sensation  
though the ruins of people  
seem ignoble

## AFTER WAR BECAME PEACE

Oh for the joys of war  
and better still  
the celebrations that  
occur  
after the kill  
remember Dunkirk  
and that berk  
Hitler  
well  
we sat upon the beach  
a quarter million  
of us  
beside the drink  
(I do like to be  
beside the seaside)  
then some coward said

to fight on  
was suicide  
I fought the sun  
and the waves  
but not the Hun  
he stayed outside  
the town  
until uncle came  
in his motorboat  
then this coward  
said again  
Hitler had us  
by the throat  
then he let go  
soon  
we would sue  
for peace  
sorry  
here comes uncle  
sat here so long  
I've got carbuncles  
you brought my niece  
no leave the artillery  
show some  
chivalry.

Wilson John Haire  
21 May 2015

**Book Review:** A nation and not a rabble—the Irish Revolution 1913-23, *Diarmaid Ferriter*.

## Confused Thinking From Ferriter!

One way of judging a book on this period of Irish history in the 20th century is to read what it says about two pivotal events—the 1918 Election and the Articles of Agreement which purported to be a Treaty. There should, by the way, be a much bigger centenary commemoration of the 1918 Election than there will be on the Rising. If the Rising had not been endorsed by that election, and endorsed overwhelmingly, then the Rising would have been another failure. It was the reaction of the Mother of Parliaments to that Election which determined that there was a war.

I wonder how many academic books are planned for that centenary event. It does not seem to have been included in the decade of commemorations, and our academics will no doubt do their duty by not including it either in their 'studies'. But it is about time there was at least one book on it! One that might explain why Westminster, with the most democratic Parliament Britain ever elected, decided to ignore that Election result in Ireland and did everything possible to suppress what the elected representatives did in the carrying out of their mandate—to set up an independent Government.

Ferriter's book is true to form. It passes over the 1918 Election result and the reaction to it as just another event. It goes on immediately to quote Dan Keating on his joining the IRA and his war involvement: "*It was the thing to do at the time—there was a wave and you got caught up in it*". Ferriter would have you believe that going to war was apparently a sort of life style choice for Dan and his comrades. And then we are told that—

"The war evolved from being one characterised by attacks on the RIC to being a war waged against British troops and 'it remains very unclear as to whether this was the kind of war that people voted for at the general election of December 1918, indeed whether they had voted for any kind of war at all'...".

The people did *not* vote for war of any kind—they voted for Independence. That basic fact seems to have escaped the Professor.

We are given the usual story about Soloheadbeg, giving the impression that the Irish caused the War of Independence. The author has read all the recent material that has been made available but, while he indulges in a lot of tittle tattle from that material, the wood is nowhere to be seen

for the trees. We are presented with a one-sided War that the Irish escalated for no obvious reason.

Then we come to the so called 'Treaty':

"And so, after signing, the Irish cabinet split and the debate began; was this stepping stone to further freedom or a betrayal of Republican ideals? Perhaps it was both, but what was focused on during the debates was the oath of allegiance and the right of the delegates to sign."

This is a transparent piece of nonsense. The Republic was signed away in defiance

of a Cabinet agreement not to do so. This issues involved were fully debated *before* the signing and it was a clear stepping stone backwards to Dominion status from an existing democratically established Republic—and that was why the oath was insisted on and why it was therefore a crucial issue.

Again it is amazing that the professor does not seem able to see these basic facts. Don't waste your time or money on this book. It is ráiméis\*.

**Jack Lane**

\* Rubbish. Ed.

dismissive: 'There was no lesson to be learned, it was all crazy'..."

But Mountbatten belonged to Churchill's elite. And that elite understood that myth played a more important part in Britain's contribution to the War which it started than hard military fact. After May 1940 Germany could only be defeated by Russia, and Churchill's great object was to spread the War until Russia was brought into it. Britain's great object was to maintain its naval dominance of the world so that it could continue living off it. On land, it consisted of public schoolboy heroics of various kinds, and Mountbatten figured largely in these, being the hero of a wartime film made about him by Noel Coward, *In Which We Serve*.

After the War he became Viceroy of India.

In the 1914 War, India was still disrupted by the effect of the great terror by which national resistance of 1857, the 'Indian Mutiny', was scotched. Indians were drafted into the British war effort in great numbers. Their reward was the Amritsar Massacre. A substantial degree of national cohesion was regained by 1939. The Congress Party had been formed. It offered to co-operate with Britain in exchange for independence, and declared itself neutral when the offer was refused.

And one of the Indian leaders, Subhas Chandra Bose, raised an Army and collaborated with Japan, which had proclaimed the slogan *Asia for the Asians*.

The Japanese assault on the British Empire, in response to British backing of an American ultimatum with which Japan could not comply and survive, undermined the British position in Asia, and marked the beginning of effective Asian nationalism.

The Japanese proclamation of the rights of Asians has been subjected to British hyper-criticism, but it was nowhere near as bogus as the British declaration of the rights of Arab nationality in 1916—or the raising of scores of thousands of Irish recruits under the slogan of Democracy and the Self-Determination of Small Nations.

Britain, using its Naval dominance and its diplomatic expertise brought about the Second World War, but it lacked the will to fight it as it had fought its 1914 World War. Its conduct of the War was catastrophic in the extreme—catastrophic for others. It fought it on the margins, always refusing a settlement which might have limited the War, and always driving it to catastrophe. And this course of action, motivated by Imperial sentiment, had the effect of shredding substantive Imperial will.

## Lord Mountbatten —generous with the lives of others

The late Lord Mountbatten has been in the news again recently. Who was he?

According to Tory historian Andrew Roberts, he was a reckless soldier who held a high command due to his upper class family connections, and a bungling Imperial administrator. In the first capacity he was responsible for the futile Dieppe Raid of 1942, in which three-quarters of the raiding forces were killed or captured. In the second capacity he was responsible for the chaotic Partition of India, in which hundreds of thousands died.

We give below some extracts from Chapter 2 of Robert's *Eminent Churchillians*, called *Lord Mountbatten And The Perils Of Adrenalin*:

"Mountbatten's task at Combined Operations was to singe the Fuhrer's moustache, with a series of operations to harry North-Western Europe and thus keep the maximum number of German troops away from the Eastern Front. 'Winston adored funny operations', recalled Major Desmond Morton, his intelligence liaison officer, 'Unfortunately he seemed unable to connect up funny operations with the great strategic plans, or to see the effect of one upon the other. He addressed his mind to them as the Managing Director of a railway might have, as a hobby, a miniature railway in his garden;...'

"Although it was the fiasco of the raid on Dieppe in August 1942 which dominated Mountbatten's period as Director of Combined Operations, he was also responsible for planning a number of other raids which could have been equally disastrous. One such was the proposed attack on Alderney [the smallest of the Channel Islands] in May 1942. The island's population had been evacuated before the Germans arrived, and it was then converted into a fortress... Yet the plan was not cancelled because of its unfeasibility, but aborted at the last moment because the navy and airforce

found their plans irreconcilable... When the cancellation was announced to the guardsmen, they cheered...

"Of the 4,963 men of the Canadian Second Division who crossed the Channel in Operation Jubilee [the Dieppe raid], 3,369 were killed, wounded or captured in nine hours. Tanks were landed on the wrong side of the sea wall, on loose shingle on which their tracks could not get a grip... The raid was a politically inspired move to encourage the hard-pressed Russians...

"Whatever the strategic imperatives behind it, the planning of the Dieppe raid was Mountbatten's personal responsibility...

"I could never see what was hoped to be achieved', recalls one of Mountbatten's former shipmates, Captain Iwan Sarell. 'Here was a narrow beach and a high sea wall at the end of it, with a tourist esplanade. Once the tanks had landed on the beach there was no way out. The whole thing was demented. No wonder the Chiefs of Staff never agreed to it'...

"It is hard not to agree with Nigel Hamilton, Montgomery's biography, who has written that, as Chief of Combined Operations, Mountbatten was 'a master of intrigue, jealousy and ineptitude. Like a spoilt child he toyed with men's lives with an indifference to casualties that can only be explained by his insatiable, even psychopathic, ambition'...

"Mountbatten subsequently explained that 'Dieppe taught us lessons which had to be learnt... But above all it helped me evolve what I call my philosophy of invasion'. He further argued that, 'for every one man who died at Dieppe in 1942, at least twelve or more may have been spared in Normandy in 1944'. This was arrant nonsense. A lance-corporal could have told Mountbatten not to attack a well-defended town without proper air and naval cover. As Jacob has said, 'I don't believe for a minute that Dieppe taught us anything about D-Day' {Ian Jacob, Military Secretary to the War Cabinet.} Captain Sarell is even more

Indian independence was ruled out of the question in 1941. An *alliance* with India was refused. Five years later it was seen that a sea-change had occurred in Asia and that India could no longer be held.

A few years ago Cathal O'Shannon made an RTE programme about Irish collaboration with Nazism. But it turned out that his war on Nazism consisted of participation (in the RAF) in the reconquest of Burma. Burma had been conquered for the Empire by Lord Dufferin—an Irish Imperialist—in 1886. It declared its independence, in alliance with Japan, in 1942. It was reconquered for the Empire, with the help of Cathal O'Shannon, in 1945. But it would not submit to the second British conquest. Churchill said that Aung San should be tried for treason, or war-crimes, or one of those things. Instead of that, he had to be recognised as Prime Minister of Burma—though Britain had him and most of his Cabinet assassinated as a parting shot.

Burma went. India would not stay. But how was India to be let go?

There were various ways it might have been done. It was decided to do it in the style in which the War had been conducted—catastrophically. Mountbatten became Viceroy:

"Once again, Mountbatten was to be the beneficiary of a 'necessary myth'. There was no real doubt after the Second World War that India had to be evacuated by the British; the questions were when and how, and whether it would be left entire or partitioned, with a separate Muslim state in the north. The loss of India was necessitated by financial, administrative, strategic and political imperatives, but it became government policy to hail the British retreat as a great achievement in itself.

"In Cabinet on the last day of 1946, Aneurin Bevan, the conscience of the Labour left, pointed out that 'withdrawal from India need not appear to be forced upon us by our weakness, nor to be the first stage in the dissolution of the Empire. On the contrary, this action must be shown to be the logical conclusion, which we welcomed, of a policy followed by successive governments for many years. There was... no occasion to excuse our withdrawal. We should rather claim credit for taking these initiatives'...

"Attlee's... statement... was thus re-drafted to including a long historical preamble. As he put it on 20 February 1947, the policy was made to look like 'the fulfilment of Britain's mission in India'... Far from personifying steady and stable progress towards self-government, Mountbatten chose instead to vacate India with haste, leaving a

security situation so fraught with danger that it led directly to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people and the displacement of millions..."

The Viceroy in place in 1946, Field Marshal Wavel, planned to concentrate military force in Muslim areas, while transferring power to Congress. On 17th December 1946 the King recorded that Attlee felt Wavell's Plan—

"savours too much of defeat and does not realise that it is a political problem and not a military one. Attlee doubts whether he has the finesse to negotiate the next step'.

"When military and security problems inevitably arose from Mountbatten's political 'finessing', the British soon found that they had been so concerned about saving face that they could no longer save lives... The deaths which occurred—far greater in number than was ever officially admitted—are routinely presented as being both unavoidable and fewer than might have been expected. The truth is tragically different..."

On February 20th 1947 Attlee said Britain would hand over to a government "*capable of maintaining peace*", not later than June 1948.

"The allocation of a mere sixteen months to wind up three and a half centuries of British presence imposed fearful strains on an already seriously over-stretched civil administration. It also gave Britain no room to manoeuvre, and made communal violence more, rather than less likely, because of the ever-present reminder that on 1 July 1948 there would be either a Congress-dominated India or a partitioned sub-Continent. This proved a spur rather than a disincentive to disorder. Muslims, Sikhs, Princes, Untouchables and all the other natural opponents of a Hindu-ruled India were given a date by which they had to establish their positions, by violence if necessary, in order to forestall the dictatorship of the majority..."

"Attlee later called his choice of Mountbatten 'an inspiration'...

"Churchill, to his lasting regret, approved the appointment..."

India had not been prepared for independence by British rule. It had not even been prepared for Partition. A multitude of conflicting interests were shocked into frantic motion by the announcement that the British Government would withdraw from the sub-continent in the Summer of 1948. Mountbatten intensified the frenzy by bringing the date of British abdication forward to Summer 1947. It became evident that British India would not hold together when Imperial rule ended and that arrangements would have to be made for a transition to some other

outcome, but no procedures for this transition were established:

"Mountbatten revealingly told his staff, 'it would be most undesirable to lay down a procedure for self-determination which would give the wrong answer'..."

He later told his biographers:

"One had an immense feeling that was it, this was being endowed with an almost heavenly power. I realised that I had been made into the most powerful man on earth..."

What did he do with his supreme power?

He—

"resisted all attempts to reinforce British India militarily prior to the transfer of power. As he told his staff meeting on 9 May, 'If India was granted Dominion Status in 1947, it would be clearly desirable for all British forces to leave the country as soon as possible'. This policy was to have horrific consequences when the Punjab was divided."

"Persuading India to join the Commonwealth consumed more of Mountbatten's time and energy than did security questions. 'The Commonwealth meant so much to me', he was later to explain."

"An inordinate amount of time was... spent by Mountbatten on the ceremonies for the transfer of power. Discussion of them, and 'Flags for the New Dominions', often came far higher on the meetings' agenda than, say, 'Situation in the Punjab', which was usually relegated to the end."

His bias was strongly in favour of Nehru and the Congress/Hindu connection, and against Jinnah, and the Muslim connection, which had supported Britain in the War with Japan:

"Mountbatten was immune to the paradox of working against the interests of those who had fought loyally for the Empire in two world wars, but in support of those who had advocated non-cooperation even when the Japanese were poised at the gates of India..."

The outcome of Mountbatten's accelerated withdrawal, and refusal to make provision for a replacement state system and police a transition to it, hardly deserves to be called civil war. It was a wild series of communal wars.

Roberts rejects the figures of 200,000 deaths given by the Mountbatten-influenced Indian historian, Penderel Moon. He quotes a remark by Rab Butler, a senior Conservative politician in the 1950s:

"[Mountbatten's] conduct in India not good. Took sides. Anti Muslim/pro-Hindu. Ten million displaced and one million killed: his fault. Didn't foresee and take precautions, but in history books his winding-up looks O.K."

**Brendan Clifford**

## The Keynesian Multiplier

Probably the most famous element of Keynesian economics is the multiplier, which as Keynes was happy to acknowledge, was first proposed by his fellow Cambridge economist Richard Kahn.

The idea of the multiplier is that, if there is a stimulus to the economy in the form of, say, an increase in Government expenditure, the effect on national income and employment is greater than the initial expenditure: indeed the effect is a multiple of the initial expenditure. The corollary of this is that a cut in expenditure will lead to a greater drop in national income and employment than the initial cut. This is the point that many anti-austerity campaigners make.

Why is this? The reason is that the initial expenditure creates a ripple effect. So, if public service pay is increased by 1,000 euro, the initial effect is that the lucky public servants will have increased their aggregate income by 1,000. But there will be secondary effects. The public servant might be able to buy more clothes, for example. This will increase the income of the retailer, who might be able to employ more staff and purchase more from the textile manufacturer who will in turn increase his workforce etc. etc.

Since Keynes was addressing Governments in his work, the source of the economic stimulus he had in mind would come from the State. The whole point of his work was that stimulating aggregate demand could not be left to the market. Government expenditure could be current (i.e. consumption) expenditure or capital (i.e. investment expenditure). Keynes believed that if there was an increase in investment expenditure it should be productive, but even non productive, wasteful investment would be better than nothing. In this regard it is worth reproducing one of the most famous passages from Keynes' classic work:

"If the treasury were to fill old bottles with banknotes, bury them at suitable depths in disused coalmines which are then filled up to the surface with town rubbish, and leave it to private enterprise on well tried principles of *laissez faire* to dig the notes up again (the right to do so being obtained, of course, by tendering for leases of the note-bearing territory), there need be no more unemployment and, with the help of the repercussions, the real income of the community, and its capital wealth also, would probably become a good deal greater than it actually

is. It would, indeed, be more sensible to build houses and the like, but if there are political and practical difficulties in the way of this, the above would be better than nothing."

If it is accepted that a given level of expenditure has a greater effect on output and employment than the initial expenditure, how can this "*multiplier*" effect be quantified.

Let us begin with the formula for national income:

$$Y = C + I$$

Where  $Y$  = National Income,  $C$  = Consumption and  $I$  = Investment.

It is assumed (and it important to be aware of this assumption) that the relationship between  $Y$ ,  $C$  and  $I$  remains the same. The implication of this is that it doesn't really matter what the source of the original stimulus is (consumption or investment). A change in consumption will affect both investment and income in the same direction as will a change in investment affect consumption and income.

In the following equations, the triangle symbol represents a *small change*, while the  $\alpha$  represents the marginal propensity to consume. Therefore:

$$\Delta Y = \Delta C + \Delta I$$

But:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta C &= \alpha \Delta Y \Rightarrow \Delta Y = \alpha \Delta Y + \Delta I \\ \Rightarrow \Delta Y - \alpha \Delta Y &= \Delta I \\ \Rightarrow \Delta Y(1 - \alpha) &= \Delta I \\ \Rightarrow \Delta Y &= \Delta I / (1 - \alpha) \end{aligned}$$

It is assumed that  $\alpha$  or the marginal propensity to consume cannot be:

- (a) greater than 1 or
- (b) less than zero.

At first glance both these assumptions seem to be reasonable. While individuals can live beyond their means (i.e. have a marginal propensity to consume greater than 1) an economy or the aggregate of individuals cannot consume more than they produce. We shall re-examine this assumption later. But certainly, in a closed economy with no access to funds from abroad the assumption is completely reasonable.

The assumption that the marginal propensity to consume cannot be less than zero is also reasonable. As an economy's income increases, its capacity to consume also increases. While it is possible that

some external shock might cause people to dread the future and save more, under normal conditions consumption would be expected to increase as income increases.

So, if we assume that the marginal propensity to consume ranges from zero to one what is the significance of the formula  $\Delta Y = \Delta I / (1 - \alpha)$ ?

The formula suggests that the greater the marginal propensity to consume the greater will be the effect on income of a change in investment. So, if the marginal propensity to consume is 90% and the amount of investment is 100 euros, then there will be an increase in income of 1,000 euros ( $100 / (1 - 0.9)$ )! In this case the multiplier will be 10. On the other hand if the marginal propensity to consume is 20% the multiplier will be a more modest 1.25.

It should be said that the effect of the multiplier is limited by the level of employment. At full employment an increase in expenditure will only lead to inflation.

Keynes also entered the following *caveats*:

1) The method of financing might increase the interest rate and may retard investment in other directions. If there is limited capital available—as there usually is—an increase in Government investment might cause a reduction in private investment. This is sometimes called "*crowding out*".

2) Time lags might not lead to an increase in employment. It takes time for the production process to respond to an increase in demand. If there is no increase in production, the increase in expenditure will only result in an increase in inflation. And, if the productive sector of the economy believes that the increase in expenditure is temporary, it might decide not to increase production. Instead of increasing production, the productive sector of the economy might respond to what it perceives as a temporary increase in demand by running down stocks.

3) An increase in Government investment might reduce confidence. For example, if people believe that the increase in expenditure will be followed by an increase in taxes, they might postpone consumption.

4) In an open economy the benefit of the multiplier will be dissipated if the increase in expenditure leads to an increase in imports.

5) The marginal propensity to consume is likely to reduce as employment and income increases.

6) Automatic stabilisers (social welfare) will reduce fluctuations. So, if employment increases, the level of consumption might

increase, but by a relatively small amount because the person's income has not increased by the amount of his new salary but by the difference between his new salary and what he was drawing on the dole. The opposite applies in there is an increase in unemployment. The loss in consumption is stabilised by social welfare payments. Also, the unemployed person may be in a position to draw on savings accumulated when he was employed.

In Keynes' discussion of these *caveats*, he suggests that they mitigate the effects of the multiplier rather than neutralise it. In this reviewer's opinion points 5 and 6 are indeed mitigating factors. In the case of point 5, even if the marginal propensity to consume does drop as income increases, it is still likely to be greater than zero. Regarding point 6 while automatic stabilisers will reduce fluctuations it will still be the case that an increase in employment will increase aggregate consumption which will have positive knock-on effects.

But in this reviewer's opinion points 1 to 4 deserve closer examination.

It is not just the method of financing the multiplier that is important, it is the fact that it has to be financed at all that is significant. Government expenditure is not generated out of thin air.

In the most simple example, increasing the pay of public sector workers by increasing taxes may have no effect on aggregate demand. Assuming that public sector workers are no more or less spendthrift than their counterparts in the private sector, all that will be achieved will be a transfer of net income from the private sector to the public sector.

Now let us assume that, instead of raising taxes, the Government decides to borrow to fund the increased public sector pay. Let us further assume that the borrowing is domestic. The outcome may not be very much different from the previous case. The economic effect will depend on what alternative use the savings of the lenders will be put if the Government had not decided to increase public sector pay.

If it is assumed that there are plenty of people in the private sector who wish to borrow for consumption purposes, the Government's borrowing might be at the expense of borrowing from the private sector. In such a case there will be a transfer of current income from the private to the public sector. In terms of aggregate demand and the effect on national income there will be no change. The economic effect will be the same as the previous

case in which the increase in public sector pay was financed by taxes. However, if the State is competing with the private sector to borrow from a limited supply of domestic savings, the interest rate might increase which could dampen demand for investment.

Now let us assume that, instead of borrowing from domestic savings, the Government decides to borrow from abroad. In this case there will be a stimulus to the economy. No one in the domestic economy is deprived of current consumption. It is true that the loan will have to be paid back at some stage complete with interest payments but these countervailing effects will only occur in the future. If Keynes is right, the initial stimulus will increase national income to such an extent that the economy will have no difficulty repaying the capital and income. Indeed the general prosperity might lead to more borrowing to repay the loans so that the countervailing effects caused by repayment of capital and interest can be postponed indefinitely.

It might be wondered why the most indebted countries are also not the most prosperous! Part of the reason might be that, at a certain stage, the interest and capital repayments outweigh the stimulus effect of the initial loan. This suggests that, contrary to what Keynes purports in his story about burying treasury notes in disused coal mines, it does matter how resources are used.

Another hint as to why indebted countries are not the most prosperous can be found in the caveats that Keynes himself entered but scarcely discussed in his book.

In the discussion so far it is assumed that there is a dialectical relationship between consumption and investment. An increase in consumption causes an increase in investment and *vice versa*. It is plausible that an increase in investment, if it is productive, will cause an increase in the productive forces in society, leading to increased income and consumption, but what about the opposite? Is it likely that an increase in consumption will cause an increase in investment? The theory is that capitalists will respond to the increase in demand by employing more people, who in turn will increase their consumption, leading to a virtuous circle ending in full employment.

Although he does not dwell on the difficulties, Keynes concedes that investment may not always respond to increases in consumption. There may be a "*time lag*" between the increase in consumption and the investment. As Keynes says, the

capitalist might adopt a wait and see approach and merely run down stocks. If there is no increase in production, the increase in demand will only result in an increase in prices. Alternatively, if the economy is an open economy, the increase in demand will result in the purchase of imports, which will in turn cause an outflow of income from the country (the opposite to a stimulus).

Why might the native capitalists not respond to the increases in demand by increasing employment? Firstly, they might take the view that increasing public sector pay is not sustainable in the long term and refuse to commit their capital to what they see as a temporary increase in demand. Secondly, and more likely, they may not have the capacity to increase their productive resources. The process of production has become ever more complicated and sophisticated. It is unrealistic to expect native capitalists to be able to compete with such diverse attractions as BMW cars or iphones.

So, what are the consequences of an increase in demand with no corresponding increase in investment or production? If the economy is a closed economy, all that will happen is the increase in demand will lead to a rise in prices until aggregate consumption returns to an equilibrium level which the level of production can sustain.

But what happens if the economy is open? Instead of prices rising, the increased demand will be absorbed by the purchase of imported goods. This will cause an outflow of funds from the country, leading in the short term to a balance of payments deficit. If the economy has its own currency it is likely that this will devalue and imports will become more expensive, choking off demand for imports and restoring the balance of payments position.

However, what if the economy in question does not have its own currency? Consumption has increased and this is financed by foreign borrowing. But the currency does not devalue and therefore imports remain cheap. There is nothing to dampen demand if the State continues its policy of foreign borrowing.

Consumption remains at a level above investment or the productive resources of the country. Of all the possible consequences, the least likely is that there will be an increase in investment. The effect of the excess in consumption is that domestic savings are absorbed, leading to both private and public debt. If the tap supplying foreign credit is turned off, the economy is

not in a position to rely on domestic resources since its capital has been depleted. Another problem is that wages are at an inflated level—not in relation to other countries but in relation to the productivity of the country—making it difficult to compete with foreign products.

The most extreme example of such an economy is the case of Greece. There are no Keynesian solutions to the problem of Greece since she does not have Keynesian problems. Her problems do not arise from a lack of demand but the opposite: excessive demand in relation to what the economy produces. In the period of her boom the aggregate marginal propensity to consume was greater than 100% (in

Keynes' multiplier formula a marginal propensity to consume greater than 100% will lead to a decline in income). What other conclusion can be drawn from the massive balance of payments deficits that the country was running?

The last thing that Greece needs is an "economic stimulus". She needs to increase her productive capacity, which will most likely involve a sacrifice in consumption. Problems of productivity and investment are themes on which Keynes was remarkably silent.

**John Martin**

**Next Month: The Transmission of Savings to Investment**

*"The most thought-provoking thing about the times we live in is that we still are not thinking."*

Martin Heidegger

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- \* On the Poet-Philosophers of Greece – a Few Notes  
Editorial
- \* Seán O'Faoláin and the Poets  
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- \* Heidegger's Philosophical Notebooks, 1939-1941  
John Minahane
- \* Selections from the Philosophical Notebooks, 1931-1932  
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## Poland And Ukraine

**Polish politicians have been to the fore in leading the destructive EU policy towards Ukraine. However, there are signs of disenchantment, as *Russia Today* has reported:**

"Retired General Waldemar Skrzypczak, an influential figure in the Polish military, says he withdraws all words of support for Ukraine due to the country's sliding towards nationalism. Earlier he advocated supplying heavy weapons to Kiev.

The angry U-turn in attitudes towards the Ukrainian government was published on Friday in the *Gazeta Prawna* newspaper. Skrzypczak said he is outraged with a law that the Ukrainian parliament passed hours after Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski spoke before the MPs to express support for Ukraine.

The law gave benefits to all people who fought for Ukraine's independence throughout history. Those include fighters of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, or UPA, which was responsible for mass killings of Polish citizens in 1943-44. The tragic events are known as Volhynian slaughter in Poland.

"I realized that Ukraine has no concern for Polish people. I am talking about what happened in Volhynia, the slaughter of 100,000 Poles by the UPA", the ex-general said.

"The UPA murdered my uncle. They nailed him with forks to a barn door. For what I know, he was dying maybe for three days. Their savagery was beyond imagination. And Nazi Germany didn't invent the things the Ukrainians did to us. They hacked people with axes", he added.

Skrzypczak said some Polish politicians are living in illusion and would not criticize Ukraine to avoid sparking controversy.

"I wonder on what foundation is Ukrainian President Poroshenko building the future of Ukraine. Bloodthirsty nationalism? It's frightening. I have long been telling that Ukrainians must get rid of nationalism, because otherwise cooperation with Poland would be very difficult if possible at all", he said.

<http://rt.com/news/250905-polish-general-rejects-ukraine/>

Does  
It  
Up

Stack  
?

#### RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF CRIME

Independent Waterford TD John Halligan told the Dáil that criminals should be made to pay for the financial cost of their crimes.

If justice to victims of home burglaries has to come by way of deduction from the criminals' means of living: be it wages, pensions or social welfare—then so be it. *"I am more interested in defending the rights of homeowners than someone who breaks into a home to make life miserable for them and steal from them"*, Halligan said. He was introducing his private members bill: *'Restorative Justice (Reparation of Victims) Bill'*.

The Minister of State for Enterprise John Berry TD, speaking on behalf of the Minister for Justice, Frances Fitzgerald, TD—who was no doubt dealing with what she thought was more urgent business—said that the acceptance of the Bill would give rise to significant difficulties relating to prisoners' rights, conflict and overlap with existing law and proposed legislation, the rights of accused persons and practical difficulties for the criminal justice system. Mr. Perry referred to work under way in the Department on legislation to give effect to an EU directive on the rights of victims. In the meantime criminals' rights are of paramount importance! It does not stack up at all.

We live in a funny old world alright—especially when we have had the spectacle of burglaries into the home of two former high-ranking Ministers—one under a former Government, Mary O'Rourke; and another one under this Government, Alan Shatter, who was at the time Minister for Justice and also Minister for Defence. Literally overnight the Gardaí had got back all that was burgled from both homes—and the really odd thing was that there was never a prosecution afterwards of the burglars. So one is left with the distinct impression that there is one law for our governing elite and well—nothing much for the rest of us or so it seems. It isn't as if victims are not compensated because we know of many cases of victims of abuse being compensated, so how Minister Fitzgerald can splutter on about the criminals' rights and the law just makes no sense at all.

#### COMPUTERISATION OF TRANSPORT

The "herd instinct" is now proving to be not so much an instinct as a *"herd compulsion"*! Witness the compulsion to

computerise everything from play to work to war and to travel. It is no longer good enough to do something, it must be done using a computer and individuals feel pressured into doing it by computer. Or rather having a computer to do it for you. Just because the technology exists, people are encouraged to feel they must have it and must use it. A person in Ireland can use a computer app (we are too busy to say "application") to control a holiday home in Spain—turn the heating on/off, roll up the window blinds, switch on/off the lights and visually check out the rooms online. This technology costs money and time but if it is regarded as essential then the money and time will be devoted to it. Motor-car drivers can open and close the windows by pressing the appropriate button. A screen shows how close the perimeter of the car is to the other cars or to obstructions. The door locks open and closed automatically. We go for these things like children going to play but we are aiding our own destruction every time we use computers—there is a dark side to increased computerisation. Computer hackers can get into a car's computer and can control it and thereby control the car. Now that airplanes run on computers too and have wi-fi on board they can be hacked into too and the planes' trajectory can be controlled by a terrorist. It is elementary stuff and our reaction is to ignore it.

Flying drones are now used to deliver bombs to particular locations with no danger to the controllers and with no need for *"boots on the ground"*. So when is a war a war? Politicians who use drones are committing criminal acts where there is not a declared war. Does anyone care? We sit back and marvel at the technology instead of shouting *"foul"*.

Many plane crashes, resulting in hundreds of lives lost, have been caused by malfunctioning computers on the planes. The solution is to take the computers out of the planes. Planes with computers in control are dangerous and should not be licensed. We know this but we allow ourselves to be lulled into acceptance by the IT companies which make little of the damage and feed us with deceptive lies about the reliability of computers which we willingly accept. We know air travel is very dangerous due to computerisation and we know we are not going to give it up so we ignore the danger, instead of campaigning for the abolition of computers on planes and cars. It will not happen. Smokers know that 9 out of 10 smokers' deaths are the result of smoking cigarettes. We are similarly and just as dangerously addicted to computerised travel. It just doesn't stack up but there it is.

#### GOVERNANCE

The citizens of Ireland have taken a great amount of punishment over the past six years and there is no doubt that, if there had been good governance, much of the punishment could have been avoided. Yes, the bankers were to blame and developers overdid developments (with some appalling slipshod building work/materials), but most of what happened can be squarely blamed on lack of regulation. The Central Bank did not regulate the bankers, the Planning Departments in Local Authorities did not regulate planning properly, the requirements of the Companies Acts were not policed by the Company Regulator, and even the Registration of Business Names was not implemented. What went wrong was almost 100% preventable if there had been good tight regulation. *The lack of regulation was intentional*. Somebody, perhaps an international banker in Washington D.C. thought up the concept and coined the deadly phrase *"Light Regulation"*. And boy how that very concept of *"light regulation"* suited all the chancers in business, politics and banking etc. It caught on so fast. It in fact became a 'good thing'!

Well it is not a good thing. We know that now, but not much has been done about it. The present Fine Gael/Labour Coalition Government must be easily the most vacillating Government in the history of the State (except in proposing appallingly dangerous Referenda). The country is in severe financial difficulties and nothing is being done about it. We have no leadership and no vision of what needs to be done for the good of all our people. Kite-flying of policies is almost a daily occurrence: now you have a Medical Card and now you don't; water charges, free water allowances (it was never free and the tax payer always paid for it), service charges, sell off Coillte to the Chinese or don't—for the moment anyway (funny how 3000 tons of logs were *imported* into Galway harbour recently)—open up special sterile rooms for our drug addicts—and one thing can be absolutely certain that they won't be in any salubrious part of the country—will they? And then the reshuffle of Ministers with Leo Varadkar pulling down his kite, which he called *"medical card system reform"*, and instead saying he will wait until September for *"an expert review panel"* to report first.

He would do us all a favour if he would go off and walk the El Camino and stop talking until he has a decision to communicate to us. *Buen Camino—Leo*. You will find Ireland even better when you come back. It is the Public Service runs the country after all, as you well know. It is



the Public Service which runs the country and look at the state of us. Political supervision and guidance has been hopeless. Only one rock solid policy exists and that is for politicians and senior public servants, senior lawyers and senior consultants to rip-off the taxpayers. Sanctity of contracts is pleaded in their cases and "*The Ministers' hands are tied*" are the usual excuses trotted out. But for citizens outside the privileged class the Ministers have no problem with breaking the social contracts made with the elderly, with families, with the unemployed and basically with anyone who is too weak to enforce social contracts made at election time in return for their votes.

#### CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND

Speaking of social contracts, the present Government seems set on breaking social contracts with Trotskyite abandon. And not only the social contracts, this Government is riding rough-shod over the Constitution of Ireland. Article 46 of the Constitution states the manner in which the Constitution may be amended and in Article 46 there is no reference to the Government. The Government as such has no function in amending the Constitution. This may be news to you, as it is for me—we have got so used to this Government proposing and backing changes to the Constitution. According to the Constitution, the Government has no function in the matter. Article 46 states:

"Every proposal for an Amendment of this Constitution shall be initiated in Dáil Eireann as a Bill and shall upon having been passed or deemed to have been passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas be submitted by Referendum to the decision of the people in accordance with the law for the time being in force relating to the Referendum".

There is no argument but that the Government and Government Ministers have been hugely involved in campaigning

for a "Yes" vote in the latest three Referenda and that large amounts of taxpayer's funds have been expended so as to secure a "Yes" vote. It appears that this sort of Government activity is outside the law and, if the courts were impartial, such activity would render the results of the referenda invalid. The Courts are *not* impartial. The appointment of judges has become highly politicised. Since I wrote on the *Children's Rights Referendum* in the *Irish Political Review* (May 2015), the Supreme Court has, after several years' deliberation, handed down a verdict that Yes there was interference by the Government but that due to the passage of time (caused by the Supreme Court itself!) and the passing of further legislation during that time-lapse it is not now in the public interest to declare the result of the referendum invalid. That, in my opinion, is a *political* decision and not a judicial one.

The supposedly independent Chairman of the Referendum Commission is Mr. Justice Kevin Cross who is a judge of the High Court. He was formerly a staunch member of Fine Gael in the St. Luke's Cross Branch in Cork where he was an energetic canvasser for Fine Gael candidates at election time. He is married to Alison Lindsay who is also a judge and her father was Patrick Lindsay—a very prominent Fine Gael TD for North Mayo, a Senior Counsel and, surprise, surprise, was appointed Master of the High Court. So that indicates how very independent Mr. Justice Cross is in his Government-appointed role as Referendum Commissioner in this referendum.

The McKenna judgement is well and truly ignored, with huge expenditure of taxpayers' monies on the "*marriage referendum*" where we see Minister Simon Coveney TD, Minister of Defence and Agriculture, expending his time as Director of Elections and he is paid by the taxpayer. A Director of Elections on behalf of the

Government is in itself invalidating the result of the Referendum. The Government arrogantly motivated every organ of the State to promote a "Yes" vote and RTE in particular has barely tolerated anyone in favour of a "No" vote, contrary to its Statutory obligations. Minister Leo Varadkar and others walked into the Dáil with a "Yes" label on their jackets—as did Senator David Norris in the Seanad and, when asked to remove them as it is illegal to parade such emblems—pointedly refused. And they were not expelled as they should have been. So where is the equality they so espouse?

In addition to the Government parties, Fine Gael and Labour, using Government power to misuse taxpayers' money, there has been a huge in-pouring of dollars from the USA to interfere in the Referendum. *Phoenix* magazine (Vol. 33, No.10 22nd May—4th June 2015) revealed that Chuck Feeney's Atlantic Philanthropic (AP) alone has pumped in over \$20 million to LGBT organisations which favoured the "Yes" vote. Who said votes can't be bought? No other media have commentated on this incredible aspect where a rich person from outside this State can *interfere* with its internal politics and no parliamentarian has even asked questions—or, if they have, they certainly haven't been reported. The CEO of Apple Corporation has also stated that he wants this Referendum passed and thinks it is *necessary* if they want the firm to continue doing business in Ireland. Imagine any other country allowing that kind of blackmail and not just allowing it but going along willy nilly with it! The bullying and aggression employed by the "Yes" side in this Referendum is nothing short of a disgrace. It was a total denial of the democratic process but then this is what we have come to accept in our "*lovely little country*" as our Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, likes to call it.

**Michael Stack ©**

#### RAMPANT CRIMINALISATION

It's hard to know what to say  
a Muslim gets 38 years  
in a British court  
hard to convey  
the fears  
for reason.  
In Iraq  
an American soldier  
was fatally attacked.  
Yes, bomb-making was his trade  
against

this American invade  
they  
who killed a million  
they  
who the world over  
ride death's pillion  
this London taxi driver  
gets a savage sentence  
from  
an Imperial skiver.

**Wilson John Haire**  
25th May, 2015

#### **JOHN SWIFT on Guilds concluded.**

*Democracy*" and, almost uniquely on the Left, favoured Ireland's entry to the EEC in 1973. He died in 1990 at the age of 93.

It is regrettable that Swift didn't find time to explain the extraordinary progress of the Guild System in Germany right up to the 1940s and indicate that, whilst the Reformation in England brought about the regression of Guilds, Germany which was at the forefront of the Protestant Reformation, appears to have substantially retained them!

**(To be continued)**

## GUILDS continued

its *Backerei*, just as the French thoroughfares have their *boulangeries* and *patisseries*. In Berlin, for instance, there were before the late war {W.W.I.}, over 3,000 bakeries numbered in the telephone directory as being in the city area. Under the Hitler regime, the German baking trade guilds although organised in the much publicised state labour service (*Arbeitsfront*), pursued much the same objects as did their parent guilds in the Middle Ages.

They had a central cartel for the wholesale purchase of raw materials and equipment. They supervised the half-dozen or more bakery schools in Germany, with their holiday centres and rest homes. In a country so developed industrially as modern Germany it seems strange to see these guilds of the baking trade conducting their business much as did their ancestor guildsmen in 13th-century Heidelberg and Hanover" (Swift, p.31).

### WHY GUILDS FAILED

"It is hardly necessary to enquire, why did the guilds pass away? In previous chapters we have observed the Dublin guilds in action. We have seen the narrow professionalism, nepotism and general corruption which they engendered. Many explanations have been put forward for their decline. The most common reasons assigned are, the development of the handicrafts into machine production, and the expansion of markets and of the capabilities of capital generally.

It is true that the guilds grew up on domestic and handcraft production, and that the means of transport available before the development of steam power meant that the trading organisation available grew out of the local markets.

Those explanations, however, are not sufficient of themselves to explain why under the new conditions imposed by the industrial revolution and the consequent expansion of production and trade, the guilds were not able to expand, or adapt themselves and survive. It is not just enough to say that with the advent of machine production only the wealthy tradesman could become a master in the sense of being owner, leaving the less fortunate craftsman to sell his labour as a journeyman to someone else.

Quite apart from the introduction of machinery and the expansion of the markets, the guild itself was an unstable type of organisation because it was always up against the problem—what to do with

the journeyman who could not become a master? The guilds could never hope to hold in permanent suspense the class conflict inherent in the relation of the owning master on the one hand, and on the other the serving journeyman. This fact was early made manifest in the development of purely journeymen's guilds. Some of these appeared as early as the 13th century; and but for repressive laws, such as the combination acts, the journeymen's guilds would have developed more extensively, and with greater power. There are records, for instance, of journeyman bakers' guilds in England and in Germany in the 13th century.

The Dublin Bakers' Guild did not disappear because of the advent of machinery or the broadening of the markets. Save for an odd dough-mixing machine introduced in the early part of the 19th century, the Dublin baking trade remained unaffected by machinery until towards the end of the century. Neither did the extension of markets affect the trade much, bread being made for local consumption and not for export."

### MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

"An interesting recent work on the guilds is *The Medieval Guild System*, by Rev. G. Clune, D.Ph. {See *Labour Comment*, April, 2014, Mondragon 28} This work attributes the decline of the guilds to moral and religious deterioration in those who composed the guilds. Undoubtedly the guilds in their selfish and unscrupulous anti-social pursuits, were immoral. But this anti-social defect was inherent in their structure and in their functions which the guilds—were their members ever so morally inclined—exercised.

Whether trade guilds will ever rise to an important position again in society is to be doubted. As long as they comprehended two classes, an owning class and a serving class, the guilds could at the best, hold in suspense or unresolved the class conflict necessarily attending this relationship. Whilst, even if we had class-less guilds, to give them legislative functions either in government or the municipalities would be an error against which several hundred years of rotten administration warn us" (Swift, p.201).

### IRISH LABOUR HISTORY SOCIETY ARTICLE

"The old trade guilds that furnished urban government, including Irish urban government, for hundreds of years, were an example of vocationalism organised to monopolise not only professional profit and privilege but civil right and office not attainable by the masses in the community

who were denied membership of the guilds. As in many other cities and towns in Europe where the guilds operated for hundreds of years, the guilds of Dublin exploited their municipal power in restricting admission to trades and professions to all but their own nominees. We know from the minutes of the City Assembly, in the Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin, how the guilds' vocational power was abused in the most ruthless promotion of professional interests. Before the 1830s, when the vocational and political power of the guilds both in Ireland and Britain was shorn by the Municipal Reform Acts, the guilds were in decline. They were on the way out, doomed not so much from the threats of central government as from the weight of their own corruption.

In the days of their opulence a strong feature of the guilds in Ireland, as elsewhere, was their dedication to religious observances. This was seen in their public functions, their endowments of Church activities, and of course, their ascription of holy patronage. Thus for the Dublin merchants it was the Guild of the Blessed Trinity; for the bakers, the Guild of St. Anne, with the other guilds similarly claiming saintly patronage. How these religious and medieval connotations of guild life may have influenced *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* in the plea of their authors for a revival of guild vocationalism, is a question that could give us much debate. That the drafters of the report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation found inspiration in the old guild corporations is attested by the report's many quotations from the Encyclicals—this notwithstanding the report's final disavowal of any advocacy of corporatism or even vocationalism" (*Report of Commission on Vocational Organisation (and its Times, 1930-'40's)* by John Swift, Saothar No. 1 (1973) Journal of the Irish Labour History Society).

### ABOUT JOHN SWIFT

John Swift was born in Dundalk, Co. Louth in 1896, the son of a family of bakers. He moved to Dublin in 1912, was sacked for his Trade Union activities, became a conscientious objector and was imprisoned during World War I. He was a founder and Chairman of the Secular Society and a co-founder of the Spanish Aid Committee {1936-1939}. In 1938, he went on the first of many visits to USSR, later founding the Ireland-USSR Society.

In the late 1960s John Swift drafted the Labour Party's document "*Workers'*

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**LABOUR**

# Comment

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"Swift's tour de force, of course, is his book (1948), *History of the Dublin Bakers and Others...* In Swift's view, the book's main value is its exposure of the corruption of Dublin's medieval guilds" (*John Swift: A Irish Dissident*, John P. Swift; Gill and Macmillan; 1991; p.186).

## John Swift on the Guilds

"Surprisingly little research work seems to have been done in the field of trade union origins in Ireland (1948). The published work amounts to only a few volumes; and, they throw but little light on important problems. James Connolly's *Labour in Irish History* is a sketchy if noble treatise on the centuries' struggle of the down-trodden serfs and wage slaves. Ryan's *Labour in Ireland* is much the same, but brought up-to-date to include sketches of Connolly and some of Connolly's surviving co-workers, including Jim Larkin.

Outside of those two works, the only other important work dealing specifically with the subject is the *History of Trades Unionism* by Beatrice and Sydney Webb. That, so far as trade union origins in Great Britain are concerned, has long been recognised as a standard work. As regards origins in Ireland the work has not the same value. In preparing their work the Webbs visited Ireland, but their researches on the spot seem to have been not considerable.

They are summed up in a three-page appendix to their main work which, in Longman, Green's second edition, 1896, run into 550 pages. The appendix is entitled "*On the assumed connection between the Trade Unions and the Guilds in Dublin*". The authors are very caustic on the Dublin unions' claims to great antiquity. They say "the adoption by the Dublin Trade Unions of the arms, mottoes, saints and dates of origin of the old Dublin Guilds is more interesting as a trait of Irish character than as any proof of historic continuity." After quoting some cases in proof of their thesis, the Webbs conclude their Appendix thus:

"In short, the Irish Trade Unionist, with his genuine love for the picturesque, and his reverence for historical association, has steadily 'annexed' antiquity and has embraced every opportunity for transferring the origin of his society a few generations further back" (*History of the Dublin Bakers and Others*, John Swift, Published by Irish Bakers, Confectionary and Allied Workers Union-Dublin-1948-p.165/66).

At this time the Dublin guilds were disintegrating {1802}. There were many causes of the disintegration. One of the causes most evident from a perusal of contemporary publications, including newspapers, was the strong sectarian and conservative policy of the guilds. Up to the time of its reformation in 1841 there was no more reactionary body in Europe than the Dublin Corporation" (Swift, p.193).

### BAKERS' GUILDS IN GERMANY TO-DAY

Collective purchasing and price-fixing were primary concerns of the Merchant Guild. Official buyers appointed by the City Assembly were availed of by the Guild to purchase big quantities of raw materials and general merchandise for the Guild members. This characteristic of the early guilds is seen to-day in certain European countries, where the guilds in one form or another have survived. In Germany, for instance, there is still existing the Guild of the German Baking Trade, or, as it is known in Germany, the *Reichsinnungsverband des Backerhandwerks*. This writer has, on visits to Germany, made some investigation into this organisation. The organisation is, as its German title indicates, a federation of separate guilds of the trade.

It publishes an annual report and guide (*Jahrbuch*). In the *Jahrbuch* for 1939, the most recent one available, particulars are given of 800 branch guilds of the trade in Germany. These aggregated over 100,000 members, to which it was hoped to add 7,000 new members from Austria and 5,000 from the Sudeten part of Czechoslovakia, both of which territories being at the time annexed to the Reich.

The baking trade in Germany, as on the Continent generally, is still largely in the medieval or domestic stage of production. The bakeries are small family businesses, the master baker being an operative in the bakehouse, probably with his son as an apprentice and his wife or daughter, possibly both, looking after the shop. Nearly every street in a German town has

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