

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Hysteria

The political situation in the South has progressed—or regressed—towards something like the 1923 situation of Treatyites versus Republicans.

The Fine Gael message is that a vote for Fianna Fail will be a wasted vote. The issue now lies between Fine Gael and Sinn Fein. The great object is to prevent Sinn Fein from winning. And, as we write, Sinn Fein is one point ahead of Fine Gael in an Opinion Poll.

The received truth of the Southern Establishment—of what until recently might have been called its "*political class*"—is that the North is bad news. Jack Lynch was praised on all sides for having kept it at bay. The way he kept it at bay was to renege in 1970 on the Northern policy he had set in motion in 1969. His aim then was to seal off the South from the development it had helped to set in motion in the North, regardless of the consequences this could have for the North. His solution was to let the North stew in its own juices.

Well, the North did stew in its own juices. The Northern minority was betrayed by the Party and Government that said it would *not stand idly by*. Events in the North then took a turn which they would not have taken if the Southern political class had not disengaged and *stood idly by*, as far as that was possible in the light of public sentiment.

The Northern minority, forsaken by the two states which asserted sovereignty over the Northern Limbo-land, took its affairs into its own hands. Its made war on the State which was exerting a purely military sovereignty, and learned to live without the blessing of the State which continued to assert a *de jure* sovereignty even while doing its best to play the part of Judas.

Because Dublin media opinion-sputers never took the trouble to understand what Northern Ireland was—what it made impossible, and what it made inevitable—it has no sense of what contemporary Sinn Fein is. And, when a know-nothing understanding is confronted with a coherent, rational development out of a situation about which it preferred to know nothing, hysteria is the result.

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## Greece and the Euro:

### *David without a sling*

"The absence of a central authority, or even procedures which everyone has to follow, reflects the core problem identified at the creation of the euro. There have been many examples of a government without a currency—including Ireland until 1979. A currency without a government—the euro—is a completely new concept" (Brendan Keenan, *Irish Independent*, 21.2.15).

This banal yet crucial truth is the main lesson of the Greek crisis. Greece was like David without a sling facing Goliath. The fact that it still survived in negotiations with Goliath showed more of a weakness in Goliath than any great strength in David. He made concessions but lives to fight another day.

Keenan does not suggest how you build a Government or even a coherent authority to govern a currency. Nowadays nobody mentions the Fiscal Compact or Treaty, even though it was created and passed to establish such an authority for the Euro. It's all very well to lambast the Greeks for

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## The Banking Enquiry

### A little bit of insolvency goes a long way

Central Bank Governor Professor Patrick Honohan has submitted further evidence to the Banking Inquiry in order to clarify his earlier remarks in January concerning the Guarantee. In this evidence (by letter on 12 February) he considers what the Government should have done if it had known Anglo Irish and INBS (Irish Nationwide Building Society) were insolvent and that the cost of an unlimited

guarantee to the State would be €35bn. He compares this with the actual case, where there was a lack of confidence in the business models of the two institutions causing a liquidity crisis, which was managed by means of the Guarantee.

In the first case (which is entirely hypothetical) the solution would have been to tell the European Central Bank that the Government was going to liquidate the

two banks with a view to '*shocking*' the ECB into coming up with some sort of risk-sharing arrangement, whereby (since the ECB was adamant that no banks should be allowed to fail) such a liquidation involving bondholder-burning could be avoided and the cost to the Irish State would be reduced. He does not describe how such a risk-sharing arrangement would have worked or point to any precedent where it has been used.

In his second scenario, which corresponds to reality, there was no definite knowledge (but there were suspicions)

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The most hysterical outburst we have seen comes from *Olivia O'Leary*—who should know better, as she once worked for the BBC in Belfast.

Here are the headlines on her article in the *Sunday Independent* on February 1st:

*"Remembering the Holocaust and recalling why we should never vote SF*

*While we mark the liberation of Auschwitz, there are other ghosts who we will remember at the going down of the sun and in the morning, writes Olivia O'Leary"*

Her device for linking Sinn Fein with the Holocaust is not a link at all. She recalls that a German President, Karl Karstens, made Ireland the place of his first State Visit in 1980 and that she had a Foreign Affairs briefing saying he had chosen Ireland because it did not have an active Jewish lobby that would organise protests. She asked him if he had chosen Ireland because he wouldn't be met with protests. He replied that he hadn't. What she should have done, she now considers, was tackle him *"about being a member of*

*the Nazi stormtroopers"*, as he had been a Brownshirt in the early 1930s: *"But I didn't do my job as a journalist properly"*.

However, even though she hadn't asked the hard question, *"my colleagues looked away embarrassed"*. And German reporters accompanying the President—

*"came running over to me. What Jewish newspaper did I work for... Surely I was Jewish, they asked? I was astonished. 'Surely we are all Jewish on this question', I wanted to answer"*.

But she didn't.

However, she had at least asked an embarrassing question, and was glad:

*"Because we must never forget... what the Nazis did, ...what our own government did in refusing entry to many Jews..., nor indeed the pogrom against Jews in Limerick in 1904."*

Then, abruptly:

*"Already in this country, for everybody under 24, the over 3,700 killed in the North (over 1,700 of them killed by Republicans) are something their parents*

*tell them about, something of which they have no personal memory... That's why David Kelly did us a favour when he thrust a photograph of his dead soldier father at Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness and questioned him during the Presidential election. Private Patrick Kelly was shot by the IRA at Ballinamore during the rescue of kidnapped supermarket boss Don Tidey... He must not be forgotten."*

And that is why, remembering the Holocaust, it should be *"almost impossible ever to vote Sinn Fein"*.

When Olivia worked for the BBC in the North, she never asked the hard, obvious question: *Why did Westminster, when deciding to hold the Six Counties as part of the UK state, exclude them from the institutional framework of democratic politics by which the state functioned?* That was a question which BBC television did not allow to be asked, so Olivia did not ask it.

By the double exclusion—from British and Irish politics—the Nationalist community was confined to a sort of reservation, policed by the Unionist community, with no possibility of a common political life developing between the two, and with no constitutional means of redress.

Perhaps Mary McAleese went over the top in the German comparison which she made. It wasn't Auschwitz—not an Extermination Camp, only a Concentration Camp. But what rules are there for determining the legitimate limits of hostile response by a people against systematically undemocratic government in a region of an otherwise democratic state? That is the hard question Olivia preferred not to ask.

There was a very minor spill-over of the Northern War into the South. What else could be expected in view of the duplicity of the Southern state?

In the North, *"Republican"* came to mean in practice most Catholics. Garret FitzGerald repeatedly told Northern Catholics not to vote Sinn Fein because a vote for Sinn Fein was a vote for the IRA. After every such warning the vote for Sinn Fein increased.

The IRA maintained a war effort against the British Army for a quarter of a century and then negotiated a peace arrangement while keeping itself basically intact. The Dissidents who wanted to continue the War (Anthony McIntyre etc.) never amounted to much, though they were encouraged by the Dublin parties and Whitehall. Then Sinn Fein was the party which made the 1998 arrangement work

by means of an agreement with the representative Unionist Party. And then, on the strength of its Northern achievement, it began to build itself up in the South and is now running neck and neck with Fine Gael, Fianna Fail apparently having wrecked itself.

The old parties, rattled by the rise of Sinn Fein, which they find inexplicable in what they see as normal politics, appear convinced that there must be something sinister behind it. They see it as politically suspect because the party is not filled with individualistic careerists: Ambitious elements do not give confidential briefings to the media against the leading elements. The general membership seems to be united with a sense of purpose to which individual ambition is subordinate. And that is not normal!

The fact that Fianna Fail was such a party for a long generation is forgotten. Political normality now is what Desmond O'Malley introduced into Fianna Fail after he failed to get the leadership, though he had been Lynch's white-haired boy.

Subverting Fianna Fail was the great object of the *Irish Times* for a generation, and it succeeded in the end. Fianna Fail was the party of corruption, of crony capitalism. Haughey had to be demonised because he made "*crony capitalism*" produce the Celtic Tiger by convincing Europe that Ireland was no longer a British echo, and introducing the European style social compact.

The great 'corruption scandal' was the means by which Larry Goodman's beef export business was built up.

O'Malley was the ideologist of *laissez faire* capitalism, who left Fianna Fail and set up the Progressive Democrats to expose crony capitalism, and did his best to destroy actual capitalism by means of investigative Tribunals applying standards that have never existed in the real world.

But actual capitalism—Haugheyite capitalism—survived. With Irish beef getting the 'all-clear' in the USA, who won a huge contract for beef exports to that country, but Larry Goodman! And a Fine Gael Agriculture Minister is praising his enterprise.

Fine Gael, Labour and Fianna Fail now want to sell off the national stake in Aer Lingus—a company which is in profit, carrying more passengers than ever before, and with a healthy financial reserve. Not only does it make money for the State, it provides a connectivity between Ireland and the rest of the world which does not

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## Greece: Debt Mutualisation

The Greek situation as highlighted in the current crisis conceals an important economic factor inherent in the situation. This is that the experience of Greece shows that risk-sharing in the Euro-zone has become a reality. In the past five years over two-thirds of Greece's public debt has been mutualized by the transfer of 140 billion Euros to the European Financial Stability Facility (the sovereign bail-out fund), together with more than 50 billion Euros to the Greek Loan Facility (the bilateral loan account between Euro area governments and Greece), and nearly 30 billion Euros to the European Central Bank's balance sheet. (Information taken from "*Euro area risk-sharing is a reality: over Greece, much taxpayers' money is at stake*", by Marcello Minenna and Edoardo Reviglio and published in the OMIF Commentary briefing of Wednesday 25 February 2015, vol. 6. Ed 9.2).

Eamon Dyas

## Greek GDP

Courtesy of Internet Commentator *John the Optimist* below are some figures re: GDP which indicate that Greece is not doing badly. Some of the countries are in the eurozone (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia). How do you think these countries will feel about a dig out for Greece which is wealthier than them?

### GDP per capita:

Greece: \$21,954  
Bulgaria \$7,498  
Romania \$9,422  
Serbia: \$6,354  
Macedonia: \$4,838  
Montenegro: \$7,106  
Croatia: \$17,607

So, Greek GDP per capita is at least twice the average for south-east Europe.

### Looking further afield:

Poland: \$13,648  
Czech Rep: \$19,844  
Slovakia: £18,046  
Latvia: \$15,375  
Lithuania: \$15,538  
Estonia: \$18,783

Also, courtesy of John the Optimist some statistics on suicide. Greece has one of the lowest suicide rates in the world. Its about one-third Germany's rate. Number of suicides in 2011 (Eurostat):

Greece 477 ( 4.3 per 100,000 population)  
Germany 10,166 (12.5 per 100,000 population)

I'm probably in a minority of one, but I think Greece should give Germany a break!

John Martin

## Greek Development

An interesting graphic from European Commission shows Greek GDP development, exports and unemployment from 2011 to the present, with forecasts to 2016:

GDP:		Exports:		Unemployment:	
2011	-8.9%	2011	0.0%	2011	17.9%
2012	-6.6%	2012	1.2%	2012	24.5%
2013	-3.3%	2013	2.1%	2013	27.5%
2014	+0.6%	2014	5.3%	2014	26.8%
2015	+2.9%	2015	5.4%	2015	27.5%
2016	+3.7%	2016	4.9%	2016	22.0%

Philip O'Connor

depend on commercial criteria. This is of huge benefit to enterprise all around Ireland, not to speak of convenience to the general public. But such connectivity does not make sense in terms of 'shareholder interest', which is the primary criteria for companies functioning under British company law.

Rather than selling Aer Lingus, the Government should be buying back shares which were sold off under a Fianna Fail/ Progressive Democrat administration.

The motive of the Fine Gael/Labour coalition is that it will bring easy money into the State's coffers in the short run—money that can be spent on buying votes in the 2016 election. It is deterred only by the rise of Sinn Fein in the opinion polls.

The rise of a new party within an established democracy rarely has to do merely with the policies of the moment. Democracy as we know it is made functional largely by the stability of the political parties which compose it. The party system of the last eighty years seems to have run itself ragged. It stirred up troubles in the North 45 years ago and then went into denial about it. A party developed within the North which fought a war, made a peace, constructed a Government, and showed itself able to learn quickly what to do in every new situation. No wonder the time servers in the State are running scared!

## Greece and the Euro

continued

their dysfunctional state, which it is, and by comparison to laud the Irish State for dealing with Goliath more effectively, but the EU is not even a State or a Government. It has some of the ornaments of state but it is not one. It functions by a version of horse-trading among its nation state members and then following the biggest horse. Its original integrating mechanism, its core, the Commission, has been robbed of its authority and is now a mere bureaucracy. It's far in the background, not even in the room, when, at this stage if the original project was maintained, it should be in the foreground.

So we have a pretend State dealing with a dysfunctional State. There is no room for celebrating any winners or losers in this conflict. Pots and kettles come to mind. The Greek State, even with the best

will in the world, is not going to be sorted out any time soon. And if the only thing the EU has to offer it to help create a functional State is being a bailiff to deal with their debts, then the omens are not good. There are more to States than money and debts. Human values and virtues are the first essential.

There is no prospect yet of a new European *demos* or polity that would form the solid basis of an integrated EU and the possibility of forming a real state, apart from plenty lip service paid to such a thing and even that is now getting scarce. The only thing that could be called a European *demos* today is in reality reduced to phobias about Russia and Islam that are inherently negative and self-destructive for Europe. But they are the things that get Presidents and Prime Ministers on to the streets.

It was one of these phobias that strengthened Greece's hand. Merkel has committed herself to Greece staying in the EU and the Eurozone. Greece also wants to stay in the EU and the Euro but the EU had to decide whether to throw them out over a few billion Euro against the wishes of Merkel. Another problem is that there are no rules for doing this. A member can leave but not be expelled from either.

It would be a serious indictment of any political entity to lose one of its constituent parts, indicating serious misjudgement, or incompetence, or both. And, as Greece is a very small part of the whole, if it cannot be managed then it's a poor show by combined wisdom of all the others.

But the consequences of forcing Greece out are incalculable. It would be something like Scotland leaving the UK. The EU and the Euro could well disintegrate, or at least lose an enormous amount of credibility. A political vacuum could be created in Europe and the Greeks have raised the possibility of filling it with an approach to Russia or China. This has scared the hell out of the EU leaders. The spectre of the Putin monster that the EU itself has helped create is being used to haunt it. Moscow has already invited Tsipras to meet with Putin. And Beijing has invited Tsipras to meet with Prime Minister Li Keqiang. The BRICS [trading association made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] might have a new member! And of course there is another vacuum created by Europe in nearby Libya that is being filled by ISIL. Surely one vacuum is enough for the moment.

The Greeks had and have plenty room to play with in this situation.

During the recent negotiations I was reminded of de Valera's negotiating skills with his Goliath—Lloyd George as leader of the most powerful Empire the world had ever seen. DeV also had a very weak hand by comparison with his opponent. In his first round of talks in 1921 with the 'Welsh wizard', after the Truce, the wizard got nowhere with him—which was exactly what was needed at the time. He gave up and said negotiating with de Valera was like trying to collect mercury with a fork.

Later de Valera's strategy was to reduce the formal differences between the two sides, to make them as low as possible, and then point out the consequences of Lloyd George not agreeing—putting the wizard on the spot. For instance, Dev was prepared to accept the King as head of an association of Ireland and the Commonwealth but not as king of Ireland—an external association. To emphasise the point of how low this difference could appear, the Irish Cabinet meeting of 3rd December 1921 increased the amount the Irish Government would pay to the King's Civil List. The issue could appear to be semantics for those who did not want to know better.

The problem then posed for Lloyd George was whether to declare full-scale war on Ireland for the first time over this difference of view towards the King. Was it worth the risk of war? and would a war on such an issue get the sympathy and understanding of the US and British public opinion? Lloyd George could be seen as going to war over a form of words, over semantics. It should be borne in mind that, formally, Britain was never at war in Ireland and now the wizard would have to formally declare a new full-scale war in Ireland in 1922.

Dev's strategy was ruined by Collins not following the agreed Cabinet position of December 3rd, and not having the subtlety of de Valera to prolong the negotiations and make these choices as clear-cut as possible to all concerned. His only proven skills were in organising assassinations—necessary but not sufficient for the task in hand.

Let's hope the Greeks stay united and keep reminding the EU of its weakness and that it has as much to lose as them if their problems are not solved and they both have more to gain by resolving their differences and that the only difference between them seems to be some debts.

**Jack Lane**

# Banking Enquiry

continued

that the banks were insolvent and the appropriate action, according to him, would have been to intervene with a nationalisation programme (as apparently sought by Brien Lenihan) with Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) from the ECB (via the Irish Central Bank) being provided for a time to allow for discussions with Europe (concerning risk-sharing) along with a limited, not blanket, systemic Guarantee. This would have reduced, but not eliminated the costs to the State of the intervention.

As regards the actual Government response, he says that the Guarantee, including as it did all debt, resulted in higher costs for the State in the end, with no risk-sharing and no sympathy either from the Europeans as they were not consulted as part of the process.

Prof. Honohan will be recalled by the Inquiry at a later date so it will perhaps have an opportunity to question him in more detail on these matters. A few points come to mind immediately, however. Emergency Liquidity Assistance is supposed to be temporary and can only be provided to institutions which are fundamentally solvent. The belief at the time was that this was the case, and that the insolvency arose subsequently, with the collapse of the property markets later in 2008-9, resulting in the destruction of the value of the banks' collateral. But belief is not the same thing as knowledge, and the question arises of what proof could have been given to the ECB at the end of September 2008, or what due diligence would have been required, to convince them that there was no solvency problem.

This matter came up in the evidence to the Inquiry given by Honohan's Trinity colleague, Professor Philip Lane, on January 21st and was considered in some detail. It seems there was indeed some concern over the possible insolvency of the two banks, even back in September 2008, but that ELA (the use of which later became commonplace, but was at that time relatively untested) could have been applied as it was applied later on "*on the understanding that the government was going to stand behind the banks*" (p214). This is later clarified to mean a Guarantee, but there was no discussion of whether this would have, or could have, been a limited Guarantee.

So for the Honohan 'solution' to work, it seems, some sort of solvency guarantee from the State would have been necessary for the ECB to make ELA available to the banks, even temporarily, in September 2008. The idea of this being a '*limited guarantee*' which would not involve subordinated or unsecured debt seems implausible in this context, unless being '*a little bit insolvent*' is an easier concept for the accountancy profession to countenance than being '*a little bit pregnant*' is for the medical profession.

Professor Honohan seems determined to maintain that there was a better alternative option available to the Government on the night of 29th September 2008 than the one actually chosen, which did succeed in correcting the immediate perceived problems of liquidity and confidence in the system. For this to plausibly be the case, he would have to explain how the ECB could have issued ELA without a State Guarantee of bank solvency as comprehensive as the actual Guarantee itself turned out to be.

Sean Owens

## On the appointment of Patricia King of SIPTU as Congress General Secretary

### ICTU's forceful new leader

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) does not often get a new General Secretary. In the 55 years since its foundation there have been just six: James Larkin jnr., Leo Crawford, Ruairi Roberts, Donal Nevin, Peter Cassells, and David Begg, each bringing with them a radical change in leadership style, political substance and direction. With the appointment of Patricia King of SIPTU in February this year to succeed Begg, who is retiring, we can expect another radical turn at the helm of the battered and bruised, but still very substantial Irish Trade Union movement. This appointment is very good news.

#### CALIBRE OF LEADERS

But in what direction? Nevin, a sincere, quiet and dedicated intellectual loyal to the Labour Party ("*Mr. Trade Union News*") steered the movement through the tumultuous crisis-laden 1980s, diligently serving under such bigger than life figures as Paddy Cardiff, John Carroll and Mattie Merrigan snr., but in the end of the day did not leave a forceful stamp on the movement. The more decisive and determined Peter Cassells, committed to transforming Irish Trade Unionism away from its British confrontational heritage towards a European model, was more an ally than a servant to leaders with a similar view of things, especially Bill Attley and Phil Flynn, and with them he helped engineer the revolutionary path to Social Partnership in Ireland. David Begg, who held the post throughout the "Celtic Tiger" years and sought to broaden partnership to a "*social justice*" model, had to contend with relative Union membership decline in the face of globalization and later the crisis years from 2008, but nevertheless kept the leadership stable and focused. The

Congress, somewhat aging, jaded and battered, is now struggling with the effects of the crisis, what Shay Cody of IMPACT has called "*managing a necessary strategic retreat*" in Partnership and power while ensuring not to lose its footing in either. Congress is facing one of its periodic "*cross roads*". Is Patricia King the person to jump start it into a new era?

#### "TOUGH COOKIE"

All the indications are good. King is often described as a "*tough cookie*". She has successfully represented workers in the public sector at the highest levels (Croke Park, Haddington Rd. etc.) but also in the much more rough and tumble of the private sector. She came to national prominence in 2005 leading the SIPTU side in the watershed Irish Ferries dispute over the fraught issue of low-paid foreign workers being brought in to replace Irish workers. And won. She led the workers of Vita Cortex in Cork in 2014 in securing proper redundancy settlements after a 161 day sit-in.

From a small sheep farm in Kilmacanogue in Co. Wicklow, where she still lives, she began her Trade Union career in the 1980s with the occupation of the Triumph car factory in Dublin where she was a shop steward. She later became an official with Larkin's old Workers' Union of Ireland, a Union which imbued its activists with a uniquely intelligent class perspective like few others. On the merger of the WUI and ITGWU to form SIPTU in 1990, King became one of few women officials in the powerful new Union.

King's tough line of argument and stubbornness in negotiations are legendary. Her working class loyalty and incorruptibility are sincere and unquestioned. A

recent profile stated:

"King always has her lunchbox with her, whether in ... Liberty Hall or while ... on the board of the RTE Authority ... There were plenty of opportunities for wining and dining with fellow authority members, but instead she would be spotted in the RTE canteen with her lunchbox. 'She won't be bought, even for lunch', said [a] union source" (*Sunday Business Post*, 25.01.15).

King has no enemies in the Union movement and is universally admired. Writing in the February issue of *Liberty*, SIPTU President and close comrade of King, Jack O'Connor said:

"Patricia is eminently qualified to assume the role [of ICTU General Secretary]. She is one of the most experienced and skilled Trade Union representatives in the country. Patricia has served in virtually every capacity in the Trade Union movement from shop floor activist, Trade Union organiser, advocate and negotiator. She was the first woman to be elected as a national officer in the history of SIPTU—a role she has discharged with distinction. During her years with SIPTU she has represented the Union in many tough and intractable disputes."

#### PRIVATE AND "NON-POLITICAL"?

King is known as a private person, who keeps her Trade Union work separate from her private family life in Wicklow, where she is well known and liked in her community. She is a good singer, a trait properly held in high regard in Irish politics and public life as an indicator of strong character. She sings in her local Church choir and famously delivered a powerful solo at the end of a multi-denominational service in University Church in 2013 commemorating the 1913 lockout.

Some critics worry about her Catholic background and "non-political" reputation. She is certainly not an orthodox "leftist" as many of her predecessors at ICTU have been. She is a member of the Labour Party in a matter of fact kind of way, but not regarded as having any great *grá* for it. She has worked with politicians from all parties in that old WUI way of getting things done that leads critics to have seen her in the past as "close to Fianna Fáil".

She is certainly a Trade Union pragmatist but also a strategic thinker who sees the big picture and has famously little patience for detail, while also steering clear of being overly committed to any dogmatic position on "macro-economic" issues. But when the need was there she has forcefully represented SIPTU positions nationally, on issues beyond

industrial relations as diverse as adoption and Palestine.

#### BIGGEST CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge to Trade Unionism in Ireland today is rebuilding a base and "veto power" in the private sector, where membership has declined to probably below 20%, mostly concentrated in "old" industries and among older workers. This compares to membership of over 85% in the public sector, which increasingly dominates Irish Trade Unionism. This challenge is not unique to Ireland—quite the contrary. In many Western countries private sector Union membership is dipping below 10%. But the decision by Congress to appoint King rather than a more public sector-based leader is a signal of a clear desire for forceful politics. If anything credible can be done in the private sector, King's

appointment could be a turning point in Irish Trade Unionism. A good starting point here has already been the strong fight SIPTU has put up on the attempted dismantling of Joint Labour Committees and Registered Employment Agreements by the current Government.

King's commitment to a 'deep' involvement of Unions in industry is also a trademark. She played a leading role in getting Government to institute an overhaul and expansion of the apprenticeship system, and is a member of the Commission established to oversee this interesting development.

King can be expected to arrive at Congress as a force of nature. A hopefully decisive new leadership style and direction can be expected to rapidly emerge.

So, all in all, an excellent choice .....

**Philip O'Connor**



**The TUC & Social Partnership,**  
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interview with *Frances O'Grady*,

TUC General Secretary. ISBN

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#### "Parliament & WWI"

is a series of extracts from **Westminster Debates**, which appears in *Labour Affairs*. The following is taken from a debate on **Compulsory Military Service** which appears in the February issue. It features an interjection to a speech opposing **Conscription** by **John Dillon** of the **Irish Parliamentary Party** by **Commander Josiah Wedgewood**, a **Liberal member who switched to Labour in 1919**:

"*Commander Wedgewood*: The Irish people can govern themselves, and they have decided against it [conscription]. I am a little surprised at the fiery opposition raised by an Irishman to Conscription in England. I recollect that at the beginning of this War, when I still thought that peace might possibly be preserved, I made a speech from this

bench which was howled down by Members of the Irish Party because they wanted the War. I do not know how much they want the War still; whether they are getting tired of it or whether they still intend to prosecute the War to a successful conclusion..."

#### Labour Affairs

(incorporating *Labour & Trade Union Review*)—is produced monthly at £2. The magazine covers current developments in British, European and International politics. [labouraffairs@btinternet.com](mailto:labouraffairs@btinternet.com)

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# Pseuds Corner-Boys

Pseuds 3

## Michael Gove

*"The noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads to England"* quipped Dr Johnson, a Tory.

These days any *Commons* prospect for a Scots Tory entails their forsaking Scotland and standing for an English seat, preferably in such leafy and loot-laden constituencies as Surrey Heath. Take the Right Honourable Michael Gove MP, currently Government Chief Whip and formerly (2010 to 2014) Secretary of State for Education. Before the Conservatives combined with the Lib-Dems in Government in 2010, Gove was Shadow Secretary for Education and wrote a regular column for *The Times*. Ignorance did not preclude commenting on Irish events and persons. For instance, one Easter he described the 1916 Insurgents as *"squalid gangs that betrayed Ireland"*.

In the House of Commons on 11th May 1916, some hours before British firing squads shot Sean MacDiarmada and James Connolly to death, Prime Minister Asquith said that the rebels had fought a fair fight.

Like the other prisoners shot in Dublin and Cork, they had not been charged before a jury, or before fellow Irishmen, or in open court, but before British Courts Martial, nor did the public know anything about the proceedings except the verdicts after the execution of their sentences. They were charged and found guilty on charges of taking *"part in an armed rebellion and in waging war against His Majesty the King"*. Nowhere did the words *"treason"* nor *"Ireland"* occur in the charge or the verdict, and I imagine that, had they done so, the most dumb-headed Court Martiallers would have fallen off their chairs laughing. If the rule of the King of England or the Parliament in England had any moral traction in Ireland the execution of a handful of insurgents would have left Irish men and women unmoved.

One Irish Republican, Roger Casement, was hanged for High Treason, and he had travelled to Ireland to dissuade his comrades from staging the insurrection.

Though he was captured in Kerry, the British dared not arraign him before a jury of fellow-Irishmen in Ireland. He was tried in London's Old Bailey. Leading for the Crown was the Attorney General (and later Lord Chancellor). F.E. Smith, who a couple of years previously had promoted the Ulster Volunteers, pledged to fight against the British Army if Parliament attempted to implement Irish Home Rule. Connoisseurs of squalid manipulation of politics and law could do worse than study the career of Smith, and the history of the Act under which Casement was charged.

Since the 12th Century, when Henry II of England claimed the Lordship of Ireland, the betrayal of Ireland has never been a crime in English Law, nor is *"the betrayal of England"* known to the Statute Book. But Irishmen and women who betrayed Ireland have been rewarded, time and time again by the monarchs and parliaments of England, their agents and their champions. Informers like Leonard McNally in 1798, venal politicians such as members of the Irish Parliament, bribed by money and peerages to vote for the Act of Union in 1800, Sadlier and Keogh in the 1850s, and forgers like Richard Pigott in the 1880s.

Rewards for betraying Ireland and all moral principle still apply, including earning plaudits from Michael Gove and *The Times*. In November 2007 Gove celebrated the 90th birthday of Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien by describing him as *"the greatest living Irishman"*. I recall the days when I held O'Brien in high regard, days when O'Brien sued *The Daily Telegraph* for libel. But, in 1972 O'Brien and his wife Maire Mac an tSaoi blotted their copybook. In fact they spoiled their brilliant, scholarly *Concise History of Ireland* in order to ingratiate themselves with the British Government and its sycophants. They wrote of the British Army firing on *"rioters in Derry"* on Bloody Sunday and thus they aligned themselves with Lord Chief Justice Widgery, Prime Minister Edward Heath and their squalid gang. Lord Saville's enquiry and Prime Minister David Cameron repudiate the story that those fired on, killed, or wounded were rioters. O'Brien's coat-turning did not prevent him becoming Editor-in-Chief of London's *Observer*, nor did his Pilgrim's Progress into squalid propaganda prevent him being hailed as *"Valiant for Truth"*.

If there is a Pseuds' Corner in the next world he may well preside there.

Today Mr Gove is Government Chief Whip, but for the first four years of the current Government he was a Secretary of State for (God Help Us All!), Education.

Whilst Shadow Secretary he wrote a regular column for a Paper of Dubious Record, *The Times*. One Easter his column described the Irish Insurgents of Easter 1916 as *"squalid gangs that betrayed Ireland."* When he became Education Secretary he sought to dictate how history, amongst other subjects, was taught, and appointed,

Professor Simon Schama as his "History Czar". To celebrate the Bicentenary of the French Revolution Schama wrote *"Citizens"* which showed a contempt for the Revolution and its adherents which perhaps inspired the young Gove. Partly as a counter-blast Mark Steel wrote *"Vive la Revolution"* which impales Schama on a cocked bicorn hat. If you like revolution without tears, save those of laughter, I suggest you read Steel.

Donal Kennedy

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Letter Published in *Evening Echo*,  
Cork, 9th Jan. (with a small deletion)

## Why D.D. Sheehan MP Left Cork

In his piece *"The plight of Captain Sheehan and family"* (*Echo*, 30 December 2014) Turtle Bunbury perpetuates the story that the MP and his family were forced to leave Cork in 1918. He writes: *"Shortly after the 1918 election gunshots were fired into the family home on the Victoria Road in Cork, most likely by radical militant Republican elements forcing them to abandon it."*

The expulsion of an MP and his family from Cork and Ireland in this manner would have been a very noteworthy event. A unique event as far as I am aware. He was one of the best known MPs of his time in Ireland and Britain; he represented Mid Cork for 17 years. He was also a barrister and a journalist and was therefore well able to account for himself. Yet he left no account of this extraordinary event. Neither did any of his contemporaries leave an account or protest or mention it. Neither did any newspaper report it. Dublin Castle did not use it even though it would have been propaganda gold to discredit Republicans. And a rumour would have been sufficient for that purpose but it does not seem that there was even a rumour about it. His very sympathetic biographer, John Dillon, does not mention it in *"The Life and Times of D.D. Sheehan B.L."* (3 Bridges Publishing, 2008). So where is the credible evidence for this expulsion? Turtle does not provide any.

None of his MP colleagues had to leave the country though they had supported and recruited for the war. So why did he? The reason is simple and obvious. He did not envisage an independent Ireland. Home Rule, maybe, with real power staying with Westminster and he decided to contest the 1918 Election for a Labour seat in Westminster representing Limehouse. Logically enough he moved to London for that election to better represent his new constituency. But he did not win the seat and was left high and dry politically. He had burned his boats in Irish politics. He had made a disastrous life-changing decision.

The story continues (but Turtle does not continue it) that Sheehan decided to return in the mid 1920s when the alleged expulsion threat was lifted. The truth is somewhat unpalatable. Because of his decision to leave and his failure to win a seat he was a broken man financially and politically. His pension was reduced and he went bankrupt. To survive he engaged in various nefarious activities and became effectively a conman trying to obtain money by fraudulent means.

He applied for money on 1st November 1926 to the Irish Grants Committee in London which compensated Southern Loyalists. But he had got so notorious that in October 1924 it was reported to the Committee that the Commissioner of the Police in London had explained about another case involving him where:

"Complaints had been received from several persons who stated that they were induced by Captain Sheehan and another to advance an amount in all to over £1,000 to the (Imperial Settlement) League as a condition to their being appointed County Organisers. It was alleged that the money was obtained from these people by fraud and the whole matter was under the consideration of the Director of Public Prosecutions with a view to criminal proceedings being taken. Captain Sheehan at that time disappeared" (British National Archives, Kew, CO 762/24/14).

The Irish Grants Committee did not accept his case for compensation and dismissed the claim he made to it as yet another attempted fraud. His war record counted for nothing.

He returned to Ireland to escape the consequences of his behaviour in London. Therefore the only indisputable, documented and credible threat that was an ever made to force him to leave a country was made by the London police and he sought refuge in Ireland to escape the consequences.

**Jack Lane**

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## INTERNET TO DISAPPEAR?

Eric Schmidt, the Executive Chairman of Google, thinks that the internet will "disappear" (RT.com, 23.1.15):

"There will be so many IP addresses, ... so many devices, sensors, things that you are wearing, things that you are interacting with that you won't even sense it, it will be part of your presence all the time."

The idea that something external to a human being could be absorbed or become indistinguishable from him is not a new one. Marx and Engels believed that man acts on nature, though tools and later machines. In the process he changes and is changed by nature (the role of technology was not considered by Darwin in his theory of evolution).

Marx and Lenin also believed that under communism the State would "with away". It was unclear whether this meant that the State would cease to exist or the opposite: that it would become so pervasive that the individual could not conceive of acting independently of it.

The 1974 film *The Conversation*—written, directed and produced by Francis Ford Coppola—suggested that the threat to individual freedom came, not from the State, but private corporate interests using bugging devices to surveille their targets. The film could hardly have anticipated social media such as *Facebook* in which the most intimate personal details are transmitted to the world voluntarily. As an example, recently the parents of a teenage son only discovered that he was gay from the content of advertisements that were appearing on his *Facebook* page.

Marx observed that under capitalism production was socialised—that is to say, it was organised on a society-wide and international basis—even though ownership was in private hands. It could be said that cultural values have undergone the same process of socialisation, which the internet has accentuated. Never before have corporate interests had such access to, as well as knowledge of, their targets.

The individual can 'liberate'—or 'isolate' himself—from his family or peers through the internet.

## SAME SEX MARRIAGE

The forthcoming referendum on same sex marriage is being presented as a referendum on equality. It used to be the case that equality was about access to material resources, but now it means something else entirely. There were two thoughtful contributions to the debate on RTE's *Drivetime* (12.2.15 and 13.2.15). Petra Conroy, who is a member of an organisation called *Catholic Comment*, is against the proposed Constitutional Amendment, while the journalist Brenda Power supports it.

Power cautioned the "Yes" side against complacency. It is not good enough to accuse the conservatives of bigotry or to pretend that the passing of the amendment was part of the natural order of things. For centuries the institution of marriage has consisted of parents (a man and a woman) committing to each other for the purpose of providing a stable environment for procreation. Perhaps changes in reproduction technology have made support for the traditional institution less important.

The people will be asked to decide on whether the traditional family unit should be given precedence over other family arrangements, which are already tolerated, but are not given the same status in law. To pretend that a move away from this traditional model is not a radical departure will convince nobody.

## GREEK TRAGEDY

A royal flush will always beat a pair of deuces. No amount of knowledge about game theory from the new Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis can change that. The Greeks have only one card to play. By threatening suicide it might bring the whole house down. But at the time of writing it looks like the rest of the Eurozone is prepared to call Greece's bluff.

The experience of Greece in the last 15 years shows the weakness of Keynesian economics. The theory holds that an increase in consumption will stimulate investment, leading to an increase in output or national income. But production is complicated and does not flow automatically from an increase in demand. In an open economy the increased demand is absorbed by imports.

If Greece had its own currency, it would devalue, thus raising the cost of imports, which would restore equilibrium in the balance of payments. In the absence of a



domestic currency the onus is on the State to eliminate balance of payments deficits by other means. This involves controlling public debt and private debt facilitated by the banking system.

Greece, along with other countries, failed lamentably to do this. It has had a standard of living, which is not justified by its level of output. The maintenance of an artificial standard of living drains the country of productive investment. Labour gravitates towards employment in the public sector; the retail sector or the non-traded sector (e.g. construction).

Keynes predicted that, if there is an increase in consumption, national income will increase by a multiple of the increase in consumption: the so-called *multiplier*. But the corollary of this is that, if consumption diminishes, national income will decrease by a multiple of the reduction in consumption.

In Greece the negative multiplier was high because economic activity was orientated towards servicing domestic consumption. In Ireland, by contrast, a large proportion of economic activity was orientated towards export markets. Companies producing for export markets were not affected by a decline in domestic demand, indeed the greater supply of labour as a result of layoffs in the retail and construction sectors made such export companies more competitive.

Policies of austerity make sense for Greece, but they must be accompanied by policies which increase the productivity of labour in the international traded sector. Her euro zone partners should help mitigate the social costs of the very necessary adjustments that need to be made to the economy. In the meantime, it would be helpful if the new Government dispensed with its entertaining circus act and face the reality that years of State-sponsored economic stimulus have left the Greek economy in such dire straits that, like the character in the Tennessee Williams play, it has become dependent on the *"kindness of strangers"*.

#### STATE AND PRIVATE DEBT

There has been a view in this country that Ireland is at least as entitled to concessions from other euro zone countries as Greece and that Government Ministers should have the guts to make themselves unpopular by banging their fists on the table. But what is our case? Unlike the Greeks, we hardly count as a charity case (incidentally Greece is by no means the

poorest country in the Eurozone). Ireland's GDP per capita is still well above average; our unemployment rate is dipping below the Eurozone average; the national debt is falling as a percentage of GDP: in debt terms, we're now behind Greece, Italy and Portugal.

The argument appears to be that the State underwrote private banking losses. While this saved our own banking system, we should also receive credit for the fact that our actions also prevented contagion in the rest of Europe: Anglo-Irish Bank was Europe's Lehman's.

But the facts of the matter are that the country was living beyond its means. People were offended by the late Brian Lenihan's assertion that *"we all partied"*, but in aggregate economic terms that is true. There are two ways that a country can live beyond its means: by increasing its external public debt and its external net private debt.

State debt is not a great problem if the debt is financed by domestic savers. Japan has a debt to GDP ratio of about 200%. This is considered perfectly sustainable, since the State's interest and capital repayments do not leave the economy. It is only when the State borrows from abroad that the economy assumes the capacity to live beyond its means. It should be said that there is nothing wrong with foreign borrowing if it is invested in such a way that it increases the productive capacity of the country, but if all it does is enable the State to reduce taxes *"there may be trouble ahead"*!

Similar arguments apply to the accumulation of private debt through the banking system. In the past the capacity of private entities (companies and individuals) to borrow, or *"live beyond their means"*, was limited by the volume of domestic savings. This all changed with the lifting of capital controls and was accentuated by the inauguration of the euro.

So, foreign money (money not earned by our citizens) flowed into this country through the State and the private banking system and stimulated the economy. The fact that we had difficulty repaying this money and we had to make dramatic adjustments when creditors lost confidence in the economy suggests that a large proportion of the borrowing was used to sustain a standard of living not justified by the level of output in the economy.

Is it unjust that Irish taxpayers should have to underwrite both State and private

banking debt? Unless it is assumed that the Government during the Celtic Tiger era was illegitimate, it would be difficult to argue that the taxpayer shouldn't be responsible for State debt.

Regarding Banking debt, the money, unlike in the case of the Icelandic banks, did flow into the economy. To quote from the American journalist Michael Lewis: *"Ireland bought Ireland whereas Iceland bought the world"* with the funds from abroad. The German taxpayer has stronger grounds for indignation than the Irish taxpayer (although the costs it bore were proportionally far less). The German taxpayer had to put in almost 100 billion to Landesbank, which bought securitized debt from the USA. In effect the German taxpayer was subsidising fraudulent lending practices by American banks.

Should the Irish taxpayer then be responsible for the bad lending decisions of the banks? Firstly, these banks are licensed by the Irish State and therefore the State should have regulated them more stringently. Secondly, the taxpayer did not pay for the full value of the mistakes. Part of the burden was born by shareholders and junior bondholders. Thirdly, the taxpayer did not pay for the enormous losses incurred by the foreign banks operating here. Enormous amounts of money flowed into the economy. This was, in effect free money, which was lost by Royal Bank of Scotland (parent of Ulster Bank), HBOS and Danske Bank (parent of National Irish Bank).

Perhaps morality or justice should have no place in these matters. The State should minimise the liability of the taxpayer, regardless of the rights and wrongs of the matter. Donal Donovan, a former IMF deputy Director, said in his submission to the Banking Inquiry that we could have got away with 5 billion euro less if Europe had allowed us burn senior bondholders. But Europe didn't. And we did receive billions of euros in Emergency Lending Assistance and other forms of funding which enabled us to work our way out of the crisis.

In the Long Fellow's opinion our indignation at the way we were treated by the EU is misplaced. As has been mentioned before in this column, the real injustice was not that the senior bondholders were paid, but that the massive flow of money into the country led to a redistribution of wealth from those who sold assets (land and buildings) at grossly inflated prices to those who bought them before the crash. ■

## Regretting the War Of Independence?

"*That this house regrets the War of Independence*" was the title of a debate hosted by the The Literary and Debating Society of NUI Galway in collaboration with the History Society in NUI Galway on 29th January. The Bank of Ireland Professor of History at TCD, *Eunan Halpin*, was due to propose the motion but was unable to do so due to illness. His place was taken by *Dr. Tomás Finn*, a lecturer in Modern Irish History in NUIG.

### PROPOSERS

Mr. Finn listed all the negative aspects of the War of Independence—including a huge cost of life, turmoil, destruction, and militarism. He also believed that Sinn Fein objected to more positive solutions, such as the Government of Ireland Act, which they could have influenced if they had gone the Constitutional route. He questioned Sinn Fein's democratic mandate, and pointed out that the War was controlled locally, by local groups, which led to quite a lot of atrocities, which could also have led to the exodus of Protestant population. A culture of militant nationalism was also cited as a legacy of the War of Independence.

Mr. Finn believed that the analysis of the legacy of the War of Independence could only to one conclusion—and therefore, the motion should be accepted.

*Jack Lane*, from the Aubane Historical Society, then spoke for the opposition.

He took issue with the suggestion that the Dail, which first met in 1919, had no democratic mandate and that the War was caused by an unrepresentative group of people. There was an all-Ireland General Election in 1918, where Sinn Fein won an overall majority with 79% of the vote. He went on to give the results of four subsequent elections where Sinn Fein/Republicans got majorities: these were the January 1920 Municipal Election where they got 77%; the June 1920 Rural Council Election where they got 83%; the June 1920 County Council Election where they got 80%; and the June 1921 General Election where they had 100% success in the 26 Counties. And they got these massive majorities despite the sudden introduction of Proportional Representation, which was an attempt to maximise divisions among the electorate and dilute

support for Sinn Fein. These results showed that it was a People's War in a real sense and fought on full democratic grounds.

Also, this was just after WWI, which was allegedly fought for the "*freedom of small nations*" in Europe. Irish soldiers had died by the tens of thousands and killed by the tens of thousands for this freedom and then got the Auxiliaries and Black and Tans instead of freedom.

The Irish did not vote for war—they voted for independence. But the British threw everything at the people involved with implementing those democratic mandates—therefore making the War of Independence regrettably necessary. It was a defensive war.

He also pointed out that Independence was, and is, a relatively normal demand for national groups across the world. About 200 nation states exist and most were achieved by war and none regret it. In fact, more and more want to do likewise, Scotland, Palestine, Kurdistan, etc., and national freedom was and is the essential factor in world politics. Ireland led the way for many of these nation states and we should not regret it and we should oppose the motion.

*Dr. Brian Hughes*, a research fellow in Trinity College Dublin, spoke for the Proposition.

Mr. Hughes started by saying that he assumed that the people in the room would not support violence nowadays, in order to achieve a political aim. He stated that he didn't agree with comments like those made by John Bruton, who said that independence could have been attained through Home Rule. He said that we shouldn't regret the Independence of the state—but we should regret the violence, and the aftermath of that violence. He cited the example of Kate Carroll—who was shot after complaining about the IRA interfering in the production of her poteen.

This type of civilian atrocity wasn't all one-sided, Mr. Hughes clarified—the British killed many civilians. However, that was the consequences of the type of warfare that took place. Even though he admitted that there was a case for sanctions against spies during a war, innocent people were killed, and should not be airbrushed from history. Property was looted and

burned down. And many people—not just Protestants, but also Catholics that were in the RIC or the Army—felt that they did not belong in the newly-created state, and left, mainly for Britain.

For those reasons, Mr. Hughes called on the House to agree to the motion.

As *Éamon O'Cuiv*, TD for Galway West and grandson of Éamon De Valera was late—due to car trouble, as later transpired—*Dr. Sean Duibhir* stood in for him temporarily.

Dr. Duibhir agreed that the violence of the War of Independence was totally regrettable, but the War in totality was necessary. The British Establishment was against Irish self-determination. Voting Sinn Fein, which supported a separatist state, necessitated violence. Dominion status, which was upgraded to a full, independent republic, allowed for greater independence than Home Rule. Home Rule would not have allowed for fiscal independence, and would have given us a Civil Service totally orientated towards Westminster. He believed that we could not have achieved this independence without the War of Independence.

We did set the example for others—which were why maybe Indians could gain Independence without violence.

### AUDIENCE REACTION

Initially, even though the convention in the house was that the first speech from the audience was always a proposition one, since the proposition side were either too scared or too unprepared at that time, the audience debate kicked off with an opposition speaker.

He said that, because of the War of Independence, he stood there as a citizen, not as a subject of the British monarch. He did not believe that there was any way to know that Independence could have been achieved without a violent struggle, especially since (as he stated in response to a Point Of Information) Ireland was part of the UK itself, rendering comparisons with Canada or Australia invalid.

*River Byrne* then spoke for the proposition, while declaring that he didn't know a lot about the topic, nor really cared. He did think that Independence could have been achieved without violence, citing the example of Norway's Independence from Sweden. He believed that Home Rule was a good offer, but that Irish people simply wanted more, and more.... he also said that he didn't like terrorism, which apparently refers to the actions of the IRA of the War of Independence.

### ANOTHER SPEAKER

*Éamon O'Cuiv* then arrived during the

Audience Debate, which was interrupted temporarily to allow him to give his prepared opposition speech to the motion. After apologising for his late arrival, he divulged that he initially considered speaking in favour of the motion, because a war for Irish Independence should have been unnecessary, but for the British objection to Irish self-determination. He believed that the 1918 General Election was the closest we were going to get to a referendum on Independence, and when the results came in in favour of Independence, the British rejected the results, despite Irish people dying in the trenches for the "*Freedom of small nations*". He agreed that the War of Independence was a bloody affair—but so was World War One, but people did not think of the British Army as terrorists, and in the War of Independence, much of the "*terrorism*" came from the British.

Mr. O'Cuiv also pointed out that the First Dail, after receiving a solid democratic mandate, attempted to establish a proper Government, as far as anyone could do so with the opposition of the British. A delegation was even sent to Versailles to try and get recognition for the Irish Republic. He also stated that the Home Rule on offer was a lesser form of autonomy than what Wales has at the minute.

Therefore, Eamon O'Cuiv asked the house to reject the motion.

#### AUDIENCE

The next speaker based his case on the fact that Australia and Canada were slowly getting their independence, via Dominion status, around the time of the War of Independence, citing that as a way in which Independence could have been achieved. The War left people divided and dead, and he also claimed that we lost free trade relations with the British Commonwealth as a result of Independence.

Another speaker said that Protestant Landlords whose "Big Houses" were burned down during the war were tyrannical landowners—and as he was of a Protestant background, he couldn't really be considered "*sectarian*". The British split the progressive elements of the Irish Independence movement, and the most conservative elements took power. However, on balance, he seemed to oppose the motion, because he said something to that effect near the end.

*Zack Frennet* then spoke for the proposition. He believed that we have to look at things in hindsight, and stated that most of the actors were Irish—on both sides—which was regrettable. In its aftermath, the Civil War began, which split

Irish society for decades, and arguably still defined our politics. He also believed that the Troubles in the North were another side-effect of the War of Independence. He therefore called for the motion to be passed.

*Fintain McKee* was the next speaker for the opposition. He believed that the War of Independence was an organic and natural response to the repression of Irish nationalist aspirations by the British and, overall, was primarily a defence of the newly-declared Irish Republic against British authorities. In relation to points made about the death toll and destruction brought to bear during the war, he responded as follows—"*Tell me of a war where no innocent died, or no building fell*".

However, he believed that we should not regret the War of Independence—Americans would never regret their War of Independence, nor would Orangemen regret the Jacobite/Williamite Wars from which they believed their ancestors emerged victorious. As a Belfast man, he said that he regretted not been able to walk in a free Ireland in his home city, and called on the house to oppose the motion.

*Brian Farragher* believed that the Irish decision to join the EU made the "*fact*" of Independence from the UK irrelevant, and that Ireland was better off as "*part of something larger*"—therefore concluded that the War of Independence was pointless, and therefore regrettable, hence called for the motion to be passed.

*Tommy Roddy* then spoke for the opposition. He said that he based his conclusions on what he heard on the night, as he came into the debate with an open mind—and concluded that he was on the opposition side, agreeing that Sinn Fein had a legitimate mandate to declare an Independent Ireland. He also believed that this should not have led to a war, if it had not been for British opposition.

Addressing the issue of community divisions in the aftermath of the war, he pointed out that Kerry had some of the worst atrocities during the war years, but yet community spirit is indisputably strong in the County, explaining why it arguably had the best football team in the country. Finally, he believed that Ireland's stand for Independence led the way for others, including Scotland, which recently got the chance to choose whether or not to become Independent. Therefore, he called for the motion to be defeated.

*Conor Kelly* didn't think that Ireland did really try all the alternatives to violence before the War of Independence, and he apparently considered Sinn Fein a "*small, partisan group*". He also believed that the civilian casualties and political polarisa-

tion in the aftermath of the event was enough grounds on which to propose the motion of regret towards the War of Independence.

*Vincent Lacey* rejected the description of Sinn Fein as a "*small partisan group*", when it has a clear, democratic mandate by the majority of Irish people in multiple elections. He stated that Constitutional Nationalism, of the type proposed as an alternative by Conor and other proposition speakers, had been tried for half a century, and it did not work.

When the First Dail was trying to set up a new state, as *per* their mandate, Britain tried their best to stop them, and ultimately, the War of Independence which followed allowed us a choice in our future as a nation. Maybe we were better as part of the EU, but *IRISH* people get to choose what *THEIR* politicians do, rather than having mostly English politicians make decisions on their behalf. Therefore, he called on the house to reject the motion.

*Annie Duffy* was of the opinion that the War of Independence was regrettable because one of the outcomes of it was that it ultimately led to the beginning of "The Troubles" in the late 1960s, due to its polarising nature and its role in reinforcing sectarian attitudes. Even nowadays, every year around the "Marching Season" Belfast looked like a warzone with bonfires, and burning effigies of enemy politicians. "*Why is this the case in a modern society?*" she exclaimed. Ultimately, because of this legacy, for which she partly blamed the War of Independence for, she came down on the side of the proposition.

*Mike Spring* was the final audience speaker. He started by stating that Irish people killing other Irish people (or any people, he added) was hugely regrettable, but that we had to be realistic—Irish people had tried to use the Constitutional route towards Independence, but it didn't work. Being a citizen of a republic mattered. He fundamentally opposed monarchies, due to their inherent principle of inherited power. He therefore believed that Independence, flawed though as it was, should be celebrated. Even if a War for Independence defined us as a nation, that was better than been defined solely by centuries of submission to England.

#### SPEAKERS

The following points were made in response to the audience.

*Eamon O'Cuiv* said that we were agreed that it would have been better to do things without a war but stated that, if Ireland had stayed a part of the UK, Irish soldiers would have been involved in various colonialist wars, and would have been

conscripted into WWII, rather than having the choice to stay out—the choice of Neutrality during said war he defended by pointing out that Ireland's involvement in the League of Nations in the 30's showed that small nations didn't seem to matter at the time. He also believed that the Boundary Commission that was promised in the Anglo-Irish Treaty which ended the War of independence did not function as planned, leaving a large Nationalist Minority in the North. He then talked about the differences between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael—to much laughter in the audience. And he believed that there needed to be a debate on the direction the EU is going, and identified it as a "dividing line" between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. And, after all that, he called on the house to vote down the motion.

Brian Hughes, unlike quite a few of the opposition speakers, didn't think that the War of Independence was a simple case of an anti-imperialist war—the first victims of the war were two "inoffensive policemen" in Soloheadbeg in 1919 which began the war and the Black & Tans didn't arrive until March 1920—over a year after the War of Independence began. He finished by saying that we should regret the violence, and we could not oppose the motion unequivocally.

Opposition guest speaker Jack Lane, disputed that the War of Independence started in the manner described by Mr. Hughes. Dan Breen could not have started a full-scale war and his actions were not supported by the Dail, but the British persistence in suppressing the Dail ensured that his type of action became necessary to achieve Independence.

He said the reference to Norway and Sweden was interesting. Norway seceded without a shot being fired in 1905. That was the ideal way to solve the national issue but it was treason in the UK to suggest secession at the time, so it was out of the question.

On Dominion status: Ireland had voted for and established a Republic; Dominion status was a regression forced by a threat of more intense war if the Articles of Agreement were not signed. This was not a Treaty as it was not between equals and was not called such. The Dominions were not the natives in government as in Ireland but were the British Colonists who had destroyed the natives and were the 'kith and kin' of the UK. It was not comparing like with like.

It was ironic to hear Irish Independence being criticised for leading to 'civil war' and other alleged atrocities when one considers what, for example, the USA did with its Independence—genocide of the

native population, enslavement of the black population and a gigantic civil war. Yet nobody suggested that the USA should regret its independence. National independence is an end in itself.

The final speaker, (the proposer) Tomás Finn, argued that Sinn Féin had no legitimacy for an aggressive war of Independence. He was of the belief that Nationalists could have influenced legislation in Westminster in order to achieve independence, and finished by saying "Do you accept the war of independence in its totality or do you not? That's what we have to answer when we vote tonight."

#### RESULT

Unfortunately for Dr. Finn the answer

was decisively in opposition to the motion by a pretty large margin. The House decisively rejected the motion "That the House Regrets the Irish War of Independence".

#### POST-SCRIPT.

As I afterwards established, Kate Carroll was executed as a spy—not for making poteen. Her execution was the leading item in an *Irish Bulletin* forged by Dublin Castle as part of its campaign against Independence. It is interesting that a TCD academic today uses the same method as Dublin Castle did nearly a century ago to seek to discredit the War of Independence. TCD remains true to itself.

Jack Lane

## Casting Cold Yeatsian Eyes On Revisionism Dev And 'The Cruiser'

James Joyce's short story, *The Dead*, contains a fictionalised portrayal of a real live Irish-Irelander to whom, over time, Joyce had taken a dislike. Yet, according to her son, it was quite an accurate characterisation of his mother:

"... 'And haven't you your own land to visit,' continued Miss Ivors, 'that you know nothing of, your own people, your own country?' 'O, to tell you the truth,' retorted Gabriel suddenly, 'I'm sick of my own country, sick of it!' ... Gabriel tried to cover his agitation by taking part in the dance with great energy... Then, just as the chain was about to start again, she stood on tiptoe and whispered into his ear: 'West Briton!' ..."

Kathleen Sheehy, mother of Conor Cruise O'Brien, had been thinly disguised as Molly Ivors. Yet, for a couple of decades, 'the Cruiser' himself could be no less scathing than his mother, not only of the "West Britons" of the *Irish Times*, but also of the Anglo-Irish air-of-superiority and arrogance of a Protestant Nationalist like William Butler Yeats (1865-1939). This was in his 1965 essay *Passion and Cunning: An Essay on the Politics of W.B. Yeats*, on which occasion O'Brien proudly proclaimed himself to be an "aboriginal writer", which self-description, however, O'Brien would later self-censor and excise from the 1988 reprint of that essay. O'Brien professed to hold Yeats's famous 1925 Senate speech, denouncing the banning of divorce in the Irish Free State, in the utmost contempt:

"The new legislation was, in practice, not much more than a minor irritant. Belfast is not very far away... Most Irish

Protestants therefore took a guarded line in the matter. But not Yeats. (The *Irish Times*, representative of Protestant opinion, editorially regretted, on 12 June 1925, 'the manner of Senator Yeats's intervention' on the subject.) Yeats's aristocratic feelings and his pride as a Senator were hurt; the same oligarchy to which he had felt himself to belong, the 'fairly distinguished body' which 'should get much government into its hands', was now taking its orders from a bunch of peasants in mitres. The 'base' were dictating to their betters. The peroration of his speech on divorce was not a liberal one; it was the statement of a spokesman of a superior caste, denying the right of inferior castes to make laws for it: 'We against whom you have done this thing are no petty people. We are one of the great stocks of Europe. We are the people of Burke; we are the people of Grattan, we are the people of Swift, the people of Emmet, the people of Parnell. We have created most of the modern literature of this country. We have created the best of its political intelligence.' ... My friend Dr Mercier, like almost all scholars from Ireland who have written on Yeats, find his aristocracy, as an Anglo-Irish attitude, more congenial than the aboriginal writer of the present essay can find it... Post-War writers, touching with embarrassment on Yeats's pro-Fascist opinions, have tended to treat these as a curious aberration of an idealistic but ill-informed poet. In fact such opinions were quite usual in the Protestant middle-class to which Yeats belonged (as well as in other middle-classes), in the twenties and thirties. The *Irish Times*, spokesman of that class, aroused no protest from its readers when it hailed Hitler (4 March 1933) as 'Europe's standard bearer against Muscovite terrorism' and its references to Mussolini were as consist-

ently admiring as those to Soviet Russia were consistently damning. But the limiting factor on the pro-Fascist tendencies of the *Irish Times*, and of the Irish Protestant middle-class generally, was the pull of loyalty to Britain—a factor which did not apply, or applied only with great ambivalence—in the case of Yeats."

The last political conclusion that should be pursued in respect of Yeats is to tar other family members with the same brush. Quite the contrary. William B. was a vocal Treatyite supporter of the most vicious and murderous Civil War repression of Republicans by the Free State. As a Fascist, Yeats had composed an anthem for the Fine Gael Blueshirts which was rejected as too extreme even by Ireland's would-be Mussolini, Eoin O'Duffy, with its refrain of "*Hammer them down!*" By way of contrast, the poet's brother, the artist Jack B. Yeats (1871-1957), was a Protestant Republican and a solid anti-Treatyite. One of his most powerful paintings is of the burial of Harry Boland, the Republican leader murdered by the Free State in 1922, of whose funeral in Glasnevin Cemetery there is no other pictorial representation, since the Free State Government forbade the presence of any camera. Nor did Jack Yeats concur with his brother's unqualified "*no petty people*" accolade accorded to the Anglo-Irish tradition. As Victoria Glendenning, an English biographer of Elizabeth Bowen, rather awkwardly recorded:

"When Elizabeth was taken by (Glendenning's later husband) Terence de Vere White in 1947 to see the painter Jack Yeats in his studio, it was not a success... Yeats's comment was: '*The English who settled in Cork remained English. They liked it because it seemed like a part of England. She was afraid I'd expect her to buy a picture.*' A strange thing to say of a member of a family who had owned land in Cork and lived continuously on it for three hundred years. But that is how it was" (*Elizabeth Bowen—Portrait of a Writer*, 1977, p 138).

W. B. Yeats had this much in common with his son Michael B. Yeats (1921-2007)—they were both Senators. The father served in the Free State Senate 1922-28, while the son served in the Republic's Seanad 1951-54 and 1961-1980, being elected Cathaoirleach of the Seanad for 1969-72. But there the political similarity ends. Michael became a lifelong Fianna Fáiler, joining in 1943 and serving on its National Executive from 1948. Michael Yeats's 1998 book, *Cast a Cold Eye: Memories of a Poet's Son and Politician*, has long been out of print, and it had been remaindered well before that, I myself

picking up a copy for just £5 in 2000. It is a pity it was so undervalued, for it is full of sharp political insights and commentary. He described his primary education in a Dublin Protestant boarding school, and his fellow students, as follows:

"Being the sons of Protestant gentlemen meant that they were all very pro-British—and the teachers also... The 'Anglo-Irish' of that day were still trying to come to terms with the new Ireland. They were gradually coming to accept that the Unionist days were over, but their eyes were still pointed firmly towards Britain... In church on Remembrance Day and on other occasions when it seemed expedient, they would raise their voices in song, calling on the Almighty to look after the King of England: '*Send him victorious, long to reign over us, happy and glorious, God save the King.*' Their only source of news about Ireland was the *Irish Times*, still staunchly Unionist, with its daily Court and Personal column faithfully retailing the then respectable comings and goings of the Royal Family. At election time they voted for the Cumann na nGaedheal Government, not because they had any particular liking for William Cosgrave, but because he wanted to retain whatever ties with Britain remained after the Treaty. In any event, he was greatly to be preferred to Éamon de Valera, who was considered to be a dangerous republican who stood for everything that the 'Anglo-Irish' of the day feared and hated..."

"I arrived at Baymount School knowing nothing about the great events that were taking place outside its walls. The country during the early 1930s was in a fever of political activity, with a new Fianna Fáil Government under Éamon de Valera, the abolition of the Oath of Allegiance, the Economic War with Britain, the formation of the semi-Fascist Blueshirt movement with which for a brief period my father was involved. Of all this I knew nothing—I did not even at that time know that my father had been a Senator. I had never heard of Cosgrave or de Valera. There was just one thing I did know. I knew that I was Irish and that I felt no sense of loyalty to any other country... It some became clear to me that everyone else in the school held one fixed view. Not quite appreciating the nuances of their parents' political party attitudes, the boys all proclaimed that Cosgrave must be supported because—he might have been surprised to hear—he was pro-British. De Valera, on the other hand, was to be condemned on numerous grounds, most particularly because he wanted to break away completely from Britain and to establish an Irish Republic. Surrounded by these vociferously stated views, I had to make a decision for myself. As presented to me, this was an issue to which there could only be one clear and common-sense answer. By the time I left Baymount School at the age of 14, I had

become a committed de Valera republican" (pp 14-15).

Setting himself apart from his fellow Southern Irish Protestant schoolmates did not prevent Yeats, when attending a South Dublin secondary boarding school with a similar ethos, from forming one particularly enduring friendship:

"Brian Faulkner was the first Northern Unionist I had ever met, and his political attitudes were poles apart from the pallid West-British atmosphere that I had grown used to at Baymount School and now again at St Columba's. These 'Southern Loyalists' professed to love Ireland, but could not envisage Ireland save as an integral part of the United Kingdom and the British Empire. Brian, on the other hand, centred all his loyalties on the Six counties. He was typical of his fellow Unionists in their wish to remain part of Britain, but strictly on their own terms" (p 21).

Michael Yeats's love of his own native Ireland went hand in hand with becoming a life-long follower of de Valera, and he went on to develop an abhorrence of Dev's treatment by historical revisionists:

"At the time I became active in politics, Éamon de Valera was still the dominant figure in Irish public life. He was the 'last Commandant' of 1916, the founder of Fianna Fáil in 1926. In the 1930s he had got rid of the Oath of Allegiance and all the other restrictions on sovereignty contained in the Treaty document. He had created the 1937 Constitution. In 1938 he had made our later neutrality possible by getting back the four 'Treaty ports' and at the same time ending the 'Treaty clauses' which gave Britain in time of war the right to use Irish soil as a war base. Finally, at the time I joined Fianna Fáil, he was steering neutral Ireland successfully through the World War period. Éamon de Valera, today gets a bad press. The cult of revisionism is in full swing, and it sometimes seems, almost, as if an attempt is being made to write him out of Irish history. Some of our revisionist writers give the impression that all they know about this towering figure in modern Irish history is his (1943) St Patrick's Day speech on '*The Ireland we have Dreamed of*'... Now, after 50 years, it seems that no discussion of de Valera's long career can take place without some reference to these long-forgotten '*happy maidens*'. Why their sudden reappearance? It seems that these maidens fit in conveniently with the revisionist concept of de Valera as an austere individual who presided over an Ireland that was narrow, conservative and backward looking in its thinking. It was only with his departure from the political scene, we are told, that a new and liberal Ireland could arise. This interpretation of modern Irish history ignores the fact that for nearly half the time that de Valera was

active in politics he was not even in office. It was others who brought in the ban on divorce. It was others who abandoned Dr Browne's Mother and Child Scheme because they were not willing to risk 'a belt from a crozier'. De Valera was certainly very conservative in his thinking, but in this he was typical of the Irish people and politicians of his day" (pp 63-64).

Michael Yeats particularly enthused: "For Éamon de Valera, the safeguarding of Irish neutrality during the World War, ending with his brilliant reply to Churchill's arrogant victory speech in which he attacked Irish neutrality, was the culmination of his long career" (p 64).

For those who decry that neutrality, there is one other Fianna Fáil 'villain' who must be brought into the picture. In his 2007 book *Ireland: The Politics Of Enmity 1789-2006*, the Queen's Baron, Professor Lord Paul Bew, charged:

"The son of a Free State army officer from the North, Haughey first achieved some public notice on VE Day in 1945: in celebration of the end of the war in Europe, some Trinity College students flew the Union Jack from the flagpole facing College Green: Haughey, in retaliation, burned another Union Jack, and there was a minor riot" (p 527).

In the *Sunday Business Post* on 4th May 2008, the novelist Dermot Bolger brought the same charge to the level of hyperbole:

"Ireland's ambiguous relationship with World War Two is best encapsulated by events in Dublin on the day when the Allies declared victory. When other cities were rejoicing at the collapse of the horrors of Nazism, here future Taoiseach Charlie Haughey was leading a riot of Catholic students (some waving Nazi flags in bravado) against the locked gates of Trinity College, a riot initially caused because Trinity had the gall to fly the flags of the triumphant nations."

*Literati* and Professors have continued to keep the pot boiling in that regard. In a *Sunday Independent* letter on 13th January 2013, I pointed out:

"Ronan Fanning is, of course, entitled to pass any judgement he likes on Charles Haughey's response to the Falklands War. But a Professor Emeritus of Modern History should stick to the facts and not engage in myth making *en route* to his polemical destination, as when he writes of 'Haughey's anti-British instincts, first publicly exemplified by his role as a student in burning the Union Flag hoisted over Trinity College on VE Day in 1945' (*Sunday Independent*, December 30, 2012). The fact is that Ireland's national Tricolour was the only flag set alight over Trinity College that day by one of

the Empire Loyalist pups who had first raised the Union Flag above it. The latter flag remained intact, but in response to the Trinity provocation some protesters, including Haughey, set another Union Flag alight on the street below. A patriotic Irish Republican response to that Trinity provocation was expressed as follows a fortnight later: *'To get the TCD episode into proportion, let us, therefore, look for its equivalent in some other small nation with an unassimilated minority. Let us suppose that 'an excited schoolboy, who should have known better', from the Sudetenland, were to hang a swastika in pre-war days from the famous University of the German ascendancy in Prague. Would the Czechs dismiss it with 'Boys will be boys!''?' (Irish Times, May 21, 1945).* These words of wisdom from the self-described Protestant Republican Hubert Butler were very much to the point in recognising the essential equivalence of such '*Croppies Lie Down!*' Union Jackery and Nazi flag-waving over those regarded as *untermenschen*. Regrettably, successive editors have failed to include this incisive analysis by Butler in any of the editions of his writings that have been regularly published over the years."

Butler's own Anglo-Irish arrogance was undoubtedly at its best when demolishing the West British allegiances of his own kith and kin. And there was another Protestant Republican who bore witness from within the walls of Trinity College. Michael Yeats recalled that VE Day:

"Nowadays those writing about the years of the 'Emergency' tend to make the assumption that during this period neutral Ireland was in a state of hibernation, knowing nothing of what was going on in the world. In fact newspaper readers were fed a constant diet of war news, and anyone who preferred their news to have a more lively and propagandist taste had only to listen to BBC Radio, which could be heard all over Ireland... It might be thought that the official Government censorship was severe enough during the 'Emergency', but in Trinity College there was a further layer of censorship that had no connection with the reporting of war news. The various College Societies were forbidden to stage any political debates in public. Even the mildest topics of party politics had to be discussed in private, with a Chairman chosen from the College faculty. I used to go to meetings of the UCD Literary and Historical Society and hear their fiery political debates, held in public with the press present. I envied them their democratic rights. It is hard to see what purpose the Board of Trinity can have had in banning any public political debates, but it was presumably a result of their siege mentality at that time... Even after the European war was over, they refused to make the College Dining Hall available for a speech by Harold Laski, a perfectly harmless

English Marxist intellectual of the day..." "If it was indeed the intention of the Board to avoid all controversy that might draw unfavourable attention on the College, then they ruined all their efforts through their inaction on VE Day (the day the war in Europe ended on 5 May 1945). I was in College, watching the 'celebrations' building up on that day. A large group of students began running round Front Square, brandishing a large Union Jack. These were mainly students from Northern Ireland, who had spent the War years in safety in Dublin—they had not even gone to study in Queen's University in Belfast, where the odd bomb might perhaps have fallen on them. Then they went up to the roof of Regent House, overlooking College Green, where they hung up the Union Jack and the American flag; they then burned a Tricolour flag. This inflamed a counter-demonstration by students from UCD, including, it is said, a first public appearance by Charles J. Haughey. The Trinity porters (British ex-servicemen all), who could have removed those on the roof in five minutes if they had wanted to, were happy to leave them there, but locked all the College gates so that those violent Irish types outside could not get in... By chance I met in Front Square Dr Kenneth Claude Bailey, who held the position of Junior Dean and was therefore responsible for student discipline. He was a former British Army officer, and notoriously imperialist in his attitudes, so it was without much hope that I approached him and suggested that he should get the students down from the roof before something really serious happened. He did not even answer, but just turned away" (pp 40-43).

Yeats had already provided an overview of Trinity:

"I entered Trinity College in October 1939... The student body in Trinity was overwhelmingly Protestant. The administration of the College was in the hands of a group of mainly very old men, whose offices were held for life, and whose thinking on Irish affairs had evolved way back in the 19th century. The student body, having grown up in the new Ireland, were somewhat less conservative in their political attitudes, but they were still strongly pro-British. In many respects the Trinity College of the 1940s was a backwater, hardly even part of the nation. At that time its financial resources were so big that it could carry on without a State subsidy... Even amongst the Trinity students of the day there was always the odd one who did not conform to the norm. At the time that I had arrived on the scene there was, for example, a recent graduate who had the general reputation round College of being an eccentric left-wing radical. His name was Conor Cruise O'Brien. I saw on a College notice-board a sheet of paper signed by him, asking anyone interested in reviving the defunct Dublin University Chess Club to come to a meeting at 11 am

on 11 November. Having always been a keen player, I decided to turn up. Unfortunately he had forgotten that 11 November was Remembrance Day, when at 11 am one was expected to stand, poppy-clad, for the two minutes silence (at that period, the wearing of the poppy was looked upon as a Unionist manifestation). So when I wended my way across Front Square past the silent human statues, and arrived at the Chess Club rooms, he and I were the only ones there. We fixed a new date for the meeting, but in fact it was another 30 years before I saw him again" (pp 38-39).

That would have been 1969, but "the Cruiser" would undergo many metamorphoses in the later decades. So proud was he of his 1965 path-breaking essay on W. B. Yeats that he placed it to the fore in his 1988 book, *Passion and Cunning and other Essays*. In his introduction to that essay's re-publication, O'Brien boasted:

"If I am not mistaken, the general impression among those Yeats scholars who are interested in his politics is that I may have overstated my case a bit {indicting Yeats for being pro-Fascist—MOR}, but that is better than sweeping the subject under the rug, as had been the general practice in Yeatsian studies in the period before publication of the essay in question" (p 11).

Yet O'Brien was telling a lie from the very outset: "*The essay is reprinted here exactly in its original form*" (p 10). It was not. O'Brien had excised from the 1965 essay his then proud description of himself as an "*aboriginal writer*". True, in the 1988 reprint, O'Brien did leave intact this original 1965 judgement: "*The peroration of his speech on divorce was not a liberal one; it was the statement of the spokesman of a superior caste, denying the right of inferior castes to make laws for it*" (p 53). But he did not tell his readers that he now agreed with that stance of Yeats. In 1991 'the Cruiser' made the following approving statement in the *Foreword* he penned for a biography of his first cousin by the latter's widow: "*Senator W. B. Yeats had indeed in 1925 spoken out, with fire and eloquence, against the prohibition on divorce*" (Foreword, p viii, to *Skeff—A Life of Owen Sheehy Skeffington*, by Andrée Sheehy Skeffington).

It was as a member of Liam Cosgrave's Fine Gael-Labour Government of 1973-77 that O'Brien had made manifest his crusading role as the spokesman of a one-man superior caste—his own good self—who now believed that the aboriginal Irish were greatly in need of a full-blast British civilising mission. As Michael Yeats recalled:

"In 1975, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Minister for Post and Telegraphs, spent three months with us (in the Seanad) with a Broadcasting Bill. This was a curious piece of legislation that one would not have expected to see put forward by a member of an Irish Government. Its main provision gave the Minister power to force the RTÉ Authority to use its second Television Channel for the purpose of broadcasting BBC 1 in its entirety. In other words, there were to be no Irish programmes whatever on our second TV service. In the Seanad debate, I cross-examined Cruise O'Brien about his precise intentions in this legislation. My reading of the Bill, I said, was that on Irish Television we were to get the BBC from the display of the Test Card in early morning to the playing of '*God Save the Queen*' by the Grenadier Guards (or whomever), with a film of the Queen of England in uniform on her white horse, the Union Jack flapping behind. Cruise O'Brien—this Irish Government Minister—told me that I was correct, that under the powers given to him in the Bill he proposed to instruct the RTÉ Authority to use their new second channel in precisely that manner... In order to understand Cruise O'Brien's thinking on this Bill, one needs to remember that in 1975 he was nearing the end of his political transformation from youthful radical to Unionist. In the following years he developed a stage further, returning to active politics as a member of the fringe UK Unionist Party, whose policies, on occasion, made Ian Paisley seem like a moderate" (pp 98-99).

No wonder that Yeats so enthusiastically welcomed the defeat of Cosgrave-Cruise O'Brien Government in the 1977 General Election, before 'the Cruiser' could complete his pet project:

"After the votes had been counted Fianna Fáil emerged with 84 seats. Three Coalition Ministers were ousted, one of whom—to universal joy—was Conor Cruise O'Brien. I was told that at election counts in different parts of the country the news of his defeat was greeted with applause from all parties, including his own Labour Party. He had antagonised nearly everybody by his increasingly anti-national views, and his almost fascist endeavours to control what was said and done on Irish Radio and Television. After the election, he gained a seat in the Seanad but resigned a year later to become Editor of the English newspaper the *Observer*. From then on he became '*Britain's favourite Irishman*'."

"A couple of days after the election I wrote a private letter to the then Editor of the *Irish Times*, the late Fergus Pyle. In it I pointed out that on a number of occasions during the campaign, he had published surveys of the opinions on various subjects of supporters of the different parties. These polls must obviously have been based on a primary question in each

case, that is, '*What Party do you support?*' Yet his newspaper never published this basic information. I added in my letter that on the basis of what he did publish I had made my own calculations, which showed clearly that the *Irish Times* polls envisaged support for Fianna Fáil amounting to around 51 per cent to 55 per cent. I found it hard to understand the insistence in the newspaper, day-by-day, even up to the day of the count, that the Coalition Government were certain to win the election. At the same time, their own polls showed that there was about to be a landslide win for Fianna Fáil. He replied to me in some detail, but the gist of his letter was that they simply did not believe the extent of the swing as shown in their polls. But he did not make any effort to explain why, having had what, at the very least, was a warning that there was a massive swing to Fianna Fáil, he and his political 'experts' continued to say the opposite. It seems to have been a case of '*if you don't like a poll's results, then ignore it*'..." (p 105).

John Martin, of this parish, in his 2008 book *The Irish Times: Past and Present*, wrote of how noteworthy Pyle's appointment had been following the retirement of Douglas Gageby in 1974: "*The most obvious choice to succeed Gageby was Donal Foley who had been the retiring Editor's right hand man for many years.*" John went on to quote Gene Kerrigan's *Magill* article of December 1979:

"What, in the liberal *Irish Times*, seemed an almost heretical suspicion, began to grow among the journalists, both Catholic and Protestant. Could it be that Foley was denied the job because he was a Catholic? Despite all the changes in the paper, might the old sectarianism be alive at the heart of the paper which had presented itself as the champion of liberalism?"

John continued:

"James Downey in a discussion on the Vincent Browne programme (14.12.06) expressed the view that Pyle was appointed Editor because he was a Protestant. He said he was told this 'in so many words' in a discussion with Major McDowell. Pyle was the first Editor appointed following the establishment of *The Irish Times Trust Ltd*. Major McDowell dominated the Trust" (p 181).

Michael Yeats's revelation showed that Britain's Major Tom McDowell had found in Fergus Pyle a tame puppy willing to respond to *His Master's Voice* in respect of the 1977 Irish General Election. What a pity that Yeats has been out of print for a decade and a half! For he was no less illuminating on the Fianna Fáil rivalries of Jack Lynch, Charlie Haughey and George Colley.

(to be continued)

Manus O'Riordan

## Killing Them Softly

Commandant Seán A. Murphy has written the self-published *'Kilmichael'*. He is a proud Corkonian, hailing from Skibbereen. He is no great fan of Tom Barry's. He describes him as a "junior officer" after Kilmichael. The Auxiliaries are treated fairly.

Comdt. Murphy was mainly an ordnance officer in the Army. This comes through. His knowledge of weapons and ammunition is very impressive. His career was orthodox and classical. He spent some twenty years with the Ambush in mind. He appears to be fascinated by the local history. He makes great use of military aphorisms. As so-and-so said. According to—whoever. I've never heard of many of these. As Von Claustro said, "*The proximity of the enemies' front lines gives an indication of the concomitant risks*". Or, as Hanky B. Schultz maintains, "*If your flanks are distended, then your rear needs re-inforcing*." A lot of it is nonsense, of course. But I'm at home with nonsense. There might be a living there. Must think about it. As . . . as . . . I said. No. I'd better not. Shtop!

What I'd like to know is what the Auxies were doing leaving barracks in Macroom, as the light was about to depart, on the Dunmanway road? What's it all about? And how did Tom Barry know, that November late afternoon, they were coming? We're never told. After reading *Kilmichael*, I don't know what to think.

I have one big gripe. That photograph. The twelve happy men. The look-alikes. All smiling, youngish, fit. Neat and tidy. Hair clipped, Brylcreamed; in blazers and slacks, shirts and ties. Victorious. I must quote the accompanying caption verbatim (maybe someone will demur):

"The Defence Forces top marksmen: the author (seated, second from left) with other members of the Irish Defence Forces' Combat Shooting Team which competed successfully in the British Army's CENTSAM (Central Skill at Arms) competition at Bisley in the UK." (See illustration, p17.)

Now our army has competed in the British Army's competition. That's what is said. I don't say this. Comdt. Murphy says it. Read it for yourself. Like it or not, you are British. The Irish Defence Forces are British. They are adjuncts. Auxiliaries, if you like. Let it be corrected or accepted.

Count me out. *The fools, the fools, they have left us our Fenian dead*"

What did Pearse think that May morning in Kilmainham? Was it for this that Connolly died? Or should 'Irish Republic' be substituted by *English or British Province* in the Proclamation? And this too with the centenary year to come. With bated breath I await the disclaimer. The smile has been wiped off my face

I served, too, in the Irish Army in the Ordnance Corps. My service was undistinguished. Indeed it was indistinguishable. There is one great tale of Tommy Dee, a newly-commissioned officer who'd earned his B.Sc. However it was somewhat inglorious. *Infra dig*. It was a B.Sc. (Agr).

One day, a wise-acre was watching Tommy examining rifles. "*Oh!*", says he, "*Tommy D! He'd be better employed looking up cows' asses than looking down the barrels of rifles.*"

A Court of Enquiry was held at Macroom on 30th November 1920, in respect of 15 cadets of the ADRIC police and one temporary constable of the RIC, killed on the 28th day of November. They are listed, having been examined, superficially, by a Dr. Kelleher. It was testified the dead bodies were found just past Kilpatrick Post Office. In *toto* 16 of the I Platoon, 'C' Company.

A Lieut. Hampshire stated: "*All bodies were badly mutilated... four had been killed instantaneously {sic} and the others butchered*". The Court stated they "*were wilfully murdered and mutilated by some persons unknown. In most cases they were murdered after being wounded*". The only ADRIC survivor was Cadet Frederick Forde. Well, might one ask, "*What's it all about, Alfie?*" The fighting had been fierce. There was no way of *Killing Them Softly*.

Three members of the West Cork Flying Column (WCFC) died. They are, variously, called Volunteers, irregulars. Really, the *irregulars* were the Auxies. Or Auxiliaries. Or ADRIC. They'd been organised to supplement the RIC, who were being picked off, subverted in their original cause, demoralised and undermined. The ADRIC were paid £1 sterling *per diem*, with expenses. They were all former Brit. officers, with War service. They were adventurous, out to put down the Paddies. They were ruthless and were

without any real military discipline. They pillaged at will. They were all chiefs. None were Indians. They lacked real cohesion. They had no *esprit de corps*. They were getting on in years.

The Volunteers of the IRA were mostly small farmers, labourers, shop assistants, and tradesmen of various sorts. They had no deep military training. They had *tír grádh* (patriotism) and a sense of belonging and fellowship. They had some training in drill (discipline) and shooting. They sought freedom. They were sick of British rule. The Auxies were a red rag to them. They had respect for their leaders, at all levels, it would appear. They had a knowledge of history, local and national. They were ready for the fight. They had assorted weapons. ADRICs were armed to the teeth.

Tom Barry was the leader of the WCFC. He was aged 22 years. He'd been born in Killorglin, where his RIC father served. He had joined the British Army. He'd risen to the rank of Sergeant, serving mostly in Mesopotamia. He was possessed of outstanding leadership qualities, yet to fructify. He had a quick mind. He was decisive. He looked younger than his age. He was daring. He was ready to take on the Brits. He would prove a thorn in the British side. His fame would spread far and wide. His name would become a by-word. He was the master of surprise. He knew his men. They knew him. There was respect and mutual regard. The stage was set.

Some would think it an unequal contest. Comdt. Murphy is a conventional soldier. He has regard for the orthodox. He believes reservists or irregulars do not command the same fraternal fellowship. But perhaps his view is clouded by the very expertise of his experiences. Where local patriotism prevails, military forces, even when lacking training, can surmount odds which might appear beyond their capacity. History, in many places, has served up various examples of this. Before and since.

West Cork would become hallowed ground for the most looked-down-upon Irregulars. The Flying Column was given birth to there. It would spread out from there. The ambush of an Army troop train at Headford Junction on the Killarney Rail-line, would follow. Twenty-six British Soldiers K.I.A. Regulars, this time.

After Kilmichael, the Auxiliary irregulars would never again cock the same snoot. Tom Barry had left behind an



indelible mark. No one is perfect, but he was a great commander. While some were furtive and slinking in the shadows, he donned his uniform and, chest out, went to confront the foe. West Cork would lead.

There were three struggles. The Easter Rising was almost all in Dublin. The War of Independence would occur in Dublin and in 'The Republic of Munster', mainly. The Civil War would be fought too in Dublin and in 'The Republic of Munster', of course, with a small number of exceptions. Great leaders had emerged. Few reached the status of Tom Barry, who in later years would go on as a catalyst for reunification of republicans. Beyond party politics. Above the scrambles for power of others. But there always are the begrudgers.

(On page 188 of Murphy's book, Professor John A. Murphy, and his loud whisper behind the back of the hand, elevates Tom Barry, instead of lowering him.)

Comdt. Murphy analyses the merits and demerits of various weapons. A lot of it is heavy going. Suitable, perhaps, for an artificers'/armourers' course. Much seems to have been garnered from manuals and military papers. No wrong there. His use of mathematical formulas left me in a tizzy and reaching for the headache pills. (Along with the weather of course. Thunder all about. Memories too. Flooding back. Brother Vulgus and the CBS [Christian Brothers Society], The Green, Tralee. You don't shake off these things, easily. Those equations. Time was I could work out a half crown, each way, cross-doubles, at any odds, in my head; four horses, six doubles, with an accumulator.) At the very first of Murphy's formulas I was lost. (That's always the easy part. Making up a losing docket. Backing horses can become a habit. On the losing side would have been my lot on the three occasions mentioned. It's a bit like Maggie. *Out, out, out!* A bit like drawn in Trap Four at Shelbourne and then taking a bump at the first bend. But I digress. Must forget the bow-wows.)

The Auxies had been having a royal old time of it. Real snug in Macroom Castle. The best of grub. Target practice down by the river. Taking off in their Crossley-tenders. Motoring about the countryside. Knocking heads together. Spraying bullets about. No real opposition. The Paddies were a soft touch. And getting paid for it. Great. Looking into the mirror. Posing and pouting. Keeping weapons in good nick. Actions bright and slightly oiled.

Until . . . until that day. The twenty-eighth day of November. "*On the twenty eighth day of November...*" Some while before four pm, a party left Macroom in two Crossley tenders, each containing nine Auxies. Eighteen in *totto*. Maybe it was seventeen. There may have been an error. They were going to their doom.

The WCFC contained 36 men, a platoon. They were deployed on a serpentine stretch of road. No. 2 Section was positioned on the western flank, on the northern side of the road on raised ground. No. 1 Section was similarly deployed to the east of No. 2 Section. The Sections were less than two hundred yards apart. The Command Post (CP), close to No. 1 Section, was near the bend on the road. There was bogland running parallel to the road, extending along its southern length. No. 3 Section was positioned close to and south of the bogland.

The first truck approached. Barry was standing near the CP. He threw a grenade and sent the truck careering, killing the driver. No. 1 Section joined in. The Auxies, stunned, reacted slowly. They were taken out in quick time.

The second truck was now in the killing ground, between the criss-cross of Sections 1 and 2. The occupants reacted more quickly. All three IRA Sections were now locked with them. The fighting was close

range and hand-to-hand. Pandemonium had set in. The IRA participants seemed the more controlled. Some Auxies had cried out in surrender. Tom Barry blew his whistle and volunteers ceased firing. As some rose to take the surrender, Auxies resumed firing. Barry concluded it as a British ruse and ordered resumption of the action.

All Auxies lay dead. Two freedom fighters were KIA {Killed in Action}. Another lay mortally wounded. Barry had been in the middle of it. He had countered the surrender cries of some Auxies and had ordered his men to continue the fight. There had been some confusion, naturally. But Barry had maintained control. It was over within half an hour or so. An eerie silence had descended.

Now Barry's hand stayed at the rudder. He fell-in his troops. He drilled them and marched them up and down the road. He had sensed the after-drop in spirits. He countered with his Drill instructions. His nerves held. Amongst the men ran a re-invigoration. Barry's orders rang out. Reactions were quick. Responses immediate. The Commander had held control. From the first contact until last. Never straying. Never in error. He marched them off, the arms, equipment and ammunition of the ADRICS having been collected



The Defence Forces' top marksmen: the author (seated, second from left) with other members of the the Irish Defence Forces' Combat Shooting Team which competed successfully in the British Army's CENTSAM (Central Skill at Arms) competition at Bisley in the UK.

for another day; the wounded helped along the way. The WCFC had done its work for the day. The two Crossley-tenders lay overturned on the road, left to burn. The War had started in earnest. The night began to close in. One Irregular was making good his escape.

Intelligence reigns. In war and in much else. It's all about EEIs (Essential Elements of Information). When you know the answers, you're right behind the eight ball. You make your Intelligence Estimate. You can highlight things. Or low-light them. You have the dope on the opponent. Now matters are in your own hands. Your move, everything considered. You can take the initiative. The opening gambit is yours, even if it be allowing the other to think it his. Use your noggin.

Comdt. Murphy does not reckon the EEIs. He quotes Gen. Kitson, who has made the observation that finding the enemy was the problem. "*Find em, fix em and eff em*", as our own great commander, Gen. Martin O'Brien, has put it more succinctly. We are told that, that day, the Auxies were, maybe, trying to regain lost control. (When was it lost?) Kilmichael followed Bloody Sunday, when British spies were eliminated in Dublin.

Comdt. Murphy is now losing his grasp, I feel. "*There is a suggestion*", he unprofessionally states, "*that these killings {in Dublin} provided the impetus to the British Government to exercise the extensive powers available to it*" {this is wild speculation} "...and that as a consequence orders were given to intern all known officers of the IRA and other suspected men".

He continues: "*It may well have been that this was indeed the mission of the 'C' Coy ADRIC patrol that day.*" {Yes, this Comdt. Murphy has stated. Nowhere else in Ireland! Just in West Cork, it seems.} "*It is unlikely that they were expecting to be attacked*", he laconically adds. But what about the light? Would darkness come and rescue the ADRICs?

We are to believe that the Brits would apprehend IRA leaders all over the country. "*There is a suggestion*", Comdt. Murphy offers. His book would be improved if omitted these unprofessional leaps into the dark. I find it hard to credit that all this 'make-believe' has occurred. It's a bit like watching Judy Garland in *The Wizard Of Oz*. I'll stick with the EEIs. I'll stick with asking questions. Maybe somewhere, sometime, the answers will emerge.

Meanwhile, what did Barry know? Why was he there? How long was he there? Who'd told him what and when? And

what had been said? It was no accident that he was there? He knew a lot more than has been revealed here. He had duties: to himself, his men, the people, his country. He had arranged things to his liking. Patiently he waited. Listening for the whirr of the Crossley Tenders. The Brit Irregulars were coming. Two lorry loads from Macroom on the Dunmanway road. Tom Barry and his Column were deployed astride the serpentine stretch of roadway, Kilmichael was about to go ballistic. A new dimension had begun: the arrival of the IRA Flying Column. Intensity and size would grow. The Brit system would be extended. De Valera had argued against Collins' low-level assassination campaign. He believed it to be immoral. Chicago-like. He advocated big battles. They would prove more fruitful, militarily. The attack on the

Custom House was the first and last. The Brits came to the table and then . . . But the Civil War awaited. And that is another story altogether.

A tip of the cap to Tom Barry and the West Cork Flying Column. Good on you, boy, girl!

**PS:** An Ordnance Bomb Disposal Officer went to a Dublin office building. A suspicious parcel was to be examined. He cleared the building and entered the office. He conducted a controlled explosion. He gave the 'All Clear'. Awaiting journalists entered. "*What was it, what was it?*", they asked. "*Nothing*", he replied "*Just those china ducks you pin on the wall*". "*Oh*", said a journalist, his pen and pad posed. "*I suppose*", he suggested, "*it might be called a wild goose chase!*"

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

#### Part One of Series on Keynes's General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money

## Keynes' Critique of Orthodox Theory

In the 1930s the capitalist world was in the midst of an economic depression. Orthodox economics could neither explain the causes nor offer a credible solution. In the previous century Karl Marx had described capitalism in terms of a system which socialised production while keeping ownership in private hands. But economic theory had not built on Marx's theoretical foundation. Instead it developed on completely different lines.

The orthodox theory in the 1930s held that an economy consisted of individuals with different roles. Capitalists or entrepreneurs provided capital and workers provided labour services. Each of these individual actors negotiated freely with each other leading to an equilibrium price of labour. The market, if left to its own devices, would lead to full employment.

According to Keynes the economic orthodoxy of the 1930s made two assumptions:

- 1) The wage is equal to the marginal product of labour.
- 2) The utility of the wage when a given volume of labour is employed is equal to the marginal disutility of that amount of employment.

### **The wage is equal to the marginal product of labour.**

The first assumption suggests that capitalists continue to employ labour until the marginal product equals the marginal

cost of labour. The marginal product is a "*downward curve*". In other words as each extra unit of labour is employed the extra product produced diminishes. For a given level of capital the capitalist will be able to employ first class workers. But as he employs more workers the quality diminishes until at a certain point what the extra worker produces is no longer greater than the cost of employing him. At this stage the capitalist will stop employing any more workers.

The wage or—from the employer's point of view—the marginal cost curve is an "*upward curve*". In order to entice more people into the work force or to work overtime the employer must pay the workers a little more. At some point the downward marginal product curve will intersect the upward marginal cost curve at a point of equilibrium.

The second assumption owes much to John Stuart Mill's theory of utility. The worker gains utility or pleasure from consuming the products that his wages can buy. But on the other hand he experiences "*disutility*" or pain from the effort of working each day. If the pain or effort of working exceeds the pleasure of consuming he will not work any more.

If the market price of Labour is low, many workers will not work because the remuneration from employment gives them less utility or pleasure than that lost from giving up their leisure time. Therefore, as the price of Labour increases, the supply of Labour also increases. But, of course, the

level of employment is not simply determined by the worker's choice between leisure and work. As indicated earlier the marginal product that the worker produces must be at least equal to the wage that he is paid.

The orthodox theory refused to accept the possibility that involuntary unemployment could exist if the market were functioning correctly.

Accordingly, its solutions only made sense if its assumptions were valid. The solutions suggested by the orthodox theory (per Keynes quoting from Arthur Pigou's *Theory of Unemployment*) were as follows:

1) Better organisation to reduce frictional unemployment

Frictional unemployment arises from the gap in time between workers leaving (voluntarily or otherwise) their existing jobs and finding new work. If for example, workers don't have information about new jobs available, the time gap will be greater and accordingly the level of frictional unemployment will be greater. Workers might also decide not to take the first job available in the hope of obtaining a better job. In general, frictional unemployment is not regarded as a serious social problem. In the Ireland of the Celtic Tiger the level of unemployment was at 4%. This was regarded as "*full employment*" since the 4% was considered to be largely frictional.

2) Decrease in marginal disutility of labour

In plain language this means increasing the incentive to work. Policy-makers must ensure that the pleasure from the increase in consumption which wages give is greater than the pain of working. This often means increasing the pain of not working by reducing welfare rather than increasing the pleasure to be derived from obtaining a working wage.

3) Increase the marginal physical productivity of labour in the wage goods industry.

In Marxist terms the value of the means of subsistence is lowered because the value of wage goods has gone down. This enables employers to lower the real wage paid to workers and thereby employ more labour.

4) Increase the price of non wage goods compared to the price of wage goods

Keynes doesn't elaborate on why orthodox economic theory advocated such a policy. It certainly appears to violate free market dogma. However, the logic would appear to be similar to point 3 above. If the price of wage goods (subsistence goods) is relatively cheaper than luxury goods the real cost of labour is thereby reduced.

Keynes' position was that there was no reason to suppose that the equilibrium level of employment arrived at through the intersection of the marginal product and marginal cost curves would also equal a level of full employment.

It strikes the present writer that the first assumption (wage = marginal product of labour) is determined by the capitalist (or his managerial representative) whereas the second assumption (utility of wage = marginal disutility of employment) is determined by the worker. Only the capitalist knows when the marginal product equals the wage, whereas only the worker knows when the utility of his wage equals the marginal disutility of employment is reached. Furthermore while the workers as a class might have an interest in full employment, the same cannot be said of the capitalists.

Inherent in the orthodox theory is the idea that, if individuals act in their own self interest in the market place, the social effect will be benign. It was never explained why this was so. Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* questioned this article of faith. To extend the religious metaphor: he was not so much denying the existence of God (or the market) as questioning His righteousness. Keynes did not want to destroy the God of the market but merely to save Him from the consequences of His actions. And what could be more reasonable for an English liberal, intellectual of the 1930s than that!

Keynes's analysis of the economy was completely different to that of Marx, but there was one point of similarity. Both of them looked at the economy as a whole or as a system. Keynes very deliberately placed the word "*General*" in the title of his classic work in order to challenge the economic orthodoxy which denied that the economic crisis of the 1930s was systemic.

All economic theories are abstractions or simplifications of reality. They attempt to explain the driving forces of the economic system. There will always be exceptions, which the theory does not explain, but defenders of a given theory will claim that the exceptions cancel each other out or are random with no theoretical significance. Almost all economic theories have a grain of truth in them. However, if the exceptions are of greater significance than the theory, the theory should be discarded in favour of one that gives a more complete explanation of the laws of motion of the economic system.

Also, as Marx pointed out, a specific

economic theory might be true at a particular historical point, but will not be valid for all economic systems or the same economic system at a different stage of development.

Keynes did not so much disagree with the orthodox economic theory of the time. His main concern was to point out its limitations.

**The wage is equal to the marginal product of labour.**

Keynes largely accepted the first fundamental assumption of orthodox economics that the wage was equal to the marginal product of labour. Like all economic theories the theory that the marginal product of labour is equal to the wage is a simplification. For example the theory assumes a given level of capital. But labour productivity is not solely determined by the individual worker's skills or natural ability. The greater the level of capital investment, the greater the level of labour productivity. Also, as Marx pointed out, as the level of capital increases, the deviation from the average level of worker productivity diminishes. The machine determines the intensity of work rather than the worker.

But in most developed economies the proportion of the workforce in manufacturing employment has diminished. The services sector is not capital intensive and therefore the theory can be applied. And, even in manufacturing industry, a skilled worker can be more productive than an unskilled one.

During the Celtic Tiger era as companies expanded it became difficult to obtain suitable workers. The productivity of the newest employee was less than the previous employee recruited. An effect of this was that there were people employed in jobs that were barely capable of doing them. This was good for the workers. Opportunities were given to people who, in normal circumstances would only have aspired to the most menial job imaginable. In normal circumstances an economy would have come up against the limits of its productive capacity.

At a certain point the wage paid to the worker would become equal to the value of the product that the worker produced. At this point the employer would cease to employ any extra workers. However, Ireland managed to keep the boom going by importing skilled labour from Eastern Europe. So the productivity of the last worker employed was kept at a high level.

It should be pointed out that the rule

that the marginal product of labour should equal the wage of the last worker does not, of course, mean that the capitalist ends up with zero profits. The previous workers generate a surplus. So while the average profit per worker goes down as the capitalist employs more workers, the absolute level of profit continues to increase until the last worker's product equals the marginal cost or wage.

The orthodox economists of the time believed that the unemployment problem could be solved by reducing the price of labour (i.e. the wage). This would keep the marginal cost below the marginal productivity of labour and encourage employers to employ extra units of labour.

But this did not explain the economic depression of the 1930s. Unemployed workers would have gladly accepted a cut in wages if it increased their chances of employment. The problem was that there was no work at any wage.

**The utility of the wage when a given volume of labour is employed is equal to the marginal disutility of that amount of employment.**

The theory that the utility of the wage equals the marginal disutility of employment has an element of truth about it. It is certainly logical that the more a worker is paid, the more likely he is to work. But how significant is this psychological insight in explaining economic phenomena?

There may be cases where individuals make a decision to remain dependent on welfare rather than work if wages are not high enough. Also, it was noticed that during the Celtic Tiger era there was an increase in female participation in the workforce. Housewives, who would have been happy to look after their children, were encouraged by higher after-tax income to enter the workforce because such increased disposable income more than compensated for the extra childminding fees.

It is also the case that during the Celtic Tiger era there was effectively full employment and wages rose. When the economy moved into recession there was a drop in wages.

At first sight this would seem to support the orthodox theory that the supply of labour increases as wages increase. But a moment's thought would suggest that this economic insight has very limited value. While wages may have gone down in the current recession, the overwhelming anecdotal evidence would suggest that unemployment is mostly involuntary. Most unemployed people would be happy to work at the current lower wage rates, but the jobs just aren't there.

Keynes didn't believe that high wages

created employment. Indeed, he argued that sometimes real wages rose during a recession. This was because diminishing employment resulted in an increase in the marginal productivity of labour because only skilled workers were employed. (In Ireland some public sector unions have argued that private sector wages have risen during the recession.) Keynes was firmly of the opinion that the wages level was an *effect* rather than a *cause* of employment.

He believed that the struggle for increases in money wages affected the distribution of aggregate real wages between different labour groups, but did not affect its average amount per unit of employment. This is similar to Marx's view that the wage level was set at the means of subsistence as determined by a society's level of development. The industrial struggle can prevent wages from falling below the means of subsistence but this will not, of itself, lead to a long-term improvement in the condition of the working class.

Keynes also believed that workers reacted to changes in nominal wages rather than real wages. If there is a rise in the cost of living, workers will not go on strike even though there has been a reduction in their real wages.

If it is accepted that workers do not

control the level of real wages, the whole carefully constructed, orthodox house of cards collapses. Firstly, workers are absolved from responsibility for unemployment. If the equilibrium price of labour does not lead to full employment, the workers cannot be blamed since they did not determine it in the first place. Secondly, since the workers do not determine the price of labour and employment level, how can it be assumed that the equilibrium level will correspond to full employment? What determining element in the system had an interest in full employment? Not even the orthodox economists claimed that the capitalists desired full employment.

Keynes offered an explanation for the economic crisis that the orthodox economics of the time failed lamentably to do. It was obvious during the 1930s Depression that unemployment had not been caused by the wage level. The unemployed would have been only too happy to accept a cut in wages in order to obtain employment. Keynes gave a theoretical explanation, which unlike the orthodox theory, accorded with what was happening in the real world.

Next Month: Consumption,  
Investment and Savings

**John Martin**

## Who Dares Call You Paddy Now?

I read Eamon Dyas's article (*Humour and Satire—Catholic Irish in Britain and Algerian Muslims in France*, Irish Political Review, Feb, 2015) with interest as a fellow Irishman living in London and living through the Provisional IRA activity in this city and noting the reaction of the English public and the Irish from the Republic to what was happening. Certainly there was hostility in the workplace towards the Irish employees especially when yet another bomb went off. Living near Hampstead Heath, I could hear the explosions quite clearly from as far away as Deal in Eastern Kent with the Heath acting as a sound booster. Sometimes the windows rattled like when a flyover some miles away on the North Circular Road in London was destroyed by a massive explosion. They say that during WW1 huge explosions could be heard from as far away as France because of the Heath's stereophonic qualities. So, it was into work to face the workforce.

In my case, it was a building site off Holloway Road where I was working as a carpenter. That workforce then was mainly Irish from the Republic. They weren't too pleased with this Northerner: I was getting them into trouble again.

There was always a danger that their houses would be raided by the anti-terrorist squads. Some had already gone through this while living in Kilburn, a then lively Irish area. Two thousand homes had been raided over the years when they had nothing to do with the Provos. Of course the Provos would never live among the Irish community of the Republic or any among any other Irish. It turned out that they preferred their safe houses to be in the mainly Jewish area of Golders Green and other middle-class areas. That way they were well away from informers. Hospital employees' homes were even raided on occasions and the belongings of the Irish nurses from the Republic gone

through. Usually the raiding parties just walked away, leaving the door smashed open and their personal effects scattered throughout the room. So I could understand their feelings. Then they started on those with Irish names but who had been born in England of Irish parentage.

Could the anti-terrorist squads be that stupid to raid the areas where the Irish of the Republic lived? Didn't they know they weren't sympathetic to what was happening in the North through ignorance of what was going on there? Many were integrated into English society with sons and daughters living and thinking the English way of life. Much like my own five children who were either hostile to the Provos or frightened of them. Even they on occasions thought I had something to do with the bombing.

This was the result of me trying to explain to them what was happening in Northern Ireland to the Catholic population. That seemed to make things worse for to explain the realities was to justify what the Provos were doing in London. I said no more about it and listened to their moaning about how they couldn't get to work on time because a road had been shut down, where they got the bus, because of a suspicious car or package.

Then there was this lovely Dublin girl bowing and scraping and apologising on behalf of the Irish community every time a bomb went off. She was a secretary in the office of a building site I was working on. She once asked me why I wasn't condemning a particularly severe bombing that morning. She was wearing a poppy (maybe as some sort of protection), even though it was months away from that WW1 blood-spattered celebration. I had a good gaze at the poppy and she quickly said her parents were English and she was really only born and brought up in Dublin.

I had just returned from visiting my parents who lived on the loyalist Rathcoole estate a few miles outside Belfast, in dangerous circumstances as a mixed family, and I had heard six bombs go off before breakfast one morning. How much the windows rattled and vibrated after the explosions had made my father an expert in guessing the weight of the bombs. He would say: "*That's a 50 pounder, that's a 100 pounder...*" or "*That's one for the books—a five hundred pounder!*" Then, being retired as a shipyard joiner, he would hop on his bicycle and cycle furiously the seven miles to Belfast to try and find the scene of the explosion (smoke and flames

was his landmark) and see if he was right about the weight of the bomb by the damage done. So getting back to London was holiday time from real bombing and a bomb-groupie of a father, an Ulster Protestant at that.

Back in London I was now also trying to judge the weight of the bombs by the vibrations on the windows. At least I knew now what a loud noise was compared to the bass thump of a bomb. One night there was an especially loud bass thump and a cry outside in the street: "*What the fuck was that!*" before the windows had even stopped rattling and vibrating. Now the Londoner was getting to know what a bomb sounded like. I wasn't inclined to argue weights with them. I won't say I wasn't anxious sometimes as to the reaction of the mainly English tenants where I lived. I remember one Irish family nearby playing Irish jigs and a howl going up: "*Stop that Irish music!*" Other than that slight outburst there were no further problems.

On one occasion on a building site, after the financial district—the City of London—went up as if hit by a small atomic bomb, the site civil engineer, a Ghanaian, with a smile on his face, gave me the thumbs up as if I were responsible. Occasionally you might get an English worker on a building site who went all out to taunt you. Sometime in the 1970s a Provo by the name of Dessie O'Hare (known as the border fox, later to join INLA) was such big headline news that most Londoners heard of him. This person in particular mixed my name Haire up with O'Hare and asked me if he was a relative. I knew he and few other English were going to start something so my answer was: "*He could be a relative, you never can tell these days what is what*". That was the end of me being picked on.

The lads from the Republic then took over with their banter and it became a cat and mouse game. In those days I hand-rolled my cigarettes. While working I stuck one into the opening of a scaffold pole for afterwards and forgot about it until I heard a shout that became a scream. A usually macho Cavan brickie was pointing at the cigarette thinking it was a crude fuse ready to be lit. I reclaimed it and lit up as they watched me suspiciously. I'm sure they thought I had deliberately done that to try and scare them. That forgetfulness on my part made them even more hostile towards me. It wasn't as if I was going around preaching the Provisional IRA way of life. I never mentioned them nor did I

bring up the subject of Ireland North or South. In fact the more silent I became the worse this form of persecution became. But basically I couldn't care less what they thought I was up to, even when one hysteric was shouting all over the site that I was an IRA spy.

I tried to puzzle out why they had picked on me, obviously a Northern accent was one feature of their distrust but another one was hands. I had just finished two years in Theatre and in not using tools for that length of time my hands had become soft and were blistering. I occasionally licked my hands like a dog to get some relief and this must have been noted. The Irish were always concerned about hands, as were some English Trade Unionists on sites I had been on. On one site a new labourer appeared one morning to sweep up. We noticed he had white and puffy hands as if he hadn't done manual work before. He didn't do much work but was always seen getting close to those who were in conversation. We decided he was a plant put there by the company to learn about the coming Trade Union organisation of the site. The Irish too had similar things about hands—if they weren't hard and horny, calloused and a colour other than white you weren't considered a proper man, maybe a clerk, one who wears an overcoat in Winter, or a spy of some sort.

The Irish, like all nationalities, have some pretty odd elements among them. Now there was this bizarre person shouting out to all that I was an IRA spy and that only my trigger showed I had done any work. He claimed to have done time for GBH and spread this information around the site in order to try and intimidate everyone. His life revolved around drinking and he was suspected of breaking into building sites at the week-end in order to steal tools. The reason for this being he would run out of money in the pub. The stolen tools he would bring back to the pub and sell them at a pittance to those whom he knew.

He was particularly scared of the Provos' presence in the city and he felt they would come for him one day like something out of the old television series *The Four Just Men*. He was so wound up on occasions it was a good idea to have a hammer in your belt and to keep it under your coat at knocking off time, when going home. When the gangerman could take no more from him he was sacked. He left the site and came back drunk, throwing bricks at me. I found a scaffolding pole a good instrument for warding off a wild animal.

I felt I might have to kill this person in order to save my own life. The gangerman was reluctant to phone the police, which the Irish usually see as a kind of informing, also, he said the *cunts* had raided his home a year back. I was then sacked by the general foreman for attracting trouble. I ended up walking down the road with the person who had been trying to kill me. He shook hands a dozen times like drunks do and begged me not to tell my *friends* about him. He said he didn't do time for GBH but it was a good way of keeping people off his back. He went off blubbing and wiping his eyes on the sleeves of his donkey jacket. I had to feel sorry for him.

The security services put the Irish community, who were mainly from the Republic, under unbearable pressure. Elderly men who usually sang the old Irish songs of resistance in pubs would find themselves taken into custody overnight for questioning. Swoops were made on groups of Irish drinkers as they talked outside pubs at closing time, a custom that could go on for a couple of hours, but which the police saw as some kind of conspiracy. I'm sure this silly attitude must have driven some into the Provos or else some became their aiders and abettors. But mostly the Irish of the Republic community just wanted to be left in peace to develop their life in England.

My experience with those from the Republic was worse than with the English. There was always one or two English who had some understanding about why all of this was happening: and they had no Irish forebears, It was all a great pity for I loved being among the Irish community during the 1950s and 1960s. I went dancing in the numerous dance halls around the city, I loved the Irish pubs with their music, and the way you could strike up conversations with complete Irish strangers, which could be difficult with the English who sometimes wondered what you were after with your friendliness. Now that was all gone. I didn't feel comfortable in the pubs anymore when I spoke and my accent was noted. I would be asked if I was Donegal and I had no reason to claim that.

Sometimes they would think I was a Northern Protestant in there to spy on them, or some element from the Gardai or the RUC. That suspicion, among many other suspicions, was once reported to the manager of a pub I used to frequent. I was asked to leave, and if I wouldn't I was threatened I would be chucked out on my head. The paranoia was intense among the

Irish of the Republic in London at the time. It was almost an illness with their shouting on occasions at you that the Birmingham 6 were *fuckin'* guilty and should be hanged, despite the evidence being out there that proved them innocent. Their question seemed to always be why are you and the Protestants causing all this trouble for us? Why don't you get together like we do in our part of the country?

There were exceptions to this of course like the Green Ink bookshop at Archway run by a group from the Republic who sold books on Irish history, Irish music tapes and tapes made by the composers of Provos under the name of *The Irish Brigade*, songs like *The Supergrass Song* or *My Little Armalite* or *Roll of Honour*. They didn't hit the Top 10 Brit list but here they were being sold in a London under attack. Besides that *An Phoblacht* and the *Andersonstown News* was on display.

These people were all the braver because they were not supporters of the Provos but ran a bookshop that allowed a wide range of opinion on all things Irish to reign. I have been there when the head of the anti-terrorist squad has paid what seemed to be a casual visit to browse the books. On one occasion it happened to be he who loved all things Irish literature and was especially taken by W.B. Yeats. He was chatting merrily away to the girl behind the counter who had recognised him for what he was. To indicate this she winked at me. In Summer she would put a table and chairs outside displaying some books and played taped Irish music. Being a pretty redhead, the local English boys were more interested in chatting her up rather than arguing politically with her. But the bookshop couldn't keep going as the Irish began to go home during the time of the Celtic Tiger and custom fell away. It was now difficult to pay the rent of £600 per week. And there it lies locked up to this day for many years now.

Another courageous act I came across was at St Joseph's Catholic Church at Highgate. Though not religious, I accompany my wife there for her own comfort. One morning, at the height of the bombing, and before Mass started, two young women from the Republic stood up as the Irish priest from the Republic entered. They demanded he put their bunch of flowers on the altar in remembrance of those who were dying in the North of Ireland for the principle of freedom. He did, blessing them, and the flowers.

My other life was in the theatre and I

kept both lives separate. If you just stick to writing theatre plays and let your agent know you are not interested in writing the odd episode of a soap or a thriller for television, then you have to have a day job, like I was doing in going back to the tools when the resident dramatist post ended or when the royalties dried up from publishing and translations and performances abroad.

But, when able to work full-time in theatre, it became a relief from the caterwauling of the building sites though it opened up a new suspicion about your writing and whom were you really communicating with. Did that last play of yours says something to the Provos? In actual fact, even the Provos needed some relaxation. The Price sisters after bombing the Old Bailey had gone to the Royal Court Theatre in London to see Brian Friel's play: *Freedom of the City*, sort of reluctantly about Bloody Sunday in Derry. Friel afterwards apologised for writing it. Friel, though a Northern born in Omagh, Tyrone (his mother and my mother were friends in their early days), has a sort of Southern slant in his work.

Though no doubt an able playwright with many honours principally in England, he is cautious, and cautious for the sake of his *career*, by avoiding the worst of the Northern turmoil: much like Seamus Heaney, a good poet, also with many honours in England but he also avoided writing much of what was happening in North *vis-à-vis* the Brits.

Of course there is another angle to their achievements—they being both Northern Catholics and had beaten the Unionist system that tried to keep them down. Many Catholics in Northern Ireland see this as being sufficient. Protestant academic howls of derision and envy against both of them seems to prove this point. As for myself, fool that I might be in their eyes, I preferred to get the saws, hammers and chisels out again and feel free to write what is the reality of my life—if only those bloody *Free Staters* would leave me alone.

I had been brought up under constant siege from a hostile Protestant community where we always lived as Catholics because my Protestant father was frightened of living in a Catholic area, and we didn't have the money to live in a middle-class area. The anti-Irish feeling in London from the English and the anti-Northern feelings from some people from the Republic I can say I took in my stride

Unpublished letter to *Irish Times*, 15th February

## The Irish Bulletin

I was bemused by Michael Foley's review (February 14) of "Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland" particularly the short shrift he gave to "The Irish Bulletin" "which was not available at corner newsagents".

In his memoir "*Changing Times—Ireland since 1898*" Edward MacLysaght (1887-1986) records that he kept every copy since its first issue since 1919 and the inconvenience it caused his mother when she took two copies to read on the train which she boarded a train at Killaloe in February 1921. The train was stopped by Crown Forces on the way to Limerick, who searched her and court-martialled her for possession of the paper. She was sentenced, in Limerick to one month's imprisonment or a fine of £20.00. She chose the imprisonment, but her husband, who returned home that day from a business trip to Australia, paid the fine for her.

Your reviewer may reflect that there was no regular air-service to Australia in 1921, and may speculate on the likely consequences for corner newsagents had they dared to stock *The Irish Bulletin*.

**Donal Kennedy**

The following letter was submitted to the *Irish Independent* on February 15, but was denied publication

## Roisin Shortall's Principled Stand On Clare Daly Bill

If Sinn Fein's regression to abstentionism in the vote on Clare Daly's Fatal Foetal Abnormalities Bill was a cop-out, the application of the whip by the Labour Party to force women to carry such pregnancies to full term was beneath contempt. All credit to Anne Ferris for being the only Labour TD refusing to be whipped into line and for voting according to her conscience.

Your columnist Liz O'Donnell reflects (February 14) that "Labour should have insisted the fatal foetal abnormality issue be included" in the original Protection of Life in Pregnancy Act of 2013, and that "arguably, such tragic medical cases would have found more supporters than the controversial suicide clause".

She is quite right. Roisin Shortall TD had already put conscience before career in September 2012 when she not only resigned her Junior Health Ministry but the Labour whip as well, over what she described as lack of support for both the reforms and values of the Programme for Government.

In the 2013 abortion debate Shortall came under attack from the extremes of both sides. She voted against that Bill because, as she stated in July 2013, she found it abhorrent that it provided for no gestational time limit whatsoever in the case of a suicide threat. But she further argued that a rape victim should not have to be suicidal to get an abortion, and she declared her support for abortion in the case of rape, incest or fatal foetal abnormalities.

True to her principles, Roisin Shortall made sure to vote for Clare Daly's Bill, while Labour TDs, who would have scoffed at her conscientious stand in 2013, now followed like sheep behind Fine Gael in order to cast their votes against.

**Manus O'Riordan**

because I knew why the Provos were making war on England, though some of their earlier efforts I found abhorrent when civilians died. But in the main it had to be done, and their methods improved with time. We Northern Catholics knew it would happen one day, knew that it had to happen. Southerners, as we saw it, had tried to destroy one another at one time and now they were telling us we weren't even Irish after they had agreed to the Treaty that cut us off and left us to suffer under a brutal regime.

As Fidel Castro said on entering Havana on horseback after a successful war against the US-sponsored dictator Batista:

"This revolution has also been about dignity, the dignity of our people. Who dares call us *Spicks* now."

And no one did. Though some people of the Republic may not like it, the Provo campaign also brought dignity to the Irish people as a whole. Who dares call you *Paddy* now? No one does.

**Wilson John Haire.**  
8 February 2015

## Dollar As Reserve Currency

In *War & The Dolllar*, Valentin Katasonov explains that, on the eve of the collapse of the Bretton Woods currency system, the dollar made up almost 80% of global foreign-exchange reserves (in 1970 it totaled 77.2%, and in 1972 - 78.6%). Then, after the transition to the system negotiated at the 1976 Jamaica Conference, that percentage gradually declined, reaching its lowest level - 59.0% - in 1995. In the wake of financial globalization, the dollar's positions strengthened again (reaching 70-71% between 1999 and 2001), but then a new decline was seen in the dollar component of global foreign-exchange reserves - dropping below 61% in 2014. Nevertheless, it is still higher than in 1995.

(<http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2015/01/21/war-and-the-dollar.html> We are indebted to **Tim O'Sullivan** for bringing this article to our attention.)

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Does  
It  
Up

Stack  
?

### 'THE HOME RULE CRISIS 1912-14'

The above book is edited by Gabriel Doherty and was published by Mercier Press in 2014. It resulted out of a "major public conference" that the School of History, University College Cork organised in 1912, according to Doherty, "as part of its broader programme of events designed to mark the revolutionary decade in modern Irish history in October 2012". Over two days, as Doherty explained,

"approximately 200 academics and members of the public heard and discussed ... manifold aspects of the crisis over the Home Rule bill. At the end of the programme the overwhelming consensus among all participants—speakers and audience members alike—was that the proceedings should be published. To that end selected participants in the symposium were given an opportunity, on the basis of the discussions at the conference, to refine their ideas before submission of their final texts. The resulting volume is one that contains a multiplicity of views on the third Home Rule crisis, some of them, as one would expect, at odds with each other. There is no single 'line' or interpretation evident here, no overarching 'meta-narrative' save, perhaps, a refusal to be unduly influenced by the subsequent development of the 'Irish' and 'Ulster' questions—matters to which the attention of future conferences and volumes in the series will be directed."

What is a bit perplexing is that Doherty starts off his Introduction with the analysis that the third Home Rule Bill and indeed "what happened in these islands between 1912 and 1914 was a series of political seismic shocks that will forever register high on the Irish and British historical Richter scales" yet he goes on to accept that for "decades" these events have been only held "on the periphery of the collective memories of both peoples" (emphasis mine—MS). So here we have a distinct dichotomy as stated by Gabriel Doherty that, on the one hand, the history of those days are indeed "peripheral" to, on the other hand, the idea of the matter being "forever registered high on the Irish and British historical Richter scales". That foregoing slipshod analysis is why academic history is so tainted these days because, by trying to have it every way, one ends up having it nowhere. I contend that without historical coherence, one has nothing.

And, in the Acknowledgements section, Doherty thanks those who aided the original Conference and the production of the book. Here one is truly staggered by the presence of our loftiest State organs from the:

"Department of the Taoiseach: Jerry Kelleher.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Jennifer Whelan.

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht: John Kennedy, Sabina O'Donnell and Stephan Brophy."

"The original conference was organised with the support of a grant from the Reconciliation/Anti-sectarianism fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and this volume has been produced with the support of a grant from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The editor wishes to express his thanks to the ministers in question."

The fact that our State subsidises our universities with eye-watering amounts of money and seems to think nothing of further lavishing them with tax-payer's money seems to be a matter of no interest to those involved.

The Opening Address to the Conference, 19th October 2012, was titled: *'The 1912 Home Rule bill: then and now'*, and was given by the British Ambassador to Ireland Sir Dominick Chilcott.

In the List of Contributors, we are told that Sir Dominick Chilcott,

"went to school at St. Joseph's College, Ipswich (De La Salle brothers), spent a year in the Royal Navy as a midshipman, and read philosophy and theology in Oxford University. He is a career diplomat who joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office thirty years ago. He had served as High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and Maldives (2006-7), Deputy Ambassador to the United States (2008-11), Ambassador to Iran (for six weeks only in late 2011—the posting was ended by the attack on the embassy) and is now Ambassador to Ireland. In addition to those postings, Dominick has served in Ankara (1985-8), Lisbon (1993-5), and at the UK's mission to the European Union in Brussels (1998-2002). Between overseas assignments, he has worked in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London on European, African and Middle Eastern affairs. He has been a private secretary to two Foreign Secretaries, Sir Malcolm Rifkind and the late Robin Cook. He was Director of the Iran Policy Unit in 2003 and Director for bilateral relations with European countries from 2003-2006."

Throughout the book the 'Sir' has been omitted—presumably at Chilcott's insistence

—because we do know how our academics and indeed politicians love their Knights and other gewgaws of imperial days.

Sir Dominick begins:

"I applaud the vision of the School of History, University College Cork, in organising this conference. It seems exactly right, for reasons on which I intend to elaborate further, that the events that form its theme should be held up to the light of objective, modern scholarship and re-evaluated. The Minister of Justice, Equality and Defence, Alan Shatter, put it very well in his statement to the Dáil, earlier this year, announcing the pardon for Irish soldiers who had deserted their posts in order to join the Allies to fight against Nazi Germany in the Second World War. Mr. Shatter said that in the time since the outbreak of the Second World War:

'our understanding of history has matured. We can re-evaluate actions taken long ago, free from the constraints that bound those directly involved and without questioning or revisiting their motivations. It is time for understanding and forgiveness.'

"Before going any further, I should offer a health warning and make a plea. At the de la Salle boarding school in Ipswich, where I was educated, I had to choose, at age fourteen, which subjects to study for 'O' level, the equivalent of the Irish junior certificate. For some Byzantine timetabling reason, we faced a straight choice between music and history. I choose music. I am confident, therefore, that, by a long distance, I must be the least qualified of all the speakers at this conference. So it is with an entirely appropriate sense of humility that I deliver this address to the cream of Irish, British and international scholars of this tumultuous period in British and Irish history. I make one plea to this audience. Contested history is a subject best left to historians; governments enter the territory at their peril. There are many examples where modern interpretations of historic events by governments have caused tension in international affairs. Perhaps one of the best-known recent cases was the law passed by the French parliament in January 2012 making it a crime publicly to deny that the killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 constituted genocide, an action that provoked an angry response from Ankara. I obviously want to avoid prompting that sort of controversy. So to be clear, where I touch on the events of 100 years ago, these are my personal reflections. I am entirely responsible for their accuracy or otherwise. They are not the policy positions of the British government. And someone who stopped studying history when he was fourteen is delivering them. So be gentle with me.

The title of this speech is 'The 1912



Home Rule bill: then and now'. The 'now' is significant. The ambassador's job is to promote his country's interests in his host country. Happily, relations between Ireland and Britain have never been stronger or more settled than now. We both have governments committed to accentuating the positive in our relations. The 'joint statement' agreed by the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister in March sets out a new narrative for our relations, one that is no longer dominated by Northern Ireland but focuses more on promoting jobs and economic growth and working together in the European Union and in the wider world."

Ambassador Chilcott goes on to promote a wonderful version of British/Irish interests—not just politically but economically yet he never addresses the elephant in the room—which is that Ireland is in the Euro-zone and Britain is not and therefore has a *competing currency* to ours. (All emphases are mine—MS.) The three strands of our mutual underpinnings according to Chilcott are Europe, the North and Queen Elizabeth's visit. About the latter he states:

"A very important stage in that historic visit, of course, took place here in Cork. None of us will quickly forget the sight of the Queen joshing with the stallholders in the English Market or enjoying a walkabout with the people of the city."

Well as was reported in the *Irish Political Review* of the time, this writer never witnessed any such walkabout, such was the level of security with armed Garda and snipers visible on all high buildings on the South Mall and the Grand Parade, but maybe the Ambassador is engaging in poetic licence here and mere historical revisionism—which of course he knew his hosts would be well acquainted with.

Chilcott is ever alert to the renegades in Irish society and issues a warning about how *"they could exploit the decade of centenaries for their own nefarious purposes"*. He doesn't say who these might be but I think he knows that his audience will know them and deal with them accordingly—after all he must know of the historical endeavours of those present. But Chilcott wants never-the-less to send out a strong message about John Redmond to whom the rest of his address is a paean of praise. Redmond, according to Chilcott, was a great parliamentarian, even today in Westminster there is a bust of him outside the members' dining room in the House of Commons.

"He eschewed violence and revolution."...

"Another reason for warming to

Redmond was the position he took at the outset of the First World War. He realised that this was not a war of two morally equivalent parties, as some have presented it. There was an aggressor and at least one neutral victim—a small Catholic country, Belgium. It was the violation of Belgium's neutrality of course, that triggered Britain's entry into the war..... So I am with the former Taoiseach, John Bruton, in believing that Redmond's call for Irishmen to join the army in September 1914 should be judged by what he was trying to achieve at the time. His aim was to persuade Ulster unionists voluntarily to come in under a Home Rule government in Dublin. His goal was 'unity with consent'. He hopes that the experience of fighting shoulder to shoulder would bring together Ulster unionists and Irish nationalists. It didn't work, as we know."

Chilcott states that *"like many Nationalists, Redmond did not understand Ulster well and underestimated the intensity of unionist's opposition to Home Rule"*. Indeed Chilcott makes this startling claim that more or less as a result of that:

"For much of the twentieth century, the people of these islands lived with the legacy from that time, of the gun being at the centre of Irish politics."

Chilcott then addresses how democratic the British/Scottish Governments are with regard to the Independence referendum that was ongoing at the time of the Conference and how striking is the absence of threat or use of violence in that process. He ends with this conclusion:

"I think John Redmond would approve."

Along with Ambassador Chilcott's address, there are 17 other contributors to this book. Amongst them is the great historian, Thomas Bartlett, whose take on the subject will leave many Northerners challenged—as indeed I was, and a great essay from an American graduate called Matthew Schownir. I will deal with these essays and others in upcoming *Irish Political Review* articles.

Michael Stack ©

**After a Defence Cooperation Agreement was signed between Britain and Ireland, the British Minister of Defence paid a first ever visit to Ireland. The following letter appeared on the *Irish Examiner* on 14th January**

## **We need to reconsider defence co-operation**

May I express concern at the report of an agreement on defence co-operation between Ireland and the UK, due to be signed later this month.

Currently, there is a deployment of eight Irish army personnel as part of a joint contingent under the umbrella of the Royal Irish Regiment in Mali. The presence of Irish Army personnel operating under British command might be construed as conferring approval of current British wars overseas and must be considered repugnant to Ireland's policy of neutrality. The formal presence of Irish Army personnel alongside British soldiers blurs the independence and sovereignty of the Irish Army and sends out the message that Irish and British armies are under single command and the Irish State is just a devolved British administration.

It amounts to a surrender of sovereign control over Irish defence forces to a foreign army. Indeed, some may interpret the Irish State's involvement with British forces as a further sign of incremental Commonwealth re-entry. I find this disparaging of the independence and ethos of our national army and State.

The Irish Army is not an imperial army. It was born out of the struggle for independence from British rule.

**Tom Cooper**

## GUILDS continued

ly confess, but their main purpose is the increase of private productive ownership and so the most perfect attainment of the supreme Guild ideal proposed by Leo XIII : the betterment of the condition of each individual member "to the utmost in body, mind and property". In the words of Pope Pius X, they are "neither revolutionists, nor innovators, but traditionalists". And with these great Pontiffs they, too, understand that no programme of labour can be finally successful that is not inspired by true religious ideals. Here is the great need of the future.

### (To be Continued)

"On the Condition of the Working Classes"  
See A. C. Breig, "Papal Program of Social Reform", p.10.  
*Ibid.*, p.56.

*Ibid.*, pp.53, 54.

*Ibid.*, p.53

Letter to Archbishops and Bishops of France,  
August 25, 1910.

"On Christian Social Reform", Catholic Social  
Guild Pamphlets, pp. 18, 19.

Cnf. Breig, p.48

*Ibid.*, pp. 53, 54.

"Social Reconstruction". Reconstruction  
Pamphlets, No. 1, p.22.,

*Ibid.*, p.19.

**BAKUNIN, Mikhail** (b. May 30, 1814, Russia-  
died July 1, 1876, Berne, Switzerland).

Russian anarchist and political writer. He travelled in western Europe and was active in the Revolution of 1848. After attending the Slav congress in Prague, he wrote the manifesto "An appeal to Slavs" (1848). Arrested for revolutionary intrigues in Germany (1849), he was sent to Russia and exiled to Siberia. He escaped in 1861 and returned to western Europe, where he continued his militant anarchist teachings. At the First International (1872) he engaged in a famous quarrel with Karl Marx, which split the European revolutionary movement.

## "God Damn the Pushermen"

At what point do legends which we create come to be believed, so much so that we can start to ignore evidence or discount measurable facts? We become objects of a vested interest. When our conventional narrative acquires a particular status, to give up on the legend reduces us as individuals or as parts of a profession,

For years the pharmaceutical industry has spent a lot of money on propaganda and trying to misrepresent the result of medical trials and surveys on the outcomes of treatments. The Cochrane Foundation has 31,000 researchers in 131 countries. They have found many cases where there has been a clear and obvious prejudice in much data covering drugs used in heart disease, cancer, and arthritis.

In terms of SSRI's\* the case is even worse. There is now considerable strong data to undermine much of the conventional wisdom going back to 1987. Though a large number of patients may be stabilised and helped on a path to recovery, there is now recorded almost as many cases of failure as success. This is because of the presumption that adjusting serotonin levels is a key driving force in curing people with a broad range of mental illness.

It is not long since the jewel amongst the ideas for excellence in the future of Irish health care was dual location of hospital facilities. With subsidies and tax write-offs disappearing in the heart of the recession, the wonderful free market was found to be timid and development slowed to a crawl. Now there is a lot of advertising advising us of the excellence thought to be obtained by going to private providers. Due to the

Government deciding to not expand capacity in the Health Services Executive, this has led to the need to buy services from the private sector to patch over cracks in the system

So outsourcing gets a bit of the Government's expenditure on the current account. The structure of Micheál Martin's H S E is in disarray but yet, on a day-to-day basis, hospitals and clinics function very well, taking into account the limits under which they are operating. Thus the bureaucracy goes in circles while service delivery remains in stress.

Meanwhile the *Sunday Express* of *Lá Fhéile Bríde*\*\* (1.2.2015) warned that Doctors in Britain will be paid to sell Statins. In other words : drug companies will contribute to medical professionals in proportion to the regularity in which they prescribe the favoured drugs. Statins have been called a wonder drug but they come with many serious side effects and are in danger of being over-prescribed or even being mis-prescribed in some cases. And let's not forget the likes of Bechtel, who are heroes of neo-liberal markets and who want to buy all our drinking water and sell it back to us. This in turn leads to more cross subsidisation of branches of cartels that corner the flow of wealth and profits in the world.

**Seán Ó Riain**

\* **SELECTIVE** serotonin re-uptake inhibitors or serotonin-specific reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are a class of compounds typically used as antidepressants in the treatment of major depressive disorder and anxiety disorders.

\*\* St. Brigid's Day.

The following letter appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph* on 29th January

## Public Sector Myths

The Northern Ireland Assembly has now agreed a budget that mirrors the Chancellor's plans in Great Britain to reduce public spending to its lowest level since the 1930s.

Unfortunately, the Assembly's confidence in the cuts and other measures proposed is founded in myths about our economy. One of these is the notion that **"public servants here have a 40% pay lead over their colleagues in the private sector"**.

However, this a partial quotation from the NI Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (19/11/14), which qualifies this, noting: "differences in the composition of the respective workforces."

"For example, **many of the lowest-paid occupations, such as bar and restaurant staff, hairdressers, elementary sales occupations and cashiers, exist primarily in the private sector, while there are a larger proportion of graduate-level and professional occupations in the public sector.**"

Tellingly, the same document also notes: **"Full-time employees in Northern Ireland had the lowest median gross weekly earnings (£457) across the UK regions at April 2014."**

Another myth is that "our public sector is too big and needs to be cut to rebalance the economy". Yet again, the truth is hidden in plain view.

In DFP's *Public Sector Pay and Workforce Strategy for 2009-2010*, it confirms the reason the public sector here accounts for a higher proportion of jobs than in the rest of the UK "is in part due to the lower employment rate in Northern Ireland and the greater need for public services due to the demographic structure of the population and its socio-economic status".

**Little wonder, then, that public sector unions are gearing up for industrial action on March 13, not merely in their own interests, but also in the interests of the wider community.**

**Michael Robinson**

*Michael is Chair of the Northern Ireland Constituency Council of the Labour Party*  
<https://sites.google.com/a/votelabour.ie/northernireland/>

## GUILDS continued

their speedy restoration. It will be easy for working men to solve aright the question of the hour, he tells them" ... "if they will form associations, choose wise guides and follow the path which with so much advantage to themselves and the commonwealth was trodden by their fathers before them." (2)

The utmost betterment of the condition of each individual member "*in body, mind and property*" (3) is the purpose for which these Guilds are to be founded. But for their success religion is as essential today as in the days of old. It is true that the outline of these new organisations drawn by Pope Leo in his Encyclical on "*The Condition of the Working Classes*" {*Rerum Novarum*, 1891} is suggestive merely of an ideal Christian labour unionism, such as alone was practical at the time of his writing. This does not preclude a far closer approximation to the mediaeval Guild system. He purposely refrains from adding more specific details, since the latter, as he wisely remarks, must of necessity vary with time, and place, and circumstances:

"We do not judge it expedient to enter into minute particulars touching the subject of organisation: this must depend on national character, on practice and experience, on the nature and aim of the work to be done, on the scope of the various trades and employments, and on other circumstances of fact and of time: all of which should be carefully considered" (4).

Following the example of his predecessor, Pope Pius X too called attention above all to the need of workingmen's Unions. He too reminded men that social science is not of yesterday, that no new civilisation is to be invented and no city to be built in the clouds; that the successful organisations established in the past, under the wise cooperation of Church and State, are of far more than historic interest. Writing to the Archbishops and Bishops of France, he thus instructed them in this regard:

"It will be enough to take up again, with the help of true workers for social restoration, the organisms broken by the Revolution, and to adapt them to the new situation created by the material evolution of contemporary society in the same Christian spirit which of old inspired them. For the true friends of the people are neither revolutionists, nor innovators, but traditionalists" (5).

Urgently as he recommends the Guild ideal, his greatest stress is placed upon the need of adaptation, the need of carefully

availing ourselves of "*all the practical methods furnished at the present day by progress in social and economic studies*". This thought is even more clearly expressed in his letter to the Bishops of Italy, 11th June 1905:

"It is impossible at the present day to reestablish in the same form all the institutions which may have been useful, and were even the only efficient ones in past centuries, so numerous are the radical modifications which time has brought to society and life, and so many are the fresh needs which changing circumstances cease not to call forth. But the Church throughout her long history has always and on every occasion luminously shown that she possesses a wonderful power of adaptation to the varying conditions of civil society, without injury to the integrity or immutability of faith or morals" (6).

For a brief but complete summary of all that has hitherto been said we may turn to the Encyclical of Leo XIII on *Rerum Novarum* "The Condition of the Working Classes" {1891}. Referring to the various associations and organisations that can be created for the benefit of the labourer, he concludes:

"The most important of all are workingmen's unions; for these virtually include all the rest. History attests what excellent results were brought about by the craft guilds of olden times. They were the means of affording not only many advantages to the workingmen, but in no small degree of promoting the advancement of art, as numerous monuments remain to bear witness. Such unions should be suited to the requirements of this our age, an age of wider education, of different habits, and of far more numerous requirements in daily life" (7).

But neither Leo XIII nor Pius X could have foreseen the rapidity with which social developments were accelerated by the stirring events of the World War {WWI}. The slow material evolution of centuries was then compressed within as many years of energetic, throbbing life, of revolutionary and often misdirected social action. Yet it was all finally to aid in bringing the world nearer to the ideals of the Middle Ages, in making possible a closer approximation of the Catholic Guild system than even Leo XIII, with all his marvellous insight into the social developments of the future, could have considered feasible. He has not, however, failed to leave provision for even this situation. We need but turn again to the final norm by which, as he says, every labour organisation of the future must be tested and found true or wanting:

"To sum up, then, we may lay it down as a general and lasting law, that workingmen's associations should be so organised and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable mean for attaining what is aimed at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost in body, mind and property" (8).

This ideal was strictly kept in view in the programme of social reconstruction drawn up by the Administrative Committee of the National Catholic War Council, 1919, and later incorporated in the *Congressional Record* of the United States. That suggestions occur here which were never formally included in the Encyclicals of Leo XIII or Pius X need not startle anyone. They are not the less surely contained in that "*general and lasting law*" of the great "*Pope of the Workingmen*" which was just quoted. In the reconstructive programme, stamped with the seal of the Hierarchy of the United States, can be found the consummation of the Guild idea. In their most vital passage the Bishops say:

"The full possibilities of increased production will not be realised so long as the majority of the workers remain mere wage-earners. The majority must somehow become owners, or at least in part, of the means of production. They can be enabled to reach this stage gradually through cooperative productive societies and copartnership arrangements. In the former the workers own and manage the industries themselves; in the latter they own a substantial part of the corporate stock and exercise a reasonable share in the management. However slow the attainment of these ends they will have to be reached before we can have a thoroughly efficient system of production, or an industrial social order that will be secure from the danger of revolution" (9).

Such is the aim of the new Catholic Guild system. No one maintains that these developments are possible without wisely directed labour organisations, both where there is a question establishing cooperative productive societies—a true Guild ideal—or of merely sharing in the management of industries, obviously through the representatives of craft Guilds. Such, too, is clearly the meaning of the Bishops, who strongly vindicate the right of labour "*to organise and to deal with employers through representatives*", and heartily approve of the establishment of shop committees, "*working wherever possible with the trade union*" (10). That such methods will imply "*to a great extent the abolition of the wage-system*", they candid-

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# Comment

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## Modern Catholic Guild Programme (1919)

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

Of all the constructive labour movements that at the close of the war are sweeping over the world in a mighty wave of industrial unrest, there is not one whose leaders are not inspired by the supreme idea of labour organisation. Trade Unionism and the Cooperative movement, Syndicalism and the groupings of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), Guild Socialism and the Soviet system are but different and often hostile phases of the same world-wide labour agitation that is steadily gathering to a crest and moving on with impetuous force. Law-abiding or opposed to all authority, Christian or relentlessly determined on the destruction of all religious beliefs, these various movements still conform with one another in a vague acceptance of the Guild idea.

Anarchism cannot be reckoned among the world's constructive forces. Though it may blend with other movements, and even for the time adopt their purposes, it remains, as its name implies, a pure negation. Its immediate object is neither more nor less than the annihilation of the entire existing order of society. Out of the ashes of the old world, sunk in flame and ruin, a new order is phoenix-like to arise in liberty, youth and beauty. Destruction is sufficient for to-day. The morrow will provide for itself. Such was the principle of its founder, Bakunin. The constructive ideas that its ardent champions claim for it are nothing more than a mere general license, with no authority of God or man to hold it in restraint.

Socialism, too, while allied with a thousand plans that are not of its own origin or being, contains but one vague

constructive thought: The more or less common ownership of the means of production and distribution. How far this shall be effected, how it shall be carried out, and what shall be its future details, no one is qualified to say. We do not marvel, therefore, that Socialism has been the prolific breeding place of every variety of radical thought. Countless numbers of its leaders, and of its rank and file have steadily drifted to the Guild idea, which many of its own members now conceive to be the only practical working plan.

Men realise that the outcome of Socialism can be nothing but tyranny. This was again fully evinced in its ultimate development, Bolshevism. Speaking of the philosophy of the Russian Bolsheviks, the American Secretary of Labour, the Hon. William B. Wilson, rightly said:

"The will of the majority is as objectionable to them as it was to the

Kaiser or the Tsar. It establishes a dictatorship on the plea that the autocrat knows better what is best for the people than they themselves know. It sets up a close dictatorship which demands obligatory labour service. The worker sacrifices his own free will. Whether he likes his employment or not—whatever may be his desire to move, he cannot do so, without permission of the dictator. He cannot change the conditions of his employment, he must not quit, because of the merciless 'dictatorship of individuals for definite processes of work.

"This dictatorship would control the courts which are to be used as a means of discipline that will consider responsibility for the 'pangs of famine and unemployment to be visited upon those who fail to produce bread for men and fuel for industry.

"The public press is to be systematically repressed or controlled. Nothing is to reach the attention of the masses except that which has been prepared for them."

The Guild system, then, under one form or another, is doubtless the most important social suggestion for our own time, and indeed for any stage of industrial development. It is the one unfailing means of self-help that labour possesses. The first true conception of the craft-Guild idea was given to the world by the Catholic Church. We are not therefore surprised that, in assigning the causes of our modern social disorders, Pope Leo XIII significantly singled out before all others the abolition of the Guilds:

"For the ancient working-men's Guilds were abolished in the last century, and no other organisation took their place. (I). So, too, in the work of reconstruction he naturally placed the greatest stress upon

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