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Irish Election

Just Desserts!

The main casualty of the Election was Labour. That is how it should be. It rejected the opportunity, presented by the collapse of Fianna Fail in the 2011 General Election, when it became the second Party in the state, to take the role of official Opposition, lead the campaign against Austerity, and put itself in the running to become the major party in a Government. It chose instead the safety of permanent third-party status, with seats in Government for a few years as junior party to Fine Gael. The result is that it has been relegated to fourth-party status, and that there has been fragmentation of the party system, relieved only by the rise of Sinn Fein.

The main beneficiary of the Election is Sinn Fein. This too is as it should be. The Election campaign might be characterised as the first Anti-Sinn Fein Election since 1923.

We have just seen the first Anti-Sinn Fein election in the Republic. There will be many more.

Sinn Fein expressed the hope a few years ago, that it would have members in government in both Dublin and Belfast on the centenary of the Easter Rising. And it seems that the primary object of all other parties in the Republic, none of which contests elections in the North, was to prevent this from happening. And that also seems to have been the object of the State itself, as well as the parties that have governed it, because the Justice system arranged that the sentencing of Thomas Murphy for minor tax arrears should be done on Election Day, when it headed RTE news bulletins all day. He is charged with not paying a total of Euro 38,519.56 over a nine year period (under Euro 5,000 a year!): the rest of the 155,445.10 is made up of penalties and fines. Nevertheless, Justice Minister Frances Fitzgerald reminded us in the *Independent* on election day that Thomas Murphy's friend is "*Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams' fired Thomas 'Slab' Murphy*", and "*today he appears before the Special Criminal Court*" (26.2.16).

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Anti-Rising propaganda for the gullible

Two days before the election, Ruairí Quinn bitterly berated the Dublin working class for its failure to support the Labour Party. The majority of them, he said, had always supported Fianna Fáil, and much of this support was now transferring to Sinn Féin. Labour had always been a minority taste in working class areas—a maximum of 20% in his own case. He doesn't enlighten us on why this might be so.

The medium he chose for his message was the party's staunchest supporter in the media. *The Irish Times*, certainly a minority taste in the electorate he is criticising! For Quinn and that paper alike, it seems that working class voters suffer from an inexplicable and irrational false political consciousness. How else could it be explained he doesn't tell us.

Both Quinn and the *Times* have espoused a theory whereby history is unsafe in the hands of the masses. The newsheet is long known for its promotion of a "revisionist", i.e. pro-British, version

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Brexit—Cameron's agreement

The agreement that David Cameron has negotiated with the rest of the EU is a very significant victory for him and a major defeat for whatever remains of the European ideal. It will henceforth be legal in the UK to discriminate against workers from the rest of the EU in certain tax matters and, despite paying the same in national insurance contributions as UK workers, they will not receive the same level of child benefit unless they bring

their children to live with them in the UK.

Tax Credits and Child Benefit were the issues the media chose to focus on for most of this negotiating process but, as we have consistently pointed out, these were and are relatively minor administrative matters, designed to help the optics of Cameron's referendum strategy, not serious matters that required 'reform'. Of far greater significance are the concessions granted to the UK in terms of the single

currency, the City of London and 'ever closer union'.

With respect to the latter, this column pointed out last month that exemption of the UK from 'ever closer union' will mean—

"exclusion of the UK from the application of all further ECJ decisions taken in line with this provision, or that decisions, if they are to apply to everyone, **cannot** be taken in line with this provision. In other words, it represents either the effective removal of the UK from the jurisdiction of the ECJ or the legal abandonment of 'ever closer union' for

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Education: The art of appearing to be doing something!

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The trial, on a minor civil charge, was held before the Special Court which functions under Emergency Law. Emergency law is law beyond the law. Its purpose is to defend a badly-run state, which cannot protect itself by means of ordinary law, from being overthrown. We have never been against such a thing in principle, but we cannot see its legitimate application to a minor case of alleged tax fraud. Particularly as there was clearly no intimidation of jurors in a libel action Murphy brought against a newspaper some years ago—and lost.

Saving up the sentencing so that, long after the Northern War was ended by Sinn Fein, a member of Sinn Fein who had been particularly influential in ending the War and, (how should we put it?) disciplining the Peace, should appear in the Special Court on Election Day, is an Establishment tactic—what is that but a wilful debasement of the very idea of law by the preachers of law and order? Preachers of law who, with their minds preoccupied with the danger of Sinn Fein constitutionalism, have let ordinary gangland activity—and

the underlying drug problem—run riot under them, just because it is not political.

It was also arranged that the following headline could appear on election day: *Former IRA Leader To Fight Extradition On Abuse Charges*. This alleged former IRA leader, who is allegedly contesting an Extradition Warrant in Spain, is not named in the article. So, whether it is true or false doesn't matter. The thing is presented just as an echo of the noisy effort some years ago to characterise the IRA as being essentially a paedophile movement.

There are four items of this kind in that issue of the *Independent*.

Bertie Ahern has spoken from the grave. He told the *Independent* that "*SF has blown ten seats with Adams as its leader*".

A few years ago, all kinds of people were very anxious to improve Sinn Fein's electoral chances by persuading the Southern membership to oust Adams and replace him with Mary Lou.

The notion that Sinn Fein was damaged in the South by the allegation that Adams was the organiser of the Northern War, and the indisputable fact that he was the

organiser of the Northern Peace—that was for the birds. It was the War and Peace in the North that gave the Provos a boost in the South, enabling them to overtake the Stickie-oriented Labour Party so quickly. The reckoning of the Partitioned parties must be that, if they could Partitionise Sinn Fein, the Southern section would wither, and that, if it could be established as a principle that the Southern section should operate autonomously, it would soon become ordinary.

But does anybody believe that, if it did Partitionise, the Northern War would not continue to be thrown at Free State Sinn Fein as a criminal enterprise with regard to which its hands were not quite clean?

The SDLP has taken part in a 26 County Election campaign for the first time. Its new Leader—Colum Eastwood, in case you've forgotten or never knew, who replaced Whatsisname last year—wrote an article for the *Irish Independent* (Feb 25th), the day before Polling Day, entitled: *To See What A Mess Sinn Fein Would Make In Government, Have A Look At The North*. It begins:

"Ireland is too small to tell two different stories... You can't govern one way in Belfast and campaign the opposite way in Dublin without it being noticed..."

Ireland might be small but it consists of two political entities which know very little about each other, because they have separate systems of party politics. The substance of a democracy is its party-political conflict over whatever power of government exists. We know because we are the only all-Ireland periodical publication. And Sinn Fein knows because it is the only all-Ireland political party. People get locked into the knowledge that is relevant to the party conflict in which they are engaged, and find it difficult to see much that is outside it.

All political parties in Ireland, except the Ulster Unionist Party and the defunct Northern Ireland Labour Party, used to be anti-Partitionist parties. But none of them was an all-Ireland party.

Sinn Fein used to be all-Ireland in principle, but for most of the past 90 years it did not engage in ordinary electoral activity at all on either side of the Border. It did not engage in ordinary electoral activity in the North until it had brought the War to a reasonably successful conclusion for the Catholic community there. And then, on the strength of its Northern success, it became a normal political party in the South, while going from strength to strength in the North, and remaining a united party.

North and South are not equivalent political bodies. The South is a state. It raises its own taxes and spends them as it chooses, and how to do that is the central issue at elections.

The North is not a state. Many academic propagandists, particularly Professor Dermot Keogh in Cork University, and Professor the Lord Bew of the Queen's University Belfast and the Stickie IRA, say that it is. But it isn't. It is a region of the British state; excluded from the British political system but entirely subordinate to it, which operates a kind of local government under Whitehall direction.

Colum Eastwood knows that very well. But he writes as if the North was a democracy in which the electorate put Sinn Fein into government, giving it the opportunity to show how good it was at the business of raising taxes and spending, and it has "*broken promise after promise*".

He quotes an *Belfast Telegraph* Opinion Poll showing that in the opinion of two-thirds the performance of the Assembly was either "*not very good*" or "*very bad*" and presents that as an indication of Sinn Fein failure.

Sinn Fein is not the major party in the Assembly, and the Assembly is not a Parliament with control over Government. SF has no general power of government. Government departments are shared out between parties proportionate to their strength in the Assembly, but the sharing-out is done by the parties independently of the Assembly.

An Opinion Poll about the competence of Sinn Fein in running its Departments, conducted within the Catholic electorate, would indicate something. A general Opinion Poll about the Assembly indicates nothing.

A couple of years ago Micheál Martin condemned Sinn Fein for not uniting the North and Eastwood echoes this. Martin possibly knew—one never knows with him how much is deception and how much is genuine self-deception—and Eastwood certainly knows—that the North under the Good Friday Agreement that made peace possible is a carefully-structured system of division, based on two electorates, reflecting the existence of two distinct societies between which there has never been a flicker of the sentiment of common nationality which is a precondition of normal politics.

Eastwood was Seamus Mallon's nominee for the SDLP leadership. Mallon himself became leader when John Hume, who had helped to bring about the GFA despite Mallon, resigned once the Agree-

ment was in place. Mallon, as leader of the major party of the Catholic community, was unable to put the Agreement into operation. David Trimble, leader of "*moderate Unionism*", would not let him. Nevertheless he tried to behave as if he was Deputy Prime Minister in a democracy. He made himself a political irrelevance by that and the SDLP went into decline.

Mallon, and others, acted at times as if they wanted to free themselves from the system which Hume had delivered to them and to make a deal with "*moderate Unionism*" that would render the GFA irrelevant. In fact they had toyed with that notion over a very long period, beginning in 1971, but never had the nerve to go out on a limb and test it.

Are the other parties of nationalist Ireland, which have all joined forces against Sinn Fein in this election campaign, still anti-Partition parties or not?

They were all anti-Partitionist until 1998. None of them proposed the repeal of the Constitutional assertion of Irish *de jure* sovereignty over the North. This meant that, while at some point they might have adopted a policy of unity by consent, they did not regard British government in the Six Counties as legitimate. It only meant that for practical reasons it was not their policy to assert legitimate Irish sovereignty by force against illegitimate British government.

The nationalist parties of the South were not subject to the British government which they held to be illegitimate, and which was certainly undemocratic on the ground that had nothing to do with the *de jure* claims of the Irish Constitution. The Catholics in the North were. For them illegitimate subjection was a practical matter. They were governed in a way that was illegitimate, even on British constitutional terms.

The old Nationalist Party complained for almost half a century. Its complaints were ignored. Its replacement, the SDLP, complained. Because of Republican activity of a different kind, it was offered compromise arrangements within the British system which would have accepted British power as being legitimate. It refused them because it could not face its electorate after clearly acknowledging British power as legitimate. It rejected the 1971 offer on its own, and later rejected a 1974 arrangement that was largely in place, with the backing of Fine Gael and the Labour Party.

The Unionist Party had agreed Power-Sharing on the understanding that Dublin,

by signing the Sunningdale Agreement, had recognised that the Six Counties were legitimately part of the UK. But, when that became an issue, Fine Gael and Labour denied in Court that they had recognised the North as being legitimately part of the UK. This led to a surge of Unionist hostility against Power-Sharing. A Strike was called against the Sunningdale system unless the Irish sovereignty claim was withdrawn. The Dublin Coalition did not call a referendum to amend Articles 2 & 3, and it backed the SDLP demand that the setting-up of the Council of Ireland should press ahead regardless.

Articles 2 & 3 were not amended until the IRA brought the Northern War to a conclusion in 1998 by means of the Good Friday Agreement and said it didn't mind if the Southern sovereignty claim was withdrawn.

When the SDLP failed to hold its electorate under the GFA system, and Sinn Fein overtook it in the North, and established itself in the South, the Southern Establishment began to criticise it (or throw jibes at it) which implied that it now regarded the North as having been legitimately governed by Britain, and the Republican war as nothing but an outbreak of criminal activity. But none of these parties, to our notice, ever criticised their own Northern policy over the decades as incitements to criminal activity, or said what they thought Northern Ireland was and is, or explained whether they are now Partitionist in principle as well as practice.

But there is now no doubt that general hostility to Sinn Fein by these parties, which denied British legitimacy in the North for so long, has to do with the fact that Sinn Fein is not only an anti-Partition party in principle but is an actual all-Ireland party.

*

With only a few seats remaining to be counted, no party is in a position to form the kind of coalition that has become customary in recent years. The participation of Sinn Fein, as the third largest block, would be required to form such a coalition—and the gulf between its policies and those of the two main parties remains too wide.

It therefore seems inevitable that there is an arrangement between the two largest parties, leaving Sinn Fein to be the main Opposition—the result most feared by Eoghan Harris and others, who believe that such a position would leave the Party in a strong position at the next Election—which cannot be too far away.

Anti-Rising propaganda

continued

of Irish history, and one of Quinn's last actions as Minister for Education was to abolish the subject altogether as a required subject for the second-level Junior Certificate examination. The theory seems to be that in Ireland historical memory is a problem, as the masses insist on remembering the wrong things. Better to suppress history or induce a state of confusion and amnesia about it ("*move on*") and concentrate instead on a general liberalising of society as the key to finally becoming a "*mature society*" (a favoured refrain of *Irish Times* columnists).

Propaganda is, of course, a purposefully insidious business. And it is amazing how its after-effects can endure for a century. The British account of the Rising appeared very soon after the event in the famous *Irish Times Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook*, at a time when any accounts by the insurgent side were ruthlessly suppressed by the British (Dublin Castle) censor. The *Handbook* is promoted today by the paper as an objective account of the Rising, and a few years ago it reprinted it in a new format with the reader guided through it by Shane Hegarty and Fintan O'Toole.

The *Handbook* delivers the British account of the 1916 events in a solemn and apparently 'objective' and thorough manner. The information in it is voluminous but outrageously lop-sided. It is a massaged account of events. There are accounts of the "*Defenders of Trinity College*", which in fact didn't need a "*defence*" as it was never attacked. Indeed, Trinity was transformed into a fortified stronghold and became the military base for the counter-offensive against insurgents in O'Connell Street and the GPO.

There is no straight-forward account of General Lowe's decision to withdraw from front-line engagement and reduce the Rebellion instead by containment and then massive artillery bombardment and machine gun fire. There is no admission in the *Handbook* that the vast majority of civilian casualties met their deaths as a result of this strategy.

The Inquiry into the 'execution' of prisoners by Captain Bowen-Colthurst gets much coverage, including the comforting finding that he was a mad loner. The North King Street massacre is treated in such a way that few casualties are accepted and the finding of the inquest

jury is inferred to be unreliable. It introduces that episode thus:

"The women and children were urged to leave the district, but declined to do so and, unfortunately, there is no doubt that people who were not taking part in the operations were killed."

The British defence of its reckless Military actions is quoted in full, under the title "*Sir John Maxwell answers charges of brutality*".

One small example of how a simple event can be misrepresented with a little ingenuity is the battle at Davy's Pub beside Portobello Bridge on Easter Monday, where a tiny group of Citizen Army men held back the Royal Irish Regiment at the Grand Canal. The *Rebellion Handbook* claims the site was briefly occupied and then abandoned by its garrison after a "*short and sharp fight*", having been successfully subdued by the military.

But the accounts by Citizen Army men in the Irish Military Archives give a different version. According to these, their small force was instructed at about 12.30pm to occupy Davy's and hold the British forces from crossing the canal bridge until Stephen's Green had been fortified. They then withdraw and joined that garrison.

This withdrawal was necessary due to the reduced size of the insurgent force in the city in the wake of Eoin MacNeill's countermand order. The men at Davy's in fact held out for several hours on Easter Monday against large British forces and then, having performed their allotted task, withdrew in full order and without casualties across roofs and lanes to join the main force in the Green. In one of several similar accounts, Ruairi Henderson's *Witness Statement* recounted:

"At about 4 o'clock McCormack sent word to the party to fall back on the {Harcourt Street} Railway Station, their job of covering the organisation of strong positions in the city and impeding troop movements having been carried out."

To this day, the Irish National Library continues to accept the British version of this event, stating on its webpage on the Rising that Davy's "*had to be abandoned within a matter of hours in the face of intense fire*".

It is interesting to note that the later massacre of civilians and prisoners in North King Street was committed by men of the same force (the RIR) that had been held up for so long by the Citizen Army at Portobello Bridge.

With the propaganda of images things are no different.

Pathé News is famous for its extensive newsreel coverage of events of concern to Britain throughout the 20th century. Just in time for the 1916 centenary commemorations, its newsreels of the Rising have now been made widely available on the web. The release of this material was hailed by *The Irish Times* as providing the public with a unique film record of the Rising and its aftermath. It did not say a word about the propaganda purpose of those very one-sided films. Pathé, says the paper, "*has, arguably, the finest collection of Irish filmed news events before the advent of television*".

In one sequence, *The Irish Times* tells us, "*footage shows British soldiers receiving tea and food from women on the street*". But, when you look closer at the shot reproduced by the paper, the women concerned are not just "*women on the street*". They are in fact members of a British military auxiliary formation known as the "VADs" (Voluntary Auxiliary Detachments) established on the "Home Front" as part of the massive wartime recruiting and military support machinery. In Dublin the VADs were overwhelming drawn from the unionist population. There is no mention of this basic fact in *The Irish Times*' coverage of the "*women on the street*", but it is a fact that gives an entirely different meaning to the picture.

Looking through the much praised Pathé newsreels, the footage of British troops are all of valiant soldiers manning barricades, firing their guns, or trooping in disciplined fashion through the city in which they have obviously successfully "*restored order*". Officers are seen efficiently directing military operations or being courteous to civilians. There are shots of friendly smiling off-duty soldiers, wounded but happy men being treated by valiant nurses of the Dublin Branch of the British Red Cross, soldiers bantering in a friendly manner with civilians, or handing out food to the hard pressed poor etc. And everywhere smiling, friendly faces.

The only shots of "rebels" in the Pathé newsreels are hazy mug-shots of leaders, columns of defeated and dejected prisoners, or grim-faced garrisons and their officers surrendering to Empire forces.

It is the British picture of the suppression of the Rebellion.

It is nowhere mentioned in the recent ecstatic coverage in *The Irish Times* and elsewhere of these newsreels and images that nationalist papers such as the *Inde-*

pendent and *Freeman's Journal* of the time—despite their hostility to the Rising—were ruthlessly censored and their content directed by the military "authorities" under the Defence of the Realm Act. *The Irish Times* of the time probably didn't need to be censored as it instinctively skewed the news in the British interest.

Shops in the South are currently awash with popular reproductions of contemporary newspaper coverage of the Rising. *The Indo*, following the example of *The Irish Times* in reproducing its *1916 Rebellion Handbook*, is itself now producing weekly supplements composed of their 1916 reporting without much (if any) mention of the censorship under which they operated.

A stand alone publication, the *Revolution Papers*, is another example of the same thing, published in 192 weekly instalments (complete with volume binders) under an editorial board headed by Emeritus Professor The Lord Bew. No doubt a very lucrative enterprise, the *Revolution Papers* reproduce contemporary editions of the *Independent*, *Irish Times* and *Freeman's Journal*, with some revisionist commentary on what they supposedly tell us about the Rising. For "balance", some very few other papers, such as the *War News* bulletin of the Republican Army, or copies of the pro-Fenian Irish-American *Gaelic American*, are interspersed between the Establishment papers, with the apparent purpose of demonstrating the marginality and the unrepresentative nature of the rebellion.

One of the truly most insightful small books the current writer has read on these matters is Brian P. Murphy OSM's *The Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland, 1920* (Athol Books, 2006). In it he describes in depth the philosophy and practice propounded by British propaganda supremo, Sir Basil Thompson, during the War of Independence. This was what Thompson called the doctrine of "*verisimilitude*" (= 'simulating truth'). It consisted of spreading apparently objective reports containing a wealth of facts (thus establishing credibility)—but leaving out decisive information or including half-facts and skewing them with loaded adjectives, thus distorting the reality of any given situation in the Dublin Castle interest.

The whole project of reproducing contemporary 1916 Pathé newsreels and censored Establishment newspapers is occurring without any health warnings as to their content. The spreading of this material will allegedly "*bring the Rising*

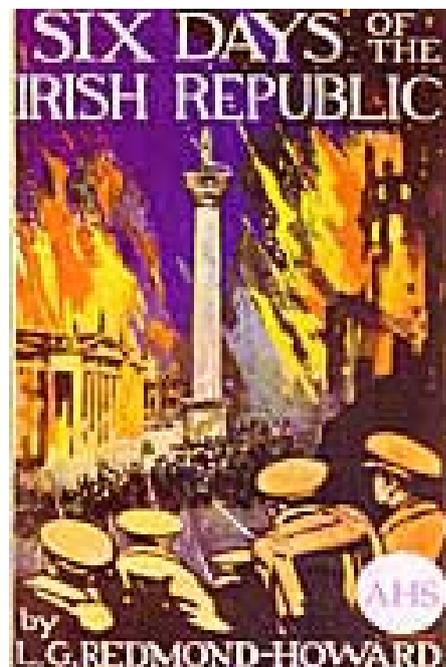
to life for a new generation". But in fact it represents a none-too-subtle modern day anti-1916 propaganda effort of which Basil Thompson would thoroughly approve. And it is interesting to see the cast of usual suspects who have lined up to drive the whole project.

Philip O'Connor

The Origins and the Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920 by Brian P. Murphy *osb*. Foreword: Prof. David Miller. 50pp. €10, £8. Post-free in Ireland & GB

Six Days Of The Irish Republic (eyewitness account of 1916), by L.G. Redmond-Howard. Contains a profile of Roger Casement, written during his trial; the Irish Case for the League of Nations; and a play written jointly with Harry Carson (the Ulster leader's son). Intro. by Brendan Clifford. 256pp. €21, £17.50. Post-free in Ireland & GB

Irish Times: Past And Present, a record of the journal since 1859, by John Martin. 264 pp. €21, £17.50. Post-free in Ireland & GB



What Drives Brexit

When Enoch Powell was a minor and despised figure in English politics he was dismissed as not being in any way significant because the English nationalism he was representing was regarded as dying—if not actually dead. His response was that it might be just sleeping. He has been proved right. English nationalism is alive and well and is the key to the Referendum: it is the cause of it and will determine its outcome. The genie of English nationalism is out of the bottle and it has got its mojo back.

It now sees the Heath pro-Europe era as a blip in its long history, caused by a moment of weakness resulting in the wake of the two World Wars. Entering Europe is now seen as having been an act of desperation to replace Empire and the view is that it has not worked out. To add insult to injury, the ultimate insult, staying in Europe means accepting a Court that can overrule the House of Commons.

Harold Macmillan's grand scheme was for the UK to be to Europe what Greece was to Rome. The US had put the UK firmly in its place after Suez. This was the culmination of the process that began with the 1922 Naval Treaty when the US ended the Royal Navy's ruling of the waves and forced it to renounce its 1911 Treaty with Japan.

However, European leaders at that point had learned their lessons from the two World Wars and the European project was to prevent the UK ever again playing the Balance-of-Power game in Europe. They had developed Christian Democracy

as the social philosophy for Europe. That is why the UK was not at Rome in 1956 and why de Gaulle kept them out in the 1960s. The UK was not allowed join on its terms. Europe knew what it was.

The next generation of European leaders did not have the understanding of the founding fathers and allowed the UK to join. If they had maintained the approach of the founding fathers, the UK might have played a positive role. Heath, Roy Jenkins etc. were certainly prepared to do so. But, when Thatcher challenged the project, she found it willing to transform itself from its founding principles. This has now reached the point where the EU has now permitted the UK to 'reform' it to the point where it allows the UK to opt out of anything that it does not want, beginning with the very essence of the project, the further integration of all its members.

This has only whetted the appetite of the English nationalists. They know they are dealing with an entity that has lost its sense of destiny and any political entity that loses that is lost. It becomes a hulk that can last a long time but it remains a hulk. The hulk of the Titanic still exists.

This is a dynamic that the pro EU people do not seem to understand. The Jacques Delors Institute issued a statement on 25th February called "*The EU-UK Agreement Much Ado About (Almost) Nothing?*" The very title illustrates the hubris of the document. The most basic fact about the EU-UK Agreement is that the EU is now formally and legally less integrated than before the Agreement. The dogs in the street know this but not this document.

Among the weasel words and formulations we find:

"The agreement merely takes more formal note of the fact that Britain does not wish to embrace the goal of an "ever closer Union", yet without preventing other member states wishing to move further in that direction from doing so."

But Tusk, the President of the Council, says it is a legally binding Treaty lodged with the UN which surely makes it more than a 'formal note'.

On the limitation of benefits for some of the most vulnerable people, it confirms the mean and mean-spirited approach endorsed by the Agreement: "*it is not possible for inactive citizens to take up residence in another EU country unless they have sufficient financial resources for their upkeep, and it is even less possible for them to do so if their sole aim is to obtain welfare benefits*".

But the City of London will be safeguarded:

"The scope of the "reform" invoked in connection with the regulation of financial services is less certain: while pointing out that financial services operating in the context of the single market have to apply a single rulebook, it specifies that specific adjustments may, if necessary, be adopted in the context of that standard legal framework."

At least it has the decency to admit that "*While these "reforms" are not particularly inspiring in terms of the spirit or the letter of the EU treaties, they may nevertheless seem acceptable to anyone prepared to consider Britain's specificities.*" Of course they may be but why are they acceptable to the Delors Institute, which has the reputation as being a guardian of the EU at its best? The Report, like the Agreement itself, is a craven submission to UK blackmail and the authors give every indication that they know that but they do not have the confidence or sense of self-respect to reject it.

Jack Lane

Brexit—Hungarian Left View

One of the harshest judgements on Mr Cameron's summit deal comes from the left-of-centre Hungarian paper *Nepszava*, which in an article headlined "*Brexit and the populists*", says that "*This week Cameron expected the European Council to start dismantling the already dilapidated edifice of the Union on account of his irresponsibility. And we watch all this helplessly.*"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35621111>

Brexit—Cameron's agreement

continued

everyone, not just the UK."

The text of Cameron's agreement clarifies matters considerably in this regard:

"It is recognised that the United Kingdom, in the light of the specific situation it has under the Treaties, is not committed to further political integration into the European Union. The substance of this will be incorporated into the Treaties at the time of their next revision in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Treaties and the respective constitutional requirements of the Member States, so as to make it clear that the references to ever closer union do not apply to the United Kingdom.

The references in the Treaties and their preambles to the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of **Europe do not offer a legal basis for extending the scope of any provision of the Treaties or of EU secondary legislation. They should not be used either to support an extensive interpretation of the competences of the Union or of the powers of its institutions as set out in the Treaties.**"

As was noted last month, the European Court of Justice routinely uses the assumption of further integration when coming to its judgements. According to the above text this would no longer seem to be possible. The notion of 'ever closer union' now therefore appears to be a dead letter for everyone in the EU, not just the UK. This is a quite remarkable change.

Given that the UK is perennially obstructive to the EU's efforts at greater integration there was in the past some hope that the Eurozone might offer an alternative avenue of development on an intergovernmental basis. But Cameron's agreement appears to have put paid to that idea too. Whereas before it was recognised that the EU was a union whose currency was the Euro, with some members (the

Re-Founding Europe

Varoufakis has formed a new movement to "*re-found the EU*". It is called "*Democracy in Europe—Movement 2025*". It is to hold a workshop in Berlin, participants to include thinkers, activists and politicians, including Italian intellectual Toni Negri, the American economist James Galbraith, British Labour Shadow

UK and Denmark) having the right to opt out, now it is recognised that the EU is a multi-currency union. In the section dealing with Economic Governance the agreement states:

"Discrimination between natural or legal persons based on the official currency of the Member State, or, as the case may be, the currency that has legal tender in the Member State, where they are established is prohibited. Any difference of treatment must be based on objective reasons.

Legal acts, including intergovernmental agreements between Member States, directly linked to the functioning of the euro area shall respect the internal market, as well as economic and social and territorial cohesion, and shall not constitute a barrier to or discrimination in trade between Member States. These acts shall respect the competences, rights and obligations of Member States whose currency is not the euro."

So any '*natural or legal persons*' that feel themselves to be discriminated in some way through the operation of the single currency will be able to sue for redress through the courts. This opens a vast area of contention for the legal profession and has the potential to stymie further deepening of the Eurozone, the purpose for which it is clearly intended. What after all is the point of measures to deepen integration if they do not give an advantage to the nations involved?

There is of course a strong possibility that the UK, despite having effectively eviscerated the EU of its core principles, will opt to leave anyway. It has been argued here that there is considerable potential upside for Ireland in such an event, but the various think tanks and most of the media have decided to focus on the negative aspects only.

It was interesting therefore to see a report from the Bertelsmann Foundation in mid-February which, instead of using dodgy economic modelling to predict post-Brexit behaviour, actually took the trouble to ask senior executives what they would do. The survey took as its base the most benign Brexit scenario, whereby the UK

Finance Minister, John McDonnell, German-Greek cultural academic Margarita Tsomou, and several members of the Spanish Podemos party.

Plans are, if it comes together, to contest the next Euro elections. <http://www.tagespiegel.de/politik/in-berlin-varoufakis-gruendet-neue-linke/12931374.html>

leaves the EU as a political entity, but retains its access to the single market.

A total of 782 respondents were in the sample, 404 of whom were executives of UK-based companies and 378 executives of companies headquartered in Germany, but with UK operations. The sample was cross-industry, and included financial services, consumer/retail, IT/technology, manufacturing and a range of other sectors.

Perhaps the most remarkable finding is that overall, 29% of the executives surveyed believed they would either reduce capacity in the UK or relocate capacity away from the UK in the event of Brexit. This figure was more or less the same, regardless of whether the company was a UK company or a German one. The figure

rises to 33% for the financial sector considered alone and a striking 42% in the IT/Technology sector. Manufacturing, with its high fixed costs, would normally be thought of as less likely to reduce operations or relocate, but even here some 26% of respondents said it was probable.

The survey received significant coverage in the UK press, but seems to have gone largely unreported in Ireland. One would hope that, even if the Irish Government dare not risk upsetting its new best friends in Westminster by canvassing UK business to relocate to Ireland post-Brexit, there are some within the IDA or IFSC who are, ever so quietly, doing so.

Sean Owens

EASTER 1916

Currently we have been writing about Ireland in 1916. In ten discrete blogs we map out the route which led to the Easter Uprising and examine the consequences without partisan prejudices. This is not the stuff of British court historians, and we have drawn their evidence from contemporary newspapers, Parliamentary records both in Britain and Ireland, and Home Office Records which shine a light of a different hue on the decision taken *not* to alert the Dublin Government of the warnings from Roger Casement. The blogs are to be posted in the following order:

1. Towards the Easter Rising examines the role played by Alfred Milner, the unapologetic British 'race patriot' and the power-block whom we call the Secret Elite, in interfering in Irish affairs to support 'British' Ulster. The passive toleration of the UVF compared to the treatment of Irish Volunteers offers one example of the inequalities that pervaded Irish society. For the first time we raise the question of what motivated John Redmond to spring to his feet in August 1914 to commit Ireland to the Empire's war? [posted 27 January]
2. Putting Ireland into the context of a European war of which few in Britain had any expectation in the summer of 1914, reveals interesting tensions which sit awkwardly together. Was Ireland a smokescreen or could it have been plan B had Germany failed to invade Belgium and so 'trigger' war? Evidence from the Boer War demonstrates that such a plan was not fanciful. In that instance Lord Alfred Milner was advised by his influential friend Philip Gell that should President Kruger fail to invade, he could justify the war to the British people on the basis that Germany had provided the Boers with weapons. In an Irish context the weapons supplied to the UVF and the Volunteers in 1914 were all sourced from Germany. [3 February]
3. On 8 August 1914, the *Munster Express* rejoiced that a miracle had happened; that John Redmond's reaction to Sir Edward Grey's statement in the House of Commons some five days earlier, had changed Irish attitudes. It had not, but a cosmetic sheen was wiped over Ireland and reinforced by the Home Rule 'conversion' to support the Empire's war. In fact nothing had fundamentally changed. [10 February]
4. 'No Justice for Rebels in Sheep's Clothing' continues the theme of injustice

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR · LETTERS TO THE EDITOR · LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WW1 And 1916

Over the last two years, we have published over 130 blogs covering the first two years of the First World War. Their aim has been to highlight the injustices, inequalities and downright lies which were committed in the name of a war to save civilisation. It was not. We have framed our work through the machinations and malpractice of a small coterie of very important British and American politicians, bankers, industrialists and power-brokers, originally identified by Professor Carroll Quigley in this seminal work, *The Anglo-American Establishment*.

Through a series of posts we have drawn attention to different aspects of underlying myths, propaganda and false histories which have grown to be accepted as true accounts of the war. Currently we are finalising a book on the collective action taken to prolong World War 1 in order to crush, not simply beat, Germany. We have focused attention on—

- * the scandal in France where the great Briey iron and steel industries were allowed to fall intact to the German invaders in 1914 so that production of the machinery of war could continue unobstructed. Though condemned by the French National Assembly, no action was taken against the men who profited through inaction which caused hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen their lives
- * the myth of the Great Blockade from 1914-1916, which Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, promised would bring Germany to her knees within 9 months. The manner in which so much vital produce and raw materials was

allowed to continue into Germany defies belief. Examples of British manufacturers and producers making a fortune from selling to the enemy makes a fool of all who believed and trusted the Admiralty

- * the scandalous American Relief programme supposedly constructed in October 1914 to save Belgians from starvation. Under the direction of the American mining engineer, Herbert Hoover, later the 31st President of America, the sham programme was funded largely by the Allies and, by feeding the German army and people, helped prolong the fighting. How did they manage to hoodwink so many politicians and bankers ... or to what extent were they in cahoots? Had it been nipped in the bud, how short might the war have been?
- * the shambles of the Dardanelles and Gallipoli. The real reason behind the shocking military and naval debacle has been identified and re-examined with evidence proving that the most important outcome, that the port of Constantinople, though promised to the Russians, did not fall into their hands, was achieved. For such a deception, thousands of Australian, New Zealand and Irish troops were sacrificed for nothing. But it kept Russia in a fruitless war.
- * the lies and manipulations behind the so-called munitions scandal in Britain, with serious concern over the actions of David Lloyd George, explores the twisted propaganda which brought to an end the first British war cabinet in 1915.

These are just some of the major themes to be found at firstworldwarhiddenhistory.wordpress.com

and prejudice which Irishmen faced even when dressed in the King's uniform. The British Army was highly pro-Ulster Unionist in the ranks of its upper echelons. Matters were made much worse by the deliberate down-playing of Irish achievements and military successes. In particular the attention drawn to the Australian and New Zealand sacrifice at Gallipoli to the detriment of the massive cost to Irish lives was a serious, if not racist mistake. [17 February]

5. The Rising itself had been covered from virtually every aspect by Irish historians, so our resume is a brief coverage for those of non-Irish extraction. Here begins the blame game. Is it a mere question of determining who is most to blame, or are there deeper forces lurking behind the event? [24 February]

6. The war of words which broke out at the start of the rising displays initial shock. What is particularly interesting is the manner in which influential newspaper like *The Times* carry the lie that what happened was German in origin and the systematic process of framing the narrative of the Easter Rising. In Parliament too, blame was conveniently laid at the door of Sinn Fein, and every effort was made to mislabel and dismiss the rebels as lesser men. The propaganda machine at Wellington House was thrown into overdrive to minimise any pro-Rebel support from America, and John Redmond willingly contributed to the condemnation of 'criminal madness'. Why? [2 March]

7. Given that from the start the authorities at Dublin Castle were accused of knowing about the likelihood of an uprising of some sort, yet doing nothing about it. It was a claim that gathered momentum fanned by the rabid antagonism of Augustine Birrell's political enemies. Yet the real question should be addressed to those who operated at level above mere cabinet minister. Documents obtained from the Public Records Office at Kew in London show that Roger Casement tried at least on two occasions, to convince his military investigators that a message should be sent in his name to call off the Rising. Records also prove that several sources claimed comments were made by Casement's interrogators to the effect that it would be better to let matters come to a head. These were corroborated by the Home Office legal adviser. So why was the Chief Secretary to Ireland kept in the

dark? Why was the information deliberately withheld? In whose interests was it to permit the Rising to go ahead undisturbed? [9 March]

8. Men out of Bedlam considers the consequences of portraying the uprising as a Sinn Fein plot and the insensitivity of the executions of the men who had led the revolt against the Empire. General Maxwell's heavy handed hard-line reaction and the repression of people all over Ireland changed the public perception about what had just happened. The enormous blow to the Irish Parliamentary Party's standing both in Ireland and Britain was made worse by the return to old Unionist domination. Was the country returning to its old political ways? [16 March]

9. The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland became yet another example of how the British Establishment set up investigations to come to the conclusion which they had already predetermined. This commission was headed by Lord Hardinge, and literally confined its investigations to the agencies which confirmed its prejudices. It also took every opportunity to patronise the Irish people. Worst of all, it declared that the Irish Home Rule (Parliamentary) Party shared in the blame for the rebellion. It was an incredible conclusion, steeped in bias and made even more ridiculous by the commission's decision *not* to take any evidence from John Redmond or his associates. [23 March]

10. So what is the legacy of Easter 1916? In this era of war commemoration, should the Irish government simply stand shoulder to shoulder with the British Government to commemorate a war for the Empire which sacrificed so many Irish lives? How do the British interpret the Rising some 100 years on? What might have happened if the Secret Elite deigned to treat Irishmen as equals in the great war for alleged civilisation? Do we still swallow the old lines; follow the history written by the victors? The facts remain irrefutable. In vilifying Sinn Fein, the British State confirmed their place as an anti-British pro-republican independence movement. The rising made Sinn Fein. Has the time not come for the British Government to release all its restricted archive materials pertaining to Easter 1916? Those who were sacrificed in the awful war deserve the truth. [30 March]

Gerry Docherty and Jim Macgregor

The Following Press Release appeared in the Irish Times as a letter on 27th January with minor alterations

Continued UK membership will undermine the Euro

The case in favour of Brexit as the least damaging option for all parties including Ireland has been insufficiently aired in the debate to date in Ireland.

The critical issue is the Euro to which the future health of the Irish economy is intimately connected. David Cameron claims in his November 10th letter to Donald Tusk that the UK "*is not looking for a veto over what is done in the Eurozone*". He then asks for seven principles to be made legally binding, many of which have the potential to constrain the Euro.

Judging by past actions rather than ambiguous wording the use by the UK Government of its veto to block the Fiscal Treaty in December 2011 indicated the true nature of British concern for the Euro. Apart from showing an unwillingness to lend support to the Eurozone in a time of crisis, the British action testified to two stubborn realities: the persistent antipathy to Europe expressed by a majority of the UK electorate; and an arguably unbridgeable ideological difference between London and Brussels in the matter of banking regulation.

In an article in the *Financial Times* last year Jacques Delors stated that the EU has a small engine and the UK a large brake. The message was clear: the European project cannot develop, and may even be at risk, while a eurosceptic UK remains a member.

The Government has identified the Irish national interest with the UK remaining in the EU. The opposition parties are backing this position. An Irish diplomatic effort has been mobilised in support of the British negotiating effort and there have been alarmist predictions of a 20 per cent drop in Anglo-Irish trade following a British exit, based on a speculative worst case scenario.

This one sided debate marks a worrying departure from the traditional Irish policy of support for deepening EU and Eurozone integration. No political party or organisation is asking the three most important questions regarding Brexit: what grounds are there for believing that the differences between the UK and the Eurozone are reconcilable; what would be the damage to the Irish economy if the Euro is critically weakened by a "compromise" with UK demands; and what contingency plans exist in the event that the EU breaks up?

Irish Political Review Group

Editorial Note:

The economist Brendan Keenan discussed this Statement in his *Irish Independent* Column on 11th February.

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

GOOGLE TAX

It was surprising that Google didn't tell the British Tax authorities to get stuffed after they demanded that the company pay Corporation Tax. Perhaps it felt that, given that it does not pay very much Corporation Tax anywhere, it was not in a position to strike a high moral tone. The £130 million pounds that it did pay for a period of 10 years is derisory when it is considered that its annual revenue in Britain alone is over 4 billion and its average global profit is about 25% of sales. But why should it pay any Corporation Tax to the UK?

In the Long Fellow's opinion, the case for the UK receiving more Corporation Tax from Google is threadbare. David Gauke—George Osborne's assistant—defended the deal at Westminster. Quite reasonably, he made the point that profits are taxed where the products are made, rather than where they are sold. So, on this basis, the UK was lucky to obtain the level of Corporation Tax it did from Google. HM Revenue did very well!

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

The counter argument appears to be that, because the British are consumers of the product, they generate profits for Google and the State should be entitled to a share in them. Indeed Richard Murphy—an economics advisor to Jeremy Corbyn—suggests, albeit a little half heartedly, that Britain should be credited with a higher proportion of the global profits of Google because most of the costs are incurred in the US!? But it is precisely because the costs are incurred in the first instance in the USA and secondly in Ireland that those countries should be credited with the profits.

Of course, Google itself notoriously does not declare its profits on the basis of where the value is created. The location of its profits is decided by considerations of tax planning, rather than the logic of production. But if, in global terms, there is a strong moral case that Google should pay more tax, it does not follow that the UK is entitled to the tax that other countries such as the USA have forgone.

BRITAIN AND GLOBAL TAXATION

If Google, along with most other multinationals, does not occupy the high moral ground, the British Government is not in a position to give lectures. There has never been any pressure put on British protectorates, such as Bermuda, to desist from facilitating tax avoidance by multinationals and others. The likes of Murphy has gone on record as describing the Republic of Ireland as a "pariah State", but is less vocal on the practices of countries that are dependencies of the UK. Google has a substantial operation in Ireland. Its European headquarters is in Dublin, employing more than 2,500 people—unlike Bermuda which just provides a brass plate.

THE US & GLOBAL TAXATION

If there is any country that is entitled to feel aggrieved at the tax practices of Google, it is the United States of America. But the Long Fellow does not feel too much sympathy for that country. The US could very easily close the tax loopholes which facilitate such tax avoidance. For example, that country allows tax residency to be determined by the location of the Head Office, rather than, as with most countries, the location of management control. Changing the criteria for tax residency would eliminate much tax avoidance, but the US legislators do not seem interested, notwithstanding their frequent denunciations of corporate 'deserters'. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the US is prepared to forgo such corporation taxation in order to facilitate the global reach of corporate America.

The lesson of all this is that Ireland should pursue its own national interests and not worry too much about what other countries think.

THE BANKING INQUIRY

If the Banking Inquiry was intended as a re-Trial of Fianna Fáil prior to the General Election, it failed in its objective. Blame was dispensed across a wide variety of actors. While the FF/Green Government contributed to the crisis, the Report noted that the Opposition Parties were calling for even greater tax cuts and increases in public expenditure.

Much of the report confirmed the findings of previous reports, but in some respects it might have altered slightly our understanding of the events leading up to the crisis. For example, it appears that the State apparatus was not purely reactive. There is some evidence that it was trying to anticipate and manage events. The Bank Guarantee was not something that was decided off the cuff on a night in September 2008. As early as January 2008 there were

detailed discussions by the Department of Finance about this option.

Also, while Merkel and Sarkozy's communiqués from Deauville might have bounced the Government into accepting the Bail Out programme in November 2010, the State had been discussing the possibility of such an eventuality as far back as September 2008.

BURNING THE BONDHOLDERS (AGAIN)

According to *The Irish Times* the Inquiry unearthed a report from the *National Treasury Management Agency* which suggested in March 2011 that there should be a partial burning of Senior Bondholders. This could have saved 9 billion euro. The recommendation seems to have been tentative and was subject to the approval of the ECB. As we now know that approval was not forthcoming.

It is interesting to note that that recommendation was made at the beginning of the current Government's term. Nevertheless, the Long Fellow would recommend caution in interpreting this. He seems to remember reading that the NTMA also recommended the complete opposite, because burning senior debt would have undermined its ability to raise funds on the money markets.

The Report (per *The Irish Times*, 28.1.16) also seems to have concluded that the IMF was in favour of burning senior debt. Again, this is not the recollection of the Long Fellow. It is true that some IMF officials on the ground thought burning senior debt was a good idea, but they were overruled by their superiors. So, their 'opinions'—and that's all they were—were of no consequence.

Also, in an apparent contradiction, the Inquiry Report notes that the Troika (of which the IMF was a part) imposed on the State the re-paying of Senior Debt as a condition of receiving Bailout funds.

While the Inquiry's final report appears to be not without interest, the most interesting aspect of the venture was the public hearings, particularly the contributions of Cowen, Ahern and McCreevy. The conclusions of the Inquiry did not contradict earlier reports on the crisis. Most of the damage done to the economy had already occurred by 2007. The Government led by Brian Cowen was faced with a series of impossible decisions. Even with the benefit of hindsight, it is not at all clear that any alternative set of decisions made after 2007 would have led to a less unpalatable outcome. ■

John Hume: Saint or Sinner?

"Unlike Hume, Adams was a team-player, with the discipline that comes with having to consult your immediate colleagues about both strategy and tactics."

That estimation comes from a very unexpected source, Ruth Dudley Edwards, writing in the *Sunday Independent* (3.1.16). And it is also very true. But it raises the question now: is John Hume worse than Gerry Adams?

For many years John Hume was lauded as a saint in Nationalist Ireland. He was a saint because he opposed the Provos and suffered the slings and arrows of the "*bigots in the North*" (aka Ulster Protestants). From the Dublin perspective he was one of us, yet not one of us—being a Northern Catholic. But he had made himself bigger than any Northern Catholic ever before, so he couldn't be ignored and kept in quarantine. He had to be taken into account. Luckily, he headed a party whose sole business was in the Northern territories so, once he was sated, he would leave 'us' alone. He would only be, therefore, a problem for the bigots.

However, Ruth Dudley Edwards has pointed to a worrying thing. If Hume was the Saint who brought the Peace, and the Peace has disturbed the Southern Garden of Eden by letting in the serpent (Gerry *et al*), is the Saint responsible for the fall of Heaven?

It seems that Saint John of Derry cannot be continued to be venerated because of this unexpected Northern intrusion. So Apostle Seamus of Armagh, the lost prophet, was really the Chosen One after all. It was, after all, himself who had verily warned of the evils to befall us all, evils that he had seen befall his own people before, if the serpent's head was not crushed, and the Fall of Heaven would come to pass.

Up until this worrying thought, there was one great manipulator and we knew his name. The Scribe Ed, son of PD, had pointed him out, as Gerry of Belfast. The former Disciple, Anthony, had denounced him as a false god, as had Ed, the Scribe, and the Pharisees all agreed, as they do. But it seems that there was worse amongst them than the evil one. There was a greater snake in the grass about all this time, and his name was Hume, who had been turned into a trout, weighing 3lbs, by the evil one of Belfast.

But Ruth Dudley Edwards has a point: Hume from the beginning worked behind the back of his party colleagues, and behind his erstwhile leader, following his own agenda. He spied for Dublin as the SDLP was being established; he plotted with Taoiseach Lynch to destroy Stormont behind the back of his party leader; he was consulted by Taoiseach FitzGerald with regard to the Hillsborough Treaty whilst keeping his own colleagues in the dark; he consorted with Adams, acting independently of the party of which he was leader to bring about the settlement he personally had in mind. He frustrated his party colleagues in their devolutionary desires and facilitated an Agreement between the mortal political enemy, Sinn Féin, and the British, an agreement which had the effect of undermining his own party. And he brought the serpent south into the Garden of Eden.

It, of course, depends on your perspective whether Hume is Saint or Sinner. For the Northern Catholic the position is fairly clear—outside the disgruntled elements that exist around the SDLP. And these things mentioned are not a criticism of Hume. They are meant as praise. But it is amazing that such blind spots exist in those who line up to condemn Adams for the thing that they cannot see in Hume.

Hume is a mystery because the narrative about the Peace constructed by Nationalist Ireland is fraudulent.

The initial part of the Peace initiative that culminated in the Good Friday Agreement involved Gerry Adams and Fr. Reid. The second part involved Gerry Adams/Fr. Reid and Charles Haughey. The third part involved Gerry Adams/Fr. Reid/Charles Haughey and John Hume. That is the correct chronological sequence of it and it is very important to understand that.

For a long time it was suggested (and Hume was of that belief) that his talks with Adams had begun the Peace Process, rather than, as it really had come about, through the Adams/Fr. Reid/Haughey axis. Hume had been 'protected' from this information for his own good at the time, lest his party colleagues and others in Dublin should learn of the tentative growth that was being cultivated by Charles Haughey, and ruin it all. That is now known but not said.

The Peace initiative remained hidden from the SDLP and from those outside of Haughey's close circle, to prevent it being assailed by the mainstream of 'Constitutional Nationalism' and destroyed. It was kept from the bulk of Fianna Fail and particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs. That was until Fr. Reid was instructed, by Haughey, to make tentative contacts with Hume, who was felt trustworthy enough to be let in on what was going on.

Hume had been taken into FitzGerald's confidence, prior to the Hillsborough Agreement of 1985 and had remained water tight-lipped about it, to maintain an element of surprise against Unionists and stop stop the knowledge of Hillsborough being blurted out by Hibernians wishing to taunt the bigots and ruin the necessary effect. It appears that Robinson had known something of what was coming at Hillsborough and was initially relatively easy with a consultative role for Dublin in the administration of Northern Ireland. Later, Paisley and Robinson got the brush-off from Thatcher when they asked her the direct question so they knew, but just couldn't believe it. They were in self-denial about the Iron Lady, so felt hugely betrayed when she did what they feared she would (this information is in the just released State Papers but no journalists have shown interest).

An earlier attempt to at dialogue between Hume and Adams came to nothing. In January 1985 Adams surprised Hume on a live radio show by issuing a challenge to the SDLP to meet Sinn Féin. A startled Hume responded to this by saying it was the leadership of the IRA which made all the important decisions and insisted he would only talk to the organ grinder, not the monkey. The IRA called Hume's bluff and request for talks, and the SDLP Leader dismissed a further invitation to talks from Sinn Féin, labelling the party "*mere surrogates*". In response, Taoiseach FitzGerald went on RTÉ Radio reading a prepared statement in which he said that any meeting between Hume and the IRA should be "*broken up*" and warned that members of the Army Council, if identified, would be arrested. By contrast, Charles Haughey expressed "*full support*" for Hume's "*initiative*".

Sean Donlon, Department of Foreign Affairs, hearing that Hume believed "*he could significantly damage them*" (the IRA. P.W.) *in a confrontation*", told the SDLP leader that he doubted "*that he could at this stage discredit people like Adams and*

the provisional organisation in Belfast" (SI 3.1.16). Donlon was undoubtedly correct.

The meeting came to nothing when the SDLP refused to have it recorded and Hume's diversionary tactic just postponed the process toward a peace settlement. It was possible that Hume's deep involvement at this point with the process that was to result in Hillsborough that year determined a different attitude to the one he took in later years.

Then, when he saw the failure of the 1985 Treaty, and the potentiality of the Adams/Haughey process to produce a more all-embracing settlement, he grasped the Republican nettle. Hume's view in 1985 was that IRA military capacity was in decline and that Sinn Fein were mere "puppets" for those in the IRA who "called the shots" was also a judgement that Hume later discarded.

Hume finally met Adams in January 1988, when hostility toward Republicans in the aftermath of the Enniskillen Bombing was at a very high level. When this encounter became public, Haughey made a point of publicly backing the "integrity and judgement" of Hume in engaging in talks with Sinn Fein, going against the SDLP Leader's critics, without saying anything about his own earlier initiative. Hume then informed and instructed the SDLP to hold a series of talks with Sinn Fein at Clonard Monastery in March 1988.

This was the first entry of the SDLP mainstream into the process and there was much reluctance among the rank and file about having to do so, as Austin Currie reveals in his autobiography. There was in fact great hostility towards what Hume was doing within the SDLP. A British official, reporting on a meeting between Mallon, McGrady and Brian Mawhinney (a Junior Minister), noted that "the Minister was impressed with the lack of enthusiasm by which they put forward the argument (for talks with Adams. P.W.) and what appeared to be their embarrassment/discomforture" (IN 31.12.15, State Paper report). By this time the British strategy of demonising Sinn Fein by association with violence/terrorism had amplified the latent hostility of the Constitutionalists, making Hume's initiative a very difficult one.

The Sinn Fein/SDLP Talks of 1988 broke up without agreement. Currie wrote in his autobiography:

"It was with a great sense of relief... that the Sinn Fein talks came to an end in September... My experience of the Sinn Fein talks convinced me more than ever

of the necessity of finding a way of opening talks with the unionists" (p. 370).

What is apparent is that the primary objective of many within the SDLP, particularly the high-profile figures outside of Hume, was to use Hillsborough as a lever against Unionists to establish a return to Devolution, with the 1985 Treaty acting as a kind of fall-back device pinning the Unionists into some form of power-sharing with the SDLP.

This is not meant to relegate Hume's role in the Peace. John Hume was absolutely indispensable to it. However, the standard account of Hume's role is wrong. Hume's crucial contribution to the Peace was in scuppering what the British and Dublin had intended for the SDLP at Hillsborough and in throwing his weight behind the other process that was developing through Adams, Fr. Reid and Haughey. That made all the difference to what subsequently was to occur. And the occasion when Hume accomplished this was during the mysterious goings on at Duisburg.

One of the chief British objectives in agreeing to the Hillsborough Treaty was to lure the SDLP into a devolved government with unionists that would replace Direct Rule. The British saw Hume as the main obstacle to such an internal settlement and, six months before the Hillsborough Treaty was revealed, they sounded the SDLP leader out at a meeting where he was assured about the concessions Britain was prepared to make to him. The object was stated: "to test his reactions to our approach and, in particular, to gauge whether a limited agreement of the kind we have in mind will offer enough to the SDLP to allow them to consider seriously internal political development" (CENT 1/13/38, 17.6.85).

The moment for Hume and the SDLP to fulfil their part of the bargain arrived 3 years later, after the Unionists had been made, at last, pliable. However, whilst most SDLP leaders had been hooked (like a 3 pound trout?), Hume refused to take the bait. As one senior negotiator on the British side of the Hillsborough Treaty remarked later: "the one thing none of us expected was that John Hume would shortly be talking to Gerry Adams" (John Hume, *Irish Peacemaker*).

The British had invested considerable political resources to win over Hume and Dublin (including the unprecedented Hillsborough concession itself of an Irish consultative role in NI) against Sinn Fein and now Hume had betrayed that faith in

him. He refused to be Britain's instrument in the North. And this set everything on a path that Britain never intended and which the SDLP never expected.

The October 1988 talks in West Germany were an attempt to break the Ice Age caused by the Hillsborough Agreement. Present were the UUP, DUP SDLP and Alliance. Fr. Alex Reid was present to transmit the Sinn Fein view. The Duisburg Talks took place after two years of an absence of formal dialogue between the Unionists and the SDLP. The Unionist parties required a suspension of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, including the closure of the Maryfield Secretariat, to engage in formal talks on re-establishing devolution in the province. They had made an election pledge not to engage in Talks while the Agreement was in place and they wanted sufficient time to elapse before the next meeting of the InterGovernmental Conference in order to hold formal inter-party negotiations. So they requested a postponement by the two Governments of the next meeting of the Secretariat to justify taking part in talks while the Agreement was operating.

The SDLP represented by Currie, felt the party should accommodate the desire of Unionists to hold formal dialogue, believing there to be a softening of Unionist resistance to Agreement and a potential for devolution. There was support from the other main personalities for this position, as well as from Fine Gael and Labour.

However, Hume disagreed and communicated his displeasure to Currie after a leak had suggested the SDLP delegation had agreed to this. Hume sent Currie a policy document he had drawn up himself saying that there would be "serious political consequences" if Hillsborough was suspended and he ordered Currie to stop pursuing the matter further (Belfast Newsletter 6.2.89). The objective was "to achieve an agreement that will transcend in importance any previous agreement ever made and... address all the relationships that can contribute to the realisation of peace and stability".

Currie noted in his autobiography:

"I was very disappointed by this document. The whole purpose of Duisburg, as far as I was concerned, was... to enable the Unionists to get off their hook of not talking while the Anglo-Irish Agreement remained in existence. Devolution was part of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, supported by the two governments, and... a central plank of SDLP policy... The SDLP response to the Unionists, which was effectively John Hume's response,

did not cover the exigencies of the political situation. I began to fear another agenda was at work... What I did not recognize at the time, because I was not party to everything that was happening, was that the end of Duisburg was a watershed and that devolution had been moved down the list of SDLP priorities" (pp. 361-2).

The SDLP had wanted to see a devolved Power-Sharing Government established within 'Northern Ireland' on the basis of Article 4 of the Hillsborough Treaty. A working party had been set up with this objective in mind. But it seems that Hume let the devolutionists go through the motions before he calculated, after his talks with Adams, that an all-Ireland settlement which included Sinn Fein should be held out for, rather than surrendering the position hard-won at Hillsborough.

Hume must have seen that the Treaty of 1985 had failed in its objectives and would, at best, only lead back to the situation of Sunningdale in 1974, which was unstable. That was good enough for many in the SDLP, but not for Hume any more, especially since he became aware of the peace initiative that involved Haughey and the Irish Government.

So Hume decided to bank the main gains attained at Hillsborough, with its all Ireland component and Dublin's role in 'Northern Ireland'. He then focused his efforts on an all-Ireland settlement which included Dublin and Sinn Fein. The devolutionists were shoved aside. They only returned when Hume, with the sustaining Provo war effort, got them the better deal in 1998

Hume's project of fostering a pan-Nationalism with Sinn Fein, to achieve a wider settlement beyond devolution, had won out. And this was a watershed in political affairs, as Currie noted. If it had just been the SDLP, without Hume, there would have been no Peace Process or Good Friday Agreement. These were a product of the Republican endurance, the leadership around Adams, with Haughey's facilitation, plus the strategic vision of Hume.

After the death of Mrs. Thatcher in April 2013, many Dublin commentators took the view that the Hillsborough Treaty had helped to begin the Peace Process that led to the Good Friday Agreement. For example, Stephen Collins in *The Irish Times* of the 8th April 2013 claimed Thatcher was "a pivotal figure in creating the conditions for the Belfast Agreement" and that the 1985 Agreement was a "stepping stone" to the 1998 Agreement.

Presumably this was because the Iron Lady had "faced down the Unionists" and "lanced the Unionist boil".

The policy of Mrs. Thatcher was never aimed at accomplishing something like the Agreement of 1998, by the including of Sinn Fein in a political settlement. It was meant to defeat the IRA and not to make peace with it. The purpose of the 1985 Treaty was part of this strategy to isolate Republicans politically and produce an overall defeat of the IRA. Mrs. Thatcher's policy of 1985 failed and Hume came to recognise its failure in a *de facto* manner, although never saying as much. Adams and Hume therefore determined to carve out a different future, in line with Hume's wider strategic vision. And Britain then became open to peace-making with Republicans, leading to Good Friday 1998, after the Iron Lady had been put out to grass by the Tories in an internal *coup* during November 1990.

The dispute over Hume (Peacemaker or FreeStatebreaker?) that is now raging is down to Dublin's paralysis of mind after being confronted by Sinn Fein as a product of what Hume did and the Peace he helped secure. Ruth Dudley Edwards has a sharper mind and sees that Hume was the problem all along for Dublin. He was the Northerner who broke free of the 1920 settlement that was meant to bottle them all up, up there. He injected the fleet-footed manoeuvres that outwitted the designs of Treatyite Dublin and London to nail the box down with a new Stormont. He did what was best for his community and he has to be saluted for that.

It was said that, when Hume was confronted by his colleagues who were concerned that the 1990s negotiations with Adams were damaging the SDLP, he replied: "If it's a choice between the party and peace, do you think I give a fuck for the party?" (F.O'Connor, *Breaking the Bonds: Making Peace in Northern Ireland*, p.25)

And neither did he give a fuck for Dublin.

Pat Walsh

Resurgence!, the second volume of
Pat Walsh's

*The Catholic Predicament In
'Northern Ireland',
Catastrophe And Resurgence*
is to appear later this year

Catastrophe! is available:
€24, £20
postfree in Ireland and Britain
(334pp.)

Letter, *Irish Examiner*, 24 Feb. 2016

Redmond's Volunteers Were Not All Nationalists

I noticed that your recent reviews of the two RTE television showpiece series on the 1916 Rising—the tortured drama "Rebellion" and the narrative account "Rising"—failed to notice a glaring inaccuracy repeated in both as fact.

This is the assertion that the great majority of the 150,000 members of the National Volunteers loyal to John Redmond rejected the call of a minority to oppose the war and enlisted in the British Army to fight in 1914-18.

But according to the undisputed official figures—repeated on the website of the Department of the Taoiseach—a total of just over 28,000 national volunteers joined the British Army throughout the entire war. That was about 20% of its membership at the time.

The vast majority of Irish recruits came not from this Irish nationalist political formation at all but firstly overwhelmingly from the urban poor motivated largely by material need and secondly from the unionist population motivated by its sense of British patriotism.

There is extensive historical testimony to these facts in Pádraig Yeates' excellent social history, "Dublin: A City at War 1914-18".

The great majority of the Irish National Volunteers failed to follow Redmond's call.

Philip O'Connor

Philip O'Connor adds:

I've been reading through the RIC Special Branch reports for the war years. They report to their masters in a bluntly honest fashion month by month the collapse of the National Volunteers in late 1915 after Gallipoli and Bishop O'Dwyer's letter which they say is being circulated widely and being posted on walls around the country. They complain of the failure of Redmondite volunteers to enlist in any significant numbers. O'Dwyer is seen by them as central to this. By the end of 1915 the RIC is reporting dolefully to Dublin Castle that the NV were now moribund and had collapsed.

They also report NV meetings that did take place in 1916 were now applauding the Rising and demanding the release of the Rising prisoners.

In 1918 they report that considerable numbers of former NV were now joining the Irish Volunteers and that there was no longer any difference between the two.

UNIONISM'S SIDE-LONG GLANCE

Ulster Unionism is not the most reflective of political tendencies, thus it was interesting to read Alf McCreary ('Religion Correspondent', *Belfast Tel.* 05.12.15), in his column, actually a full 'Berliner' page. The greater part of the piece is about the late Gerry Reynolds of Clonard [Redemptorist] monastery. A small item is headed *'The propaganda war'*, sub-headlined (but in bigger print) *'How SF talked up their chances'*. It was about the visit of Bill and Hillary Clinton to Belfast, Bill C being the President of the USA at the time.

McCreary was "head of information" for Queens University at the time, and he notes that—

"... several Sinn Féin leaders—who were then banned from appearing on TV—were chatting to a gaggle of Church of Ireland bishops.

"Meanwhile, in a corner, the university unionists were talking only to each other. It was clear who was winning the propaganda war."

'Propaganda' is there being used as a political 'cuss word', rather than a matter of simply, 'spreading the word'. It's a pity McCreary simply leaves it at that—presumably in the hope that some Unionist will take a hint. They probably won't, because Ulster Unionism is deeply, and proudly, apolitical. They enjoy talking to themselves, for a long time, after Sinn Féin took to electoralist politics with an increasing gusto, the unionists ('Democratic' and 'Official'). thought the best approach in local government was not to allow them to speak, or anyway, not to allow them to be heard.

It was Alliance that put a stop to the nonsense by taking some Councils to court, Belfast and Craigavon among them, for not doing their statutory duty. The Alliance party is almost political, if it could get over being 'appalled' by the fact (in effect), that the rest of us aren't nice Alliance types.

THE RUSSIAN ASPECT

An item in the *Irish News* (Wed., 09.12.15) is germane to the above: it is headlined *Russia man feels he is 'not welcome' after car attack*. The man in question is Konstantin Nesterenko who live just off the Newtownards Road, in 'near east' Belfast, quite close to the 'flash-point' readers may recall from a decade or so ago before the Orange Order took the advice of the police and varied their route past the Short Strand area.

Since that time it (the area across the

Newtownards Road from the Strand) has been a very 'quiet', and Mr. Nestorenko makes the point that only his car was vandalised (windows smashed) in a "communal car park". He has been living "in Ireland", presumably mostly in Belfast for fifteen years. The PSNI are treating the matter as a "hate crime". That means the Mr. Nestorenko's insurers will cough-up for repairs almost immediately. In the meantime the "50-year-old" must be thinking of relocating.

'Ethnic minority' elements, mostly from east Europe, but also from other parts of the world (e. g. Syria), have tended to devolve into 'Taig' areas, partly because, like the Poles and Portuguese (mostly of 'black-African', Angolan origin), they are Catholics, as well as being unwelcome foreigners. Given the popularity of the Chinese New Year festivities around Donegall Pass and Botanic Avenue, and the Indian Mela in Botanic Gardens, it is clear this sort of behaviour is not a demand coming up from ordinary citizens of Unionist / Loyalist Belfast.

It is probably the work of elements in the Loyalist paramilitaries. They have taken the knuckle-headed view that, if the Brit Left favour the Republicans then they should snuggle up to the Brit far Right. And the Right 'across the water' have been flattered by genuine 'bodies of armed men' taking them seriously, and have contributed finance, and occasionally hardware to the UDA, in particular. Though, even the crazed (KAT—"Kill All Taigs") element in the UDA have learned not to trust the 'British Nationalists'. Mainly because they are rotten with informers, are essentially English chauvinists who, basically, think Ulster Loyalists are dubious Paddies with guns—and anyway, many of them are prissy law'n'order fanatics who don't like people shooting at the police and / or "our armed forces".

Despite the rocky relationship, some Loyalist chieftains have let the racism and chauvinism rub off on them, and some of their followers. There is probably a bonus for every attack on black, brown, and beige skinned interloper who is incommoded, like Mr. Nestorenko. The latter, like the Taigs, has the bad taste to have pinko-gray skin, but then, he is a foreigner. And he's a Russkie! They were the mortal enemy of all we hold dear until—relatively—recently. So it's OK to give them a poke and chase them into Taigland.

COLD COMFORT ON ST. PAT'S DAY

Loyalists have found something other that the display of flags on Belfast's City Hall to complain about. It is the Saint Patrick's Day celebrations in the city centre.

These celebrations started in the late 1990s, approved-of in City Hall by Sinn Féin and the SDLP, the UVF-leaning PUP (Progressive Unionist Party), Alliance, some Ulster Unionists,—with the DUP doing its predictable dog-in-a-manger act opposing the matter. That was on the grounds that only Taigs would be interested on such a thing. And they didn't matter.

Despite that, the city centre celebrations got under way, Sinn Féin playing its part in the farce by distributing thousands of tricolours to, mostly, the children involved. St. Pat being—obviously—an Irish Republican. (Yes, folks, when Gerry Adams is looking away, SF can be very crude, ideologically-speaking). SF defended the display on the grounds that it 'owned' Catholic-Nationalist Belfast. It was disabused of such notions in the Letters pages of the *Irish News* and *Andersonstown News* Belfast's Taig electorate isn't in anybody's pocket.

Since then, participants have been allowed to wave what flag they choose – Downpatrick's St. Pat's Day Committee suggested the Red X, (the FitzGerald symbol, 'Saint Patrick's Saltire') which it used. This was ignored. Tricolours didn't disappear but were largely replaced by the colours of GAA Clubs and similar banners (not excluding trade union banners, and the 'lgbt' rainbow flag).

Despite the above, (some) 'Loyalists' have decided on a "12 Hour Union Flag Vigil" on "March 17th/18th 1pm/1am" (Note the Fenian designation "Saint Patrick" is avoided—smart, or what?). This "Loyalist Peoples Protest" will be held at "Belfast City Hall" (the prospect of having a fight with the police must be part of the attraction for some loyal citizens). The poster advertising this event has lots of Red Hands (a 'Taig' symbol if ever there was one) and a big crown, which may not be the British 'Crown Imperial'. The slogan "NO SURRENDER" adorns the bottom of this effort, a master class in how not to design a poster. It is cluttered with extraneous matter and has three typefaces in four lines of printed matter.

It may well be that March 17th, 2016 will bring brisk Spring weather. It is also quite likely to be freezing. One can't pretend one wishes the protesters well; this is simply mean-spirited. Last year some youths waving Union flags 'clashed' with others carrying green, white, and (ahem...) orange, Irish tricolours. Presumably the "Loyal People" involved in this 'protest' hope for a similar argy-bargy in 2016. They are presumably well aware of the fact that it is the centenary of the Easter Rising, and some may use the

St. Patrick's celebrations as an advert for the 'real thing' on April, 20th.

This rising to a (tiny) Loyalist bait is endangering the central Belfast Saint Patrick's Day celebrations. Families are not going to bring their children to an event where they could be frightened, or even injured.

DUP DEFECTOR

Ruth Patterson is a Belfast City Councillor, an Independent, formerly DUP: she left—in effect—because the DUP was being too cosy an alliance with Sinn Féin. She has suggested a number of things about the above 'vigil'. One is that it is pretty pointless, the people involved in it should seek "*change via the democratic process*". This has been denounced as "*electioneering*" by people who may be discommoded (i. e., chucked out of their Council seats) if she gets the energetic young people in the 'flags' business involved in her re-election campaign. Patterson, a pretty savvy political operator, probably has such an eventuality in mind. She is standing as an MLA in the May Assembly election, with the support of Loyalist Jamie Bryson. There is a fissure opening up in Unionist politics. Unionism is a majoritarian (if not totalitarian) ideology, but it has been divided for several generations now—and, the Protestant-Unionists are no longer the majority in the six counties of Northern Ireland.

It will be some time before this situation becomes politically relevant, but it must haunt Unionists of any kind ('Popular'—Kilfedderite—Ulster). Patterson has said that opposing the Easter Rising demonstration is pointless, presumably on the grounds that it is now a regular occurrence. The fact that this year is the centenary of the Rising is of very little consequence. Despite the best efforts of the 'political class' and their bureaucrats in Dublin, non-Irish politicians and their own bureaucrats will be elbowing each other out of the way to get to Dublin for Easter Monday.

PROD ST. PAT

Ms Patterson inadvertently added to the gaiety of the nation, once again (according to *The Irish News* (Thurs., 21.01.16) under the headline *St Patrick was Protestant says Patterson*. What she actually said, on BBC Radio Ulster's *Talkback* midday programme was that "*St Patrick himself was a former Protestant*". What she probably meant was that St Pat was not really a Roman Catholic, as Rome's authority had been broken in Britain because of the contraction, then demise, of the Roman Empire. Patrick (like

Shakespeare, something of a committee rather than an individual) was part of an isolated fragment of the Church formerly run from the imperial centre.

Then, again, she may not, probably meaning that the Saint was a proto-Prod, someone who anticipated 'Protestantism' in the sense of nationally independent bodies. (Though, where Orthodoxy, a series of nationally-independent Communion, comes into Ms Patterson's worldview, it is difficult to guess).

Ruth Patterson denies that she is "*electioneering*", but getting what the late Gusty Spence described as a "super-Prod" reputation could be useful in such a situation. Especially as her former party, the DUP, will be anxious to keep her out of the Assembly—and / or the City Hall..

MINISTER MORROW

The Rev. David McIlveen a retired Free P Minister (of religion), joined in the fun and claimed that St. Pat would be a "*biblical Protestant... if alive today*", though he seems not to have brought forward any evidence to back the claim.

The DUP intervened in the shape of one of its Lords (meaning member of the

House of...) Maurice Morrow. He is Minister of Social Development in NI. Quite what 'social development' means, and how someone who seems more interested in St. Patrick's national origins than the society he lives in is going to go about developing it, the Lord only knows.

Lord Morrow made his own claims on a BBC Foyle (Derry City) programme, debating with Sinn Féin's Phil Flanagan, who wants the Stormont parliament building illuminated green for the Saint's Day. There ensued a row about who 'owned' St Pat. Phil Flanagan did not really take part in this but did assert that he was taught at school that there was no "*Protestant religion*" in the mid-400s (AD, or CE = Common Era, if you are a truly

If Catholic Church authorities were contacted about this matter, they clearly avoided making comment. The C of I made some reasonable comments, like: "*St Patrick lived at a time when today's divisions did not exist*". And: St Pat is "*...a reminder of the common faith shared by all Christians*"—what a bunch of wimps!

Seán McGouran

Another Anniversary—and a challenge!

There is another anniversary this year that will be celebrated on a much bigger scale than 1916 and it will be a worldwide event. It will be the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare of Stratford on 23rd April. As all mankind knows, or rather has been told, he is acclaimed as the greatest dramatist in the world and no doubt the Irish Times' greatest drama authority, Fintan O'Toole, will be to the fore in his eulogies during this anniversary event.

I would challenge the reader to keep a straight face in the midst of all this when appreciating some facts about this death—never mind the many other strange facts about this Mr. Shakespeare which we will ignore for the moment. Consider the hullabaloo there will be about his death in view of the following:

Nobody knows exactly when he died and why he died. It is a rather amazing coincidence that he is said to have died on his birthday and on England's national holiday! The death was not reported or mentioned by anybody at the time. No eulogies appeared. No funeral is recorded. Much lesser contemporary mortals who died had their deaths well recorded.

His death was noted on 25th April in the Stratford Parish Register as "*Will Shakespeare gent*" which is about as informative as stating Mr. Will Shakespeare but not as author, writer or dramatist. Why?

And why Stratford, even if he came from there? Even then, Westminster Abbey was the place for English geniuses. Why was he not interred there among his peers?

His grave had and has no name on it, though his wife and family do have their names on theirs.

On the slab, not a tomb, that allegedly covers his grave, there is a most un-Shakespearean piece of doggerel about not digging up his bones which was a standard type of warning or curse to stop the then practice of emptying graves into a charnel house. It was a sort of off the shelf slab, serving this purpose.

The original monument to Shakespeare in the graveyard had him holding a sack of wool—which would have made sense if it was for his father who was among many other things a merchant—but, after a makeover, the person is now holding a quill and paper—and the monument is not

over the nameless slab declared to be Shakespeare's grave.

Also added to the monument later, was a Latin inscription comparing him to the most curious classical characters which one scholar has deciphered as saying essentially (not literally of course):

"Here lies someone who disguised himself as someone who was his better; someone who gained fame through the words of another author placed in his mouth; and who made outlandish claims that were obviously false to those who knew their texts. The earth covers {the truth}, the people are bereaved {of the truth}, and Olympus {the Muses, who live there} possesses {the truth}" (Professor Jack Goldstone).

Or, to put it more simply here lies a great chancer and the author of the monument's lines is having a laugh by playing a scholarly 'in' joke with those who know the truth.

There is also his (in)famous Will, which is very detailed but does not mention a book, never mind a library, or anything related to any literary craft. But let's not try to spoil the celebrations any further.

People like Fintan O'Toole try to avoid this issue by saying that: "*This is not really a biographical question*" (Irish Times, 5 November 2011), and that it does not really matter who wrote the plays etc. But authorship always matters. Is it not important to Fintan, and to us, that Fintan is Fintan? We must give credit where it's due and not give it where it's not due. Surely the highly righteous Fintan would agree with that?

Jack Lane

The Shakespeare Conspiracies, untangling a 400-year old web of myth and deceit, by *Brian McClinton* 516 pp. €36, £30, Post-free in Ireland and Britain

Book Launch

"A Challenge To Myth, Propaganda And Fabrication"

[February saw the publication of a new book by Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc entitled *Truce: Murder, Myth And The Last Days Of The War Of Independence*. The press statement for the book states:

"On 8 July 1921 a Truce between the IRA and British forces in Ireland was announced, to begin three days later. However, in those three days at least sixty people from both sides of the conflict were killed. In *Truce*, Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc goes back to the facts to reveal what actually happened in those three bloody days, and why: What sparked Belfast's 'Bloody Sunday' in 1921, the worst bout of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland's troubled history? Why were four unarmed British soldiers kidnapped and killed by the IRA in Cork just hours before the ceasefire began? Who murdered Margaret Keogh, a young Dublin rebel, in cold blood on her own doorstep? Were the last spies shot by the IRA really working for British Intelligence or just the victims of anti-Protestant bigotry?

This book answers these questions for the first time and separates fact from fiction in a robust analysis of the three days between the announcement and the implementation of the Truce. It counters the myths and propaganda spread by some politicians, historians and newspaper columnists in an attempt to rewrite Irish history."

Truce will be reviewed in a future issue of *Irish Political Review*. In the meantime,

here are the remarks of the author himself at his book launch:]

Later this year Ireland will mark the centenary of the Easter Rising and the beginning of Ireland's struggle for independence. We have been told that this struggle began with the killing of Playfair, a fourteen year old boy who was shot in the back by the Republicans in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916, and ended with the murder of a young unarmed English Black-and-Tan who was shot dead as he strolled through the picturesque village of Enniskerry, hours after the Truce of 11th July 1921 began.

In fact, Playfair was twenty three years old, and apparently a British Army Reservist, killed as he ran to warn the British military about the Republican attack on the Magazine Fort. The anonymous Black-and-Tan murdered in Enniskerry after the Truce is entirely fictional—no such killing ever happened.

The writing of modern Irish history has been plagued by reckless mythmaking, the recycling of propaganda, poor research, lack of context, and fictional victims. Predominantly this mythmaking has served as anti-Republican propaganda, emphasising the suffering of members of the British Crown forces and their supporters, whilst frequently ignoring those killed on the

republican side, creating a biased narrative to support a political agenda.

Booker Prize nominee Colm Tobin commented on this in the 1993 *London Review of Books*:

"Revisionism is precisely what our state needed once the North blew up and we joined the European Community—in order to isolate Northern Ireland from us and our history, in order to improve relations with Britain, in order to make us concentrate on a European future. These historians' work became useful, not for its purity, or its truth but its politics."

Of course such myth making was not confined to one side of the argument. Take, for example: Nationalist claims that 'English' Black and Tans were solely responsible for reprisals, when Irishmen were often the worst culprits; John Bruton's fantasy that the Home Rule Bill guaranteed complete independence for Ireland, without opposition from either the UVF or the British Army; Archbishop Martin's recent attempt to rewrite the 1916 Rising as a Catholic crusade supported by patriot priests—despite the fact that his predecessors spend most of the Revolution excommunicating Republicans; or the insistence of Establishment politicians in Fine Gael and Fianna Fail who claim that the good "Old" IRA never got their hands dirty, never "disappeared" one of their victims and never bombed a pub.

But the vast majority of the myths about the Irish War of Independence— still in circulation and exposed in this book—began life as anti-Republican propaganda invented by the British Forces, and repeated by a whole host of historians, politicians, newspaper columnists and others, who regurgitated these stories without first bothering to establish if they were true.

As we approach the centenaries of the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War, there is much debate about how the Irish Revolution of 1913 to 1923 should be remembered and commemorated. Given the nature of these events and the frequency that the memory of 'the men of 1916' is invoked in Irish politics, debate about the morality and legitimacy of political violence is bound to continue—such debates are important, healthy and necessary in any society, but they must be based on fact. Myth, propaganda and fabricated 'evidence' have no part in historical and political debate, and historians, politicians, academics, newspaper columnists and media outlets that employ these devices must not be allowed to go unchallenged. This book is my challenge to them.

Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc

The Professors' MOPE

Professor Kennedy's book is about MOPE—the delusion of the sense of victimhood that is the identity of the Irish and tells them that they are the Most Oppressed People Ever. Because of it, they have lived in false consciousness and have done things that had results which confirmed that groundless sense of victimhood. They lack the moral courage to look at themselves, to see themselves in a broader perspective and to behave with a modicum of political sense. They mixed Gaelic dreams, Catholic theology and romantic nationalism and, by living in this fantasy world, they brought about the Partition about which they then complained bitterly.

The 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland began in 1916, when a handful of zealots issued a Proclamation in Dublin and committed murder in support of it. They were soon put down but the wording of the Proclamation, and the mad actions by which it was supported, were infectious on the delusory culture of victimhood, so that within a few years an extensive murder campaign took off. That campaign made Partition and the formation of two states inevitable, and its continuing influence on the Northern state prevented it from settling down into a civilised democratic routine, and led two generations later to an even greater murder campaign.

This is a well-established view of the matter. The self-deceptive character of the Irish was amply proved long ago to the satisfaction of the greatest and most civilised Empire the world has ever seen.

That Empire set out to master the imagination of the world. It re-imagined the world for all peoples it had taken in hand for civilising. It made new histories for them, so that they might take their allocated places in the new world in which it was their destiny to live, and play an appropriately useful part in. And the Imperial mind reached out beyond the boundaries of Empire and constructed re-imagined histories for peoples who had not as yet been brought within the Pale.

I knew about the Pale when I was very young. It was the province of Leinster. Then I saw that the greater part of the world had been brought within it—though the Slieve Luacra borderland of three Counties still lay outside it.

I became very interested in the Pale of

the world and the restless mentality that could not relax until the work was completed and, in a sense, the world was done away with. I think it was Sir Alfred Lyall who explained that Englishmen cannot tolerate neighbours, especially when not separated from them by an ocean. Borders which were only a conventional line across land, with an alien people living across that line, made them uneasy. They just had to find a way of improving those strange, unfamiliar people, understanding them, bringing them within the English mode of understanding themselves, and then, of course, bringing them within the protection of the Empire against the still stranger people that lay yet farther on.

The destiny of the world, as conceived in the era of the Empress Victoria, was summed up in the title of the runaway best-seller, written by Gladstone's heir-apparent, Sir Charles Dilke—*Greater Britain*.

It was the destiny of the world to become Britain. And England was not squeamish about the means by which this destiny would be realised. Dilke boasted that—

"the Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race on earth. Up to commencement of the now inevitable destruction of the Red Indians of Central North America, of the Maories, and of the Australians by the English colonists, no numerous race had ever been blotted out by an invader."

It is true that Dilke was brought down a few years later. But it was not glorifying genocide that undid him. It was being cited in a divorce action. So it cannot be said that the English were without morality! Hadn't they brought in an Act against Cruelty to Animals long before they thought of abolishing their slavery?

I had thought that this interesting phenomenon, the Imperial English mind, had subverted itself with its first war on Germany—on whose culture it had become parasitic in many ways. It certainly emerged from the Great War in a battered condition. This is evident in its handling of Ireland—about which Ralph Inge, the wise Dean of St. Paul's said:

"The loss of Ireland will perhaps be considered, in the future, to have been the most shameful event in English history" (*England*, 1926, 1928 Cheap Edition, p147).

It was still more evident in the handling of its enlarged Empire, and of the world,

in which that Empire was the only possible directing force.

The second war on Germany was sheer absurdity. England seemed to build up Nazi Germany, and free it from the restraints which it had imposed on it by the Versailles Treaty, just so that it would be strong enough to be able to make war again. And then, during the long Cold War against the state that defeated Nazi Germany, the Imperial spirit leaked away, even to the extent that the *Irish Times* made terms with nationalist Ireland on its Young Ireland wing, and its owner, Major McDowell, complained to the British Ambassador that his Editor had gone native—had become a "white nigger".

Then things looked up again. There was the War in the North, small enough to live with indefinitely, and useful militarily when not much else was happening in the world. England had a war to play—and it was a useful kind of war for the world as it was becoming. And, because of it, England was in training for bigger things when the Soviet Union collapsed.

A comprehensive re-writing of Irish history was undertaken by the University system. Over the past twenty-five years that re-writing has extended to all corners of the world. Publications of that kind had reduced to a trickle. It now became a deluge again, as it was in Victorian/Edwardian times—though the quality of the writing is not what it was then. And, of course, Irish academia—or academia in Ireland—has been turned inside out.

Professor Kennedy's book put me in mind, at least in its aspiration, of a book I read about fifty years ago, that was written over a century ago, by an Imperial historian/propagandist whose name as far as I recall was Ingram. But the disparagement of the Irish in that book was lively and was almost a pleasure to read.

The Irish who disparage themselves do not do it with *panache*. That is to say, in the doing of it, they remain merely Irish of the kind that they despise—less than merely, in fact. They are influenced by the Imperial attitude towards them, but they do not become Imperial—not even if they are invited to the Princess Grace Library in Monaco. Their minds do not expand. They contract. They do not flower. They tighten up. They do not create. They imitate laboriously.

MOPE—I first came across this acronym about 1980, in an article or letter written by Lord Bew. I had to ask what the letters stood for. I had for ten years been observing the Provisional IRA being

formed all around me, and had been publishing a *Weekly* against the War, in the middle of the battlefield, but I had never heard about the *Most Oppressed People Ever*. It seems to have been a notion devised in the little University hot-house up the hill, from which nothing of relevance to the War or politics of the Northern Ireland situation ever emerged.

Did the Northern nationalists go to war because they had the MOPE idea of themselves? If they had done, I would certainly have heard of it.

The War began as an insurrection. The insurrection began as an organised defence against a routine incursion of an RUC force into the nationalist region of Derry City, following the usual high jinks at the sacred mid-August celebration of the closing of the gates to the King, who was a Papish, by the Apprentice Boys, who were Biblical.

The defence plan was not conceived by Republicans., though Republicans came in behind it. It was organised by Catholics who had served in the British Army and were not apologetic about it, and who thought it outrageous and ridiculous that they should be subject to routine sectarian harassment when they came home. Not all of them were Irish. They were all respectable law-abiding Catholics, who found themselves involved in a situation in which the law was sometimes set aside with regard to Catholics.

They broke the routine by constructing physical barriers—as NCOs know how to do it—which the populace defended. The defence went on for days.

There had been Civil Rights marches—in support of a demand for marginal reforms—during the preceding year. Unionist politicians took the Civil Rights movement for a Trojan Horse of the IRA (a view which also came from British Intelligence). The closing of the Bogside to the police proved it. Loyalists in Belfast, both state and private, then engaged in a pre-emptive action against the Falls. A defence was extemporised. The main contribution of the IRA was an announcement by its Chief of Staff that he had ordered his Belfast Battalion to prepare for action. He had no Belfast Battalion and no weapons. (About six months later he was Chief of Staff of the *Official IRA*.)

The British Army was deployed. Peace was restored. And there were two pieces of Northern Ireland in a position of peaceful insurrection—*No Go Areas* they were called.

The first organisation that emerged from the insurrection was the CC DC. DC was Defence Committee. I was never sure

whether CC stood for Catholic Central or Central Citizens.

The CCDC established relations with the Dublin Government, which included some training for defensive activity by the Irish Army. Those relations continued into the following Spring. And the Taoiseach instructed his Army to do some planning for incursions into the North in support of its Catholic citizenry.

Now it might be that aggressive Loyalism would have subsided after that wild outburst in mid-August and that the crisis would have been over but for the defensive measures it had provoked. But that is something that cannot be known. And, when a state goes berserk and assaults its citizens randomly, even if it is only for a few days, it cannot reasonably expect the disrupted citizenry, who had taken the defensive function of the state into their own hands during the crisis, to return home and dismiss the episode from their minds, when the Government assures them that it won't happen again.

The stand-off persisted through the Autumn, Winter and Spring. Parts of the Northern Ireland region of the British state lay outside the coercive apparatus of the state, in a defensive posture, and they had relations with the Dublin Government.

Whitehall did not like that, even though it was the abnormal mode of government that it had imposed on the Six Counties that brought it about. It exerted pressure on the Dublin Government to break off relations with the CCDC. (It did this through the Opposition Fine Gael Party (assisted by Labour), whose leader William Cosgrave acted for Britain in the matter, although many members of his Party, as I know from personal experience, were eager for something much stronger than Catholic Defence in the North.

Taoiseach Lynch (who had made an inflammatory speech during the August 1969 crisis) responded by arresting his Liaison with the CCDC, John Kelly, and putting him on trial for treasonable conspiracy. He also put senior members of his own Government and others on trial on the same charge, but Kelly was the one that counted most in the North. All the prosecutions failed for lack of evidence and because of the strong case put up by the Defence, but the damage had been done by the arrest and prosecutions.

Dublin might have maintained the Northern insurrection in a defensive posture, but for its Conspiracy case. Its concern about its nationals across the Border was well arguable internationally, though not through the chosen course of

making it a Security Council matter at the UN. And it could have negotiated a re-arrangement of Northern affairs with Westminster. Instead of doing that, it tried, under Whitehall pressure, to criminalise its own policy since August, using scapegoats. And it betrayed the Catholic Defencists in the North—thereby impelling developments in another direction.

(One reason why it could not follow through on its August policy was that it could not say that the Catholics in the North were its legitimate national concern, because of its insistence that the Protestants were its nationals too. T.K. Whitaker was the close adviser of the Taoiseach and advised him strongly against letting it appear that he only spoke for the Catholics.)

The insurrection in the North was slapped in the face by Dublin after nine months of collaboration, and was then left to its own devices. And it went to war.

That War went on for close on thirty years. It was not a war between the IRA and the Ulster Unionists. That is how the British media often presented it, and it is what the British Government tried to change it into with its "*Ulsterisation*" of the mid-1970s—a matter which I dealt with in the 1974 pamphlet, *Against Ulster Nationalism*.

It was a war between the Catholic community in the Six Counties and the democratic British State which had subjected it to undemocratic government. And it ended in an Agreement between the effective leaders of the Catholic community (the IRA plus John Hume, the SDLP leader, but not the SDLP as a party) and the British Government. The terms of that Agreement brought about a drastic alteration of the Northern Ireland system that was imposed in 1921. The pretence that Northern Ireland, excluded from the democratic system of the state, was itself a democracy, was done away with. The majority rule of the 1921-1972 period was done away with. The "*weighted majority rule*" of the short-lived Sunningdale Agreement was not revived. Communal rule continued, but it was bi-communal rule.

The '*Two-Nations*' view of the situation which I proposed in September 1969, and which was universally rejected then, was adopted in substance in 1998. The notion that Protestants and Catholics were religious communities within a common nationality was abandoned. It was accepted that there was no Northern Ireland body politic that could elect a viable devolved government. The communal system was preserved by an admission that each community was a distinct body politic. Two registered electoral colleges were established within the elected

Assembly, and contentious matters could only be carried if they gained a majority from the representatives of each community. And it was up to the representatives of each community to decide which matters were contentious.

From 1921 to 1972 there was a *de facto* system of authoritarian apartheid. It was often called "*Unionist mis-rule*", but I could not see what else the Unionists could have done once they submitted to Whitehall pressure to operate the Northern Ireland system of the British Government in the Six Counties, outside the politics of the state.

Authoritarian apartheid operated by Unionism has now been replaced by egalitarian apartheid, under which the overall majority cannot determine events.

Professor Kennedy does not present Northern Ireland as an undemocratically-governed region of the British state. He presents it as being itself a state. And he sees its political life as having been tainted by the War (which he denies was a War) by which most of nationalist Ireland freed itself from British rule, and by the MOPE mentality of the nationalist populace. He does not even have a paragraph describing the construction of this "*Northern Ireland state*", and presumably its secession from the United Kingdom state! By a sleight-of-mind, which is not his own, he amalgamates the idea of *Partition* with that of "*the Northern Ireland state*". He apparently did not notice that Edward Carson (whom he despises conventionally) was shocked when he found that the Partition—which he demanded—was going to be implemented by the establishment of a Six County Sub-Government in which Protestants would have to govern Catholics, instead of both being governed by the democratically-elected Government of the state, as the Scots and Welsh were.

Unfortunately, Professor Kennedy's book is written in a fidgety, sparrow-hopping kind of way. There is no concentrated reasoning or description. This passage is the best I could find:

"Partition in some form or another was firmly on the agenda in 1914. The Irish Volunteers and the diminutive Irish Citizens Army, by their actions in 1916, and their subsequent violence, virtually confirmed the inevitability of partition. When it came to the showdown, Sinn Fein and the IRA had neither a strategy of persuasion—having rejected negotiation within the Irish Convention convened by Lloyd George in 1917—nor of coercion to prevent partition... While Sinn Fein and extreme nationalists might have ridiculed the failure of the Irish Parliamentary Party on the question of

partition—the Party of Futility as it was dubbed—its own policy position was threadbare. Indeed the situation was worse than that. Not only had it failed to protect northern nationalists effectively against loyalist attack, its southern offensive imperilled their very existence... Sinn Fein and the IRA not only failed on the question of partition, they added further poison to the wells of communal hatred in the North. This in its turn conditioned the psychology and structures of the new Northern Ireland state" (*Unhappy Land*, p214).

Partition was not only "*on the agenda*" in 1914, it was an agenda motion that had been passed in the sphere of practical politics.

The Ulster Unionist movement had raised a Volunteer Army and had armed it, and had announced that it had a Provisional Government ready to take over if the Home Rule Bill was enacted. In adopting this stance, it was backed by the British Unionist Party, which was equal in Parliamentary strength to the Liberal Party, which was the Government only because of the backbench support from the Home Rule Party. And the officer *corps* of the British Army had made clear to the Government that it would not act against UVF resistance to implementation of a Home Rule Act.

Insofar as anything is a certainty in politics from one day to the next, Partition was a certainty in the early Summer of 1914, before the IRA had ever been thought of.

The Home Rule leader, John Redmond, had brought about this condition of things by ending the independence of the Irish Party in British Party politics, by insisting on a degree of Home Rule that was certain to mobilise Ulster Unionist opposition, and by the abrasive contempt which he directed at that resistance.

By July 1914 he had boxed himself into a corner from which there was no escape. But he could not admit it. After three years of bluster he could not endure the humiliation of facing facts and negotiating.

Then the miracle happened. It came like a bolt from the blue. The Liberal Government seized an unexpected opportunity to launch the war on Germany which had been in secret preparation for nine years. These preparations had been started by the Unionist Government, which set up the secret Committee of Imperial Defence in 1905, and had been carried on by the Liberal Imperialists in the leadership of the Liberal Party behind the back of the backbench Liberals.

Foreign policy collaboration between Unionist and Liberal leaders had continued through the years 1912-14 when relations

on the domestic issue of Irish Home Rule brought them to the brink of civil war.

The War united the British Parties. There was Unionist/Liberal cohesion from the word Go!, or shortly before it. The Unionists, confident that the future was theirs, agreed to the enactment of the Home Rule Bill in order to get the Irish Party recruiting for the Army. The Bill was put in the Statute Book, but its implementation was suspended until the end of the War, and it was guaranteed that it would not be implemented even then, without Unionist amendment. (Michael Stack shows that the Bill was suspended *before* it was enacted, see *Irish Political Review*, February issue.)

There was widespread scepticism in Ireland about Home Rule-in-the-Statute Book. Active Home Rule recruiting into the Army provoked the act of war against Britain at Easter 1916. Soon after the Rising was suppressed, the Government—which was now a Coalition of the Liberal, Unionist and Labour Parties—proposed the implementation of the Home Rule Act with the exclusion of six Ulster Counties, but Redmond would only agree to temporary exclusion.

Then in 1917 the Government—which was predominantly Unionist—set up the Irish Convention. Professor Kennedy appears to imply that, if Sinn Fein had participated, there might have been Home Rule without Partition. Is he suggesting that the Ulster Unionists were becoming less Unionist?

It must be 45 years since I went over that ground. My conclusion was that Partition was unavoidable, but that the Six-County Partition by means of the establishment of the Northern Ireland sub-government could have been avoided, if the principle of Partition had been agreed to and the detail negotiated over hard.

I believe that I was chiefly critical of Sinn Fein on this point. If so, I must say that it was undeserved I suppose I was hypercritical of it because it was the party that had survived from those times, and a new war was starting in its name, while there was as yet no sign of the revival of the Redmond cult.

The responsibility for what happened lies squarely with Redmond. It was he who, against the advice he had been given by a former colleague and a practical reformer of proven ability, William O' Brien, drove the situation to the brink of war, made Partition inevitable, and preferred delusory evasions to the facing of facts.

Sinn Fein had to cope with Redmond's legacy in this matter. And, within Sinn Fein, there were eminent figures who said that the coercing of Protestant Ulster was out of the question. And the President of

Sinn Fein even said that the Ulster Protestants should be dealt with as a nationality.

The *'Southern offensive'* that *"imperilled their very existence"* (the very existence of the Northern Catholics) was not an IRA offensive but a Treatyite offensive. (I assume that is what is meant is the invasion of 1922.) The Provisional Government in Dublin, established on British authority under 'Treaty' terms, made war on the Northern Ireland Government, which was a regional government of the United Kingdom state. The Treatyite leader, Michael Collins, made an alliance with some anti-Treatyites for the Northern campaign. Whitehall allowed some Treatyite successes against the subordinate Belfast militia, the 'Specials', but it called a halt when the prospect of transfer of territory was raised at Pettigo. It deployed the Army, and it gave Collins an ultimatum requiring him to make war on the IRA, or else the British Army would go into action again south of the Border.

At least that is how it appears to have been. But that appearance does not rule out the possibility of an understanding between Collins and Whitehall that he might engage in the feint of a War on Northern Ireland as a tactic to disconcert the IRA and prepare it for destruction. The War between the Provisional Government of the Treaty and the Northern Ireland region of the British state in early 1922 is not something that academic historians in general have cared to dwell on.

The chief result of that Treatyite war-feint was to bring the IRA in Belfast and the North generally into the open, so that it could be rounded up easily by the Specials and the police when Collins suddenly switched his war-effort from Northern Ireland to the IRA.

This was disastrous for the IRA within Northern Ireland, but it is wildly emotive ideological exaggeration to say that it *"imperilled the very existence"* of the Catholic community.

Forty years ago, in the mid-1970s, I organised a meeting at the Students Union of Queen's University for the purpose of having a rational discussion of the sequence of action and response in the Six Counties during those years. For that purpose a list of nationalist actions was drawn up, so that Unionist actions might be considered in the context of them. Amongst those who did not attend that meeting, and who never, to my knowledge, engaged in a discussion of that kind in those years, was the future Lord Bew, on whom Professor Kennedy relies.

Only two Queens academics attended. One was an Englishman whose name I

forget. His view of the matter was that nationalist actions that might have preceded Unionist actions were beside the point. Unionist actions should be considered strictly by themselves. There could be no justifying, or explaining, of them as reactions. The Unionists were in the wrong on general grounds, and particular actions could have no particular justifications.

It was a very English mode of understanding and moralising, as can be seen from any of England's many wars, although unusually applied in this instance.

I have never been much good at abstract political moralising which can treat the actual course of particular events in a situation as an irrelevancy. Actual people do respond to actual events. In 1919-21 there was an actual war between nationalist Ireland and Britain (including British Ireland). Professor Kennedy tries to quibble it away, but most people do not live in the verbal jugglery of Ivory Towers, and for them there was no doubt about the existence of a state of war, and actions on the one side didn't occur without relevance to actions on the other side. Each responds to the other and action and response become a cycle, a circle. And the thing about a circle is that it has no beginning. At the level of the populace there is no first action that sets off the chain reaction and therefore has moral responsibility for it.

Moral responsibility lies elsewhere. It lies in the sphere of *"high politics"*, to use a term much in use recently in revisionist jargon. High Politics is what goes on within the minuscule apex of the pyramid of state, where the levers that move millions are situated.

High Politics was the preserve of a handful of people in the British State in 1918-22. Party politics, the normal condition of political life in the British state was marginalised. The Asquith Liberals had been slaughtered in the Election. They were a remnant on the way to oblivion. The Lloyd George Liberals had all but merged with the Unionist Party in the 1916 Coalition. The Labour Party, suddenly boosted by the Liberal collapse, was the Official Opposition, but it was an Opposition that had never been in Government, which was an unheard of thing in British politics. Asquith Liberals were joining it in order to prepare it for power, but it was still a party in the process of formation. The Coalition had gained an immense majority in the Election, and it was conducted by about a dozen people in Cabinet who could do what they pleased.

That dozen people decided to carry on governing Ireland after losing the General

Election in Ireland.

The Home Rule Party had lost the Election in Ireland, and the Home Rule Party was the party which enabled Parliament to claim that Ireland was governed within the system of representative government of the United Kingdom.

The Liberals and Tories had stopped contesting elections in most Irish constituencies almost half a century earlier. They had handed over the greater part of Ireland to the Home Rule Party. And the Home Rule Party had held Ireland for the Crown, in the sense that its elected members went to Westminster and took the Oath of Allegiance. That made the British Government the legitimate Government in Ireland under the Parliamentary form.

Therefore when the Home Rule Party lost the election in Ireland, Britain lost it. But the Coalition Government decided to continue governing Ireland nevertheless, and decided to suppress the Irish Government, and there was war.

"Sinn Fein and the IRA not only failed on the question of partition, they added further poison to the wells of communal hatred in the North. This in turn conditioned the psychology and structures of the new Northern Ireland state"

—Professor Kennedy gives neither evidence nor argument in support of this view that the war over the 1918 election result determined what happened during the following half century within *"the Northern Ireland state"*. He only gives a reference number. When you look up that number, in a book which is badly made in that regard, you find it refers to a magazine article by Official IRA man, Lord Bew, who is Professor of History at Professor Kennedy's University as well as being a legislating Peer of Her Majesty's realm.

The first thing that needs to be established with regard to the influence of the Irish War of Independence on the functioning of *"the Northern Ireland state"* is that such a thing as a *"the Northern Ireland state"* ever existed in the actual world.

Professor Kennedy questions whether an Irish War of Independence ever existed, but he does not doubt that what existed in the Six Counties was *"the Northern Ireland state"*, rather than the United Kingdom state.

Northern Ireland is a devolved area within the British state, under British sovereignty. There is also a devolved Government in Scotland. It is never called *the Scottish State*, although its political dynamic is very much stronger than the Northern Ireland dynamic.

Scottish devolution was conceded to a demand for independence, in the hope of weakening the Independence demand.

Northern Ireland devolution was imposed by Westminster where there was no demand for it, and where no practical case could be made for it as an institution conducive to "*good government*", which is supposed to be the prime constitutional concern in these things.

What Ulster Unionism demanded was exclusion from Irish government, whether Home Rule or Republican. That was made perfectly clear in the Ulster Unionist Election programme of December 1918.

When the Westminster Coalition conceded that it could remove itself from the 1920 Home Rule Act if it agreed to conduct a Northern Ireland Government, the 'Ulster' leader said that the Ulster Unionists had never wanted anything but to be an integral part of the British system of government, and had never asked to be established in government over Catholics. But Westminster was insistent. It was intent on setting up a Northern Ireland Government, and it brought pressure to bear on the Ulster Unionist Party to implement one for it. It never explained its determination to have a Northern Ireland Home Rule system, despite the obvious unsuitability of the population make-up of the Six Counties for it. It just intimidated the second layer of the Ulster Unionist leadership to make the "*supreme sacrifice*" to the Imperial cause by agreeing to operate Northern Ireland, at a distance from Britain, and to govern Catholics. Carson resigned the leadership.

"*Governing Catholics*" meant policing them. All the major powers of government in Northern Ireland remained under Whitehall direction. The power of police was the only substantial devolved power. And superficially it might be seen as nothing more than the normal policing arrangement because, in Constitutional form, there was no national state police force in Britain—only the autonomous County Constabularies.

The Ulster Protestants had not asked for the power to police Catholics. And the Catholics had not asked to be policed by the Protestant community. But that is what Westminster arranged.

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A great change in the nature of policing in Ireland accompanied the setting up of the Northern Ireland system and the formation of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).

The RUC was not the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) confined to the Six County region of the British state when the 26 Counties left the state and set up a new police force.

The RIC was *not* a British County Constabulary in Ireland. It was a centrally-

organised and directed police force of the State—and in that sense a national police force. It was directed by the Department of the British State in Dublin Castle. And, while it was recruited from the populace, the organic link with the populace was broken in the deployment. There were not Kerry police in Kerry and Antrim police in Antrim. It was carefully arranged that organic links on these terms should be prevented.

It was an Imperial police force for the handling of an alien population. It was drawn from the native population but recruits were trained into an elite mentality towards it. It was a remarkable Imperial achievement, and was the prototype for the policing of other regions of the Empire.

The ruling class, by which Britain was still ruled into the early 20th century, knew very well when Constitutional forms expressed social reality, and when they did not. Ireland was Constitutionally an integral part of Britain. At the time of the Union a twenty year phasing-in period was allowed, in which Ireland would become of a kind with Britain. But it never happened. The bulk of the population of Ireland remained alien in its ways. The separate Dublin Castle administration continued. The British political system failed to take root in the greater part of Ireland.

Professor Kennedy says that Ireland, far from being a colony "*was an integral part*" of the British polity. I suppose it depends on what you mean by *polity*—superficial form or functional substance. Ireland did not become part of the British body politic in substance. The Home Rule Party only tried to manipulate British politics for an ulterior purpose. I don't know what would have happened if O'Connell had decided to be a Whig in Ireland, as he was in Britain, instead of a Nationalist, but in the actual sequence of events it was through that decision of O'Connell's that the Irish remained aliens within the Union.

The British ruling class arranged that Ireland, which it saw as being inhabited mainly by an alien population, should have centrally-directed national policing by a state police. But, when imposing the Northern Ireland system on the Six Counties, the Coalition (a Unionist/Liberal amalgam) reverted to the system of County Constabulary.

An English Communist of my acquaintance, who was familiar with East Germany, when he observed the RUC in Belfast for the first time, exclaimed in wonder: "*A People's Police!!*"

The RIC was an Imperial police force, drawn from the community for raised above it. It was an impartial caste whose function was to impose and maintain order

in a passion-driven populace. It engaged with communal disorders in Ulster only as an impartial arm of the law.

(Professor Kennedy got to know that Catholics were in the police force in Belfast in 1911, and he finds it "*ironical*". That he should see it as being at all unusual in the time of the RIC shows how little he knows about the North of Ireland before it was conjured into "*the Northern Ireland state*".)

The RUC was from the start the communal police force of the Protestant community—and within the political form which the British state took on in the Six Counties, it could be nothing else.

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In the Six Counties in 1920 there were two communities at war with each other, but each community was a segment of a larger entity. The Protestant community was part of the British war effort against the Irish state that was in the process of construction. And the Catholic community was part of the war effort of the Irish state.

The British Government decided to impose a system of devolved government on these two warring communities and isolate them from the larger bodies of which they had been part.

It was the last thing the Catholic community wanted. It was the second last thing the Protestant community wanted. The wisdom of Solomon at Westminster therefore decided that it was what both of them should have.

"*Communal hatred*" did not form the Northern Ireland structures, any more than the Irish War of Independence did. They were formed by a British Act of Parliament, combined with the decision of the major British political parties to exclude the Northern Ireland region of their state from their sphere of action.

The British Parliament decided to establish these structures. When it was doing so, it knew very well that what they would encompass was two "*wells of communal hatred*".

The two communities who hated each other were detached from the larger bodies that might have exerted a moderating influence on them, and were locked up together to be a new body politic.

I cannot see that Professor Kennedy makes any adverse comment on that noteworthy piece of British statesmanship.

His statement that the IRA "*added further poison to the well of communal hatred*" is accurate to the extent that it implies a realistic acceptance that the wells were already thoroughly poisoned.

Asking if something further was added seems to me to be like asking if infinity can be added to.

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I published a pamphlet about the Home Rule conflict in the North in the early 1970s, but withdrew it within a couple of years, thinking that I might have overstated the degree of antagonism in 1912-14. (I don't think I did.)

Lord Bew, in the early 1970s, was becoming critical of my way of describing communal relations as starkly antagonistic. He wanted a more *nuanced* description. I suggested that he should go ahead and do the *nuancing*. (He was at the time the Editor of a little magazine produced for him by Athol St.) But he didn't. He distanced himself from Athol St. and kept his distance from it in a very obvious way. But, in the late 1970s, he began running into me again and stopping for a chat. And now he asked if I wouldn't put that pamphlet back into print, because he was having to photocopy it for his students.

I wondered what had brought about this change in his attitude towards my lack of subtlety. I didn't ask him. By this time he had joined Official Sinn Fein, and had published a book, and I was disinclined for friendly relations with the Stickies. And I doubt that I would even have tolerated him for occasional cups of coffee when we happened to meet, if I had known he had gone to the lengths of becoming an Official IRA man.

In Belfast in the 1970s, living in West Belfast, opposing the War, and publishing a historical defence of Ulster Unionism, I had to give some thought to survival, even though I am by temperament close to being a fatalist, despite a complete lack of belief. And the only body from which I saw myself as being at risk was the Official IRA, with its fantastic ideology and its crazy gunmen and its threats about *disciplining* the Left—things that continued long after the formal Ceasefire.

The others had clear objects. The Provos wanted to make Northern Ireland ungovernable by Britain in order to persuade Britain to pull out. I never saw that as a practical possibility, but it was seen as a probability in respectable nationalist circles throughout Ireland, and in the circumstances it was something that had to be tried, and the Provos went about it rationally.

The Protestant paramilitaries wanted to kill Catholics in order to generate pressure against the Provos within the Catholic community to make them call off the War. That was not a practical possibility either. There was a War only because the Catholic community, having gone into insurrection after half a century of sullen subordination, was committed to it. But it was what the Protestant paramilitaries were doing, and there was

no reason why they should single me out.

But the Official IRA was acting within a vigorous but groundless variant of Marxist-Leninist ideology, bizarrely applied, and I was noticeable to them.

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Lord Bew's article, which Professor Kennedy relies heavily on, is *Moderate Nationalism And The Irish Revolution 1916-23*, published in the Cambridge University's *Historical Journal* in 1999.

Moderate Nationalism is nationalism which is moderate with relation to the force which obstructs national development, which is British Imperialism. It demonstrates its moderation by submitting to the restrictions imposed on it by British Imperialism. The moderate Irish nationalist therefore has to be a British Imperialist. If he demands Independence from the Empire, he is an Extremist. The perfect type of Moderate Irish Nationalist to Lord Bew's mind is Captain Stephen Gwynn, who was an Imperialist and a Home Ruler of Ascendancy background in the last generation of the Ascendancy when the guts were being torn out of it by the Local Government reform and the Land Reform.

I don't think John Buchan is widely read any more. He was a very famous novelist of the Imperial Establishment for two or three generations. When I was young, there was a BBC radio quiz programme for superior schools, *Top Of The Form*, in which contestants were assumed to be intimately familiar with Buchan novels. But he was more than a novelist. He was the semi-official contemporary historian of the Great War, and it was he who revealed that it was the first Middle Class War in history. The Empire, in his depiction of it, is an Empire of nationalities, and a first-rate Imperialist should have a national or colonial background of which he is proud.

Captain Gwynn was an Imperialist of this national/colonial variety. He was the son of a Donegal Vicar. He grew up in a generation to which it became clear that, after two centuries of dominance, the Ascendancy had been effectively undermined by the resurgent nationalism of the natives, and that its trappings would not last much longer. What were members of the expiring Ascendancy to do with themselves?

Gwynn became associated with a group that was feeling its way towards an accommodation with the native development in a medium of very moderate Home Rule. He joined Redmond's party and became an MP. When Redmond died, he published a biography, *Redmond's Last Years*, in which he admires Redmond but is impatient with him because of his

havering on the issue of Partition.

The Lord Bew recommended this book as one of the great books of Irish history to his select audience at the London Embassy *Soiree* a couple of years ago. His Lordship has apparently deluded himself into believing that Redmond was ready to make a Partition deal on Home Rule from 1914 onwards, but does not explain why he did not make the deal when it was on offer, and when the Government (including the Unionist Party) wanted to make it in the aftermath of the Rising. It was not Captain Gwynn who deluded him.

I don't know if it would be too much of an exaggeration to say that for Captain Gwynn Redmond was the admirable Leader who, because of an unfortunate weakness, lost Ireland for the Empire. But it was thereabouts.

The Gwynn family exemplified the decay of the Ascendancy. His wife perverted and became a Papist. He was a sceptic whose Imperialism was entirely secular and he let the family be brought up Papist. One son, Aubrey, became a Jesuit. Another, Denis, became a nationalist, served in the Great War and published biographies of Redmond and Casement and Catholic heroes of many kinds.

Stephen enlisted for the Great War and was commissioned. At the end of the War Sinn Fein was in the ascendant and he would have no truck with it. He settled down to be just an Imperialist, and wrote a column for the London *Observer*.

Lord Bew tells us that the *Observer* Editor, J.L. Garvin, was "*a former Parnellite turned social imperialist*", which I didn't know but might have guessed if I had ever thought about it. English society is Imperialist to the core, and the populist Imperialism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries grew from the Left. The first and most extreme Imperialists of that development came from Christian Socialism with its mission to civilise the working classes.

Amongst the few quotations given by Lord Bew is a paragraph from an *Observer* Editorial in 1927, which concludes the Irish who sacrificed themselves in the Great War—(they were called on to sacrifice themselves, weren't they, and wasn't Sacrifice declared to be glorious?)—

"died serving a bigger, broader and bolder ideal than that of the exclusionist Gaelic anachronism, not shirking Ireland's response to the modern world looking forward and not back to the golden age".

The only one of them I knew was our postman, in Gneevess, Carty. Since I knew

him, it is obvious that he hadn't quite sacrificed himself. The bullet didn't quite hit the spot at Gallipoli, so he only had a medal and not a grave. But he had been out in that big bold adventure—in the Christian Crusade against the heathen: isn't that how Lord Dunsany's peasant poet, Francis Ledwidge, described Gallipoli? And yet Carty seemed very content with life in our exclusionist anachronism.

There has been much probing of the motives and ideals of the Republicans of 1916 and of 1919-21 by the revisionist Establishment, and the conclusion seems to be that they were all pretty mindless, but had been fed an incoherent notion about "freedom". And Professor Kennedy tells us that Ferghal McGarry has shown that many of those who came out in 1916 didn't know what they were coming out for.

(Another nugget of truth on which Professor Kennedy follows McGarry is that the 2nd World War wasn't called the 2nd World War in independent Ireland, but was called *The Emergency*, p18. I have a distinct memory of reading about the war in the papers at the time as the *2nd World War*. A false memory, no doubt! Aren't we famous for it! And, when I looked up the papers a few years ago, and saw them reporting the World War, they must have been forgeries produced on Dev's orders after the event!!)

Basically different standards are applied to the scrutiny of motives for joining the British Army and joining the IRA. And the commonsense assumption that stronger individual motivation was required for joining the IRA than for joining the British Army is reversed.

It was easy to join the British Army and hard not to. Once Redmond started banging the drum, individual strength of character and attachment to some contrary idea were needed to resist it. You could find yourself in the British Army before you knew what was happening. To join the IRA you had to make an effort.

I never asked Carty why he had taken the King's Shilling, or what good he thought he was doing by helping to destroy the Ottoman Empire. And I can't see that the motives of the scores of thousands of other Cartys were ever probed by the revisionist industry.

I would guess that before the Home Rule Party became a warmongering party of the Empire, a good percentage of those who joined the British Army did so out of militarist inspiration. They wanted to experience war, the British Army was the active war-fighting Army that was to hand, and the cause for which Britain happened to be fighting did

not enter into it. And the State in this matter operated with presumptive virtue. The State conferred virtue on the recruit: his motives, if it ever came to a question of them, were presumed to be virtuous—unless some force of individual virtue asserted itself within him and he got himself shot for a refusal of mindless obedience.

Revisionist ideologues (Joost Augusteijn, for example) operate within the framework of British presumed virtue by not questioning the individual motives of those who enlisted for the Empire, and disparaging the motives of those who joined the IRA, or doubting, like Peter Hart, whether they had any motive at all other than the following of fashion. Everybody joined up because everybody was joining up. Wren Boys and Straw Boys joined up *en masse*, like the Pals' Battalions in English industrial region (and Dublin). It helped them to cut a dash in the eyes of the *colleens*.

But wait a minute! It wasn't really the national army at all, was it? Hardly any of the young men joined. It was a very small, select elite, not representative of the nation at all. In fact it terrorised the nation in the first instance, until the people resigned itself to it.

And the reason they fought was not to defend the Government based on the General Election result but that they wanted to fight. In fact Independence gained without something they could call a War wouldn't be worth having:

"Were these militant separatists seeking an Irish Republic, through political means if possible, through violent action if necessary? The subtext of many of the memoirs and other biographical material seems to be that a revolution-in-arms had become an end in itself... The achievement of political independence without going through the purging experience of war and bloodshed was so inglorious, so lacking in heroic possibilities, so out of tune with an imagined past, as to be soulless and unfulfilling. Self-dramatisation and the destiny of the nation demanded more..." (*Unhappy The Land*, p199).

Was the British Government only coddling when it overruled the Election and said Irish Independence was out of the question Constitutionally? John Bruton thinks they were, and that the War of Independence was not necessary. Professor Kennedy says there was no War of Independence. There was only a kind of war of Secession. I'm afraid I couldn't grasp the difference.

And he says it wasn't a War of Social Revolution—which we all knew in North Cork long ago.

The social revolution, insofar as there was one to be made in Ireland, was accomplished about a dozen years before the Rising. Redmond wanted to defer the social revolution, lest the abolition of landlordism should undermine the Home Rule movement by removing a major complaint. William O'Brien, who is given a passing mention by Professor Kennedy, and Canon Sheehan, who is not mentioned at all, thought that the abolition of landlordism would strengthen the national movement, so they got on with it, with the result that the community I grew up with consisted chiefly of landowning labourers served by artisans. (I am the grandson of a small farmer and a blacksmith.)

Professor Kennedy has noticed that the social revolution in Ireland came about under a Unionist Government. He thinks this was odd, "ironical", which shows how little he knows about the British Unionist Party. (He directs some clichéd abuse at it because he doesn't know what it was.)

He regrets that some sparks of class warfare, even of Bolshevism, were snuffed out by Catholic, conservative Sinn Fein. And he says that "*The national question crowded out the labour question, most ruinously of all in the case of Ulster*" (p198).

What stifled Labour politics in the Six Counties was not Sinn Fein. It was the establishment of what he calls "*the Northern Ireland state*": devolved government combined with exclusion from the political life of the British state. The industrial working class in the North, which was well organised in Trade Union terms, was locked out of the political movement of Labour in the state. And the terms of the devolution system imposed on the Six Counties by the British democracy required the Ulster Unionist Party to win a clear majority at every election in order to remain part of the British state in everything except its democratic political life.

And the Catholic minority, denied access to the political life of the state, could do little with relation to the Unionist Party, which was anti-Catholic in general culture and had an explicitly anti-Catholic mass organisation, the Orange Order, at its core, except vote against it.

The Catholic mass organisation, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, became a registered society for the implementation of the Insurance Act, which was the first form of the welfare state. It was very much part of the British system, and there is little doubt that there would have been extensive Catholic participation in British political life after 1923 if they had not been locked out of it.

Lord Bew decided over forty years ago that this was an aspect of the Northern Ireland set-up that it would not be advantageous to think about. It puts the blame for the Northern War on Britain. And Britain does not reward those who see it too clearly.

PS: For the writing of this article, I read the later chapters of Professor Kennedy's book carefully, in order to see how he dealt with the construction of Northern Ireland. (He did not deal with it at all.) I glanced over the rest of it to get its flavour. Then, flicking over it again before putting it away, I noticed mention of a 1969 pamphlet which I wrote.

He is strongly-inclined towards economic determinism and this leads him to wonder why Catholic shirt-workers in Derry and mill workers in Belfast did not act politically with Protestant textile and engineering workers:-

"One way out of this dilemma might be to adopt an orange Marxist position: that urban-based northern nationalists were the victims of 'false consciousness', in thrall to the hegemonic influence of an Irish Catholic bourgeoisie.* This, however, is no more convincing than putting the boot on the other foot—northern unionists were the dupes of an Ulster Protestant bourgeoisie" (p75).

The indicated reference note says:

"This seems to be implicit if not actually explicit in an influential publication, *The Economics of Partition*, produced by the Irish Communist Organisation, later the British and Irish Communist Organisation (Belfast 1969)" (p233).

No page number is given to help the inquisitive reader to find where BICO dismissed Ulster Unionism as "*false consciousness*". He couldn't direct his readers to it because it isn't there. And wasn't BICO notorious for taking Ulster Unionism to be an expression of nationality? Wasn't that why it was blackballed by the Dublin nationalist Establishment? *The Economics Of Partition* was published as a substantiation of the "*two nations*" view in the economic sphere. Its "*two nations*" context is hardly something that could be missed, even by a Professor in a well-paid public appointment under British patronage in Belfast who has an interest in not noticing it.

Professor Kennedy is not the only Professor who has described me as an "*Orange Marxist*". Professor Brendan O'Leary also did it when he was at the London School of Economics, and he contrasted me with the "*Green Marxist*"—Lord Bew.

ICO becoming BICO had nothing to do with Unionism or Orangeism. It had to do with the repudiation of "*De Valera's Ireland*" by the 26 County state and its regression into a neo-colonial Free State relationship with Britain. The late Pat Murphy showed that Free State economic development was being stunted by the currency and Budget relationship, with the surplus that might have gone into Irish capital development just being deposited in the Bank of England. The Free State later got its own money partly by accident (Britain pulling out of the EMS development towards the Euro, after Dublin had committed itself under British influence, and did not follow Britain out), and chiefly through the purposeful regime of the despised Charlie Haughey.

And we saw that Northern Ireland was incomprehensible if considered in an Irish context. It was a British construct and was part of the British state. Therefore we set it in its British context. And we took the British state as a subject of investigation—a thing which Irish academia, revisionist or pre-revisionist, has never done. And we said that, unless Irish nationalism produced a comprehensive and convincing history of the British state from the viewpoint of Ireland, it would remain in thrall intellectually to the British history of the British Isles.

Irish academia, which was already under substantial British influence, refused to adopt that approach. And Professor Crotty, who Professor Kennedy says (on his website) was his mentor, appealed to Britain in the mid-1970s to take Irish intellectual life completely in hand—which it did. Crotty was the founder of the *Irish Sovereignty Movement*, which was directed against Irish involvement in the European Union, even though it was through the EU that an increase in effective Irish sovereignty was achievable.

The result was that the Dublin nationalist Establishment of 1969-70, because it would not see what Northern Ireland was, and did not dare any longer to think about what Britain was, threw away the national intellectual and cultural inheritance insofar as it was in its power to do so.

As to "*false consciousness*", I'm sure I never gave it as an explanation of any social phenomenon. I got the idea of "*sufficient reason*" from Kant and Schopenhauer as a teenage labourer in Slieve Luacra and I never let go of it. (Such things were possible in that society of Anglicised Gaeldom, dominated by the remarkable class of landowning labourers, in which wage-labourers, such as I was, were a minority.)

Insofar as I was a Marxist, outside the sphere of strict Political Economy, it was against a background of Kant in philosophy, Clarendon in history, and Burke in 'political science', so I had no need for "*false consciousness*". But that idea has its relevance. When the Lord Bew announced the existence of "*the Northern Ireland state*", he entered into false consciousness. The state is something which Northern Ireland is not. When "*the Northern Ireland state was destroyed*" in 1972 (a thing which Lord Bew says somewhere), all the functions of State continued without interruption. I know because I was there and I would have been hard put to it to survive, if the State had been destroyed.

The substance of the State, as well as the sovereign authority, had always been British, never Northern Irish. A mind which postulates "*the Northern Ireland state*" postulates an illusion, and therefore cannot cope with the reality of things.

And there is this additional obstacle to thought:

"Those of us who do not define ourselves in terms of Irish or British nationalism sometimes struggle to understand the bewitching voices of nationalist ideology, more especially when ideas float free of material considerations" (p3).

The populace lives everywhere in national ideologies. "*Those of us who do not*", and who live in a transcendental ideology (publicly funded), will naturally not find it easy to communicate with the populace—as Professor Kennedy found when he stood for election twice against Gerry Adams in West Belfast, and twice got a derisory vote. Why so? Because the populace lives in delusion? In "*false consciousness*: ?

It seems that a reconsideration of Lord Bew's ideology of strict Marxist-Leninist Althusserianism of the 1970s is called for, along with an account of how it led quite consistently to a Professorship, and to membership of the House of Lords, by way of membership of the Official IRA.

Brendan Clifford

The Economics Of Partition, A Historical Survey Of Ireland In Terms Of Political Economy by *B. Clifford*. 108 pp, £10, £8 Post-free in Ireland & Great Britain.

Against Ulster Nationalism, A Review of Northern Ireland Politics in the Aftermath of the 1974 UWC General Strike, with Insights into the Development of the Catholic and Protestant Communities, their interaction, and their relation to Britain, in Reply to Tom Nairn and Others by *Brendan Clifford*. 88pp. £10, £8. Post-free in Ireland & Great Britain.

<https://www.atholbooks-sales.org>

Talk given on 14th January 2016 at a 6-day Conference held in Bundoran and in Dublin. It was hosted by Drew University (Madison, near New York city)

Fr. Michael O'Flanagan & the Cloonerco Bog Fight

I would like to express my thanks to Niamh Hamill and the Drew Conference organisers for their invitation to talk at this event.

Tom Barry wrote in the early pages of his classic *'Guerrilla Days in Ireland'* of his ignorance of Irish history: "*and for that reason*", he said, "*I went to fight for England in the first World War*".

His words remind us of the importance of history; both for him, personally, making the choices that shaped his life; and for us individually, as we attempt to discern the past that has shaped, and is shaping, our lives every day. This series of lectures by Drew University goes a long way towards achieving that goal.

I was born on a small farm in Mullaghmore a few miles up the road from here.

My father was one of those involved in the fight for freedom in the early years of the 20th century. He never spoke to me of his exploits. What I learned has been gleaned from his service record and from a comrade of his who lived into his nineties. He never spoke to me of the Moneygold Ambush, mustering to go to Dublin to take part in the Easter Rising, his association with Fr Michael O'Flanagan or the part he played in what came to be known as the *'Cloonercobog Fight'*. During the period 1915 to 1923, only three people in the village of Mullaghmore were active, and who can blame people for being hesitant to join up, after all the history of Irish rebellions was a history of failure: 1641, 1798, 1848 and so on.

I thought it was just my father that was unusually reticent—until I spoke to other men's sons whose fathers were out in '16—and who were equally reserved about their experiences. Of course being on the losing side didn't help. I'm not so sure this was any different for families of American veterans of the Korean War, Vietnam War and so on...

The story of Fr Michael O'Flanagan and the *'Cloonercobog Fight'* is unique, a colourful snapshot of one of the events that led eventually to open Rebellion in the streets of Dublin.

Mícheál ÓFlannagáin was born on the 12th August 1876 in Kilkeevan near Castlerea, Co. Roscommon. The area was a *'breac Gaeltacht'* and the O'Flanagans native Irish speakers. Their livelihood was gained from working a small farm of

mixed land bordered on one side by the fertile estates of the local landlord and on the other by barren bogland. Following a primary education at Cloonboniffe N.S., the young Michael had his first association with Sligo when he attended secondary school at Summerhill College. On graduating there in 1894, he entered St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, where he was ordained for the Diocese of Elphin in 1900. Following his ordination he returned to Summerhill College and worked there as a teacher until 1904.

His clerical duties soon became interlaced with efforts to establish a viable basis for the movement towards Irish Independence that was gaining momentum at that time. He became convinced that the Irish language, rural industry and the local Church were vital elements in the achievement of this. His skills of oratory in promoting his objectives were matched by an originality and genius for fundraising.

Prior to one of his trips, on behalf of Connradh na Gaeilge, to America, he cut a sod from each of the thirty two counties of Ireland; bringing these with him, he invited Irish-Americans to walk on their native soil at a dollar a time. In his fundraising work for Connradh na Gaeilge he raised over £3,000 between 1910-12, a small fortune by monetary values of the time. At Bishop Clark's request, he returned again to America to raise funds to clear the debt on Loughlynn Convent near his home. In 1906 he took another group to the USA to promote Irish lace, a cottage industry that was widespread in Ireland at the time.

Following a stint, in 1912 and again in 1914, as Advent and Lenten preacher respectively, at St. Sylvester in Rome, he was appointed curate, in August 1914, to Cliffoney in the parish of Ahamlish. Immediately on his arrival in North Sligo he encouraged the people there to organise in defence of their rights that were denied them by oppressive bureaucracies, landlords and the R.I.C.

Shortly afterwards he became involved in a remarkable incident that became known as the *'Cloonercobog Fight'*. Taking on the Establishment, against the wishes of Bishop Coyne, he agitated for turbary rights [right to cut turf] for the local people. This situation was brought about by the Congested District's Board's

acquisition of the Hipsley and Sullivan estate and their consequent insistence on re-distributing turf cutting rights to families who had relatives in the British Army or RIC.

O'Flanagan commenced correspondence with the Congested Districts Board (CDB) on 15th May 1915 requesting that bog be allotted to his parishioners who had no turbary. They had now to gaze upon great empty tracts of bog that until lately had been theirs to harvest by right from time immemorial. His parishioners, he wrote, could not be expected "*to allow their children shiver in the cold next winter while you (the Board) retain the bogs for prospective clients still further on the horizon*". He castigated the distinction between those who had the favour of the Board and those who did not, describing it as a "*rotten policy*". Towards the end of this very forthright letter he expressed his amazement at the people affected: "*In spite of all the bad history of the past, they still have some love left for law and order*".

The Board remained unmoved by Fr. Michael O'Flanagan's impassioned pleas. Despite intensive correspondence, the CDB were determined to reserve the bogs for clients of their choice. By late June families were in a desperate position as no turf had been cut and they were facing the unthinkable prospect of a winter without fuel.

Despite being warned by Bishop Coyne not to get involved, Fr. O'Flanagan, addressing his congregation at Cliffoney Church on the Feast of St. Peter and Paul, June 29th, 1915, told them to wait outside for him after Mass. Here he instructed them to assemble the next morning with their turf cutting implements. He would lead them to the bogs where he himself would cut the first of the forbidden turf: 'I would advise every man and boy who wants a turf bank and can work a turf spade to go to Cloonerco bog tomorrow and cut plenty of turf.' There was no need to be afraid, he told them! The Creator had put the bog there for the use of the people.

The following morning the dauntless Fr. Michael, accompanied by the local medical practitioner Dr. John Nally, led an assembly of over two hundred people to the Cloonerco bogs.

A large body of RIC, under Sgt. Perry (who was to die some years later in the *'Moneygold ambush'*), followed and ordered the crowd to stop. They didn't, and true to his word Fr. Michael stepped behind the spade and cut the first turf. It was a clever move as the RIC, fearing the vengeance of the people,

Scuffles took place, some of those present were arrested and legal action taken in the following days and weeks—but the turf were cut and saved. They were eventually brought down from the bogs where they were, built in a large stack close to the RIC barracks directly in front of what is now Cliffoney Parish Hall. A large sign was placed on the stack: "OUR OWN TURF FOR OUR OWN PEOPLE: FOREIGNERS HAVE NO RIGHTS HERE".

O'Flanagan requested that the turf be divided among the people and that a cart of turf be left at the door of each one of the older people in the neighbourhood who could not cut their own. More was to be left for people who had no transportation, as there were many poor people in the area at that time that had no carts.

Throughout the Summer the case simmered on and rumours of prosecution were rife. Eventually an injunction was granted by Mr. Justice Pim of the chancery division of the High Court against Fr. Michael O'Flanagan and the other leaders: Dr. Nally, Patrick Gilgar, Charles Mc Garrigle, Francis Higgins and Andrew Harrison. In deference to appeals made by Canon Doorly on their behalf the Congested Districts Board eventually decided to drop the case in return for a £5.00 fine being paid by the defendants, thus ending the saga of the "*Cloonercu Bog Fight*".

In addition to the fine, the Board agreed to apportion the plots fairly and not just to their own nominees. The people of North Sligo had won a great victory and continued to cut their turf in peace on the Cloonercu bogs until quite recent times. A right hard won for them by their sturdy forbears.

O'Flanagan survived the actions brought against him by the civil authorities but Bishop Coyne, furious at this flouting of his authority, transferred him from Cliffoney to Crossna in Co. Roscommon. The people were dismayed at the removal from their midst of a priest and leader they had come to love and respect. *They were not going to take it lying down!* Much to the Bishop's dismay hundreds of the congregation made their way in procession to the Bishop's palace in Sligo town.

Travelling in horse and ass carts and on foot they assembled on the lawn to pray and agitate for the return of their champion—and, it was related with much hilarity afterwards, stole the Bishop's apples while they were there!

In letters they beseeched Bishop Coyne that—

"you will send us back our poor, dear Fr. O'Flanagan who was an ornament to the Roman Catholic church of Cliffoney and who, during his short stay with us has discharged his duties in a manner that that no other priest has done in our memory."

When all entreaties failed, the people of the locality barricaded Cliffoney Church, nailing the doors and windows shut, thus preventing Bishop Coyne sending a replacement.

They mounted a guard day and night and assembled on Sundays outside the Church to recite the Rosary. The impasse lasted until Christmas 1915 when the Bishop agreed to provide a priest 'who would be a good Irishman and a patriot' to replace Fr. Michael O'Flanagan. Thus ended the remarkable saga of the '*Cloonercu Bog Fight*'.

Fr. Michael incurred the displeasure of Bishop Coyne again when he spearheaded a campaign to have Count Plunkett, father of the executed 1916 leader, Joseph Mary Plunkett, elected in the Roscommon by-election of 1917. The people of Crossna responded in the same way as did their counterparts in Cliffoney some time before. After several weeks of a standoff Fr. Michael returned to tell his people that he wanted to leave the parish quietly and the protest ended. In a letter to Dr. Hagan in the Irish College, O'Flanagan wrote that he—

"tried several times to reason the people into opening the Church but to no avail. On Christmas Eve I appealed to them for the sake of Ireland, to make me a Christmas gift by opening the Church. They yielded at last and for the first time in 10 weeks the [replacement] priest was allowed in..."

This time the Bishop suspended him from clerical duties and it would be twenty years before he received another clerical appointment.

However, ecclesiastical politics were not the sole or focal point of this priest's life. He was all the time growing in stature as a central figure in the Irish independence movement:

"I am a suspended priest", he once wrote. "I have been disobedient and have been suspended for disobedience, but unlimited authority I am not prepared to give to any authority in the world. I am a priest, but I was an Irishman twenty years before I was a priest. Almighty God made me an Irishman and put upon me the duties of a citizen of Ireland... no institution can take that away from me."

He was conferred with the freedom of the city of Sligo in June 1918 and an

illuminated scroll presented to him on behalf of a grateful people by Mayor Hanly. Outside the Town Hall, according to the Sligo Champion, enthusiastic crowds 'cheered themselves hoarse'.

It was Fr Michael O'Flanagan who recited the prayers prior to the sitting of the first Dáil at Dublin's Mansion House in January 1919. In the 1930s, he was one of the few Catholic priests in Ireland to support the Republican Government in Spain. An inventor too, he won a post-humous prize at an exhibition of scientific inventions in November 1942 at the Mansion House in Dublin for a type of face goggle suited to the protection of the eyes and face either underwater or against noxious gases.

As a researcher with the Dept. of Education, he worked on the translation and publication of O'Donovan's letters relevant to the ordnance survey of 1838. He died with this work uncompleted. In a poignant letter dated 2nd August 1942, addressed to the people of Cliffoney, he said: "*I am dying with a very special love of the people in my innermost heart. I'll be waiting in Heaven to greet the Cliffoney people, especially those who prayed for me at the front door.*"

This great patriot, the man whom Cathail Brugha claimed was, 'the staunchest priest who ever lived' died in Sandyford Dublin on 7th August 1942. In two days twenty-one thousand people filed past his coffin as it lay on a catafalque in the Rotunda at City Hall; thousands had to be turned away.

The people of North Sligo have never forgotten him and he is still remembered here with affection. A committee was formed in 1942 and a door-to-door collection taken up to install a holy water font to his memory at the front entrance to Cliffoney Church. The font was accepted and the installation allowed by Bishop Doorly, but no inscription or mention of Fr. O'Flanagan was permitted.

It wasn't until c1990 that this work was completed when the North Sligo branch of CCE, of which I was privileged to be an officer at the time, was renamed after Fr. Michael O'Flanagan. Shortly afterwards a plaque, with his name inscribed, was placed over the holy water font. A large crowd attended the memorial Mass which was celebrated by Fr. Patrick Healy. The Mass was attended by officers and members of the branch, by Pat O'Flanagan of Castlerea, grandnephew of Fr. O'Flanagan, and by Thomas Hargadon, Cliffoney. Thomas (RIP) was the only

surviving member of the original committee set up in 1942 to erect the memorial.

With the unveiling of the plaque to this great priest's memory, honour has been given in some small manner to a man who richly deserves more and who gave so much to his parishioners and to his country.

Joe McGowan

Further reading:

This is the link to the conference: <http://www.taccireland.com/>
This link may also be of interest: <https://www.facebook.com/FrOFlanagan/>
They have Fooled you Again, Denis Carroll; Columba Press, 1993
Priests and people in pre-famine Ireland, S.J. Connolly; Four Courts Press, 1982
In the Shadow of Benbulbin, Joe Mc Gowan; Aeolus Publications, 1993

The Moving Statues Of Dublin

The other night I was reading my *Irish Political Review*. Trying to remove my blanks and the blind-spots that bedazzle. At the same time I was watching TV. Like having caviar with Denny's sausages. The *Irish Political Review* had written about this lady academic. It said she was "*an expert on corruption*". What a big field, I thought! Sure that makes her just one of our own. A bit like the Lincoln Handicap. A crowded field. A starter's nightmare.

I took up *Irish Political Review* again. Great read. Seems the lady, "*slow-Byrner*" had been away in Ozzie-land, having fallen out with Denis the Menace. But she's back. Not pleasing everybody. I think she could be a politico in the making. Doesn't know her 'unintended consequences' from her 'intended purposes'.

"*Seventeen years*", the Slow-Byrner continued, "*after the signing of the agreement*". Makes you wonder. Does she know what this means. She should ask *Irish Political Review's* political sages. In Ionad an Phiarsaigh, recently, one of them painstakingly explained to a Fine Gaeler—a student of history—the difference between a *Treaty* and an *Agreement*. He went into great detail. Everyone could understand the nuances, as they were explained. Even the Fine Gael spokesman became animated.

I usually get the 54A in Dame Street. All about are lots of Banks and Cash Machines. I'm captivated by the architecture. I love the statues near Trinity, especially the one to Thomas Davis. Those fountains. Especially when they're working. "*Urination Once Again*" (as the irreverent used to transpose the inspiring caption). And, nearby, Grattan cuts a fine figure. I forget the bloke's name wat is staring back. Never blinks. None of them do, when you think about it. Those trees, all about. Could do with a bit of lopping. There's lots more of them about, but I don't know their names.

All of this set me thinking. Those things you miss about Dublin. *The Tomb of the Unborn Gurrier*". He normally

occupied the Bridge but wound up in the Liffey. No life-belt. He went under. And "*the Floosie*". Where is it gone to, at all, at all? And Horatio! His head! Where is it? He lost his head. Now there's no one to keep one eye out for the Spanish. "*Spanish eyes...!*"

That's a fine run of statues, running down O'Connell Street. Maybe I shouldn't say "*running*". Splattered often but never forgotten: Big Jim Larkin, hands out, pleading. *Merci, merci*. Locked out, locked up, or simply locked. Wiping his face. "*Send me your befuddled masses*", along with an escort of DMPs. Then there's Fr. Matthew. "*The drinks are on me, boys*." Then there's big Dan. Such rotundity. Surveying it all. They say the British snipers would ricochet rounds off Dan, to cannon down towards some rebel upstart. The Emancipation of the Upstarts. No disputing.

Once upon a time—look my tongue, no black mark—O'Connell Street was for the birds. I tell you no lie. They say one swallow never made a Summer. Well the swallows are all gone. There came the Great Exodus of Sparrows too. Every day is the same. Rain. A great prophet led the risen people from the centre-city wastes. They'd gone Southside. Or Northside. Who knows?

O'Connell Street, then, was lined with telegraph poles and sagging wires. Everywhere were Chinese Takeaways, Thai Takeaways, Tandooris, and other unpronouncables. The Sparrows would be perched on the wires. Like soldiers in line. Sometimes losing shape. Toppling, recovering and fluttering to re-alignment. Fidgeting and fighting. Regaining their place in the ranks. But doomed to stray to some new Mecca. Suddenly it was over. They'd gone. Gone with the wires and the poles.

The pigeons took over. Integration had failed. The place was not fitted to assimilation. The poles and wires had gone underground. The pigeons were strutting about like bullyboys. Like some

fat foreman. Chests out. Sleeves rolled up. Bandy-legged. As if to ask, "*Who's next for shaving?*" Going about with the Dublin Gimp. Moving jauntily. As if arms were criss-crossing chests like pistons. Looking about. Taking it all in. Pecking, shoving, shooing. Like an inside forward who'd tapped the ball home. Coming from nowhere, as if to ask, "*What's the fuss?*"

Pigeons and sparrows don't mix. There's no pecking order and when you throw in the statues, you're really looking for trouble. A famous ornithologist and bird-fancier had figured it all out More statues, he'd concluded. Wires for sparrows. Statues for pigeons. Looks the way it all worked out, down in Cork. Kathy Barry for crubeens, Toscanini for music, and Ringy Boy for the points. Maybe it should all be statute-bound.

Last night I read the *Herald*. It said, *Moving statues row brews over plans for College Green Plaza... Grattan ... Davis are facing time in storage before being relocated*".

And the lady wats an expert on corruption: there's currents for ating and raisins for everything.

Lt. Col. John Morgan (retd.)

CORRECTION:

There is one error in *The Castlereagh Break-In Enigma* (*Irish Political Review*, February 2016): the year of the Break-In, mentioned a couple of times, should be 2002 not 2001. The error was inadvertently transposed from the *Irish News* report, which had it wrong.

Report

Ban on Israel divestment angers pension officials

The UK Government has angered some of the country's most senior pension officials over proposed rules that have been widely interpreted as political interference in pension funds' investment decisions.

The ruling Conservative party published a statement in October outlining "*new rules to stop politically motivated boycott and divestment campaigns against UK defence companies and against Israel*".

Madison Marriage,
Financial Times, 6.12.15

**The following letter appeared in the
Irish Examiner of 9th February:**

So nobody has an issue with the 1916 plaque at Glasnevin?

I wonder are you and your readers aware of the intention of the authorities at Glasnevin Cemetery to erect a memorial wall on which will be inscribed the names of the patriots who were killed during Easter Week 1916—to be intermingled with the names of the British Army in alphabetical order.

Details of this can be found on the website of the Glasnevin Trust.

This project has the tacit support of our government and was launched by Taoiseach Enda Kenny early last year.

Apparently the two commemoration committees appointed by government did not find it a problem, nor indeed do any of our elected representatives, none of whom have uttered a word about it and, astonishingly, the latter, including Sinn Féin who, to quote one of their representatives on the subject said "*we do not oppose it*".

Such an insult to those whom we are purporting to honour this year is incomprehensible to me and I'm sure to many others; except that nobody is talking about it.

It has not been discussed since its initial launch and Enda Kenny's early comments.

Is it possible that many people do not know about it?

Would another nation contemplate such a project? Would the British honour the Germans among their own heroes?

Would the Americans honour the Vietcong?

The proposal seems to be surrounded by a great silence. Why should this be? Where is the National Graves Association on this?

Even the relatives of the executed leaders and of the other participants who gave their lives for this country are silent.

Exercised about the demolition of houses in Moore Street, they are saying nothing about what could be perceived as an insult to the patriots.

Alice Hanratty

**The following letter has been sent by
Dave Alvey to George McCullough,
CEO of Glasnevin Trust**

The Glasnevin Memorial Wall

I am writing to register my profound disagreement against the proposal to create a 'Necrology Wall 1916-23' in Glasnevin Cemetery on which the names of 1916

rebels will be intermingled with the names of British soldiers who died while suppressing the Rising. I ask that my letter be circulated to all members of your board. I am also forwarding a copies to the Departments of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Taoiseach.

I became aware of the proposal for a necrology wall from a letter in the *Examiner* newspaper by Ms Alice Hanratty published on 9th February of this year. I subsequently contacted Ms Hanratty and she has kindly supplied me with a copy of her correspondence with Glasnevin Trust. I also note that a nominated spokesperson for the relatives of the 1916 GPO garrison has publicly supported Ms Hanratty's letter (*Examiner*, 16.2.16).

In my opinion the manner in which the board of Glasnevin Trust is interpreting the concept of 'inclusiveness' is in conflict with its responsibility as custodian of a cemetery that has historic associations with the struggle for national independence. If everyone who died in the Rising—rebels, civilians and British soldiers—is to be commemorated, then no cause is being commemorated. We are being reminded of the sad fact that people died as a result of an event in a manner that suggests that it might have been better if the event had not happened in the first place.

Such an attitude to the Rising may find support among a small section of our governing elite who see the legacy of the nationalist struggle as a potential instigator of political violence but that viewpoint is contested. The majority of the public supports the idea that the centenary should be actively commemorated. In the circumstances it is deeply inappropriate that a custodial body like Glasnevin Trust should be taking a partisan stance by creating a 'non-judgemental' necrology/memorial wall.

The idea that a memorial to 1916 should be 'non-judgemental' implies that less neutral forms of commemoration should be characterised as 'judgemental'. I would question this inference of moral superiority. The critics of the legacy of 1916, many of whom have contributed to a 'revisionist' interpretation of Irish history, have replaced Irish sources with contemporary British sources in their historical researches. They balk at the near five hundred deaths that occurred in the Rising and barely bat an eye when confronted with the 17 million deaths emanating from Britain's Great War to retain supremacy against Germany, a Continental power that had the temerity to threaten the British Empire's dominance of international trade.

In short the body of criticism targeted at 1916 is based on a posture of being above nationalism when what is really happening is that allegiance is being switched from an Irish to a British orientation.

The French theorist of nationality, Ernest Renan, has explained how different nationalities draw inspiration from different sources. For some nations like England and France, history is too complicated to serve as a main prop for the sense of nationality. I would hold that in Ireland the opposite is the case. Here history has been a genuine source of pride and is very much a mainstay of our common nationality. Disingenuous efforts to discredit the inherited understanding of Irish history have diminished the Irish sense of nationality with, in recent decades, a consequent decline in social solidarity and a splintering into the various classes and faith communities. My point is that commemorating 1916 is more culturally important in the here and now than many people appreciate.

I request that you bring my letter to the attention of your board and add my name to the list of objectors to the necrology wall.

Copies to: 2016 Project Office at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (2016ProjectOffice@ahg.gov.ie), Department of the Taoiseach (taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie)

HEAVEN OR GLASNEVIN?

They have notions like
hyper-liberal progressivism
when looking back at
'16

through a distorting prism
screaming
when Redmond's finger
could no longer linger
and was forced out of the
parliamentary dyke
flooding the Irish psychic
with renewed dreams of
freedom's fight
crikey!

says dead Tommy from
WW1

ignore our socio-cultural psychologically
preconditioned differences
none of us won

we were but human hindrances
slaughtered by the gun
brothers

who should have loved one another
some of us may not have got into
Heaven

but surely we lost souls must get into
Glasnevin.

Wilson John Haire
17 February, 2016

THANK YOU FOR SELF-HARMING

Behind the shop front lies death and
destruction
and it's all for sale
to the highest bidder
if you're up for induction
and a reasonable fibber
without fear of jail
you go to the counter and ask for
Uncle Sam
the great anointer
master of the grand slam
it's all red white and blue
the lying Fox News stars
impaled on razor wire stripes
flying from every bar
and lawn
the bended knee at the
pew
the sycophant fawns
as they select the few
but it's never you
for that interview
unless you have the millions
outside they whistle and
shout
to defend the billionaires
and give the Pentagon
more clout
impoverishing the masses for the
military security complex
and what's it all about
the subjugation of humanity
to correct
and hinder nations as they evolve
their faiths and tribes and national being
bombed to stall
so out of the shop steps a new president
sounding familiar with the same old
clippity clop
with the neocons holding the reins
so much money ill spent
time now to take down the
shop front
and let the world take the
brunt.

Wilson John Haire
13 February 2016

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Unpublished Letter to *History Today* (18.1.16)

Army Of The Republic

Edward Madigan's review (February 1916) refers to "*the IRA's guerilla campaign and the counter-insurgency policies pursued by the Crown Forces in 1920 and 1921*".

The IRA of 1920 and 1921 was not an Insurgent force, and the Crown Forces were not a counter-insurgent one. Successive Parliamentary, Municipal, County Council and other elections between 1918 and 1920 mandated the establishment of a sovereign republic and adherence of local authorities. Republicans won 73 of Ireland's 105 parliamentary seat, other nationalists a further 6 in 1918. Subsequent local elections were even more supportive of the Republic. The British Government's response was to ratchet up repression, suppressing a children's concert on St Patrick's Day, targetting Trade Union activists, disrupting commercial activity, assassinating teachers of the Irish language. These activities can be checked from press reports of the time. They were not generally of forces angered by an ambush, or drunk, or random, and they involved Irish constables, and regular British Army units. Republican Mayors and Council members were harassed, arrested, murdered, by Crown Forces even before their reinforcement by Black and Tan and "Auxiliary Cadet Policemen" from England in 1920.

The IRA defended the institutions, such as the Courts, established by the democratically constituted republic, and, so far as they could, the lives and property of the civilian population, including civilians loyal to the British connection.

Donal Kennedy

Haughey & DFA

It was interesting to read in Eamon Phoenix's article on newly released state papers from the Northern Ireland Office that as Taoiseach, Charles Haughey distrusted the Department of Foreign Affairs (31 December).

The only clue provided in the article as to why this might be is that Haughey liked 'keeping all the main decisions to himself'. Might not another cause have been that senior officials in that Department were considered by the then Taoiseach to be too open to British influence?

Dave Alvey
Irish Times, 2.1.16

1916 and 'Just War'

Fr. Seamus Murphy SJ, in his recent 'Rite and Reason' op-ed ('Government betrays the Republic in desire to placate the ghosts of 1916', Jan. 12), claims that the 1916 Rising, which the state is currently celebrating as a decisive event in the achievement of national independence, did not meet the criteria of 'just war' and therefore should be roundly condemned by current leaders of the Republic.

But Fr. Murphy's notions of 'just war' are very strange indeed. In 2003 he claimed to be applying the same theology of liberation when he publicly endorsed the US-UK invasion of Iraq, which, apparently unlike the 1916 Rising, fully met the criteria of 'just war':

"The people of Iraq want peace and an end of oppression. They want neither Saddam nor war. But given Saddam's addiction to war ... he is likely, if left in power, to provoke more wars. That, coupled with the oppression and terror, far outweighs the burden of the US/UK invasion. At worst, the US/UK invasion is the lesser evil, at best a liberation." ('Liberation Theology and the Iraq War', *The Irish Catholic*, Sept. 25, 2003).

Following the achievement of independence, the people of the Irish state enjoyed 93 continuous years of peace. Following the US-UK invasion of Iraq that country has experienced over a decade of the most horrendous warfare and destruction.

We should be grateful to Fr. Murphy for revealing to us the faulty criteria not so much of Liberation Theology but of latter day Jesuitical casuistry.

Philip O'Connor
Irish Times, 15.1.16

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

BANK GUARANTEE

Some flak and criticism has been thrown at me for my remarks last July 2015 in which I said the banks should not have been interfered with by the State in 2008 and should have been left to look after themselves and be liquidated under the Companies Acts if necessary. My critics said the banks were absolutely necessary and could not be allowed to fail. I always promised myself that I would come back to the subject when I had time and, while General Election fever hits the media (but surprisingly not the people to a large degree), now is as good a time as any to revisit the argument.

The Banks were not "*necessary*" in the sense that "*we could not do without them*". Of course we could do without them if we had to. In 1970 the banks were closed for six months or so and it was a great hardship to manage without them. But we did manage. Accounts were paid in cash and in barter in some cases—as a businessman back then I know only too well what I am talking about. When I say "*cash*" I mean real money was used. Wages were paid in cash. The Post Office Savings Bank was used to store money. Postal Orders and Post Office Money Orders were used to transmit money. Importers and exporters opened bank accounts abroad to deal with their businesses. Building Society Accounts, Credit Union Accounts, and Trustee Savings Bank Accounts were used. Any person or company owing money to the closed banks did not have to pay it back until the banks reopened on 17th January 1971. And so the banks were not necessary, as in "*absolutely necessary*" in 1970-71.

And, to spell it out, the banks were not necessary in 2008. We would have found it uncomfortable to be without them but we would have managed. It would have been a great shock to the economic system but people would have moved very fast to overcome the problem. There would have been difficulties but alternative systems would have been implemented very quickly and people would have made adjustments.

With our knowledge now of the position of the banks in 2008, it looks as if Anglo-Irish Bank would have failed before September 2008. And, in failing, it would have caused considerable damage to the other banks and they would have perhaps

failed one by one and liquidators would have been appointed to each bank as it failed.

Anyone with money in a failed bank would have a difficult time until people made new arrangements, which would cause considerable short-term disruption. But not impossible disruption. Anyone who could prove losses in a failed bank would have claimed from the State under a direct guarantee system which the State should have put in place. Losses up to €100,000 would be covered under such a guarantee. Over that figure and a claim would be made on the liquidator of the failed bank. Bondholders likewise would make a claim on the liquidator.

Bank employees would have a preferential claim for their salaries and wages and redundancy payments. Many innocent bank staff-members would be out of a job and would suffer on Unemployment Benefit. Many other bank staff who were involved in approving bad loans—loans which caused the collapse of their bank—would be also suffering on Unemployment Benefit and might be sued for criminal behaviour by the liquidator.

The State has a bank—the Post Office Savings Bank, as well as the Central Bank of Ireland—and with a fast and effective response to the situation—the State could have used these two banks to make and receive payments. The Credit Unions would have been of crucial importance in a bank collapse situation.

Developers would have had a mixed prospect, depending on the precariousness of their financial positions. Many would have survived by arranging alternative sources of funding. Some would be liquidated and have their assets sold off. There should have been no NAMA. NAMA was set up as a screen to conceal the many speculators—including politicians, judges, auctioneers, accountants, solicitors, barristers, developers, landlords etc—none of whom wanted their names to appear in public. All of these would have been called upon to repay their loans by the liquidators. Naturally all of these in the Golden Circles did not want to account for themselves and this was why the Banks were Guaranteed in September 2008.

During 2007 there was an ominous silence in financial circles while secret meetings took place on golf courses, at race meetings and in private homes where the elite (as they saw and indeed still see themselves) worked furiously behind the scenes to save themselves and their partners and colleagues from the imminent

collapses. And they succeeded by and large by getting the State Guarantee and by having NAMA established to cover up their greedy and incompetent ventures. And there were other big international players involved in all this, so the pressure was immense and of course in the end as we now know it was the taxpayers of this country who had to repay the loans of these people through the banks.

When a bank fails, a liquidator will pursue borrowers to recover what is due to the bank and that takes time. When the liquidator had recovered most of the money due to the bank—it is then distributed to the creditors who were the bondholders. The bondholders might have got back quite a lot of what they were owed but it might have taken years. If I remember correctly, a Dublin company Lucan Dairies Ltd., took 42 years to be liquidated. The bondholders did not want to wait. They wanted it NOW and, by putting pressure on our State, and by abusing their leverage through IMF, the ECB and through foreign States, they bullied the Irish Government into saving the banks and repaying the bondholders. The Irish Government caved in and, as a result, the Irish people will be suffering financially and socially for the 40—50 years it will take to recover. We may forget it but it will still be there. Holding the country back, by not building the infrastructure that is needed right now (See last month's *Stack* column in *Irish Political Review* regarding the Shannon flooding etc) and all the other projects that are being long-fingered.

THE FUTURE OF BANKS

Let us be honest with ourselves first. What are the Banks doing for the Irish economy right now? Nothing that could not be done by other institutions. The major interface between the banks and the people of Ireland is the cash machines provided by the Banks. The cash machines dispense cash which is physically loaded into the machines by the Banks.

The Banks provide a system for the transfer of payments.

The Banks keep records of who owes them money (loans) and who they owe money to (deposits). Once upon a time there were Current Accounts which functioned as either loans or deposits depending on the current account holder's relationship with the Bank. But mainly the current accounts were used for the purpose of paying amounts due by the issue of cheques. A cheque is a Bill of Exchange payable on demand.

Most countries outside Ireland and the UK use Bills of Exchange payable at a

Continued p26, col.1

EDUCATION continued

However, many parents in Ballincollig already wish the school to be under the auspices of Foras Patrúnacha but operating on a multi-denominational basis. The latter is, as we have observed, completely different to the artificial Inter-denominational identity being pursued by the Department. Existing Gaelscoil space in the district is bursting at the seams. They cannot take any more and more pupils on the waiting list.

In the past "Educate Together" had to jump through hoops to get schools established and recognized. This meant initially not having teachers paid the same as other teachers. Only after three years of growth, with steady numbers on the roll, would the state give recognition. Even then, usually an embryonic school would be stuck in temporary locations in sports halls or pre-fabs. This at a time when several traditional schools has empty classrooms. Now we are supposed to imagine away the difference

between categories of school. Everything is supposed to be shiny and brand new; one Department mould to suit all.

SKIBBEREEN TO THE FORE!

Meanwhile, RTE 1 *Six-one News* mid-week programme, in the first week in February, covered a similar story from a different angle. This report referred to a case study of a National School in Skibbereen. This begins as the same old story of available classrooms not meeting demand. However, on the initiative of parents and teachers, a dynamic solution was found that suited everyone in the vicinity.

By a full consultation it was found that 60% of parents did not want to put their children forward for religious instruction while 40% did. All the teachers had been trained to be able to provide religious instruction. It was decided that teachers would rotate classes and classrooms daily, so that enough time would be given in some rooms for the 40% of pupils so they

can receive their religious instruction. Outside of the specified times, the classes remerge for the rest of the daily school curriculum. At the same time as religious study, the 60% of pupils take part in a civic society programme.

Thus there is a case of a multi-denominational style structure and a parish National School operating side by side with one principal teacher, sharing the same space and one roll list. This has been accomplished by the parents themselves without interference.

Thus, there is a disconnect nationally. The Department is not stimulating choice. It is not trying to match individual classrooms with the demands for pupil accommodation. It is instead persisting with the badly thought out so-called *inter-denominational* category. It seems to be the pointless pursuit of a cause which mostly consists of empty rhetoric, slick publicity and the provision of some senior people with the appearance of doing something.

Seán Ó Riain

Does It Stack Up?

continued

certain future date. The certain date is specified in the contract under which the payment is made. It might be 30 days (most typically) or 60 days or 90 days etc. But the date is absolutely of the essence of the contract and not to honour a Bill of Exchange on the due date can be construed as an Act of Bankruptcy which means that Bills of Exchange do get honoured on the due date and business people know exactly where they are! Which unfortunately is not the case in Ireland under our present banking system.

What Ireland needs and what every country needs is one or two State banks. We have the Post Office Savings Bank for personal deposit and savings accounts and we have AIB—Allied Irish Banks which deals with business accounts mostly, and which is 99% State-owned. It should become 100% State owned. There should be no selling off of AIB. We need the Post Office Savings Bank and AIB to be under State control so that they will be properly and securely operated.

If we have learned our lessons from the Recession—we will have learned not to be dependant on Joint Stock banks—they will almost inevitably get into trouble again because they are based on greed. Control them by legislation certainly, but let us not be dependant on them for day-to-day transactions.

Michael Stack ©

Bumpy road ahead after public expenditure cuts

The Stormont House Agreement and the Fresh Start Implementation Plan outlined among other things the Assembly's commitment to fund Voluntary Exit Schemes in the civil and public services. These were facilitated by the Treasury agreeing 'flexibility' to divert £700m of capital borrowing for the purpose. Staff to leave the Civil Service in the final tranche have now been identified, just as the consequences for public services of this scheme and the 'unquestionably real terms reductions to our block grant' cited by the First and Deputy First Minister in their Introduction to A Fresh Start, become clearer.

One department has been quite explicit, with DRD signalling in a memo to staff in July 2015, a "Routine Road Maintenance – Skeleton Service". The DRD deputy secretary noting: "I fully realise that staff on the ground are having to deal directly (or through correspondence) with members of the public who often vent their anger and express their unhappiness at the levels of service that Transport NI is providing at present."

In December 2015, the director of engineering issued a memo to all staff noting revised inspection frequencies for road maintenance standards, indicating that they "are intended as a permanent measure brought as a result of the impact of the Voluntary Exit Scheme on staffing levels".

This relaxation of the inspection regime will be felt by motorists, firstly in their tyres and secondly in their pockets.

We have an assembly election scheduled for May and a commitment to further public expenditure cuts to pay for reduced Corporation Tax from April 2018.

It is surely reasonable to ask candidates, if elected, what public services would they cut and what services would they protect in the years ahead?

Michael Robinson

Letter, *Irish News*, 22 February 2016

1916 continued

ment. They had won and it was absolutely clear that Home Rule, or any form of Irish Government, was off the agenda. There was no two ways about it. If that Government had its way we would still be waiting for Home Rule, never mind anything more. The Home Rule Act was already suspended on the day it was passed on 18th September 1914, and that is where it would remain. It was now as dead as the Monty Python parrot.

As a result, this new Government lost all moral authority in Ireland. In fact it only had legal authority because the British House of Commons is above the law. Because whatever it does is legal. It can do whatever it likes and it is automatically legal—this is the essence of the British Constitution. The beauty of the British Constitution is that it does not exist! Unlike other countries there is no Court or Law that the Parliament is accountable to.

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

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

So, while it is true that 1916 had no mandate, the existing Government had no mandate either. It was not an elected Government. The Unionists rebellion against their own Government had no mandate except what they gave themselves. And there was no Irish mandate for the war that led to the deaths of at least 10 million people.

So the Rebellion of 1916 was perfectly logical and reasonable in the context of the time and when the first opportunity arose to get a mandate, in the 1918 Election, the Rebellion got an overwhelmingly mandate for what had been done. The British Government never got such a mandate or even looked for it. Advocating Irish Independence always was and always would be treated as treason. It relied on force as it proved yet again with the Auxiliaries and the Black And Tans.

There is only one legitimate objection to commemorating 1916—it should be *celebrated* unreservedly instead.

Jack Lane

This article first appeared in *The Corkman* of 11th February 2016

EDUCATION:

The art of appearing to be doing something

(discussion article)

Currently an artificial conflict in education is being kindled *vis a vis* Patrons and Boards of Management in schools, by the Establishment in the Department of Education and certain politicians. It must be noted that over the years the success of the multi-Denominational sector is due to the industry of particular groups of people who are highly motivated whereby parents are part of every facet of the building of the school from its beginning.

Demand is high in places in which they are established. They have had some of their most vibrant success in Dublin, in the North of Ireland and the Border regions. In such locations the school's role has been about more than giving the students a modern secular education with high parent participation in management but also have contributed to reconciliation between the two old traditions or nations in Ireland and between the long-established local population and the newcomer migrants and people of different race.

The State is trying to add a superficial sheen of Secularism to the general education service at secondary and national primary level. It seems to be going through a show of change just for the sake of it, but it is transplanting a model into poor soil and not preserving some of better components that defined the original project in the indigenous situation.

Plans, both under Minister Ruairi Quinn and current Minister Jan O'Sullivan were disposed to re-describing the status of many schools. It was envisaged to offer schools the opportunity to change designation regarding Patrons. Under the existing system the vast majority of National Schools have a Board of Management on which the local Parish Priest sits, along with a built-in majority approved by the same clergyman. As the structure stood, the Catholic Dioceses were in turn the Patrons of the vast bulk of the schools.

'EDUCATE TOGETHER'

'Educate Together' is the Patron for multi-denominational schools. These are dependent on the high level of involvement and general contribution of all parents towards the responsibility of school governance. *Foras Patrúnacha* is similar in that it represents all the Irish language

medium schools which are not located in the Gaeltacht areas.

During the growth process in the case of the Gaelscoileanna, they often ended up in conflict or competition with the local official Catholic parish. There was real fear of competition for pupils which could lead to loss in roll numbers and thus loss of teachers and resources *pro rata*. Generally the majority of pupils in the Gaelscoileanna would present themselves for Holy Communion in the same parish. The rivalry was thus not related to secular or religious ideology but rather style of education along with the enthusiasm of parents, who tend to ask more questions and attend more meetings and expect more in terms of accountability in school management.

As regards newer 'designated' (inter-denominational) schools in various locations, at National School level, at least, the students would be overwhelmingly from family backgrounds that are both Catholic (at least nominally) and also ethnically Irish. Generally the vast bulk of parents would have little interest in the make-up of the Board of Management. Usually there would not be a lot of intense debate on the finer points of the schools house-keeping. Certainly there would not be a lot of discussion about ideology. It must be remembered that for all the schools there has been a lot of change in the last generation. They now have sex education and they have computers and interactive whiteboards. Yet, it is increasingly unclear what is the best match of class rooms and enrolment of students. Some are under-subscribed.

CORK EXAMPLE

As for an anecdote pertaining to the greater national position we ought to look at Cork as a case study. A feud is developing in Ballincollig regarding the patronage of a school that has not even yet been opened. According to the *Irish Examiner*, 27th January 2016, the new "*Cork Education Training Board*" (CETB)—this is the first ETB operating outside Dublin.

CETB is the co-patron of Ballincollig Community School in partnership with the Catholic diocese of Cork and Ross as well as the new status national community schools Scoil Cliodhna in Carrigtwohill and Scoil Aonghusa in Mallow. CETB is now touting to manage the new primary school in Ballincollig. It does a lot of public relations. CETB also has an interest in Third Level education through St John's College in Cork city along with Colaiste Stiofan Naofa and the College of Commerce.

continued on page



LABOUR

Comment

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Why We Should Celebrate 1916

Jack Lane of the Aubane Historical Society stands over the rationale for the Rising of 1916

It seems odd to have to defend an event that happened 100 years ago, to have to be defensive about it. It seems even odder to have to defend the people and an event that led to the establishment of this state which is now one of the longest established unbroken democratic states in the world. Many states have come and gone since 1916 but this state has maintained itself and it has not succumbed to totalitarianism of the left or right.

Yet the situation is that if we paid too much attention to our media and Emeritus Professors, who should know better, we need to defend the men and women and what they did to set up this state.

There are all sort of question marks put forward about this Rebellion. The main one, we are told, is that it should not have happened because the people concerned did not have a mandate. Indeed they did not have a mandate but no rebellion has ever had a mandate. Rebels cannot announce or advertise their rebellion. They cannot put an ad in *The Corkman* declaring that they will launch an attack on the State at 12 o'clock tomorrow and ask people to join in.

It is the support they get and whether they win or lose that matters in the end. 1916 was an act of war in the middle of a much bigger war and that war did not have a mandate either from the Irish people. The Government that declared it, and the Irish Party that supported it, were elected in 1910. Nobody campaigned and was elected to support a world war in 1910!

The 1916 people followed the rules of war. But the British did not. They executed the leaders and did not treat them as prisoners of war.

What was the context of 1916? Everything happens in a context and can only be understood in its own context.

We are told that the 1916 took up arms for no good reason as a peaceful alternative was

possible. If that were so, the people of 1916 were irresponsible and deserve no sympathy and they would never have got the support of the people. And of course, if wishes were horses we would all go for a ride.

It is often forgotten that there was a time when the people of 1916 did trust in a peaceful route. They trusted in Home Rule. Home Rule was of course a very, very limited form of devolved government—for example a lot less than what Scotland has today. It appeared possible to have this in 1912 after nearly 30 years of Parliamentary effort. That mountain of Parliamentary labour had produced a mouse.

And in 1912 Pearse shared a platform with Redmond in support of Home Rule. What happened? Pearse changed his mind. Why?

The fact is that there was a rebellion against the Government's plans for Home Rule. And this was a real rebellion. In 1912 the British and Irish Tories/Unionists organised themselves to set up a provisional government, an alternative government to prevent Home Rule. An illegal army was set up in 1913, the UVF,

to prevent by force the Government implementing the law it was about to pass, Home Rule. Tons of German arms and ammunition were imported for the Ulster Unionist Volunteers.

The Irish Volunteers were set up afterwards to support the Government in implementing Home Rule—to assist in implementing the law, not to break it as the Ulster Volunteers were planning to do. But, when they imported arms to support the Government's policy, people were killed for doing so in Bachelors Walk.

In 1914 the British Army supported this rebellion when in the Curragh mutiny it declared that it would not obey the Government on Home Rule implementation—it refused to enforce the law! They said they would not enforce Home Rule in Ulster.

And the important thing was that the Government allowed all this to happen and conceded all along the line.

But then in 1915 a most important thing happened. Something very unparliamentary happened in 1915. Something that is hardly ever mentioned these days though it was a crucial event. At the time no UK Parliament could run for more than five years and the last election had been in 1910 so one was constitutionally due in 1915. The Government's mandate had run out.

But the Government decided that an election may not suit them so they did a deal with the Opposition, the Tories/Unionists, to bring them into Government and avoid an election. These were the people who had openly and proudly broken the law against the Government over the prospect of Home Rule and planned for civil war. Now the lawbreakers were the lawmakers! It was a Parliamentary *coup d'état*.

The Unionists had their own Army, with plenty arms, they had British Army support, and now they were in Govern-

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