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Brexit: British Election, Taoiseach Varadkar, and Continental Developments

WESTMINSTER ELECTION

"People in Ireland are puzzled why Brexit failed to become an issue in the 7-week election campaign in Britain." So stated RTE broadcaster Richard Curran while posing a question to a journalist with the *Guardian* newspaper, Lisa O'Carroll, on the RTE radio programme, *The Business*' (17.6.2017).

O'Carroll ducked the question by claiming that concerns over immigration were the main driver behind Brexit and that Theresa May's Government had failed to put 'meat on the bone' by not explaining what Brexit will actually mean. What she should have said is that Brexit was ignored because Jeremy Corbyn refused to make it an issue and in that way declined to follow the advice of her newspaper and the rest of the anti-Brexit lobby in Britain.

Brexit was not an issue in the British election campaign because Labour refused to take an anti-Brexit stance. The section of the party's Manifesto dealing with Brexit began with the words: "*Labour accepts the referendum result*". There were references to negotiating priorities with a strong emphasis on "*retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union*", which is different to retaining membership of them. This had the effect of removing the UK's relationship with Europe as a contentious issue in the campaign. Instead, attention focussed on domestic issues like the 'dementia tax' and the abolition of university fees, and electoral support ebbed away from the Tories allowing the Labour Party to gain 30 seats and leaving Theresa May's 'tactical masterstroke' in shreds.

It is very likely that May's gambit would have paid off if the Labour Party had remained under the control of the Blairite mainstream; in all probability the Blairites would have based their electoral strategy on strenuous opposition to Brexit along lines

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The Incomparable Compared!

The comparison of the "*War on Terrorism*" with the war against the IRA has been widely made by British commentators in recent months. But there is no substance to the comparison. One is a matter of internal policing, the other was a foreign war.

The BBC political propagandist, Martin Dillon, published a book on the Northern Ireland War and called it *The Enemy Within: The IRA's War Against The British*. But the enemy was "*within*" only in an Imperial sense—held within the state, against its will, by a power of State in which it could play no part. It was within the state because it was held within the special Northern Ireland system of the state.

Northern Ireland was not an integral part of the political or national life of the state. It was an undemocratic variant of the otherwise democratic British state, designed to serve some purpose of the State in its Irish policy.

The ruling majority in the Northern Ireland system agreed to rule the large

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PART ONE

Aspects of the Balfour Declaration 1917

One hundred years ago the British Government did an extraordinary thing. Arthur Balfour, former British Prime Minister and at that time Foreign Secretary, wrote to Lord Rothschild, as representative of English Jewry, informing him that His Majesty's Government was in favour of establishing a national home for the Jews in Palestine. This was the *Balfour Declaration* of 1917 and its message to the world

was that Britain's power and authority was to be used in an unprecedented manner in world history, to return a disparate and widely scattered people to a territory 2000 years after they had left it.

Britain was, to all intents and purposes, colonising a territory and imposing a foreign element in an area totally against the wishes of the natives. Palestine had been Arab since the 7th Century and the

Jews had not lived there in significant numbers for two millennia. There were less than 100,000 Jews in Palestine in 1917 (about twice the number that lived in the East End of London) and over 700,000 Arabs. The Jews that were to be interposed there were European and Russian, unlike the Jews who lived in Palestine who retained Middle Eastern ways.

The Balfour Declaration was put together between July and October before being issued on 2nd November 1917. It went through several drafts before being delivered: Zionist Draft (July); Balfour

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similar to the sentiment expressed by Lisa O'Carroll. During and after the referendum last year the Blairites denounced Corbyn for being deliberately vague regarding Brexit and they have kept up that criticism. It is ironic that Corbyn ended up stealing a march on the Tories precisely because his Brexit policy contained the sort of ambiguity that his 'realist' opponents attack him for.

The main international significance of the British election result is that the UK team is entering the Brexit talks in a weaker state than when Article 50 was triggered. But the underlying significance is that a major European electorate has signalled that Government policies informed by neo-liberal principles are losing credibility. That Jeremy Corbyn ran a successful election campaign in the teeth of media opposition and internal opponents testifies to a public mood of disenchantment with the conventional wisdom of recent decades. The fallout from the Grenfell Tower disaster has compounded and amplified that mood; the centre of gravity in British politics is shifting inexorably to the left.

The question remains as to where these developments leave Brexit. Opponents of UK exit have certainly received a fillip. Since the election result, acres of newspaper comment have predicted the beginning of the end of Brexit; 'soft Brexit'

is now reckoned to be a much likelier outcome; business leaders have recognised May's difficulties as an opportunity to reassert the importance of economic considerations; and the Remain camp is said to be plotting a strategy that will lead to a second referendum. Yet this pocket of hot air is already dissipating. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, seen by many as the great white hope of soft Brexiters, is reported as confirming that Britain will be leaving both single market and customs union as a result of Brexit (*Daily Express*, June 19).

It is also worth noting that the political parties that campaigned against Brexit, the Lib Dems and the Greens, received only 9 per cent of the vote while Labour and the Tories, the parties supporting Brexit, together won the backing of 80 per cent of the electorate. A soft Brexit sounds attractive in theory, especially from an Irish perspective, but informed reflection dictates that it would land the UK in the worst of all possible worlds: constrained by EU regulations and the remit of the European Court of Justice, required to contribute to the EU budget, prevented from negotiating trade deals with non-EU states and unable to influence policy-making by virtue of not being an EU member.

Once you move down the path of Brexit with a nationalist agenda like that of the

Tory Brexiteers, leaving the single market and customs union becomes the only rational choice.

The likelihood is that the negotiations will proceed along the lines planned before the snap election was called. The challenge for the British is still to find a compromise allowing them to retain important benefits of membership while leaving the Union.

The other matter that can't be ignored is the Irish border which introduces the one complication from the election result that has changed the Brexit landscape, the new fly in the ointment: the Conservative Government's dependence on the votes of ten Democratic Unionist Party MPs at Westminster. One area where the DUP is likely to make a difference is in the matter of immigration controls between the UK and Irish Republic/EU. Practicality requires that immigration controls would be most effective if applied at the airports and seaports that connect Northern Ireland with Britain but the DUP was always expected to vigorously oppose such arrangements, and now they hold the balance of power.

Having the DUP as the 'confidence and supply' partner of the Conservative Government has implications for efforts to form an Executive in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Theresa May has addressed the problem by holding meetings with all of the Belfast party leaders and has also invited the new Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, to Downing Street for talks. Depending on how much goodwill exists in Sinn Fein and the DUP to agree a new deal for a power sharing Executive, the relationship between the DUP and the Tories in Westminster is unlikely, on its own, to pose an insurmountable obstacle to the Northern Peace Process.

VARADKAR AS TAOISEACH

As in the British election campaign and for a similar reason, Brexit was conspicuous by its absence in the leadership contest between Leo Varadkar and Simon Coveney: there were no overt differences over the topic expressed by the contenders. Nonetheless the word on the ground is that Varadkar leans more towards Europe while Coveney has a hankering for a close relationship with Britain.

Varadkar accepted in a speech he made in Brussels earlier in the year that Brexit means that Ireland needs to forge new relationships with Europe notwithstanding the close ties of recent years between Britain and Ireland. Coveney on the other hand expressed the view, while deputising for Enda Kenny in Leader's Questions in the Dail last December that Ireland should maintain a neutral stance as between

Britain and the EU regarding Brexit. The nuances of these apparently different positions are, as is often the case in politics at Government level, difficult to gauge. It is possible that Varadkar has more sympathy for the traditional nationalist view while his rival in the contest is closer to the Redmondite revisionism favoured by the inner circles of the Fine Gael party in recent years.

A straw in the wind that might be significant is that an influential barrister and trustee of Fine Gael, Frank Callinan, was tipped to be made Attorney General as Marie Whelan vacated the post. Callinan eulogised Conor Cruise O'Brien in the *Belfast Telegraph* in December 2008 following O'Brien's death, and as an amateur historian has written extensively about the Home Rule party including drafting entries to the *Irish Dictionary of Biography* for John Dillon, Tim Healy and CS Parnell. As part of last year's centenary, he contributed an article to the *Irish Times* on Tom Kettle. In the event Varadkar chose another Fine Gael barrister, Seamus Woulfe, as his AG. The appointment may of course be unrelated to Frank Callinan's field of historical research but the message that Redmondite credentials may no longer be a ticket to high office will not be lost on ambitious members of the legal profession and wider afield.

Varadkar's reshuffle of Cabinet positions reveals little about the new Taoiseach, in the sense that many favours called up during the leadership contest needed to be repaid. The most notable appointment from a Brexit perspective is that of Simon Coveney, who won two-thirds of rank and file support in the leadership vote, to the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for Brexit.

Eoghan Harris devoted his *Sunday Independent* column (18 June) to denouncing Coveney as the inheritor of the Peter Barry nationalist tradition in Fine Gael. Apparently Coveney has proposed that time should be called on the demonisation of Sinn Fein and Harris, who has little to contribute to public discourse other than anti-Sinn Feinism, is incensed.

On the other hand, in one of his first interventions as Minister for Foreign Affairs—a meeting with Michel Barnier in Luxembourg—Coveney stated:

"Ireland wants to see the closest possible future relationship between the EU and the UK—this will be critically important in minimising the impact of Brexit on our trade and on our economy."

This sounds very like a return to the Anglophilia that Enda Kenny and Charlie Flanagan engaged in, but it is open to other interpretations.

The question of Coveney's reason for choosing Foreign Affairs (having won the rank and file vote meant that he could choose his own portfolio) is important. He has shown leadership ability and is a competent political administrator. After the last General Election he undertook to sort out the housing crisis and set about applying market-based solutions, chiefly his *'Help to Buy'* scheme which had the effect of inflating house prices. In the leadership campaign Varadkar announced that he would wind up the scheme and that is now happening.

If Coveney was a substantial politician he would have remained at Housing and tried other policies; he would have seen the job through. Instead he has elected to be the Government's voice on Brexit. If he turns out to be an incarnation of Enda Kenny/Charlie Flanagan the only way that the country can be extricated from Redmondism is through the election of a Fianna Fail Government committed to an independent foreign policy untainted by 'close to Britain' leanings—but the current Fianna Fail leadership does not inspire confidence in that direction.

In any case it is likely at this stage that Michel Barnier can smell Irish Anglophilia when he encounters it; one imagines he will go through the correct diplomatic motions while mentally treating it with the contempt it deserves.

CONTINENTAL EUROPE DEVELOPMENTS

The formal Brexit negotiations began in Brussels on Monday 19th June. The main business was to agree timetables, order of business, and terms of reference. The significant outcome was the British capitulation on their demand for parallel talks on trade alongside those on the exit, a development that further strengthens the EU's tactical dominance in the overall Brexit process. It seems that the British feared being held to ransom over the single financial settlement, the amount the UK will pay to the EU, if trade talks followed the exit talks; they feared that the EU would use the threat of a disadvantageous trade deal to extract a large divorce settlement. Whether those calculations have any basis in reality remains to be seen.

The first phase of the negotiations will include the single financial settlement, the rights of EU citizens in the UK and *vice versa*, and protections for the Good Friday Agreement. Michel Barnier indicated that, assuming that the UK leaves the single market, controls will need to be applied at the Irish border. He said: *"It might mean lorries turning off into a layby after going through the border but there will be checks"*.

Negotiations about that border will be subject to a separate dialogue and will not be discussed by the first working groups. David Davis, who is leading the British side, said that the border involved technically difficult issues that can only be resolved towards the end when the *"customs and trade priorities"* are clearer.

The following snippet from an article in the *Guardian* about the Talks catches the spirit of the opening day:

"Jean-Claude Juncker's chief of staff, Martin Selmayr, gave an insight into the EU side's take on Britain's preparations by retweeting a Daily Telegraph cartoon in which a hapless Davis is seen struggling with a paper strewn desk. 'Whenever you're ready, Mr Davis', Barnier is seen telling the Brexit secretary facing him across a long desk."

Other recent developments relevant to Brexit concern the leaders of Germany and France. On May 28th Angela Merkel announced in a Bavarian beer tent that *"We Europeans must really take our destiny into our own hands"*. The remarks were made immediately following a Group of Seven summit that had been marked by recalcitrant behaviour on the part of Donald Trump. Merkel may also have wanted to strike an appropriate posture in the light of forthcoming national elections in Germany on September 24th. However, the remarks may turn out to be symbolic of a new development in Europe, now that the UK can no longer disrupt the processes of European integration.

In qualifying her remarks by acknowledging the need for friendship with the US and Britain, Merkel caused surprise by including Russia among other neighbours with whom friendly relations needed to be maintained. Within German politics the Chancellor is not known as a figure well disposed towards the Russians, so the hint of an olive branch being extended to Putin was significant.

More recently the question of economic sanctions against Russia has returned to the international agenda as a result of a Bill with bipartisan support in the US Senate which will have the effect of 'codifying' the sanctions, making them more difficult to dismantle. This intensification of the sanctions against Russia—which reflects US politics rather than any international danger posed by Russia—threaten German and Austrian investment in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia to the EU.

It happens that Merkel has a long held scepticism of Nord Stream 2 but she has gone out of her way to back her Social Democratic Foreign Minister, Sigmar Gabriel, in defending European energy

affairs from "illegal extraterritorial sanctions against European companies that participate in the development of European energy supply" (*Financial Times*, June 16). So for the moment at least Merkel's talk about Europe taking its destiny into its own hands seems to signify more than rhetoric.

Another important recent event is that Emmanuel Macron has consolidated his position through his party En Marche! winning an absolute majority in the French Assembly. This is mostly significant as an internal development in French politics but it is good news for the EU. Macron campaigned on a pro-EU ticket and his victory in the Presidential and now the Assembly elections has put a halt to a wave of anti-EU populism that arose on the back of the Brexit vote. For that reason the nature of the reforms he is attempting to introduce—whether they improve social conditions in France by increasing employment—will affect efforts to overcome the EU's malaise.

According to an article in *Politico*, Macron's first political campaign is a labour reform which will have the effect of decentralising collective bargaining arrangements. It will "nudge labor relations in France closer to the German and Scandinavian model", according to the *Politico* reporter. Time will tell whether these French and German developments amount to a new direction for the EU, more in line with the prevailing public mood of opposition to neo-liberalism.

Regarding a new direction for the EU, the lead topic in the daily blog of *Open Europe*, a eurosceptic think-tank, for Wednesday June 21st, is headed "Merkel hints support for eurozone budget and finance minister if 'framework conditions are right'", and states:

"Speaking at a meeting of the Federation of German Industries (BDI), German Chancellor Angela Merkel said of a proposal by French President Emmanuel Macron for a joint Eurozone finance minister, 'Of course, one can think about a joint finance minister if the framework conditions are right.' Merkel stressed she was also open to the idea of a eurozone budget—another one of Macron's suggestions—as long as it's clear that this will truly strengthen structures and do meaningful things." She added, "We shouldn't speak about what won't work, but we should think about what makes sense." This comes as Jan Smets, Governing Council member of the European Central Bank (ECB), said that the euro area should take Brexit as an opportunity to 'go further, to advance and to deepen the European monetary union'.

Also at the BDI meeting, Dieter Kempf, the body's chief, said that Brexit is 'the greatest political risk' for German trade and investment, adding, 'Businesses urgently need clarity about the rules by which the transition and future relations will be shaped.'

"Commenting on Merkel's remarks, Henry Newman wrote in the *Spectator's* Coffee House, 'If France and Germany do ultimately green-light major institutional change in the Eurozone, this will be a very significant development for the EU, another turn of the ratchet towards the creation of a common state-like structure. If the Eurozone has a shared finance minister, even if his or her powers are initially limited, it will be easier for further powers to accrete in due course. Creating the shared architecture of an 'economic' government is probably the only way to secure the future of the Eurozone. But voters across Europe will surely wonder whether these constitutional changes are ones they can support.'"

The interesting point is this commentary is: "Creating the shared architecture of an 'economic' government is probably the only way to secure the future of the Eurozone." So an authoritative English commentator recognises that mooted reforms in the Eurozone, supported by France and at least partially by Germany, are necessary to secure its future, and he is not happy that these reforms may come to pass.

Therein lies the benefit of Brexit to Europe in a nutshell!

Dave Alvey

The Incomparable Compared!

continued

nationalist minority in semi-detachment from the political life of the state. It was Unionist, half outside the Union.

A bizarre turn of events has now led to its holding the balance of power in the state Parliament. The Tory Party looks to it to maintain it as the Government. It appears to be willing—for a price. But few Tories are happy about the prospect.

Ulster Unionism has often been referred to dismissively within the rhetoric of British party politics as a bunch of Tories who ran a "one party state" for as long as they could get away with it. But it is not Tory, and it never has been. It is an amalgamation into a single party of all major strains of British party politics: Tory, Socialist and Liberal, along with a tinge of the National Front. It is therefore alien to the British political mind, on

which party-political conflict is ingrained as the normality of things.

The large Nationalist minority never accepted the Northern Ireland system, into which the British democracy placed it, as a possible framework for its political life. Occasional attempts were made to participate in Stormont, only to find that there was nothing to participate in. Northern Ireland had no actual political life, and no possibility of one. Its material needs were tended to by Whitehall.

Martin Dillon refers repeatedly to the *Northern Ireland State*. Considered under that heading, it was the empty shell of a state:

"We are a nation as it were in its nonage, put under the guardianship of a people who do everything for us, and leave us the liberty of transacting nothing material ourselves or having any part in the affairs of the United Kingdom, yet for all that we are not free from faction and discord any more than our neighbours."

That was Bishop Berkeley describing the colonial Irish (Protestant) Parliament in the early 1700s, with one term changed: "Europe" to "United Kingdom". It describes the "Northern Ireland State" very well.

Northern Ireland was inside the UK and outside it at the same time. It was outside it in all those things that made the British state functional as a multi-national state. And the nationalist community held within Northern Ireland was detached from it more by reason of the structure of the state as they encountered it rather than by a nationalist wilfulness that caused them to refuse to participate.

"Those bonds of citizenship that define our United Kingdom" never existed in the relationship between Britain and its "Northern Ireland" concoction.

The words quoted are from a statement by the British Prime Minister after the attack on the Finsbury Park Mosque. She said the aim of the attacker was to break bonds which Westminster itself had snapped when setting up Northern Ireland.

The IRA's 'terror campaign' quickly took on the character of a territorial war between the nationalist community that was twice removed from the democracy of the state, and the Government of the state which put it in that predicament, and it continued for almost thirty years, until Britain agreed to a drastic re-organisation of the system.

The "enemy within" is the Muslim

population of Britain. The British party system makes a considerable effort to draw immigrant populations into it, and it has always been successful until now. The Zionist propagandist Melanie Phillips drew attention, with her sensational slogan of *Londonistan*, to the failure to break the Muslims into British culture quickly..

There is a large Muslim population of recent origin in Britain because of the way Britain has been destroying Muslim states. That Muslim population is not in rebellion against that State, as the Six County nationalist community was. It is assimilating quickly in some respects—taking easily to party-politics—while remaining very much itself. In all walks of life we now hardly notice the presence of large numbers of women dressed as only nuns would have been a generation ago—and there are no nuns any more!

Islam is proving to be durable way of life amidst the affluent ruins of Christianity. It is therefore suspect, and the attitude towards it puts one in mind of the attitude towards Young Ireland when it first appeared.

It is closely supervised by the State, with a view to preventing "radicalisation". But Islam itself, which must now be accepted as a respectable part of English life, is already a radical departure from what English culture had posited as the normal development of things.

And it is out of the question that Britain should desist from military actions in the Middle East and North Africa that are bound to outrage Muslim feeling at home with 'radicalising' effect.

Northern Ireland: Result Of British General Election, held 8 June 2017

The Ulster Unionist Party and the SDLP were wiped out in the election, which was held on the straight vote system.

The DUP won 10 seats and Sinn Fein 7, the 18th NI representative being Lady Sylvia Hermon who retained South Down as an Independent: her politics are unionist and Blairite labour

Three former leaders of the SDLP have lost their Westminster seats: Margaret Ritchie in South Down, Alasdair McDonnell in South Belfast and Mark Durkan in Foyle (Derry).

The Ulster Unionist Party went into the election with two seats. It lost Fermanagh/South Tyrone to Sinn Fein and South Antrim to the DUP.

Naomi Long, Alliance Party, who lost her seat in East Belfast to the DUP in 2016, failed to regain it.

There was a 2% swing to the DUP and a 3% swing to Sinn Fein.

It is said that in the proposed Westminster Boundary Changes, with a reduced contingent from Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein would hold the preponderance.

It is hard to see the Boundary Changes as currently proposed going ahead. Indeed, with increased work for Westminster as a result of Brexit, it would be surprising if the House of Commons was reduced in size.

There is now no Nationalist representation in the House of Commons. The SDLP figleaf has fallen away and Sinn Fein will not take their seats.

Party share of the vote

Party		%	
DUP	292,316	36.0	+10.3
SF	238,915	29.4	+ 4.9
SDLP	95,419	11.7	- 2.2
UUP	83,280	10.3	- 5.8
Alliance	64,553	7.9	- 0.6
Green	7,452	0.9	
TUV*	3,282	0.4	- 1.9

* Traditional Unionist Voice

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR · LETTERS TO

The One 'Whole Nation' Nonsense!

Speaking in advance of her June 13th talks with British Prime Minister Theresa May, DUP leader Arlene Foster said:

"When I meet with the Prime Minister in London tomorrow, I will be mindful of our responsibility to help bring stability to the nation at this time of challenge. We will be working to agree arrangements that can provide the whole nation with good government."

When Foster spoke of "the nation", she did not, of course, mean "the Irish nation". The "one Irish nation" dogmatism of both the Fianna Fáil Taoiseach, "Honest" Jack Lynch, and the Fine Gael Taoiseach, Garret "the Good" FitzGerald, was consigned to the historical scrap heap when the 1998 Good Friday Agreement took *de facto*

account of what Sinn Fein leader Father Michael O'Flanagan had sought in 1916, recognition of the reality of two Irish nations, a reality argued by Brendan Clifford from 1970 onwards in the columns of the *Irish Communist* and *Irish Political Review*.

But Arlene Foster's flight of fancy in respect of "one British nation" is itself an example of out-of-touch-with-mainland-Britain make-belief on the part of the DUP. Quite apart from Foster's remarks being an expression of contempt for the Scottish nation, they are no less out of touch with the disdain felt by the English nation for her own Ulster British nation, between whom there exists no sense of common nationality. The *London Times* reported on June 14th:

"Earlier in the day Ms Foster and Mr Dodds posed to smile and wave outside the black front door of No 10 before entering. Convening beforehand with DUP MPs in Westminster, Ms Foster

declared, 'The future's bright!' prompting Ian Paisley Jnr, a DUP MP, to add: 'The future's orange!'"

The contempt felt by the English Establishment for such an outlook had been expressed in the *London Times* cartoon on June 12th, featuring the Orange "Victory Parade" to Downing Street, and with May hanging draped as a human Orange Order banner. Such English loathing of Foster's nation was even more extremely expressed in the *London Times* cartoon on that same June 14, which featured May flattened underneath her Downing Street doormat, whose words proclaimed: "WELCOME ARLENE".

It won't be too long before Foster will be forced to come to the same conclusion as that of Carson in 1921:

"What a fool I was! I was only a puppet, and so was Ulster, and so was Ireland, in the political game that was to get the Conservative Party into power."

Manus O'Riordan

Kilmichael: Eve Morrison Get It Wrong

In a letter to the *Irish Examiner* on 8 June 2017, Eve Morrison identified an IRA veteran interviewed anonymously by the late Peter Hart about the November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush. That is of great interest. [The letter appears below. Ed.]

Controversy arose because the interview was dated six days after the last known Kilmichael veteran, Ned Young, died on 13 November 1989. The discrepancy was first noted in Meda Ryan's 2003 biography of the ambush commander, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*.

In the 2008 Aubane Society publication, *Troubled History*, I pointed out that the mysterious interviewee was presented as an armed ambush participant in Hart's 1992 PhD thesis. Hart's 1998 book, *The IRA and its Enemies transformed* him into an unarmed 'scout'. He was identified in the thesis as touring Hart around the ambush site, a claim the book withdrew. I indicated also a problem with words attributed by Hart to this interviewee. In 2012 Eve Morrison confirmed he did not utter them.

Eve Morrison now states that IRA veteran William Chambers is the individual in question. He confirmed to his son that he was, "an unarmed, secondary scout at Enniskeane Bridge during the Kilmichael ambush".

In that case we are presented with two new anomalies.

First, Hart cited his interviewee saying, "he saw several [British] Auxiliaries surrender" during the fighting "and then heard further firing, some of which came from the Englishmen" (Hart, 1998, p35).

Eve Morrison will surely concur, unless my geography is deficient, that such an audiovisual feat is not possible on a bridge at Enniskeane, approximately 15km from the ambush location. She referred to Chambers' military service pension file. Is she aware of its contents?

Second, Hart's 1992 thesis identified interviewees by their initials, sometimes reversed. For example, Edward ('Ned') Young was 'E.Y.'

Hart's mystery man is 'H.J.' in the thesis, not 'W.C.' or 'C.W.' (for William Chambers). Unless Hart departed from his usual practice, that calls into question Morrison's identification. I speculated that 'H.J.' was Jack Hennessy, who died in 1970 and that Hart's 'interview' with him was paraphrased from his Bureau of Military History witness statement, which Hart had.

As to Ned Young, first identified by me in 2008 as Hart's other claimed interviewee, I would be interested if Eve Morrison could point to a sentence, a phrase, or even a word from Young on the ambush in Hart's Kilmichael chapter. John Young's son stated that his father was incapacitated at the time Hart said he spoke to Ned Young. As with Jack Hennessy, Hart had his witness statement.

In 2012 in the edited collection *Terror in Ireland*, Eve Morrison suggested that Hart's errors resulted from muddle and not misrepresentation. I tend toward the latter view, explained in 'Examining Peter Hart' (*Field Day Review 10*, 2014).

Peter Hart claimed that ambush commander Tom Barry was a vainglorious serial killer, who falsely stated that IRA casualties at Kilmichael were caused by an Auxiliary false surrender.

Had he named his interviewees, Hart's claims would not have been possible.

Hart made further claims with regard to IRA sectarianism. Unfortunately, in what seems to have been a pattern, he censored and misrepresented archival sources in making them.

It is possible to believe what Peter Hart asserted, but his research is not a reliable support. In effect, his muddle appears to have been his method.

I echo Eve Morrison's call in her *Examiner* letter that relatives with veteran interviews and other archival material should make them available, I suggest to a public archive.

In Munster, UCC's History Department is one logical place for hosting such material. It may then be evaluated equally by all scholars and other interested members of the public.

Niall Meehan
14 June 2017

Eve Morrison Letter

Chambers was 'unidentified scout'

I would like to address some of the comments made by Tom Cooper in his recent letter (*Irish Examiner*, May 22). [Tom Cooper's letter is reprinted in the *Biteback* section of the magazine. Ed] The 'unidentified scout' whom Peter Hart interviewed on November 19, 1989, was Willie Chambers, Teadies, Enniskeane. The oft-repeated assertion that Peter Hart claimed to have interviewed a Kilmichael veteran who was already dead (Ned Young, died November 13, 1989) is based on a misidentification by Hart's critics of the Old IRA veteran concerned.

Hart did interview Ned Young, but on April 3 and June 25, 1988. Chambers was a friend of Young's and a long-standing member of the Kilmichael Commemoration Committee. Chambers' son, Liam, confirmed to me that his father always said he had been an unarmed, secondary scout at Enniskeane Bridge during the Kilmichael ambush.

Liam is unable to confirm or deny what his father told Hart, but his military service pension file might shed further light.

I would like to encourage those in possession of other IRA veteran recorded interviews to come forward, as well. As an historian, I strive to take into account all available records, and to be as objective and dispassionate/

Eve Morrison

Irish Examiner, 8.6.17

Troubled History:

A 10th Anniversary Critique Of
The IRA & Its Enemies

by

Brian Murphy osb

and

Niall Meehan.

Introduction: **Ruan O'Donnell.**

48pp. €10, £8

Balfour Declaration

continued

Draft (August); Lord Milner Draft (3 September); Lord Milner Draft (4 October); Balfour Final Text (31 October).

It was no historical accident that England should be the sponsor of and power behind the Zionist project. There had developed in Reformationist England a belief that the Jews should return to the Holy Land. The famous historian, J.R. Green in his *History of the English People*, had described how England had become in Elizabeth's reign the people of the Book—meaning the people of the Bible. It was the Old Testament and the Wars of the Lord in which the Chosen People would "*smite the Philistines and Amalekites*" that primarily interested the developing English Puritan middle class. Among other things the Old Testament Bible was a programme for ethnic cleansing and genocide, projects intrinsic to the fundamentalist view of God that had taken root in Reformationist England and the destiny of the island empire.

The idea that had its origin in Reformation England was revived in 19th Century. This was that one of the Chosen Peoples was going to return another to the Holy Land as a matter of historic destiny and as a precursor to the Millennium. This idea became particularly influential in the 1840s as the Famine was let rip in Ireland.

Arthur Balfour converted to Zionism around 1906 after he met Chaim Weizmann, the leading Zionist in England. The previous year, as Prime Minister, he had presided over the Aliens Bill, which was primarily aimed at ending Jewish immigration to Britain. The Parliamentary committees established to examine the Bill reveal that England had become uneasy at the success of Jews, their developing influence in British society, and the ways Jewish wealth was displayed in London.

Private correspondence shows that Balfour saw the Jews as a developing problem for England. He held the opinion that this problem would grow if the Jews remained a distinct community. Balfour therefore reasoned that the Jews should not maintain their separateness by continuing to oppose inter-marrying. He suspected them of not having a total loyalty to their country, making them unreliable and untrustworthy.

Balfour was a prominent Eugenist and he had come into contact at the 1912 inaugural Eugenics World Conference (which he presided over) with the idea that the "Jewish Race" was the greatest success story in eugenics. The Jews, it was said, had maintained themselves as a separate entity by controlled and restricted breeding. They were the model of Eugenics the world should follow, suggested the Zionists, to keep out racial impurities in the mixing of races.

At that time it was accepted that miscegenation was a bad thing for superior races like the Anglo-Saxons to engage in. If they did, they would end up like the inferior Latins who had done this sort of thing in South America to their cost; or the Ottomans who had no concept of racialism and had thrown away their Empire through the lack of a Social Darwinist philosophy, such as the English had.

Balfour, the philosopher Prime Minister, had the habit of seeing things with ruthless logic. This sometimes led him to dither when he understood the enormity of an issue and wonder how it could be resolved. But his thought was razor sharp. He did not approve of Jewish pure breeding in England. Presumably he found it insulting that Jews would not inter-breed with the Anglo-Saxon master race.

By maintaining racial purity the Jews were making themselves a problem for England when they could be an asset if they thoroughly inter-bred and assimilated, as some did. Balfour reasoned that they had to make up their mind about what they were or there would be trouble ahead. He came to the conclusion that the Jews should assimilate or be kept out. Hence the Aliens Act.

On the basis of this logic Balfour reasoned that the Zionist cause was good for the Jews and their host countries, in forcing them to be loyal to either their state of residence or to Zion. If they could not assimilate they should go. Unlike others who began to see the Zionists as a potentially useful instrument for British expansion in the Middle East, Balfour saw Zionism as being separate to the geopolitical interest of Britain—as a good thing in itself. He saw the Jews as unique in the world—a Special People. As he told Harold Nicolson, Zionism would remove the dangerous acquisitive intelligence of the Jews that stimulated their defects. It was required to solve England's Jewish problem.

However, Balfour's interest in Zionism remained an idealist flirtation for nearly a

decade and he did not meet Weizmann for another eight years after 1906. Balfour got back to more important and pressing matters in the world, helping to plan for a War on Germany through the Committee of Imperial Defence he had set up.

Herbert Samuel was an Anglicised Jew and member of the British Liberal Government that declared the War on Germany that Balfour had helped to plan. Just after the British Declaration of War on the Ottomans in November 1914 he disclosed to the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, that he was a Zionist. Up until that point Samuel had sympathised with Zionism but had written it off as impractical. But, with Britain's War on the Ottoman Empire signalling a consequent carve-up of the Ottoman territories, Samuel began to see the Zionist ideal as a practical possibility for the first time.

Samuel discovered that Edward Grey himself was sympathetic to Zionism, as was Lloyd George and Lord Haldane. Samuel produced a memorandum for the Cabinet in January 1915 advocating the conquest of Palestine and setting out the use of Zionism in its annexation. At that time Britain was refusing to display any interest in Palestine, lest anyone think it was not fighting its War for the highest of motives. But the implication of destroying the Ottoman Empire was surely that Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia etc. were going to end up in other hands. It would be most unlike Britain to allow such strategic areas to go to others after scotching such a thing for a century.

The Samuel Memorandum advocating the planting of 4 million Jews in Palestine astonished the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. Samuel persisted, however, advocating a British Protectorate over Palestine that would make a Jewish State functional.

Before returning to Balfour Weizmann found a Zionist sympathiser in C.P. Scott the famous Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. Scott had initially opposed the War but, being a Liberal with a bad conscience, having collaborated in something no Liberal should do, he liked the Zionist cause as something that Britain could wage its War for on an idealistic, altruistic basis. It made the mass killing and destruction a bit more palatable for a sentimental lover of the Bible.

Samuel was opposed by another Jew in the Cabinet, Edwin Montagu. Montagu held the traditional view of anti-semitism that saw it and Zionism as two sides of the

same coin. He denied that there was such a thing as a Jewish race or Jewish nation except in the minds of anti-semites. Montagu saw the establishment of a Jewish state as potentially disastrous for the Jews left behind, outside the new nationalist construction.

Montagu was supported in his opposition to Zionism by the Jewish Establishment in England. It had acquired prosperity, position and security in the country and saw themselves as loyal and great contributors to British life. They saw nothing existing that could be called a Jewish Race or Jewish Nation: these were concepts employed by anti-semites to endanger the position of Jews. Zionism raised the question of divided loyalties as a consequence of supporting a scheme that was just the pipe-dream of malcontents. It would undermine the toleration and inclusivity that was slowly being achieved by the Jews in Europe and bring to the fore ideas that were most unwelcome for the future of Jewish communities.

Chaim Weizmann wrote off these assimilationist Jewish elements. He decided that in the interests of Zionism the important Gentiles who had anti-semitic attitudes were the more useful and important allies to the cause.

Weizmann reconnected with Balfour through Samuel Alexander, Professor of Philosophy at Manchester. They met in December 1914 just after War had been Declared by Britain on the Ottomans. Balfour told Weizmann that the Jewish question in England would only be sorted out by complete assimilation through inter-marriage or by the establishment of a nationalist Jewish entity in Palestine. Those who stayed in England could assimilate while Jews who wanted a separate existence could go.

Balfour told Weizmann that he had had a conversation with the widow of Richard Wagner in Bayreuth in 1912, around the time of the Eugenics Conference in London which he had presided over. Balfour told Weizmann he shared her anti-semitic views. Weizmann told Balfour that he too knew Frau Wagner's views. They were that the Jews had contributed so much to German culture and materialism that they owned it to a great degree—a thing Frau Wagner resented. Weizmann saw the problem from the opposite point of view. The Jews had made and enriched German culture when they should have used their talents and energies in constructing their own nationalist culture in a Zionist project.

Balfour was in full agreement with Frau Wagner's view of the Jews and

Weizmann understood that this gave Zionism leverage over him. Weizmann assured Balfour that, whilst Zionism could solve England's problem with its unassimilatable Jews, Russia was a different prospect. There were so many Jews in Russia that a Zion in Palestine could not take them, so Russia's Jews would continue to disrupt Russia to England's advantage in the long term. This must have been music to Balfour's ears.

When Weizmann met Baron Rothschild in Paris to tell him of his meeting with Balfour and the potential acquiring of British Imperialism as an ally, Rothschild pointed out the main impediments to the success of any Zionist project. These were, according to Rothschild, the English Jewish establishment centred around Claude Montefiore, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, along with Catholic Europe.

The Jews who opposed anti-semitism/Zionism needed to be sidelined, as did England's allies in Catholic Europe. Balfour asserted:

"the critics of this (Zionist) movement shelter themselves behind the principle of self-determination, and say that, if you apply that principle logically and honestly, it is to the majority of the existing population of Palestine that the future destinies of Palestine should be committed. There is a technical ingenuity in that plea, and on technical grounds I neither can nor desire to provide the answer; but, looking back upon the history of the world, upon the history more particularly of all the most civilised portions of the world, I say that the case of Jewry in all countries is absolutely exceptional, falls outside all the ordinary rules and maxims, cannot be contained in a formula or explained in a sentence. The deep underlying principle of self-determination really points to a Zionist policy, however little in its strict technical interpretation it may seem to favour it. I am convinced that none but pedants, or people who are prejudiced by religious or racial bigotry would deny for one instant that the case of the Jews is absolutely exceptional, and must be treated by exceptional methods..."

These remarks were made during a speech at the Albert Hall at a Demonstration organised by the English Zionist Federation, to thank the British Government for the decision to incorporate the Balfour Declaration for a Jewish National Home in the Treaty of Peace with Turkey, 12th July 1920.

Pat Walsh

To be continued

War Childhood In Northern Ireland

As a child, you had your brain full of it—excellent children's programmes from London on the radio, at a time when there was only radio. There was the constant sound of Big Ben on the radio for the 9pm news which you could hear, passing houses in the countryside. WW2 pushed British culture even more in NI when the radio was full of morale-boosting programmes like *ITMA* (It's That Man Again) with Tommy Hanley and a lot of other very good comedians. There was the daily *Music-While-You-Work*, which had a different band every day, and came on at 3pm on radio to homes and factories.

Shipyards and aircraft factories in Belfast had lunchtime events like live performances of opera singers on stages by the Royal Opera House from London, The Royal Ballet performed in the major factories (much like what the Soviet Union was doing during WW2), performances from musicals, British Movietone News films of war scenes were shown also in factories and shipyards. And so it went on relentlessly these British cultural events with very little local talent used but all coming from London.

For the children, especially the boys, there were half a dozen—not comics—more like a weekly collection of short stories in publications like *The Champion* and *The Hotspur*, featuring war stories with war heroes like Rockfist Rogan RAF, the ace fighter pilot, downing German planes. This boy's literature you just had to have. Though there was a wartime economy concerning paper there was always enough for these publications. What the girls had to read I can't remember though I had four sisters. They probably weren't as desperately needed for the war effort as the boys were.

And there was the British film industry showing their war propaganda films in the cinemas at a price of seats a whole family could go to. And the cinemas were packed with queues outside.

Our radio listening also included William Joyce speaking from Berlin promising to send Churchill some Easter eggs (bombs) and mentioning that the town clock in Portadown was two minutes fast. The Brits didn't jam the German station and it became some sort of entertainment: we loved the Churchill bashing, especially

my mother as a Nationalist and my father as a Communist.

My father also had this appetite for British writers like Lord Macaulay, Dryden, Defoe, Pope, Milton and Pope.

The curse of it all was that it still appears as the most exciting time of my life.

My father did tune into what was then written on the dial of the wireless as *Athlone*. It just sounded so tame compared to the British cultural onslaught. After WW2 the radio still continued to play *Music-While-You-Work* for the home only as some sort of nostalgia.

The Stormont regime didn't have the ability to take advantage of this wartime

onslaught of British culture and continued to see the Nationalist population as the enemy. The wartime *Belfast Telegraph* had a story where a suspect IRA man was gunned down in Belfast by the RUC and the comment by the police gunman: "I was more interested in the St Christopher wristband on him than in his wounds".

Now British culture is a permanent fixture in NI, and even more widespread with TV. My late mother, a fierce Nationalist at times, wouldn't miss an episode of *Coronation Street*. Though she was a United Ireland supporter, she hadn't a clue what was going on South of the border. I doubt if most Nationalist do even today. That's British culture for you.

Wilson John Haire
9 June 2017

break off the Conference at any point and to negotiate the future of Ireland with a foreign power (Germany was not specifically mentioned but no doubt was implied). *The British government could not consent to any abandonment, however informal, of the principle of allegiance to the King by which the whole fabric of Empire and every constituent within it is bound'...* ('*Let candles be brought in*', Geoffrey Shakespeare, 1949).

Nothing could be clearer. For the British, the 'Civil war' was a continuation of their war against Irish Independence.

Leo should realise that there is now a political vacuum to be filled in relation to this war. Fianna Fáil, which came into existence came into being because of opposition to these war crimes, is now silent on the matter. If it was true to its roots it would be planning at least 77 events in 2022-23. I am sure the thought would horrify Micheál Martin.

Sinn Féin cannot acknowledge Fianna Fáil's historic role in turning military defeat of the Republic into political success.

Labour will moan and wring its hands now as it did then.

L(e)o and behold—a Fine Gael leader might do justice to the historical record! That would be far more significant than being the first gay Taoiseach. There will be more of them but none could do such a service to the state as Leo could on this matter.

Jack Lane

L(e)o And Behold!

Much has been written about the uniqueness of Leo Varadkar as an Irish Taoiseach and more specifically as a Fine Gael Taoiseach.

One aspect of his political philosophy that could be truly unique, for a Fine Gael leader, would be his views on what is erroneously called the Irish *civil war*. He gave a hint of his thinking on this some years ago when he said in the Dáil:

"Deputy Ferris raised the issue of Ballyseedy, for example, and I have been there. I can say, in clear conscience and without any doubt in my mind, that the events at Ballyseedy constituted an atrocity. I can also say that people who were murdered, or executed, without trial by the Cumann na nGaedheal Government were murdered. It was an atrocity and those people killed without a trial by the first Government were murdered. That is my view" (24.11.2011).

So he must accept that the state his party founded was based on war crimes—a minimum of 77. This was inevitable because under the terms of the so-called 'Treaty' the new state was obliged to destroy the existing state that had been formed in January 1919.

Let's hope it was not just an off-the-cuff remark in parliamentary point-coring and it seemed at time that it was not just that. Let's hope he develops his analysis. However, he seems to have been silent on the matter since. But, with the obligatory

commemorations already being planned and agonised over about this war, he cannot really avoid dealing with it. And if he does avoid it with the usual blandishments then he is just another Free Stater, another apologist for war criminals. Let's hope not.

He could do us all a favour by calling a spade a spade about that war. There was no Treaty signed in London. There could not be. Treaties are signed between equal, independent states. It was not even what the Chinese call "*an unequal Treaty*". It was not even called a Treaty. There could not be a Treaty between the UK Government and one of its Dominions—there never was and never will be. The British were absolutely clear about this and called the arrangement "*Articles of Agreement*". Also, the British never accepted the credentials of the delegation as representatives of an Irish Republic—but as representatives only "*of those whom they represent*" and nobody else.

The British position was recorded very clearly by Lloyd George's private secretary right at the beginning of the negotiations:

"A British Prime Minister could not officially recognise the severance of Ireland from the King's Dominions. As Lloyd George's notes pointed out: '*Such recognition would entitle Sinn Féin, if they thought fit, to make a treaty with the King, but it would also equally entitle them to make no treaty with the King; to*

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Revisionist Jamboree at Kilkenny Castle

Street theatre actors, faces painted white, mixed with the summer holiday crowds. It was the first week of August 2016 and in Kilkenny, a compact city bearing remnants of its mediaeval past in its refurbished great castle and in its narrow inner streets, the annual Arts Festival was unfolding. The theme of the street theatre display was Death. This did not appear to dishearten the visitors in the least who were content to relax and absorb what was around them while at a safe remove from the stresses of the everyday.

Many had come a distance to spend a few days attending exhibitions and events by day and pass the time as night closed in at the restaurants and bars. It was a clientele that tended to be comfortably affluent and older.

Billed for the late afternoon at the Parade Tower of Kilkenny Castle was *Body of Evidence*, part of the *Casement Project*. This was to be an approximately 60 minute "special event" to mark the centenary of Roger Casement's death, he having been executed on 3rd August 1916. So, on 6th August it was anticipated that "historian Roy Foster, curator Barbara Dawson and choreographer Fearghus Ó Conchúir reflect on his extraordinary life and enduring legacy in the company of journalist and author Fintan O'Toole".

CENTRAL FIGURE IN CENTENARY EVENTS

In his introduction, before a full audience, in the region of two hundred, O'Toole referred to how central a figure Casement had been in the centenary events he had attended, remarking; "*Casement's image had been there so profoundly*". He finished by mentioning that Casement had contributed to animating the deeply important 21st century global ideal of human rights and had pioneered the practice of human rights investigations.

O'Toole concluded by associating the activities of today's Amnesty International and Human Right Watch with Casement's legacy on account of their human rights investigations. Evidently he is oblivious as to the extent to which the practice of human rights investigation, in our times, has become corrupted and debauched. In 1990 Amnesty endorsed a notorious false

story about baby incubators having being murderously stolen by Iraqi soldiers in then occupied Kuwait. That tale originated with a PR agency, Hill & Knowlton, which had been hired by the US Government. The fifteen year old girl who tearfully promoted the allegation before television cameras was in reality, the daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US; a more compromised source could not be imagined. In 2013, Human Rights Watch publicly attacked a Syrian-based Arab nun, Sr. Agnes Mariam, after she had had the audacity to publish a report challenging the US Government version of what lay behind an atrocious poison gas attack in Syria on 21st August 2013.

Before introducing the "*terrific panel*" O'Toole explained the aim was to look at Casement from a historical point of view and show how he came to be in the fraught situation he eventually found himself in. As well it was hoped to review the artistic responses to Casement.

JERSEY CAN NOT BE WORN AGAIN

Introducing Roy Foster, O'Toole referred to his "*eminence*", saying he was Carroll Professor of Irish History at Oxford and would be retiring later in the year. He explained that, as with a member of a sports team who can not possibly be replaced, by way of tribute, the numbered jersey can not be worn again, so too the name of the Chair of Irish History at Oxford would lapse on Foster's retirement. In future the Chair would be called the "*Foster Chair of Irish History*". At a prompt from O'Toole, the audience gave a copious round of applause. "*God help who has to fill that jersey...*" he responded by way of acknowledgement. He went on to refer to *Vivid Faces*, Foster's recent study of the generation involved in the Rising and Independence struggle, as a "*magnificent book*".

Fearghus Ó Conchúir, the man behind the *Casement Project*, O'Toole introduced as "*most brilliant, a distinguished artist and superb choreographer*". The *Casement Project* he described as "*one of the artistic responses, one of the main State-supported responses to 1916 ...*" The projects the State supported were not "*flag waving simplistic celebrations*" but

rather "*quite complex projects that are tending to explore the past*". The *Casement Project* was one of these.

Barbara Dawson, Director of the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, was the third panel member introduced to the audience. O'Toole spoke of how, under her stewardship, the gallery had developed impressively in the part it played in the life of the city.

Directing his attention to one panel member then another, the discussion went back and forth and then back again among the panel as O'Toole posed questions, some simple, others more elaborate. By contrast, for the sake of the ease of the reader, this report will dwell on each panelist's overall contribution in turn, finishing with the academic big beast himself; Prof. Roy Foster.

RE-IMAGINING

Fearghus Ó Conchúir explained that the centenary commemoration program involved "*remembering, reflecting and re-imagining*". As an artist he was "*very much in the re-imagining part*". This was connected with perceiving the history we have inherited as a resource and seeing what we will chose to take from it "*so that we can move forward*". He said Casement's work as a humanitarian in the Congo and the Amazon reminds us that we can not think about a national flourishing without thinking of people who live beyond our borders.

"*I am a choreographer. I work with the body*", he said. He detailed the varied series of events which made up the *Casement Project*; academic symposia to discuss "*Casement and the body*", a dance stage show premiered in London, a short film for RTE, a club night in Kilkenny, thousands on the beach at Banna strand for a day of dance to "*Welcome the Stranger*" among other things.

"*Why dance and Casement?*" continued Ó Conchúir. Casement was known for his words; his reports of human rights abuses and the words he wrote in his diaries. "*But for me he is fascinating as a body*." He was "*tall, handsome, strong, many women noticed it*". His body was always in motion in that he travelled always from place to place and between countries. At his trial he was described as of "*no fixed abode*". He read bodies, in that by reading the scars and evidence of mutilation he recognises the sufferings that people have gone through. Also, he is treated as a body after his death. The medical officer at

Pentonville prison probed his anus "to discover whether he had the sex that he claims to have had in the diaries". This was discussed at cabinet. For fifty years after his death two states discussed where that body should lie. The story of Casement reminds us that bodies are political; "what bodies do, where they go, how they interact with other bodies". Casement's body, "scandalously welcomes the stranger", particularly the colonised colonial stranger.

Ó Conchúir said his work on Casement was not about glorifying or deifying him but recognising him as a complex individual. As an artist he did not have the responsibilities to the past of a historian. He was more concerned about the re-imagining, the moving forward.

His engagement with Casement, he said, was an engagement with the aspects of Casement's life, as he perceived it, which resonated and were relevant for him in his own contemporary existence.

VISUAL REPRESENTATION

In response to a question on the visual representation of Casement, Barbara Dawson was unhesitant in recommending the very large painting by Sir John Lavery; of the Court of Appeal in session as the Casement case was being heard. The painter returned to work on it for years until he achieved the perfection he was seeking. This was, she said, the most famous and best painting associated with 1916.

Lavery "walked a line", in that, he navigated a way in between opposing political forces. He painted Churchill, Carson, Redmond and Casement all in 1916. He was the most popular painter of his time and even painted the royal family. He was knighted in 1918.

The painting along with other art works associated with those connected with the trial and appeal and with the events of 1916 featured in two exhibitions at the Hugh Lane gallery; *High Treason* and *Our Kind*.

She described Casement as "a very attractive man" who "must have spoken with an English accent" on account of where he had been brought up. Sarah Purser painted his portrait twice.

The man after whom the gallery Barbara Dawson curates is named; Hugh Lane, died when the Lusitania was sunk by German U-boat U 20 in 1915. The U-boat

on which Casement first departed from Germany in April 1916 was also the U 20. However, it developed mechanical problems and it had to return to harbour. He set out again, this time on the U 19, captained by Raimund Weisbach who had been the torpedo officer on the U 20 when the Lusitania was sunk. So the man who supervised the torpedoing of the Lusitania and the man who captained the craft which brought Casement to Ireland were one and the same man.

She described Adler Christensen, the man who had accompanied Casement from the US to Germany in 1914 as his "lover and manservant".

The Chair and all three panelists shared a similar historical picture of Casement. It belonged to the provincial world view of Irish historical "revisionism". All sang from the same song book within a smug atmosphere of mutual congratulation and mutually accepted dogma. This was a revisionist jamboree.

Tim O'Sullivan

TO BE CONTINUED

EDITORIAL NOTE:

Irish Foreign Affairs continues to carry unknown articles by Roger Casement, along with other very interesting items.

Irish Foreign Affairs, June 2017

Editorial: Europe and Ireland
Habermas *Philip O'Connor* p.
Balfour and Eugenics, *Pat Walsh*
Documents
Nazi and Zionist Co-operation
in Germany, 1937-1939 (Part 1)
Domenico Losurdo: The Germans:
A Sonderweg of an Irredeemable
Nation? Introduction

The March *Special Issue*, devoted to Casement writings, along with the June issue can be ordered through the Athol Books Sales Page.

Irish Foreign Affairs—is produced quarterly at €5, £4. It carries historical analysis and reviews international events from an Irish perspective (ISSN 2009-132X). Subscriptions: 4 issues. **Electronic €5 (£4) . Postal Euro-zone and World Surface: €16; Sterling-zone: £14**

The forged "Irish Bulletin"

The "Irish Bulletin" was the daily paper of the Irish Government established on the basis of the 1918 General election, the first Dáil Éireann. It was a hugely influential publication and played a crucial role in winning the War of Independence.

The highest compliment possible was paid to it by the British Government when it set out to discredit it by forging a run of the paper. It was an audacious and desperate project and is proof of how concerned the Government had become about its effect on political opinion in Britain itself and internationally.

This pamphlet is a collection of all the extant copies of the forgery and we are pretty sure that it is the complete run of what was published.

Aubane Historical Society

€8, £7 postfree in Ireland and Britain

incredible groundbreaking scholarship throughout and a forensic analysis of Grey and his cohorts up to and including the 1st World War.)

HB's father, George Butler, was High Sheriff of Kilkenny before Independence and a farmer of some serious means as he had over some 600 hundred acres of land, but the Land Commission saw to the break-up of his number of farms, despite his protestations about needing a living for his two sons Hubert and Gilbert. The latter went in to farming but Hubert hated it and—as the eldest—got the big house Maidenhall with enough acreage for his purposes especially his orchards. Anytime his acres are mentioned they vary from 5 to 7 to 50, so I think that maybe he himself sold off some land when he finally inherited the house in 1941 on his father's death and was left with perhaps 15 acres which saw his market gardening and orchards giving him a tidy living by his standards.

HB had two sisters, Cicely and Joan, and there is a picture of the three of them as youngsters sitting on a bench in Maidenhall c. 1905 all draped with three fairly large Union Jacks.

HB did meet with one man in Oxford, Tyrone Guthrie—a born Englishman, but whose family home was the Big House, Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan. Through him, he met Peggy, his sister, whom he married and they settled down in Annaghmakerrig where their only child was born—a girl called Julia. Eventually, HB on returning from Oxford, got work at the Carnegie Libraries and came under the influence of Horace Plunkett. According to Rev. Rob Tobin, it eventually dawns on HB that:

"it was going to be hard to make a living as a young Irish Protestant given *all the challenges that that community would be facing* so I think it fair to say that there is a certain pragmatic reason for Butler going abroad but there is also clearly a sense that he wants to explore the world..." (All italics are mine –JH.)

What can I say about this ignorant assumption? Well Rev. Rob is an American so perhaps that should be enough explanation—but really? Just to take one small example—here in Cork today the Merchant Princes operate, amongst whom are the Nicholson family (Woodford-Bourne), the Whitaker family (*the* Major Motor Dealership for Land Rover, Jaguar etc), the Good family in Kinsale (the very prestigious Acton's Hotel and Trident Hotel and until recently the biggest Millers

The Remaking Of Hubert Butler

"Here is a place of disaffection
Time before and time after
In a dim light."

T.S. Eliot, *'Burnt Norton'*.

"What then shall we do? Stick, so far as possible, to the empirical facts—always remembering that these are modifiable by anyone who chooses to modify the perceiving mechanism."

Aldous Huxley, *'Eyeless in Gaza'*.

"It occurs to me that the apparatus for the creation and maintenance of celebrities is vastly in excess of material fit to be celebrated."

Philip Larkin.

"You think that you are
doing the pushing,
But it is you who are
being pushed."

Mephistopheles in Goethe's *'Faust'*.

"In this vile world, everything is true or false according to the colour of the glass through which you view it."

Calderon de la Barca.

Much has been made in Johnny Gogan's DVD by some of the most notable contributors about the "*stellar academic career*" of Hubert Butler (HB) and, like everything else about this enterprise, when I turned my attention to finding out the actual truth of the claims—I was flabbergasted at what I found! Reverend Rob Tobin, who has actually written a biography about his hero, said very early on in the documentary that "*his academic career is really stellar*"; and Roy Foster and Fintan O'Toole make the same claims.

HB went to prep school in England and then to a minor public school, Charterhouse—on a scholarship we are told—and then on to St. John's College, Oxford where he studied classics.

I cannot really be sure about the scholarship to Charterhouse because I would need to look at their archives, so I have to let that claim (like so many others) stand unproven until such time as those making it provide evidentiary sources or until I can find out for myself through further researches. I did look up the school website and saw a list of their former famous alumni, amongst whom were Gary Liniker the soccer player and pundit, but definitely no HB—but that could be that he just doesn't fit their idea of "famous" though, according to the above mentioned *literati/academics*, HB is "*world famous*"—which in my opinion, is a claim so totally spurious

as to be absurd.

But I did find that HB went to Reading University and studied agriculture for two terms and then set off for St. John's College, Oxford, where he managed to do very badly indeed in the scholarly department—his finals saw him get a bare Pass!

When you look at it honestly, the whole idea that HB was in Oxford during "*the famous bright young things era*" and there's never any mention of him anywhere—well, yes, that made me smell a rat.

When his mother Peggy, according to Joseph Hone (HB's foster son), tried to get her "*relative*" Lord Edward Grey, then England's Foreign Secretary, "*to get her son a post in the Diplomatic Service*"—nothing whatsoever came of it.

If he was the brilliant linguistic scholar that he has been made out to be—that rather lets the cat out of the bag, I fear. (Reading *'Roger Casement on the Great War: a commentary by Pat Walsh on Casement's "Sir Roger Casement on Sir Edward Grey" and "A pacific blockade"*, Athol Books, 2017, I found Casement's assessment of Lord Grey to be quite rewarding. In effect, Grey too was a bit of a blockhead "*having been sent down from Balliol College, Oxford for idleness and when he returned only achieved a Third class degree*". But better somewhat than HB's Pass—all told. I would advise my readers to get this pamphlet as there is

locally until Bandon Co-op bought them out to name but a few. There was a very informative letter from Niall Meehan, Faculty Head, Journalism and Media, Griffith College, Dublin 8 to *The Irish Times*, 10th October 2016 correcting Roy Foster on his interview of 1st October 2016" (*again*) stating:

"One of a series of Irish Times articles by Michael Viney in 1965 opened with: 'For Heaven's sake' said a Protestant accountant, 'don't make us out to be whingers, we've nothing to whinge about'. ... 'As late as 1975, 50 years after State formation, less than 4% Protestant population provided an estimated 25% of senior managers in industry and 36% of all bank directors'."

Certainly the Bank of Ireland has always had Protestants all the way up, to the top tier especially. Allied Irish Banks (AIB) from the old Munster and Leinster Bank was more for the Catholics. Chartered Accountants are hugely Protestant-dominated but it is in Insurance that the latter really come in to their own.

So the idea that HB and his community would face *challenges* in the new State work-wise is an outright unjust claim and what is more, those making it *know this* yet they happily repeat it hoping, as Niall Meehan put it in his letter that it will become "*proof by constant assertion*".

Protestant schools like Bandon Grammar (of Graham Norton fame), Middleton College (of Bishop Colton fame), King's Hospital, Dublin (of our latest Taoiseach Leo Varadkar fame), are all full and are the *very stuff* of dinner table talk—especially about how many Catholics are getting in—*sniff sniff!*

Foster of course knows all this, having himself gone to the Quaker School, Newtown in Waterford, though he is always *careful* to let us know that his parents are/were (if deceased) Church of Ireland because it seems the latter has much more *caché* in today's Ireland. And of course Rev. Rob would also know this because his PhD Thesis was on Southern Protestantism. Then again he may—like HB—have been on the constant lookout for the *small detail* that flitted through the larger narrative and just run with that. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if that was the case.

And, in the DVD, Carroll Professor of Irish History, Oxford, Roy Foster states:

"And the contrast I often have when I am reading Hubert about this central Europe is that he is much more intelligent

than Paddy Leigh-Fermor whose flowing *purple prose books on travelling* as a young man through the Castles of Hungary or Transylvania—all those places as a young man with a backpack but always staying in these very grand houses and I feel there is far less of the reality of what is happening between people on the ground in these immeasurably complex and interesting important areas than I get in Hubert".

So Paddy gets the *slap* that Foster so liked HB giving to other people but here I would urge caution to Roy: here in Ireland that kind of thing might pass, but in London—*never, as Paddy* was so very definitely one of their own. And Foster knows the value of patronage as he himself benefited so much from it—after all, without the likes of Sir Angus Macintyre, Sir Eric Howsbawm and others, where would his Carroll Professorship be? Well certainly not in his hands for sure. so he'd want to be careful about whom he kicks especially if they represent the English State in its deepest manifestations.

Only in this week's *London Review of Books*, there is a piece saying that *The Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography* was awarded to John Bew for his book '*Citizen Clem: A Biography of Attlee*'. The prize was £5,000 and the judges were Roy Foster, Antonia Fraser, Flora Fraser (her daughter with her first husband Sir Hugh Fraser, the Conservative MP and Scottish landowner), Richard Davenport-Hines and Munro Price.

Now that is the kind of gig one gets when the English State knows that one has the *right attitude* and *can be trusted to act in its interests*. But it only takes a couple of careless fumbles and suddenly one is out of the golden circle—*capiche* Roy? As you yourself so wittily put it—an Irishman in England will always be regarded as "*a Mick on the Make*" so don't make the mistake of thinking you are immune to that classification. I know how hard you worked all those years that you were only a night lecturer to mature students and how many dreary dinner parties you attended, so keep that in mind when you criticise unwisely and quite unjustly one of their own! So back to Paddy of the "*purple prose*" as Roy would have it.

Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor ("*Paddy to his friends*") was born in London in 1915 and died in 2011 aged 96. He was the son of Sir Lewis Leigh Fermor and Muriel Aeyleen, daughter of Charles Taafe Ambler. Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor, DSO (Distinguished Service Order), OBE

(Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), Knight Bachelor awarded in 2004 though he was offered his knighthood in 1991 which he declined at the time. He was known as a British author, scholar and soldier who played a prominent role behind the lines in the Cretan resistance during the Second World War. Fermor was widely regarded as Britain's *greatest living travel writer during his lifetime*, based on books such as '*A Time of Gifts*' (1977) etc. A BBC journalist once described him as "*a cross between Indiana Jones, James Bond and Graham Greene*". Fermor is considered to set a standard of modern travel writing, in particular with this 1977 book '*A Time of Gifts*'. He influenced the whole generation of British writers such as Bruce Chatwin, Colin Thubron, Philip Marsden, Nicholas Crane and Rory Stewart.

In his obituary in *The New York Times* on 11th June 2011, written by Richard B. Woodward there is this following opening sentence:

"Patrick Leigh Fermor, the British writer whose erudite, high spirited accounts of his adventures in pre-war Europe, southern Greece and the Caribbean are widely regarded as *classics of travel literature* . . ."

"After joining the Irish Guards during World War 11, he was judged to be promising officer material for the SOE (Special Operations Executive) the unit created by Winston Churchill to wage war by unconventional means. Mr. Fermor's superiors deemed his fluency in Modern Greek useful in leading resistance to German occupation in the Aegean. For 18 months he lived disguised as a shepherd in Crete emerging from the mountains with a team that in 1944 kidnapped General Heinrich Kreipe, the island's German commander. The operation provoked brutal reprisals toward the local population. It earned Leigh Fermor the DSO and later became the basis for the 1957 film 'Ill Met by Moonlight' directed by Michael Powell and starring Dirk Bogarde. Leigh Fermor's own account 'Abducting the General—The Kreipe Operation and SOE in Crete' was published in October 2014."

Leigh Fermor, darkly handsome, great conversationalist, hero and author, was feted everywhere he went and Sir Max Hastings called Mr. Leigh Fermor "*perhaps the most brilliant conversationalist of his time, wearing his literacy light as wings, brimming over with laughter*". Fermor married his wife, the Honourable Joan Rayner (née Eyres Monsell daughter of Bolton Eyres-Monsell, 1st Viscount Monsell. They travelled together widely and lived between their two homes in the Mani Peninsula, southern Peloponnese

and part of the year in Gloucestershire. They had no children but their homes were always brimming with friends and family. For all the decades he spent writing about his beloved Greece, the Greek Government awarded him its highest honour, the Commander of the Phoenix.

I think that Foster is somewhat poisonous in referring to Fermor as staying in "very grand houses" and being away from the people and therefore being unable to write as well as Butler. He is straying from the truth but there is something more here and I think it is envy wrapped up as criticism. We know, and Foster has to know, that Leigh Fermor started at the age of 18 to walk the length of Europe with precious little money, few belongings, and some letters of introduction. He was left in England with a family in Northamptonshire by his mother after his birth, and his mother then with his sister went off to India to live with her husband. Fermor didn't meet his family in person until he was four years old.

No wonder he was sent as a child to a school for "difficult children" and was later expelled from The King's School, Canterbury, when he was caught holding hands with a greengrocer's daughter. (Don't you just love the adjective describing the daughter?) In his travels, Fermor slept in barns, shepherd's huts, many monasteries and yes, some homes of the landed gentry and aristocracy of Central Europe. Where did Butler stay? That is the question! And what did he do for money?

In my next article I will try and find the answers to these questions and more—because, as I said last month the more I study Butler and indeed the contributors to the HB DVD, the more bamboozled I become but not to the extent that I don't know when a con is being perpetrated. I am no *cábóg* and neither are my readers.

Julianne Herlihy ©

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Mary Kenny And Fascism

"If Sinn Fein TDs want to talk about Nazis, they should look to their own party's history"

That is the title of Mary Kenny's article in the *Irish Independent* on March 17th.

She takes issue with Sinn Fein TD Martin Kenny, who said in the Dail that what went on in the Tuam Mother & Baby Home made it easy to understand what happened to the Jews in Germany under Hitler. Anybody with a long-term memory, that has not been overlaid by the fashionable false memory of recent times, must see that as a silly comparison. But Martin Kenny is a young man, and he grew up in a culture shaped by Mary Kenny's generation, in which Hitler, Nazism and Fascism had been trivialised. And, given that trivialisation as being part of revisionist Irish culture, Martin Kenny's comparison does not strike me as being utterly unreasonable.

"Another Hitler" has been a regular feature of English foreign policy propaganda ever since the first Hitler removed himself.

The first of Britain's follow-on Hitlers that I took particular notice of was Colonel Nasser. Britain made war on Nasser in 1956 in secret alliance with expansionist Zionism and open alliance with the French Empire, because he was another Hitler. I was working at the time as a labourer in Boherbue Co-Op Creamery in the Cork side of Slieve Luacra. The Creamery was installing a new boiler system that was got from Germany and the German engineer who was working on it had served on the U-Boats during the World War. It was an interesting combination of facts and it gave rise to much reflection.

The story today—told by such authorities as Professor Feargal McGarry and Professor Girvin and a great many other authoritative functionaries, and contradicted by nobody with an official position that I ever noticed—is that the State did not allow us to call the 2nd World War the 2nd World War: that it made us call it *The Emergency*. But I was there and I know that the World War was called the World War, and that the papers reported it, and that it was freely discussed. *The*

Emergency was something altogether different. It was the condition of military readiness into which the Irish state put itself in order to meet a British invasion for the purpose of forcing Ireland into the World War.

The formal Government position was that it would make war on any foreign state that invaded and make an alliance with the state that did not invade, but I know that it was only a British invasion that was anticipated. And I take it to be a virtual certainty that it was the Irish readiness to make war on the invader, and make an alliance with the enemy of the invader, that kept Britain out.

The British Empire was still the major military power in the world when it decided to make war on Germany in March 1939. It was the Superpower of the time. The Irish state was in practice subordinate to Britain until 1938 in matters of war and peace. Britain held three of the Irish Ports under Treaty possession. If it made war on an enemy capable of fighting back, its enemy would not have been under realistic obligation to treat an Irish state allowing its territory to be used in the British war effort as an effective neutral.

Practical Irish neutrality was made possible by the transfer of the Treaty Ports to actual Irish sovereignty in 1938. But the chief British warmonger, Winston Churchill, declared that concession to be an act of "appeasement", subversive of British Imperial interest, and to be without lawful foundation and to be on a par with the Munich Agreement by which Britain gave part of Czechoslovakia to Hitler.

The 26 County state was under military duress in 1938. And when, the following March, Britain made a military alliance with France and Poland against Germany, and a leading British statesman condemned the 'appeasement' of the Irish, the recently achieved independence of the Irish state took on a very fragile appearance.

I don't know if the Irish Army command did contingency planning for a resumption of war with Britain. If it didn't, it was asleep on the job.

There was a nominal Irish national

army, and there was an actual Irish national army. That was a consequence of the 'Treaty' and the 'Civil War' by which it was enforced. [The nominal Army, on British insistence, and with British arms, made war on the Army that fought British control of Ireland for two years and obliged it to negotiate. British arms in the hands of a soldiery paid by Britain defeated the Army of Volunteers. (The methods used by the paid soldiery were described as "war crimes" by the new Taiseach, Varadkar, earlier in his political career.) But, when it had won the 'Civil War', the professional Army was starved of armaments by the State that had created it. It was capable only of violent police action internally. The Treaty Governments of 1922-32 did not want anything else. It was inconceivable to them that their Army should ever be engaged in real war, except as part of the British Army.

When Fianna Fail came to Office in 1932, and to power in 1933, it did its best to develop the official army into an army capable of defending the state against the likeliest enemy. (In those days Fianna Fail did not deny its anti-Treaty origins, as it now does, and did not hail the Treaty as the founding document of a legitimate Irish state.) But the likeliest enemy had effective control of the arms trade, and ensured that the official Irish Army had little more than token armaments.

Churchill declared that the Irish Government acted illegally when it asserted its independence by refusing to declare war on the King's chosen enemies after the King's Government in Britain had done so. If he had tried to compel the Irish state to comply with its legal obligations, he would have been met by a combined resistance of the Free State Army and the IRA, and there is little doubt that the effective component of the combination would have been the IRA. The official Army had no tanks, or warplanes, or battleships, or heavy artillery.

The IRA had remained in being as a secret army after its defeat in 1923. It remained in being until 1932 because the Treatyite regime made it a point of honour to enforce the Treaty system instead of altering it in order to make it acceptable to anti-Treaty opinion. Collins gained some IRA support by saying he accepted the Treaty in order to build up a force by means of it that would enable him to break it. That was the meaning of his "*freedom to achieve freedom*". It was probably hubris on his part. Whitehall is no novice in the duplicity game, and before very

long Collins found himself dashing around trying to keep his show together, but always doing as Whitehall ordered.

His successors quickly gave up any pretence of trying to make good on the Collins scheme, while making a god of Collins himself.

After the British humiliation in Turkey in 1923, its abandonment of the Greeks it had incited to conquer Turkish Anatolia, and the consequent fall of the British War Coalition, amendment of the Treaty system in a Republican direction without risking a British reconquest became possible. But Collins's successors chose to go in the opposite direction. William Cosgrave, the quiet, unheroic administrator, said he was willing to kill 80,000 Republicans in order to enforce the Treaty. And the strong man of the regime, Kevin O'Higgins (the strong Catholic State moralist who was something else in private) said that Ireland should be proud to be part of the Empire.

It became clear within a couple of years that Republican sentiment remained powerful in the society. It had become intimidated in 1922-23 by the prospect of a British reconquest by Boer War methods (Concentration Camps and a network of military blockhouses around the country) into laying low for a while. But it soon perked up again.

By the mid-twenties it became likely that there would be a General Election which returned a majority of anti-Treaty TDs, and that a majority of the representatives of the people would be excluded from the Dail by the Treaty Oath. To avert this turn of events the Government made swearing the Treaty Oath a condition of even standing in an election.

De Valera said in 1922 that there were issues on which the people had no right to be wrong, and the Treatyites told the country that that made him a Dictator. But, a few years later, in a much more settled situation, and with no British reconquest in prospect in response to voting wrong, the Free State tried to deprive the electorate of the possibility of voting for anti-Treaty candidates.

The Treaty Party came within a whisker of losing Office to a Fianna Fail/Labour Coalition in 1927. It was saved in a Dail vote only by an abstention procured for it by the Editor of the *Irish Times* in 'the *Jinks affair*' (see **Fianna Fáil, The Irish**

Press And The Decline Of The Free Stat). It then embarked on five years of Law and Order suppression of Republicanism which had the effect of keeping the IRA alive and active. In 1932 it lost to a Fianna Fail/Labour alliance. The 1933 Election was won outright by Fianna Fail.

The Treaty Party has been praised for relinquishing Government Office without a fight. If it had tried to hold on to power after losing the Election, there would have been a real Civil War, with the IRA being one party to it, and with the probability of defections from the official Army. So Fianna Fail took Office peacefully with the IRA in the background.

The Treaty Party then became Fine Gael. And it became Fascist.

If, in 1932, it had commanded sufficient military muscle to prevent Fianna Fail from taking government control of the apparatus of state, then, according to the Fascist ideology it adopted, it ought to have done so. It held that the IRA had become a Communist organisation and it had helped Fianna Fail to Office only for the purpose of then unseating it and taking its place, as the purposeful Lenin had ousted the weak, rudderless Kerenskyites in Russia in 1917.

Having failed to stop Fianna Fail/IRA by use of physical force, it set about developing a Fascist political movement with the object of setting aside the Parliamentary democracy in which Fianna Fail was flourishing—and was doing with the Treaty what Collins had promised the IRA that he would do with it.

The internal political conflict from 1933 until Britain launched the World War in 1939 was between the Parliamentary democracy of Fianna Fail, supported by the IRA, and Fine Gael's Fascist movement. And the newspaper, in which Mary Kenny invents a Nazi past for Sinn Fein, was an organ of the Fascist movement.

The high-powered academics of the Treaty Party were Fascist pamphleteers: Professor Tierney of Dublin and Professor Hogan of Cork. I do not recall that there was any public opposition from within the Treaty interest to the Fascist development of Treatyism after 1933.

Is it conceivable that an intellectual of a certain age does not know this, and innocently supposes that Fascism in Ireland developed on the Republican side?

Professor Feargal McGarry made a film about Frank Ryan in which he presents Fascism as Republican. I was willing to suppose that he might have acted out of authentic ignorance. He seemed to be a cocksure man with a talent for eliciting patronage.

I saw the film in the University cinema in Belfast. The showing was followed by a question period conducted by the Professor. I raised my hand to indicate that I had a question. I raised it repeatedly, perhaps six times. Though I was sitting no more than six feet directly before him, he failed to notice that my hand was raised. So I concluded that his ignorance of the political orientation of Fascism in the Free State was diplomatic rather than authentic. He did not let me ask the question, but he answered it all the same!

Mary Kenny tells us that Sean Russell±

"aimed at fomenting a pro-Nazi rising in Ireland. Russell forged links with the Nazis in 1938... with a view to enlisting the Reich in the IRA's bombing campaign against England. The Reich had its own bombing plans... but they weren't averse to the IRA's more amateur efforts..."

Russell was an Irish Republican, pure and simple. He did not become a Nazi by looking to Germany for arms, any more than the British Prime Minister became a Nazi when he broke up the Czechoslovak state and gave a piece of it to Hitler, in the same year that Russell tried to buy arms from Germany. Russell wanted to deplete the German stock of arms by a minuscule quantity: the British Prime Minister actively increased the German stock of arms by an enormous amount by giving it a gift of the Czech arms industry, which was the most advanced in Europe in certain respects.

I can't imagine that any quantity of arms given by Germany to Russell would have made any discernible difference to the course of events after 1938. Britain's action of empowering Hitler by breaking up Czechoslovakia, and persuading France to renege on its Treaty obligations towards the Czechs so that Czechoslovakia might be broken up, made a very great difference to the course of events.

I never before saw it said that Russell's aim was to bring about "*a pro-Nazi rising in Ireland*", and I would be very surprised indeed if that was the case. Mary Kenny needs to show some evidence for it. If her assertion rests on the mere fact that he went to Germany to buy arms, then it is on

a par with the kind of reasoning that went on in Trotskyist revolutionism in the Student Revolutionary movement in the days when she was known as a flamboyant smuggler of French Letters across the Border.

There was, however, an attempt in the mid-1930s at a Rising to overthrow the State from which Fianna Fail had purged many of the Treaty elements. Fine Gael's Fascist movement planned a March on Dublin in imitation of Mussolini's famous March on Rome. Special trains and coaches were to bring Blueshirts from every quarter of the country to a great convergence in Dublin. Timetables were published.

But all that feverish Treatyite nationalism was disabled by the orderly force by which Fianna Fail and the IRA remade the Treaty in the interest of national consolidation within the Parliamentary system.

Mary Kenny mentions another 1930s Republican whom she described as Nazi: Jim O'Donovan, who±

"masterminded the bombing of Coventry in August 1939... Instead of using a vehicle, as present jihadi bombers favour, O'Donovan used a bicycle bomb which killed five people and injured more than 70, in a bid to create a United Ireland—under the Nazi jackboot. One of O'Donovan's IRA liaison officers in the England midlands was Dominic Adams, Gerry's uncle..."

She gives a reference for the assertion that O'Donovan's aim was a United Ireland under the Nazi jackboot:

"David O'Donoghue's meticulous biography of Jim O'Donovan, *The Devil's Deal*, which documents in faultless detail the links between the IRA and Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 40s", O'Donovan being the "chief liaison officer between the IRA and the Third Reich".

While O'Donoghue's book is far better than one would expect from an Irish academic historian in the 21st century: on such a person and on such a subject, it is far from being meticulous. A meticulous historian would set the man in his time both nationally and internationally. O'Donoghue does neither. His horizons are very narrowly Free Statist nationally, and post-1940-ish internationally.

De Valera may have made 26 County anti-Treatyism a lost cause in the 26 Counties by taking the bulk of 'Civil War; Republicanism into his slightly-Constitutional Fianna Fail—discarding the Treaty

Oath, disdaining the Viceroyalty (I forget what it was called), putting the Empire and Commonwealth into cold storage, stopping the Annuity payment transfers to London, outlasting the British boycott in the Economic War, and getting ownership of the Ports—but the national question did not end at the Border. The Border kept it alive and festering.

No 26 County party, Treatyite or anti-Treatyite, major or minor, had disowned the big nationalist minority in the North and recognised the 6 County regime as legitimate. The Treaty Party ought to have done so when it repudiated Collins' funding of independent Nationalist education in the North, and when it made its pathetic settlement of the Border Commission issue in 1925, but it didn't. It encouraged the northern Nationalists, and then betrayed them. And of course Fianna Fail did not disown them, but claimed the Ulster Unionists along with them in its 1937 Constitution.

There was 26 County consensus that the Border system in the North was illegitimate and intolerable. My view is that, leaving aside the issue of the legitimacy of Partition as such, the Six County regime established by Britain along with Partition was intolerable to the 40% minority, which was required to live within the British state but was excluded from participation in the British political system, and was placed in a political Limbo—a hellish Limbo—under the informal local rule of the Protestant community organised by the Orange Order.

I proposed, after the events of August 1969, that Dublin should recognise the Protestant majority in the North as a distinct nationality, and repeal the sovereignty claim, as preconditions for establishing a negotiating relationship with Stormont. That proposal was rejected immediately by the Taoiseach and all Dail Parties.

I then proposed that the undemocratic system of British government in the Northern Ireland region of the British state should be made the issue. A vigorous agitation was launched in the North to drive home the point that, leaving the legitimacy of Partition aside, the form of government that Britain established in the Six County region of its state was essentially and obviously undemocratic. That agitation was carried into the British Labour Party in the mid 1970s and into the Tory Party in the 1980s. No political commentator or academic 'political

scientist' ever undertook to challenge that view by showing how Northern Ireland could be a democratically-governed region of the British state while being rigorously excluded from the political institutions—the political parties—by which the state was governed.

Throughout the 15 years that that agitation was being conducted vigorously, in the North and in England, catching attention in both political parties and irritating the leaderships, we never got a cheep of support from Mary Kenny.

She engaged in routine condemnation of the IRA. But the IRA was sustained by the consequences of the system of undemocratic government chosen for the Six Counties by Westminster/Whitehall. What use was condemnation against military action against a grievance of a fundamental kind—a grievance which was not being addressed politically? It was water off a duck's back.

I would not agree with Jim O'Donovan's formulation of the national grievance as stated in the ultimatum sent to the British Foreign Secretary, preliminary to the declaration of war in January 1939, but neither would I say that there were no grounds for drastic action.

O'Donovan acted within the confused nationalist consensus and therefore formulated the matter as he did. Mary Kenny belongs to the same confused nationalist consensus, it seems to me.

(But, as I recall, she married into the residue of the English ruling class and was rather prominently British for a generation. She is now Irish again. Her objective experience, if she ever assimilated it by thought, should make her know better.)

O'Donoghue describes O'Donovan's bombing campaign of 1939-40 in England disapprovingly, but he makes no mention of the Northern situation. However, what kept Republicanism alive and active in the late thirties except the predicament of the large nationalist community in the North—the humiliating treatment to which it was routinely subjected?

I have been aware of these matters to some degree since about 1940. What I knew about the North was what everybody knew. And what everybody knew was that people like us were very badly treated there and that was because of Partition.

The first time I was in the North I saw

that it was true that Nationalists/Catholics were very badly treated there.

If they had not been badly treated, and if they had not been excluded from the political process by which the State which held them was governed, I doubt that the IRA would have remained in being as an active militant force in the late 1930s.

It can be argued that Partition was unavoidable without war.

John Redmond, a Parliamentary demagogue, without experience of practical reform of Irish affairs by means of the Westminster system, held the balance of power in Parliament in 1910 and imagined he could manipulate the system to carry through an ambitious all-Ireland Home Rule Bill. He was advised by William O'Brien, who had carried through the great land reform of 1903, that he was mistaken both in his estimate of what could be done through Parliament and in his contemptuous dismissal of the degree of resistance that the Ulster Protestant community was capable of.

Redmond took no heed. He treated the Ulster resistance as a bluff and by early 1914 brought about a situation in which the practical options were Partition or war. The option of a war to impose D Dublin Home Rule system on the North vanished when the officer body at the Curragh threatened mutiny. The minority Liberal Government, kept in Office by Redmond, began to renege on its commitment to him. Parliament failed him. He demanded control of the Volunteer movement organised by the Irish Republican Brotherhood—to do battle with the Ulster Volunteers? If not, for what purpose? O'Brien said it was *de facto* Partition.

The Liberal government found a way out of the British crisis by availing of a European crisis as an opportunity to launch the war on Germany for which it had been making secret preparations for almost ten years. Redmond threw his Volunteers into that War, provoking and making possible the Republican Insurrection of 1916.

After the Insurrection, and under the shock of it, the Government, which was now a Liberal/Unionist Coalition, proposed an immediate implementation of the Home Rule Bill with the exclusion of six Northern Counties, which would remain an integral part of the British system of government and politics. Redmond rejected the proposal.

In the delayed elections, finally held in December 1918, the Ulster Unionist policy was for the exclusion of Six Counties from the Irish arrangement, those Counties to remain simply a part of the British system. There was no hint of an "*Ulster Government*". In the rest of the country Sinn Fein was returned with an independence mandate.

At the end of 1919 the Unionist/Liberal Coalition published the Bill in which Six County Partition combined with subordinate Six County Government was proposed for the first time. The Redmondite remnant saw nothing in this but the Partition element. It was still in denial about the *de facto* situation that Redmond's Home Rule campaign had brought about, and took no interest in how the Six Counties would be governed after Partition.

The Ulster Unionist leader, Carson, said, in response to the publication of this Bill, that the Ulster Unionists did not want to govern Catholics. They wanted Protestants and Catholics both to be governed within the normal British system. It was put to the Redmondite leader, Joseph Devlin, by the Editor of the *Liberal Manchester Guardian*, that he support Carson on this. But Devlin just refused to think about the matter.

Under normal British Government, within the play of British party-politics, there would probably have been extensive Catholic participation in the development of the new Labour Party, which was replacing the Liberal Party. There would have been no local Parliament, lacking any real functions of government, in which the two religious communities were provoked to develop in aggravated antagonism to one another. Nationalist aspirations to a United Ireland might have developed within the Westminster system—as Scottish aspirations to national independence did—and the Unionist alliance would not have to maintain itself in the stance of permanent antagonism which the Northern Ireland system forced on it.

The obligation imposed on the Ulster Unionists by Westminster to govern Catholics as a condition of remaining 'connected' with Britain, but no longer an integral part of it, led to all the aggravations that in the end produced a war—informal communal policing, gerrymandering, biassed planning, a segregated local civil service, Oaths of Loyalty etc.

Most of the legislation affecting

ordinary life continued to be enacted and administered by Westminster. The Stormont Parliament had none of the normal business of a state Parliament to transact, and therefore there was no business in it that could give rise to normal politics. Its only normal business of state was policing, and that was almost entirely the policing of the Catholic community that was a third and rising. And it was largely done by informal and intrusive supervision, which is the most irritating kind.

Can it be said that, comprehensively disfranchised as they were from the democratic system of the state in which they were required to live, and uniquely subjected as they were to a subordinate and subordinating system of religious communal dominance, they were nevertheless morally obliged to act as Unionists in the few situations where they could exercise some authority?

Jim O'Donovan did not distinguish between Partition and the Northern Ireland system established along with it. Neither did Mary Kenny, as far as I ever heard. Hardly anybody did. And Jim O'Donnell acted within that very broad consensus of understanding when he sent the British Government the ultimatum leading to the declaration of war.

The purpose was to alert the British democracy to the intolerable situation in the part of Ireland which it continued to hold, by engaging in an act of war against it.

The British democracy was responsible for the undemocratic system of government in the Six County region of its state. Wasn't it?

Or is it the case that the democracy of a democracy is *not* responsible for what the Government does?

If that is the case—and in Britain it is quite close to being the case—then democracy is something very different from what it purports to be.

The matter needs to be clarified. It is a matter of topical concern. The Coventry bicycle bomb was a minuscule affair compared to what has been happening recently in response to British State action in the Middle East and North Africa.

Jim O'Donovan's war did not come off big. 31 years later Ruairi O Bradaigh's war did come off big, because it was

detonated within the undemocratically governed part of Ireland. Which proves that there *was* a war to be fought against Britain over its 1920 Act and its coercively-imposed 'Treaty' settlement.

Britain itself, as a world Power, might conjure wars out of the thin air on a whim: but a small, disarmed community could not declare war on it, and sustain an impressive war effort for 28 years, without sufficient reason.

*

Mary Kenny says that Jim O'Donovan made "*a bid to create a United Ireland—under the Nazi jackboot*", and suggests that David O'Donoghue documents this. The only documentation provided by O'Donoghue that might be taken as pointing that way is the following:

"From 1937 on, O'Donovan was in touch with the Germans... While he was not an actual member of the IRA, he was in close contact with the heads of its organisation and acted as their intermediary with the Germans. He tried to indoctrinate the IRA with the Nazi ideology but met with very little success as the outlook of the leaders of that body did not lend themselves to the acceptance of Nazi doctrines..."

This is from an "*Anonymous G2 memo, September 1945*", and O'Donoghue says it is wrong on the point of IRA membership.

O'Donovan was not a pure and simple, single-minded Republican. He was a man of his time in the widest sense. He was a qualified engineer, and a liberal intellectual on top of that. He published a magazine, *Ireland Today*, in 1936-8, and he had as contributors Fine Gael Fascists, Professors Tierney and Hogan, and Peadar O'Donnell and Sean O Faolain from the other side. He belonged to the intellectual *avant garde* of his time, which kept its options open.

But he was on close terms with Fianna Fail. And Fianna Fail had closed the options. It determined that the political future of Ireland was not to be Fascist. Anti-Treatyite Parliamentary democracy established an unbreakable dominance over the Treatyite Fascist movement, and over the Catholic movement that wanted Franco's revolt recognised as the legitimate Government of Spain before it had established itself in *de facto* control of the country. Where else in Europe did such a thing happen?

The issue of Fascism was not settled in Britain until much later. It seems to me

that Britain kept its options open, even after suddenly ending its collaboration with Nazi Germany in March 1939 and declaring war on it in September 1939. What was Britain's attempt to get engaged in war against Russia in Finland in the Spring of 1940, letting its declaration of war on Germany lie on the table, but an attempt to fight against Communism rather than Fascism—Fascism being the force that saved Europe from Communism, acknowledged as such by Churchill himself?

Different standards must apply to Ireland and Britain in these matters. Ireland, unarmed itself, could not affect the course of the Spanish Civil War by refusing to sell arms to the elected Government. It was a non-player in that game. Britain was a major player and it refused arms to the Spanish democracy.

In the matter of the rise of Fascism, Britain, the state chiefly responsible for the Treaty of Versailles, was not an "*appeaser*". It was a collaborator. In the case of Nazi Germany it was a perpetrator.

The game of branding Irishmen who had contact with post-1933 Germany as Nazis has been going on now for a generation. It needs a closer look as it breeds historical mindlessness—Britain, which played major part in making Nazi Germany a Power, being always left out of the picture.

Of course Mary Kenny is not the chief culprit—although she is a casual inventor of facts. She told her mass readership at one point that I had a special relationship with Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble. It was an "*Aren't the Irish quaint!*" sort of thing. (And it was repeated by Martin Mansergh.) But she is only a well-connected writer of ephemera. The issue must be pursued in connection with the academics who specialise in it.

Brendan Clifford

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Themes Of *Times* On Munitions And Mines

There are straight-forward, "*honest-to-God*", newspaper correspondents, whose reports tell it exactly as it happens and happened, and then there are correspondents who attempt to be opinion moulders in their agenda driven reports. The *Irish Times* Western and Marine correspondent, Lorna Siggins, is an honourable representative of the first category, and on this May 5th she reported:

"When several south Connemara fishermen spotted a 'strange object' floating in Galway Bay almost a century ago, they were sure it would bring them some good fortune... People gathered around it on the strand, and a witness would recall that it was 'black' and 'like a big pot' with 'spikes sticking out'. At the time, during the First World War, anything that came in from the sea could be valuable—be it a piece of timber that might make a shed, or an oil tank that could provide fuel. The object was rolled along the sand. One of the fishermen 'undid something', and saw 'a long thing coming out like the tube of a bicycle', the *Galway Express* reported on June 23rd, 1917. At that point, several others had the good instinct to dart behind a rock. The explosion could be heard 25 km away, in Galway city, and it wrecked houses in the nearest townland of An Lochán Beag, which lies between An Spidéal and Indreabhán. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) barrack windows shattered almost four miles east in the village of An Spidéal. One man, Joseph 'Joe Hughie' Flaherty, managed to stagger from the shore, bleeding badly... Nine men aged between 17 and 53 years of age lost their lives. The youngest, 17-year-old cousins Éamonn and Pádraig Ó Laoi, came from Na hAille, as did 20-year old Mánuis Ó Fatharta. The other fatalities were Éamonn Mac Diarmada (53), Tomás Hoibicín (30), Seosamh Ó Flaithearta (32), Tadhg Ó Céidigh (30) and Colm Ó Feinneadha (18), all of An Lochán Beag, and Peadar Ó Cualáin (17), of An Teach Mór."

"The alarm was raised by Galway GP Dr WA Sandys, who was out on a sick call at the time of the incident and was nearly swept from his car by the force of the explosion. He recalled seeing thick black smoke, and drove down to the shore to find a 'horrible scene of carnage'. He alerted the then Lord Killanin and local parish priest Fr Heany. There was 'hardly a trace of bodies', the newspaper said in its graphic account, describing how the boot of one of the men was found a mile from the scene. The inquest was

held the very next day in Tigh Mhaimí Costello—now An Poitín Stil—at An Lochán Beag. Speedy efforts were made to say it was a German mine. The bereaved families had no legal representation at the inquest. Only two of the men who died were buried locally, in Cnoc cemetery at Indreabhán. Seven of the men were consigned to the 'paupers' section' of the city cemetery at Bohermore... Pádraic Mac Diarmada, whose grandfather was Éamonn Mac Diarmada, says his grandmother was left with eight children to rear, the youngest being four years of age. 'By stating that it was a German mine, there was no compensation available from the then British government, and a local collection raised a small amount of funds for the families', he says. Six months later, another mine at sea near An Spidéal destroyed a fishing vessel, the *Neptune*, which had been described as one of the finest in the Claddagh fleet. Once again, it was said to have been a German munition, without evidence to back that up."

In 1917 itself, the *Irish Times* had been party to such callous and duplicitous British War propaganda. On Monday, 18th June 1917, its heading was "*Terrible Affair In County Galway. German Mine Explosion. Nine Fishermen Killed*". It reported how keen the British authorities had been to jump immediately to such "*German*" conclusions:

"Our Galway correspondent writes: At 5.30 o'clock on Friday evening a terrible explosion was heard in Spiddal, Co. Galway... It was afterwards found that nine lives had been lost as the result of the explosion of a mine... When I visited the scene in the evening the villagers were beside themselves with grief. The crying of the women could be heard on all sides. Several men were still engaged in collecting the poor scattered remains of the dead: a sole of a boot here, portion of a flannel waistcoat there. Lord Killanin and Father Heany, P. P., arrived quickly, and visited the grief-stricken friends of the deceased men, and comforted them as best they could. Later in the evening Mr. Louis E. O'Dea, Deputy Coroner, held an inquest... Joe Flaherty, the only survivor of the explosion, told his story... District Inspector Hildebrand, R. I. C.—We are all glad to see you here... Mr. Arthur Chapman, Warrant Officer, R.N., said that he saw fragments of iron and a brass plug. As an old torpedo man he said that the mine was certainly not British. The latter were made quite differently;

'and we never put crosses on our mines'. The Coroner said that the reason why he asked these questions was that if it was a British mine the unfortunate relatives would be compensated... Mr. Hildebrand said that the jury could only find a verdict as to the cause of death. Experts would probably say whether the mine was German or British. The jury found that the death of Tim Keady and the others who had perished was caused by an explosion of a mine. They added: 'We strongly recommend the Government to take into consideration the loss and suffering of the relatives of the deceased men and we heartily sympathise with them in their deep sorrow and affliction.'"

It was quite clear that the jury itself had NOT concluded that it had been a German rather than a British mine. This did not prevent the *Irish Times*, when reprinting the self-same report in its weekend edition of Saturday, June 23rd, from stepping up the British War propaganda in the revised headlines it employed: "*Disaster In County Galway. Nine Fishermen Blown To Pieces. By A German Mine. Not A British Mine*". And, as Lorna Siggins, has noted:

"A Galway Poor Law Union motion proposed by Lord Killanin requesting assistance for the bereaved families was downplayed in a report in *The Irish Times* on June 30th, 1917."

No British Government relief funds were forthcoming, and the only alternative was recourse to an appeal for individual charitable donations. On 21st July 1917, the *Irish Times* printed, as a letter, the sad pleadings of the Parish Priest of Spiddal, Father Thomas Heany:

"I should state that the amount received, though considerable, is inadequate to make some provision for a few years for the poor stricken families till their children are able to take the place, to some small extent, at all events, of the breadwinners on whom they mainly depended for a living."

His further appeals proved to be in vain.

Lorna Siggins further related in her May 5th report:

"Members of the Cairde Chuimhneachán 'An Mine' commemorative committee say that at the time of the blast Galway Bay was laced with British devices. Brendán Ó Tuairisg, whose father was a juror at the inquest, said the coroner tried hard to establish this, even summoning a British navy officer to testify. The event shattered the confidence of local coastal communities who were so dependent on

the sea. The nine men were remembered 50 years later with a plaque recording the names... The commemorative committee has done much work to clear the shore and resurface the mile-long lane leading down to 'An Mine' from the Cois Fharrage road. The plaque has been restored for reset in a mighty boulder, which will have nine flag stones leading up to it, ahead of a series of events planned for June 15th to 18th to mark the centenary. It is also hoped to mark the men's grave in Bohermore cemetery. Local resident and committee member Donncha Ó hÉallaithe has perused area reports filed by the RIC on microfilm, and has found no mention of the explosion in the documents for June and July 1917. 'Yet, curiously, in the RIC reports, there was mention of hurley matches at Na Forbacha several miles east', Mr Ó hÉallaithe said. *'It suggests there was a deliberate policy to suppress the truth.'*"

Two years ago, on 5th May 2015, Siggins reported on the *Lusitania* controversy. The *Irish Times* sub-editor gave her report the heading of:

"No smoking guns: the 100-year controversy about what the *Lusitania* was carrying. Germany claimed that a cargo of munitions made the Cunard liner a legitimate target for its U-boats, but the wreck's owner, Gregg Bemis, says there's no certain proof."

But this was to do an injustice to the integrity of her report, the gist of which was that no smoking guns had YET been found, and how Bemis had been frustrated for over a decade in being prevented from embarking on a definitive investigation. Siggins had reported:

"When Gregg Bemis, a US businessman, takes a boat to the *Lusitania* wreck site with Eoin McGarry, an Irish deep-sea diver, next week he will be carrying a stainless-steel capsule and plaque. The capsule holds the names of the 1,201 people who died when the ship sank, along with a flower. McGarry plans to put it on the liner's hull, which lies 18km south of Kinsale, Co Cork, in about 90m (300ft) of water, on behalf of Bemis—the ship's owner—and the international diving community. *'To those 1201 souls—You will never be forgotten'*—*Hopefully someday the truth around the sinking will be revealed*', the inscription reads, reflecting Bemis's determination to establish what happened. Half a century after the first serious dives to the wreck began—led by John Light, an American who had bought the wreck for £1,000 from the Liverpool & London War Risks Insurance Association—evidence of ammunition has been recovered, such as that found by Patrick Glavin and a team from Cork Sub Aqua Club in 2006. But Bemis argues that there is still no absolute

proof that *Lusitania* was carrying the substantial munitions that Germany had said made it a legitimate target for U-boats..."

"Bemis, who is in his mid 80s, has descended to the wreck twice, first in 1993 and then in 2005. During the legal case he took here to establish full ownership of *Lusitania*, he read into the court record a letter from the British treasury. It informed Oceaneering International, a US company planning to dive in 1982, that no ammunition or explosives were on board—'but if its divers came across any they should be careful, because they still might be live'... Last year newly released British foreign-office files gave a new insight. They recorded significant concern about the potential diplomatic fallout from the 1982 Oceaneering expedition. 'Successive British governments have always maintained that there was no munitions on board the *Lusitania* (and that the Germans were therefore in the wrong to claim to the contrary as an excuse for sinking the ship)', the department's North America head wrote in July 1982. *'The facts are that there is a large amount of ammunition in the wreck, some of which is highly dangerous.'*"

"The Irish reaction to a munitions find—specifically that of Charles Haughey, as Taoiseach—is reflected in correspondence unearthed at the UK's national archives by a University of Limerick postgraduate. John Treacy, a former Naval Service officer, was researching maritime disputes between Ireland and Britain when he came across letters reflecting the same British diplomatic efforts. A reference to *Sharelga*, the Co Louth prawn trawler accidentally sunk by a British submarine in the Irish Sea in 1982, at the height of the Falklands conflict, jumped out at him. In a handwritten note about *Lusitania* on a draft reply to Edward Oakden, a British diplomat, a legal adviser named Mrs A Glover wrote: 'Assuming that the ship has sunk in international waters, there should, in normal circumstances, be nothing for the Irish Government to complain about. But it is possible that in the aftermath of the *Sharelga* incident, and in the present depressed state of relations, Mr Haughey might try to make an issue out of the affair, if explosives are found onboard.' Treacy says. 'The material, much of it being notes made before final drafts, suggests that great confusion existed across a number of British government departments.' In the event the officials could relax: the 1982 dive didn't yield the expected smoking guns... Bemis says a forensic dive he had planned this year for the centenary could not go ahead, mainly because of 'impossible' conditions he says the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht imposed."

The heading given by the *Irish Times* to the Siggins report was an editorial attempt to prevent it from muddying the waters of the anti-German "*Our War*" narrative predominating in that paper. Its recognition of Churchillian cynicism regarding the propaganda value of the sinking is quite a different matter from acknowledging a strong possibility that Britain had used civilian passengers as a human shield in the transportation of the means of waging its war. Only three days previously, on 2nd May 2015, *Irish Times*' correspondent Ronan McGreevy had written:

"The torpedoing of the Cunard liner, 100 years ago, was not the first mass killing of civilians in the first World War. But it generated outrage in a way that previous atrocities had not... Without the efforts of locals who risked their lives the death toll of 1,198, out of the 1,959 people aboard—these official figures exclude three German stowaways suspected of spying (as does McGreevy himself, lacking the elementary human compassion of Bemis in including the three 'Huns' in his total of 1,201 victims—MO'R)—would have been worse... The US consul in Cobh, Wesley Frost, recalled seeing 'five or six drowned women with drowned babies in their arms; and the corpse of one mother who had a dead infant clasped to each of the cold breasts which had so recently been their warm nestling place'... The *Lusitania*'s sinking generated outrage worldwide. Germans became the 'barbarous Hun', in the words of a cartoon at the time. The sinking of the *Lusitania* was not the catalyst for American entry into the First World War. That did not happen for another two years... The *Lusitania*'s dead included 31 infants trapped beneath the hold when the torpedo struck... The British government was quick to exploit the tragedy for the war effort, not least in Ireland, where recruitment was sluggish. 'Irishmen, Avenge the *Lusitania*', cried one poster. The sinking turned American public opinion against Germany... In Britain the sinking provoked revulsion. German property was destroyed, and there was a clamour to deport or intern German citizens. (That had already occurred a year previously!—MO'R). Some people believe that the British government was negligent or complicit in mass murder in the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which, they say, it allowed in order to draw the US into the war. And many fingers of conspiracy point at one man: Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, who wrote of the propaganda value of the sinking: *'The poor babies who perished in the ocean struck a blow at German power more deadly than could have been achieved by the sacrifice of a hundred thousand fighting men.'*"

Later in the year, on 12th October 2015, while once again quoting Churchill,

McGreevy made clear his conviction that there was only one guilty party. He wrote that the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 off the coast of Co Cork with the loss of 1,198 (sic) lives "*convinced the Allies that what they were facing was not an enemy, but a threat to civilisation*". Although, in the following year, on 31st May 2016, it was the sinking of a different ship that was the focus of McGreevy's outrage:

"Arguably the greatest sea tragedy of the war was the sinking of the RMS *Leinster*, a mail boat, just a month before the war ended, with the loss of more than 500 lives. Lieut Brian Harvey of the Sea Cadet Corps recounted the sense of international outrage at a time when the Germans were suing for peace."

The *Irish Times* was, of course, unashamedly Unionist during that First World War, and reserved its contempt for Redmondite Nationalism in other respects. A century later, in terms of attempting to mould the Irish historical narrative of that British Imperialist War that it still champions in retrospect, it now prefers to do so from a neo-Redmondite perspective, and Mc Greevy is its chosen voice. As his publicist writes of him:

"Ronan McGreevy is an *Irish Times* journalist and videographer. He is the author of *Wherever the Firing Line Extends: Ireland and the Western Front*. He is the editor of *Was it for This: Reflections on the Easter Rising*, an anthology of commentary on the Easter Rising from the pages of *The Irish Times*. It was published by *The Irish Times* and *Ireland 2016*. He is the editor of *Centenary*, the forthcoming official State book on the Easter Rising commemorations. He is the editor of two eBooks based on *The Irish Times* archives: *'Twas Better to Die: The Irish Times and Gallipoli 1915-2015* and *The Mad Guns: Reflections on the Battle of the Somme 1916-2016*."

In the March issue of *Irish Political Review*, I have already dealt with McGreevy's form in this regard, in my article "Why has the '*paper of record*' failed to access its February 1917 records?". I will not repeat what was said therein. Suffice to say in this update, that that newspaper's objective of sustaining the McGreevy "*Our War*" narrative of the *Lusitania* was assisted by an *Irish Times* sub-editor providing a headline which subverted a report by Lorna Siggins that had allowed for the possibility of a radically contrary narrative. And, needless to say, the self-styled "*paper of record*" has hitherto shown no interest in reporting findings that challenge his narrative of the *RMS Leinster*.

But there is another newspaper competing for the image of "paper of record" in the Irish market. This June has seen the Ireland edition of the *Times* (UK) move on from a purely digital format to the additional publication of a daily print edition. Now, unlike the *Irish Times*, the *Times* (UK) sees no need to put an ameliorative gloss on its Imperialist history. Why should it? After all, the contemporary day-by-day record of the Murdoch Press—whether *Times* or *Sun*—is quite unembarrassed by the shameless contradictions of wrapping its reports—even, at times, when covering the same story—in English jingoism for the "home" market, and donning the Green jersey for the Ireland editions. Market-driven as it is, perhaps the *Times* (UK), in the wake of the popular enthusiasm for celebrating the 1916 Rising centenary, appreciates better than the neo-Redmondite *Irish Times*, the thirst among Irish readers for factual reports that might challenge the "*Our War*" narrative. On May 29th, it was therefore left to the Ireland edition of the *Times* (UK) to carry a report from one of its correspondents, Catherine Sanz, entitled "Forgotten shells found on *RMS Leinster* to be re-examined". Sanz related:

"Two ammunition shells that were recovered from the *RMS Leinster* and kept in a shed for three decades are to be re-examined by the defence forces in an attempt to shed light on why the passenger ship was armed. The mail boat was carrying civilian and military passengers when it was torpedoed by a German U-boat on October 10, 1918. The shells were declared safe when they were brought up from the wreck, which has remained 30 metres below the surface of waters near Dublin Bay for nearly 100 years. Official lists estimated at the time that 501 out of the 771 passengers on board perished when the ship sank, but recent research has suggested that the death toll may exceed 550. The disaster remains Ireland's worst maritime tragedy and a search was launched last month to find descendants of the victims in time for the centenary. Michael Schütz, 63, from Dublin, said when he dived down to the ship in the late 1980s he brought up what he thought were wine bottles. He had been diving with a group from the Curragh Sub-Aqua Club in Sandyford when he noticed a large rack with bottle-shaped objects lining it. 'There was a rack of shells which looked like they were made of glass so I mistook them for wine bottles', Mr Schütz said. 'When I brought two of them up with me, my diving buddies became very concerned because they recognised what they actually were and they thought the shells might be live.' Mr Schütz said there were carbon rods in each of the shells and that one of the men

on the boat pulled one of the rods out and held it to his cigarette, as a joke. 'It lit up like a glow light! So we quickly threw the rods overboard, just in case', he said. After arriving back at the harbour the shells were sent to the Curragh camp army base to be examined. Mr Schütz had kept them in a shed at the back of his house but last month he got in touch with the centenary committee to notify them about the shells. 'I think they have a significant historical importance, considering that I am unaware of any records which note that the ship was armed', he added... A spokeswoman for the Defence Forces said that an ammunition expert would examine the shells to determine just how they could have been used. If the shells are confirmed to be British army ammunition and were present when the *Leinster* sank, then it might explain why the ship was targeted by the German U-boat, which sank several days later when it hit a mine off the coast of Scotland. The Germans had suspended attacks on merchant ships after the *RMS Lusitania* sank in 1915, but by late 1917 they focused on waters around Britain and Ireland."

Sanz continued:

"Behind the story: The *RMS Lusitania*, which sank in 1915, was not believed to have been carrying high-risk weapons until documents released by the (UK) National Archives revealed that officials were concerned a salvage operation could be in danger. Nearly 1,200 people, most of whom were British, died on May 7, 1915 when the *Lusitania* was torpedoed by a German submarine 11 miles off the south coast of Ireland. The ship went down in 18 minutes, and 128 Americans were among the victims, which is believed to have prompted US involvement in the First World War. Files released from the (UK) National Archives in 2014 under the 30-year rule showed that in 1982 officials feared that previously undeclared munitions would be discovered by divers who planned to examine the remains. 'Successive British governments have always maintained that there was no munitions on board the *Lusitania* (and that the Germans were therefore in the wrong to claim to the contrary as an excuse for sinking the ship)', Noel Marshall, head of the British foreign office's North America department, wrote in 1982. 'The facts are that there is a large amount of ammunition in the wreck, some of which is highly dangerous. The Treasury have decided that they must inform the salvage company of this fact in the interests of the safety of all concerned.' The salvage operation went ahead and recovered 821 brass fuses for six-inch shells."

So it was that, in a period when Mc Greevy yet again systematically drummed away in extolling Redmond's championing

of Britain's War—with successive frequency in the *Irish Times* issues of May 17th, May 22nd, May 26th, June 5th and June 7th—he somehow "missed" the RMS *Leinster* story carried by the *Times* (UK) on May 29th. Yet, if it is a war crime for ISIS to hold civilians as hostages to fortune, in order to perform the role of human shield in the war being waged at Mosul—as indeed it is—was not Britain guilty of a similar war crime in its abuse of the mail boat RMS *Leinster*?

Manus O'Riordan

CLIMBING THE MONEY TREE

After Jack met the Chancellor of the
 Exchequer
 on the road
 and exchanged the old dry cow for a bag
 of magic beans
 it sure did goad
 his poor ma who scolded
 like a woodpecker
 and threw them into the garden
 it seems
 a mighty tree grew overnight
 and being in his teens
 he climbed it quickly with vigour
 to what looked like the Palace of
 Westminster
 or something bigger
 stacked high from ceiling to floor
 from wall to wall
 banknotes galore
 he felt he was due a few
 when a voice roared out
 and began to shout
 it's three billion for an aircraft carrier
 one hundred billion for Trident
 this is not phantasmagoria
 it's billions for failing banks
 do you think we have a money tree
 for the lower ranks
 now it's down down down
 and looking for the axe
 no axe and its lose your home
 being class-cleansed out of town
 it's take ma and hit the road Jack

Wilson John Haire
 26 June 2017

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Unbalanced History

I am pleased that West Cork is to have a first history festival in July. However, I am saddened that the speakers chosen to discuss the War of Independence period express a narrow range of opinions. It might more accurately be renamed the West Brit History Festival. Eoghan Harris and Kevin Myers require little introduction. They have expended acres of newspaper print extolling the merits of a historian who claimed he spoke to a participant in the November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush, six days after the last (97-year-old) veteran died. I refer to the late Peter Hart. Another participant, Eve Morrison, supported Hart's claim and stated she was on the trail of the mystery man. That was five years ago. Appropriately, Ms Morrison is speaking on 'Cork Ghosts of the Irish Revolution'. The combined efforts of these four to undermine the standing of ambush commander Tom Barry, and of the IRA generally, reduced academic history (and 'historical' journalism) to a laughing stock for a considerable period. Roy Foster, who spoke for himself when he said in 1986 'We are all revisionists now', is giving the introductory lecture. He presumably will set the tone at this cosy get together. The festival will resuscitate the sectarian theory that the IRA was sectarian during the War. Eoghan Harris will show his incompetent 2012 documentary, *An Tost Fada*. I hope festival-goers will be informed of at least one serious error, admitted by RTE after I complained. The programme stated that two Protestant farmers Matthew Connell and William Sweetman were killed in a sectarian attack in April 1922 after the Truce and Treaty, whereas they were actually killed beforehand, in February 1921, for reasons that were not sectarian. There are other howlers in the programme which contemporary Protestants would have recognised as propaganda.

The decade of remembrance needs broad discussion and a fair representation of opinion. This event is one sided, with one partial exception: Andy Bielenberg. He was subject to a Harris/Myers mauling when his analysis, and that of John Borgonovo, on conflict deaths, did not reproduce their imaginative views. I hope he is not subject to more trumped-up fake-history claims. I suggest that the organisers broaden out the discussion, even at this late stage, so that more historical and less hysterical analysis is advanced.

Tom Cooper
Irish Examiner, 22.5.17

Dublin-Monaghan Bombings

I welcome the call by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Charles Flanagan to once again seek the release of UK files and documents relating to the May 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings in which 33 people died ("[UK urged to release Dublin and Monaghan bombing files](#)", May 18th).

Mr Flanagan said a new independent inquiry into the worst loss of life during the Troubles is "imperative" and said he hoped the UK government that takes power after next month's election would release files that shed light on the perpetrators behind the loyalist bomb attacks. The fact that it is more than 43 years since this atrocity occurred and no one has been brought to account is an appalling indictment of successive British governments that have refused to co-operate with the Barron inquiry into these bombings.

Speaking on the revelations contained in the Cloyne Report issued in 2011, Mr Flanagan stated that if any foreign government conspired to break the law in this state it would have its ambassador expelled.

Mr Flanagan said the behaviour of the Vatican in regard to the revelations carried in the Cloyne Report amounted to the concealment of a crime and the Irish government expects the fullest co-operation from the Holy See, the Catholic Church in Ireland, and all other relevant bodies to be fully and totally subject to Irish laws and requirements. On this basis, can we take it this expectation of "fullest co-operation with Irish laws and requirements" is also applicable to states other than the Vatican?

Following the publication of the final report of the commission of investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in 2007, it was established that it was "neither fanciful nor absurd" that members of the British security forces in Northern Ireland could have been involved in these bombings. Furthermore, it was established by Mr Justice Henry Barron that files which may be of assistance in identifying those responsible for these bombings were in the possession of the British government.

Despite repeated calls by successive Irish governments for these files to be released, British governments have persistently refused to comply. Surely this also is the concealment of a crime and an undermining of Irish law, yet no call by Mr Flanagan to expel the British ambassador to Dublin nor any moves to recall Ireland's ambassador to London

Tom Cooper
Irish Times, 29.5.17

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

WHAT IS OUR "EUROPEAN CULTURE?"

On Wednesday 23rd March 2016 the print media headlines screamed at us from the front pages "*Bloodbath in Brussels*", "*They Must Be Stopped*", "*Bombs in Centre of Europe*", with full page explicit photographs of dead and wounded bodies. We were intended to be appalled and we were. It was terrible and appalling.

But it would have prevented such carnage if the media had reported in the same way the slaughter and bombing of Syrian, Iraqi, Afghanistan, Libya or Yemeni cities, towns and little villages over the past numbers of years by the Coalition of the Willing (was there ever a more chilling title?)—basically the USUK and their allies. And then General Mad Dog James Mattis, US Secretary of Defence, states blithely on TV about their war on these peoples that "*collateral damage is to be expected*". And there was no outrage whatsoever from the media or any State or politician!

This was just another chilling phrase which means ordinary people will be killed routinely and they can just expect that in modern urban warfare. Why then when it happens in the Western capitals is that not acceptable? Is it because of the difference in the colour of our white superior skin or something even nastier than mere racism? Because, however our politicians and our lying media (MSM) put it, it is the slaughter by the Terrorist NATO States and their NATO allies which has provoked the Paris and Brussels terrorism. And it is the same slaughter that has provoked the mass migration of populations into Europe out of the bombed States.

Any State which topples or causes the overthrow of the legitimate government of another State is a Rogue State itself. Any State which militarily attacks another State is a terrorist State. We need to get our thinking straight on this if we wish to have peace in the world. "*The price of*

freedom is eternal vigilance" and at the present time we must be vigilant against the propaganda issued by aggressor States which attempt to justify their crimes against humanity by attempting to demonise their victims.

A reading of Dr. Brian Murphy's book '*The Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920*' is very relevant today to understanding the nature and extent of the propaganda bombarding us from the media constantly. The media is not an independent disinterested reporter of events. First of all, the media agenda is to earn a profit from advertising products and services for sale and so its advertisers cannot be alienated and therefore the media output is tailored to suit them by the profit-driven owners. Secondly, the media is constantly searching for news and opinions and so State Governments find a ready-made market for propaganda outpourings. Every State produces its own propaganda and it is naïve to think otherwise—as so many people do!

The Paris shootings last November and the Brussels bombings in March resulted in the huge manufacture of propaganda and 'spin'. We were bombarded with news items putting it across to us that the perpetrators were Arabic Muslims and "*non-Europeans*". French and Belgian politicians went on record to state that the perpetrators did not understand "*European Culture*". However, the facts were otherwise and the politicians were lying and prevaricating. The perpetrators were in fact citizens of France and Belgium. Salah Abdeslam, a suspect arrested in Brussels on Friday, 18th March 2016 is said to be in fact a Belgium citizen born and bred in Brussels. And so why are we being lied to by politicians and by some of the media?

And then too we must be aware of the double-bluff. How is it that the suspects in Brussels were said to be known to security forces before the arrest of Salah Abdeslam on 18th March, according to the propaganda issued after the arrest. The extended family was well known, we were told. Furthermore, the police stated that Salah Abdeslam was "*singing like a canary*", giving up names of all of his associates. If this was true, how is it that the associates were still at liberty several days later and bombing Brussels airport? It would not be the first time that security forces allowed terrorist acts to go ahead so as to achieve another agenda—look at all the billions of dollars earned in the USA through Homeland Security as a result of the 9/11 demolitions and deaths in New York in 2001.

As for "*European culture*" which, it is said, the perpetrators do not understand. What is our "*European Culture*"? We need to meditate on that. We see much homelessness and indeed hopelessness. Our culture does not adequately care for the poor amongst us. We turn a blind eye or even approve of French and US/UK bombings in Africa and Asian countries. Our Government condones the use of Shannon Airport for transport of prisoners without trial to Guantanamo Bay and we tacitly approve by electing and re-electing Ministers of Government who permit such activities. Nobody in our "*European culture*" approves of violence and yet we turn a blind eye to it. Is it not time we examined our consciences here and decide to condemn violence wherever it occurs and by whosoever it is perpetrated?

EU—A SINGLE MARKET?

The EU is very much not a single market when we look at Eurostat figures. Irish prices for consumer goods are twenty-five % higher than the EU average! In all price categories surveyed Irish prices were higher. What should be of most concern to Ireland, because Tourism is one of Ireland's biggest sources of income, is that restaurant and hotel prices in 2016 were twenty per cent higher than the EU average. Alcohol was seventy-five per cent higher. Clothing in Ireland is twelve per cent higher. It just does not stack up! We are supposed to be in a Single Market and obviously we are most definitely not!

Michael Stack ©

GLEN: a postscript

In May *Labour Comment* reported on the poor press reporting of Áine Duggan's exposure of inadequate governance at the campaigning organisation, GLEN, a Charity devoted to promoting homosexual rights. Within that body, a wide-ranging review has since been done by an independent analyst, Jillian van Turnhout. The issues she identified are such that the organisation is being wound up. However we remain mystified as to what the malpractice was. The only 'misdeed' we have seen mentioned is personal use of the body's credit cards—a use which resulted in no loss to the charity as the amounts spent were always repaid before any charge was incurred.

Surely the public is entitled to know what really happened at GLEN, an organisation which has received public funds? Where is the in-depth analysis which would normally occur in such situations?

The Origins and the Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920

by

Brian P. Murphy *osb.*

Foreword: Prof. David Miller.

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Engels Visits Ireland 1856

In our tour in Ireland we came from Dublin to Galway on the West coast, then twenty miles north inland, then to Limerick, down the Shannon to Tarbert, Tralee, Killarney and back to Dublin—a total of about four to five hundred miles in the country itself—so that we have seen about two-thirds of the whole country. With the exception of Dublin, which bears the same relation to London as Dusseldorf does to Berlin, and has quite the character of a small one-time capital, all English-built too, the whole country, and especially the towns, has the appearance of France or Northern Italy. Gendarmes, priests, lawyers, bureaucrats, squires in pleasing profusion and a total absence of any and every industry... Strong measures are visible in every part of the country, the Government meddles with everything, of so-called self-government there is not a trace.

Ireland may be regarded as the first English colony and as one which because of its proximity is still governed exactly in the old way, and here one can already observe that the so-called liberty of English citizens is based on the oppression of the colonies. I have never seen so many gendarmes in any country and the drink-sodden expression of the Prussian gendarmes is developed to its highest perfection here among the constabulary, who are armed with rifles, bayonets and handcuffs.

Characteristic of this country are its ruins, the oldest from the fifth to the sixth centuries, the latest from the nineteenth—with every intervening period. The most ancient are all churches; after 1100, churches and castles; after 1800, the houses of peasants. The whole of the West, but especially in the neighbourhood of Galway, is covered with these ruined peasant houses, most of which have only been deserted since 1846. I never thought that a famine could have such tangible reality.

Whole villages are devastated, and there among them lie the splendid parks of the lesser landlords, who are almost the only people still there, mostly lawyers. Famine, emigration and clearances together have accomplished this. There are not even cattle to be seen in the fields. There land is an utter desert which nobody wants. In County Clare, south of Galway, it is rather better, here there are at least some cattle, and the hills towards Limerick are excellently cultivated, mostly by Scottish farmers, the ruins have been cleared away and the country has a bourgeois appearance. In the South-West there are a lot of mountains and bogs but also wonderfully rich forest growth, beyond that again fine pastures, especially in Tipperary, and towards Dublin—land which is, one can see, gradually coming into the hands of big farmers.

The country has been completely ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 (for in reality both the wars and the state of siege lasted as long as that). It is a fact that most of the ruins were produced by destruction during the wars. The people itself has got its peculiar character from this, and despite all their Irish nationalist

fanaticism the fellows feel that they are no longer at home in their own country. Ireland for the Saxon—that is now being realised. The Irishman knows he cannot compete with the Englishman, who comes with means in every respect superior... How often have the Irish started to achieve something, and every time they have been crushed, politically and industrially...

The landowners, who everywhere else have taken on bourgeois qualities, are here completely demoralised. Their country seats are surrounded by enormous, wonderfully beautiful parks, but all around is waste land, and where the money is supposed to come from it is impossible to see. These fellows ought to be shot. Of mixed blood, mostly tall, strong handsome chaps, they all wear enormous moustaches under colossal Roman noses, give themselves the sham military airs of retired colonels, travel around the country after all sorts of pleasures, and if one makes an inquiry, they haven't a penny, are laden with debts and live in dread of the Encumbered Estates Court.

Letters to Karl Marx.

Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), the son of a wealthy German cotton-spinner, was the intimate friend of Marx, and collaborated with him for many years in his literary work and in the organisation of the First Communist International. Engels paid several visits to Ireland while he was working in his father's factory in Manchester. He married Elizabeth Burns, an Irishwoman, in 1864.

Marx at all times gave great attention to Ireland. He succeeded in getting the General Council of the First International to pass a resolution welcoming the Amnesty movement for the release of Fenian prisoners. "Ireland", he wrote to Siegfried Meyer in 1870, "is the bulwark of the English landed aristocracy... They, in fact, represent the domination of England over Ireland, Ireland is, therefore, the great means by which the English aristocracy maintains its domination in England itself."

(Ireland: From The Great Famine to The Treaty (1851-1921) A documentary record compiled and edited by James Carty. Published by C. J. Fallon Limited Dublin, 1951).

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