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Northern Ireland And Democracy

Brexit seems to be going ahead, but there is no Northern Ireland Government to tend to Northern Ireland interests in the process of it. The two Governments are worried by this and they are urging Northern Ireland to get a Government so that it can tend to the interests of Northern Ireland. What does Northern Ireland have an interest which could be tended to if it had Government?

Northern Ireland is an empty formula: a Constitutional abstraction which does not reflect a political or social reality. It is transcendent. It exists beyond reality. In the reality of things, Northern Ireland today, as ever, exists in two incompatible parts. Until 1972 one part held free dominance over the other. Since 1998, because of a War that was fought in the interim, the two parts became independent of each other. Its new form of government, established under the 1998 Agreement between Whitehall and the IRA, and a subsequent agreement between Ian Paisley—"Ulster Says No!"—and Martin McGuinness—the Republican war leader—consists of two groups of autonomous Ministries, each representing one of the parts, which pull in opposite directions.

It is perhaps fortunate for Northern Ireland, as a transcendent constitutional abstraction, that it does not have a Government at this historic juncture. It would aggravate the antagonism of the parts without having any power of decision.

The parts decide in the light of their own particular interests whether to form the subordinate Government of discordant parts or not. That right of decision is all that exists in the way of democracy in the Six Counties.

Those in Dublin and London who berate Sinn Fein and the DUP for not agreeing to form that unusual form of government just now do so for concerns of their own. Neither Dublin nor London has any representative in connection with the North.

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Budget 2018 – *more free market than centrist*

Budget 2018, the Government's plans for next year's public expenditure and taxation, reflects many of the problems currently besetting Irish politics: a new Taoiseach needing to win a general election and keeping his options open as to when it should be called; a Government dependent on Independents and on the cooperation of the main opposition party; uncertainty as a result of Brexit, Trump and a challenging policy debate in the EU, making planning difficult; and the theoretical vacuum created by the increasingly obvious failure of neo-liberal policies. Reflecting these problems the new Minister for Finance, Pascal Donohoe, has delivered an economic strategy that is overly cautious and steeped in the pre-2008 economic orthodoxy.

This article will examine the Budget under the headings of housing strategy, health reform and the challenge of climate change. First, it will be helpful to place the

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Centenary of the Balfour Declaration

Britain, through the Balfour Declaration of 1917, was entirely responsible for the success of the Zionist movement in establishing itself to the great detriment of the native inhabitants of Palestine. A generation ago this was freely admitted in England. For instance a popular book by James Williamson, that went to 6 editions, *A Short History of British Expansion* (1967) states:

"The British connection with Palestine

arose out of the defeat of the Turks in the First World War... The Arab peoples in general... assisted the British to overthrow Turkish rule, and had a claim to British gratitude. In 1917, however, before the victorious campaign had taken place, the British Government had made a promise to assist the setting up a Jewish national home in Palestine, although without prejudice to the Arab population. This pledge, known as the Balfour Declaration, was ill-judged and disastrous, and has cursed Palestine with a generation of strife".

FINAL PART

Despite a further "generation of strife" that sort of thing is no longer said in Britain. Now the British Prime Minister sees the Balfour Declaration as a cause for celebration with the Zionists who have taken control of and expanded the territory handed to them through conquest and have invited the Israeli Prime Minister to the party.

It is undoubtedly the case that, without Britain's Great War on Germany and the Ottoman Turks, there would have been no Zion in Palestine. Just as in the Second World War of the 20th Century when

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Redmondite Politics:
More On the Ballybricken Pig-Buyers!
(back page)

The *Irish Times*—the Southern Unionist paper chosen by Fianna Fail to be the national paper of record—Editorialises (October 19) that—

"the people of Northern Ireland are being denied the benefits of a properly functioning government. Tribal politics and sectarian-style considerations are threatening to overwhelm the commitments to peace, diversity and compromise that formed a basis of the Belfast Agreement. It does not have to be like this. Northern Ireland's leading parties have more to gain from compromise than they have to lose... Last week, it seemed that agreement might be reached... Michelle O'Neill appeared willing to fudge..."

There is no evidence that Michelle O'Neill was willing to trample on her electoral commitments. And the "*sectarian-style tribal politics*"—what we described as a national difference forty years ago—was what the Good Friday Agreement was based on and gave official structure to.

The *Irish Times* then proceeds to hold the Northern parties—but essentially Sinn Fein—responsible for the—"recent cuts... A functioning Executive would be in a position to disburse the additional funding

secured by the DUP" in return for giving its handful of votes at Westminster to the Tories so that they could form a Government.

Northern Ireland is never without a Government. And the Government is always Whitehall, regardless of whether a subordinate facade exists at Stormont. Westminster has absolute power of government in the North. "*Recent cuts*" were brought in by Whitehall against the wishes of the subordinate Government, overriding the authority devolved to the subordinate.

Whitehall has always had the authority to govern the North in any way it pleased. The main services of the state have always been run by the appropriate Whitehall Departments. And, since 1998, there has been specific provision for a Whitehall Department that can function as the devolved Northern Ireland Government when the Northern Ireland parties—which exist only because the British governing parties have always boycotted their Northern Ireland concoction—cannot be got to form a subordinate government and take the blame.

There have been calls for the Six County parties to live up to the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement. When this cry was

first raised in 1999, we pointed out that it had no spirit. To have a spirit it would have had to be negotiated between the two national communities in the North. It was never that. It was negotiated between Whitehall and the IRA after a 28 year War that Whitehall despaired of winning. John Hume of the SDLP (but not the SDLP) and Charles Haughey of Fianna Fail (but not Fianna Fail) acted as influential intermediaries. Hume was hated in the SDLP and Haughey was hated in Fianna Fail. And David Trimble of the Unionist Party let himself be intimidated by Tony Blair into letting it be thought that he had signed (though we were assured that he didn't), and then, advised by Lord Bew and Eoghan Harris from the Official IRA, he prevented it from functioning for a couple of years.

We now find our view of the Agreement—or at least some of it—being expressed by an *Irish Times* columnist in contradiction of the Editorial. Newton Emerson used to be a not funny or biting Loyalist satirist but he has evolved into a straight commentator who is worth reading.

On October 19th, in a column headed "*Varadkar tears up the Belfast Agreement*", he ridiculed the notion that the Agreement had a spirit, and commented:

"Leo Varadkar has torn up the Good Friday Agreement in unionism's favour and ended up doing nobody any favours."

In 1920 Ulster Unionism did not want the Northern Ireland system. It wanted to be governed, without devolution, within the British system of state politics. That was its programme in the 1918 Election. Historians, in a remarkable instance of *Gleichschaltung*—as the Nazi system of 'co-ordinating' the expression of public opinion was called—have all agreed to delete that indisputable political fact from recorded history.

They were persuaded to have separate 'Home Rule' as a Whitehall device that would help to confuse the Sinn Fein movement of the time

But the *Six County* Partition was their own choice. That gave them the security of a two-thirds majority.

But political life in Unionist Ulster ceased with the establishment of the Northern Ireland system. This put the Unionists in the position of being able to be part of the British state in everything but its politics by bringing out the Protestant vote at every election. And it obliged them to bring out the Protestant vote at every election so that their communal majority would be clear.

Northern Ireland had no political life of its own into which the large Catholic minority might be drawn. That community would certainly have been drawn into British politics if British politics had not been excluded from the North. It was put in an intolerable political position, and that acted on it as a stimulus to find a remedy. It remained steadfastly Anti-Partitionist, not because it was fanatically nationalist, but because British Constitutional politics was closed to it. War was the only way of producing movement towards Irish unity and therefore a war was fought, and was persisted in even when the Southern Establishment—which asserted *de jure* sovereignty over the North—lost its nerve and tried to back away. The outcome of the War is that Republicanism has gained a secure, officially guaranteed, base within a re-structured Northern Ireland system and Sinn Féin has grown into the second or third party in the Republic.

Social progress occurs in conjunction with wars. Britain has often told us so, and has blamed what it sees as Irish backwardness on the Irish refusal to support its wars. But there is a refusal to accept the fact that there was remarkable progress in the Northern Catholic community during its long war with Britain, and that the War to which it was driven was good for it.

The Protestant community opted for the routine of the *status quo* that was imposed upon it almost a century ago. It drifted along, without politics, as an annex of the British state, and atrophied. The majority-rule system at Stormont was struck down by Whitehall even before it lost its majority. The security of its two-thirds majority in its chosen Six Counties has now melted away. And a majority against it in a Partition referendum is now on the cards.

But the Taoiseach wants to change the goal-posts. He says he won't accept the Six Counties into the Republic on the basis of a simple majority. He wants to ward off the evil day by requiring a 70 per cent Six County vote for unity before agreeing to accept the return of the Fourth Green Field. The Fianna Fail leader has long been saying things to that effect.

The way things are going it will soon be demanded by these Parties—whose only Northern policy for 60 years was Anti-Partitionism—that there must be a majority within the Northern Protestant Community for Irish unity before the Dail can allow Partition to end.

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Memorials: A Balanced Approach?

Pat Muldowney says (letters, *Irish Political Review*, October 2017) that the proper approach to monuments commemorating aspects of British Empire in Ireland should be to leave them in place and erect plaques to explain what they are about. He prescribes similar treatment in respect of the recently erected Glasnevin Wall.

However, a plaque explaining the Glasnevin Wall would necessarily be complicated because, from a republican point of view, it can only be understood as an attempt to mock or belittle the men and women of the 1916 Rising. By that I mean that it is neither Republican nor British because it contains the names of the Irish patriot dead, alphabetically intermingled among the civilian dead and those of the British military who were sent to kill them.

In this way the Glasnevin Wall makes the 1916 Rising look like some kind of general disaster; of a piece with the drownings at Cammoge Point, Poulsherry Bay in Famine times or the night of the big wind. And one can't help but believe that this was exactly what was intended by the Somme cap doffers and the Poppy promoters who were behind the project.

The 1916 Rising was not a public tragedy. It was a heroic moment which subsequently inspired people all over the world to strike out against imperialism. The Glasnevin Wall has deliberately sullied the sacrifice of our patriot dead and it should be removed.

Simon O'Donnell

The current issue of the Jesuit quarterly *Studies* is on the theme of *Democracy In Peril?* It begins with ancient Athens and comes down to Brexit, touching lightly on many things along the way. There is an article on *The State Of Irish Democracy* by Stephen Collins of the *Irish Times*. It does not touch at all on the Six Counties, though they are the only part of Ireland where there has been a real problem about democracy since the Treaty Oath ceased to be a condition of entry to the Dail about 90 years ago. In fact the North is not mentioned at all in this pretentious publication, except obliquely by Fianna Fail's Northern expert, Martin Mansergh.

Democracy, in its minimum practical meaning established by Britain, is the government of a state by a political party which, in a contest with other political parties, gains a majority of seats in Parliament in an election in which the electorate is the adult population. On those terms Northern Ireland is an undemocratically-governed region of a democratic state. The parties which contend for the right to govern the state have always excluded it from their sphere of operation but they govern it when they win an election in the rest of the state.

If that description, which we have repeated over forty years, is inaccurate, we would

welcome a refutation of it. Or, if it is held that undemocratic government has no effect on the governed, we would be interested to see a case made for that view.

Mansergh writes that in 1918 the Bolsheviks dissolved the Constituent Assembly in which they failed to gain a majority, but Sinn Féin won an "*overwhelming electoral mandate that also covered retrospectively the Easter Rising, but made Dail Eireann the centre of their legitimacy*". Can democracy act retrospectively to cover an action which in its time was undemocratic? We have argued that (leaving aside the scale of the franchise) there was no democracy in 1916. The Westminster Parliament suspended it for the duration of the War in 1915 and continued without an electoral mandate. But there is little doubt that the Redmondites would have got a renewed mandate in 1915 if they had resigned and re-fought their seats, instead of supporting the suspension of democracy by the Liberals and Unionists.

The Rising was carried out in a democratic vacuum. There is no need to seek a mystical democratic validation for it by retrospective democratic action. When democracy was eventually restored in December 1918, Sinn Féin won the elect-

ion because of the great change of popular opinion brought about by the Rising.

Mansergh continues:

"History is not a simple morality tale... it would, of course, have been preferable if peaceful constitutional evolution had not been so contested that it remained stalled for nearly half a century. It is possible to argue that an Independent Ireland in twenty-six counties would never have come into being without the resort to force in Easter 1916 or the subsequent War of Independence". [In fact, the War of Independence was subsequent in the fullest sense, to the *Election*, as the Election was subsequent to the *Rising*.] "But it is also necessary to acknowledge the cost—not just at that time but with a long afterlife—of validating even for a short period, a conspiratorial militarist tradition that claimed a superior legitimacy to any elected body, no matter how negligible its electoral support." [What conspiratorial militarism claimed superior legitimacy to in 1916 was electoral politics which said that independence should be sought only through a Parliament which had repeatedly declared that it would never concede it to anything but force.] "Nearly twenty years after the Good Friday Agreement the process of exorcism is still far from complete, not just because of the residual activities of dissidents but also because of the persistent proselytism for the view that the Provisional IRA campaign has the same legitimacy as the earlier struggle for independence. The historical theorising behind this is highly contrived, indeed absurd, but what cannot be denied is that it took from 1922–98 and beyond to create a political settlement... that could win the consent of the people in Ireland and Northern Ireland."

This is all over the place, with one thing spilling over into another. The War in Northern Ireland was not, after 1922, a phase in the Anglo-Irish War, although there was some attempt around 1998 in Dublin to claim it as such. It had its own specific causes in the undemocratic structure given to the North by Whitehall which could only result in the communal policing of Catholics by Protestants.

On the comparison of the 1919 War and the 1970 War, this journal has argued that the position of the Northern Catholics, under routine communal humiliation and without access to Constitutional politics, was more difficult and more intolerable than that of nationalist Ireland as a whole after the 1918 Election. There was going to be self-government of one degree or another for the greater part of Ireland, with the "self" of the self-government being the vast bulk of the populace. Independence, as warranted by the Election, could not be got without being

fought for, but failing to fight for it would not have led to anything like the position in which a third of the Six County population was placed by the establishment of the Northern Ireland system.

War may not be pleasant. But Britain is a war-fighting state, as Tony Blair often reminded the Labour idealists. And it generates war around it. We were not advocates of war in the North—the *Fianna Fail* newspaper was. But we saw that there was sufficient reason for war if it could be fought with the possibility of some success. And we can see that it brought considerable success to the community that sustained it—while *Fianna Fail* remains in denial about the fact that it was a war.

PS The *Irish Times* of October 25th carried an article on the Catalan crisis and made complicated debating points about it that we could make no sense of, but which possibly make sense to the Ulster Unionist mind which is fiercely Unionist with regard to symbolism, and was once Unionist with regard to the political life of the Union state, but what it calls Unionism now is a "connection" with the Union state and exclusion from its political life.

Thirty years ago it was as fiercely opposed to our campaign to bring British politics to the North as it was to the unification of Ireland.

Emerson, the author, is of the opinion that "the UK appears as a model of accommodation" when compared with "the Spanish state". We cannot say that we have kept up to date with Spanish affairs since the Fascist regime arranged for an orderly transition to democracy. Now it might be that Catalonia was excluded from the democratic political life of the Spanish state, as the Six Counties were from the British state when Westminster invented Northern Ireland. But if that was the case, we are sure we would have heard of it. So we are reasonably sure that Catalonia was not excluded from Spanish state politics, and was not confined in a system of subordinated sub-government in which one community dominated another, and in which the only remedy available to the dominated community was war.

Westminster, though its perverse statecraft, is solely responsible for the 1921 Northern Ireland system and all that it led to. As far as we know, Catalonia was democratically governed within Spanish democracy, but nevertheless very large numbers of Catalans came to conceive of themselves as a distinct nationality and they wish to secede from Spain and cease to be Spanish, as England wishes to secede

from the EU and cease to be European—not that it ever was European in earnest. But England is forcing Scotland and Wales to leave along with them, and we don't know that the Catalan nationalists are forcing any other people to go with them.

Budget 2018

continued

subject in what might be called an ideological context.

During last year's Budget debate, in the role of assistant to then Minister for Finance Michael Noonan, Pascal Donohoe identified the main challenge of contemporary politics as 'holding the centre'. Donohoe was entitled to speak on behalf of the political centre since he was following a centrist course set by his three predecessors in the two Finance Departments—Brian Lenihan of *Fianna Fail*, Michael Noonan of *Fine Gael* and Brendan Howlin of *Labour*. In their own ways each of these Ministers made important contributions to the conservative task of effecting the State's survival following the calamitous developments of 2008 and following years.

However, the long term implications of the events of 2008 in the US and Europe as well as Ireland, are that what constitutes an appropriate policy stance of the political centre must shift to the left. Pascal Donohoe and his colleagues must now choose between policies relevant to the new situation or forsake the centre by holding to the Thatcherite position that all economic policies must be 'market-based'.

HOUSING STRATEGY

A commentator with his finger close to the pulse regarding the housing crisis is the former business editor of the *Irish Times*, John McManus. In a recent piece (13 October) McManus examined the prospectus of a property development company that has just launched on the Irish stock exchange, *Glenveigh Properties Limited*. As part of its legal obligations *Glenveigh* is required to list potential risks, including political risks, that the company might possibly face, risks that would push down house prices. The possibility that an Irish Government might intervene significantly in the market is not mentioned. McManus rightly deduces that builders/developers are assuming that the Irish State can be relied on to refrain from intervening meaningfully in the market, despite such intervention being "an avowed policy of every political party".

Builders, developers, banks and

Government—the parties that caused the Crash, although different personnel and more foreign vulture funds are now in charge—have a vested interest in high house prices and high rents. Since much development land was bought from NAMA by US-based funds, the market can be controlled by land hoarding on the part of these funds; the biggest driver of house prices has been identified as *"site cost inflation"*. This Government and its predecessor have tinkered with the housing market with reforms like the *Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund* and the *First Time Buyers-Help to Buy* schemes; the former failed to bring down prices of a percentage of new houses that were supposed to be 'affordable' to anything like an affordable rate and the latter added to house price inflation.

Currently there are numerous inflationary forces at work in the Irish property market: the quantitative easing of the European Central Bank pushing investors into property; the hoarding of development land; the shortage of skilled labour; and the flood of money for property development coming from companies like Glenveigh and Cairn, but also in the future from *Home Building Finance Ireland*, a €750 million Government fund announced in the Budget speech.

The only credible answer to this inflation, which is the driving force behind the housing crisis, is a major public housing programme, what John McManus calls Government intervention *"on a scale big enough to affect prices"*.

Support for such a programme is by no means confined to the political left and Sinn Féin; arguably, it is shared by Fianna Fáil and most of the Independents in the Dáil, it is also shared by moderate commentators like McManus and even by property developers with experience of the Irish market, like Noel Smyth of Fitzwilliam Real Estate Capital (see Irish Times, 30 April 2016).

In the Budget Pascal Donohoe announced an increased allocation of €1.8bn for housing in 2018 which he said would help to fund the building of 3,800 new social homes. He also raised Stamp Duty on commercial property sales transactions from 2 per cent to 6 per cent, a measure that Finance officials claim will *"disincentivise investment in commercial property and free construction resources to build homes"*.

These measures are welcome but they are not commensurate with the scale of the problem they seek to address. Donohoe has chosen the right-wing option of allow-

ing the fate of homeless families to be decided, for the most part, by market forces that are clearly dysfunctional.

HEALTH REFORM

An important and under-reported side development in this year's Budget was that the Minister for Finance chose to ignore the *Slaintecare* report produced by an Oireachtas Committee on health reform. This report reflects a hard won cross party consensus that health reform should be centred on separating public and private health resources and shifting usage from expensive hospital care to more cost effective community care. An increased allocation of €685 million was announced in the Budget, causing the total public spend on health for next year to increase to €15.3bn, but the plan agreed by the Parliamentary Committee failed to receive even a passing mention. The politician who chaired the Committee and who is most closely associated with it, Roisín Shorthall of the Social Democrats, described the Budget as follows:

"It is particularly disappointing that the Minister for Finance did not mention *Slaintecare* in his Budget speech. Health Minister Simon Harris should now spell out the government's future commitment to *Slaintecare*, even though this will have to be over a longer time scale given the failure to fully provide for the plan in this year's Budget."

Deputy Shorthall stated that the €120 million per year commitment to capital expenditure on health expenditure (spending on the construction of health buildings) was not enough to fund a meaningful switch from hospitals to community care. This would require expenditure of €500 million per year on building new health centres. The snub to the *Slaintecare* report indicates that the long-standing failure of Irish Governments to sort out health is more a matter of ideology than scarce resources; that the report was not mentioned testifies to the sway held by the private health care lobby over the present Government.

THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Another lobby group known to hold clout in the political world is the car lobby. Following the Budget environmental groups expressed disappointment that it contained no incentives against the usage of diesel or the purchase of diesel cars. During the tenure of the Fianna Fáil/Green Coalition the Irish State agreed with the European Commission various targets for reducing its carbon footprint. If these targets are not met the Government will need to purchase credits in relation to the shortfall; Ireland is considered to be among

the four worst EU states in complying with its targets and the likelihood is that credits costing over €300 million will need to be paid in 2020. Further penalties will apply in 2030.

In addition to causing carbon emissions diesel is now known to generate air pollution with various health ill effects including lung cancer. The problem is most acute in cities that have tall buildings and in 2016 Paris, Madrid, Mexico and Athens committed to curbs on diesel use leading to a total ban on diesel cars in 2025; many London Councils have imposed an additional parking cost for diesel cars. In the year to January 2017, 65 per cent of cars sold in Ireland were diesel so there is an obvious need to entice motorists towards hybrids that use petrol or to electric cars. According to *Irish Times* motoring correspondent Neil Briscoe (22 February 2017) Finance officials are said to be *"running scared of the idea"* of a carbon tax on diesel because in 2008 the introduction of new motor and vehicle registration taxes left a high number of car owners and car dealers with cars that were unsellable. Whatever about that, and no doubt devising new taxes can present a technical challenge, the Government still showed a failure of leadership by neglecting to raise diesel taxes in the Budget.

On behalf of the State, especially given the experience of the Crash, the Government needs to fashion a new way of asserting its authority over sectional interests like property developers, the providers of private health care and the car lobby, not to mention the banks. That the spirit of the age, the *'zeitgeist'*, requires a leftward shift on the part of parties like Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and the Labour Party, as well as relevant policy initiatives from Sinn Féin and the Left, does not mean that the market system needs to be overthrown. On the contrary, following the experience of continuing failures in housing and health the relationship between the State and market forces needs to be re-balanced in a manner that secures Ireland's mixed economy. That has become the only possible way forward for centre politics.

The framers of Budget 2018, oblivious to any need for new thinking, have provided a holding operation. The real problem is not that the arithmetic of the current Dáil makes effective government impossible; rather it is that Fine Gael aided by a State machine weaned on neo-liberalism can't shake off its habitual subservience to the private sector.

Dave Alvey

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BERNARD O'DONOGHUE

Every Summer, the term "going west" has huge resonance for sailors of every hue and none. Our usual pit stop is Lawrence Cove, a lovely marina in Bere Island, a ferry journey across from Castletownbere. Once the boat is tied up, salutations made to all the locals and those on other boats—really our Summer has started in earnest. The weather has little to do with it—if we are blessed with fine weather we'll take it—but never ever expect it and *that* we find is the recipe for a perfect Summer. And of course there are the books, loads of them and sometimes the one you least expect becomes the out and out favourite. In my case it was the book of poetry written by Bernard O'Donoghue called *'The Seasons of Cullen Church'* and right there in that title with its connection to the hinterland of my childhood, I immediately felt that indescribable pull and, having settled comfortably, began my reading. The book was published in 2016 by Faber & Faber, London and I came to it without having read any reviews.

This is Bernard's first collection since 2011 when he brought out *'Farmers Cross'*, a reference to the area where Cork Airport was built. But the poem of the same name evokes a much more dreadful event and that was the sudden death of his father at a Cork/Kerry football match. The farm at Cullen was sold later in 1965 by his Manchester-born mother and as he says in the poem:

"... So she flew out for good and back to England,
from the new Airport near Cork, where the lights
fought a losing battle with the fog
at Farmers Cross....."

In the new collection, there is also a tribute to his mother called *'Evacuee'*, and underneath he has written "my Manchester mother":

"Raincoats unbelted, socks up to their knees,
in films of the first weeks of the War,
boys and girls of eight or ten march bravely
to their placements in the countryside,
escaping bombs expected in the city."

But the poem that resonates most for me—that call from home, that call from

the precious well-lived past, that call from dead parents, that call from dead relatives and dead neighbours—that call that enters our soul and never leaves it till our dying breath is in:

'You know the Way'

"You know the way how, crossing Central Park,
Trying to get to the West Side from the east
or to the East Side museums from the west,
you stray off line –

I'll start again. You know the way how,
driving into Millstreet, you must decide
at the top of Lislehane whether to go
west to Ballydaly or east by Coalpits –

I'll start one last time: you know the way
how, when you get the Oxford Tube, you
must decide whether to get off at Notting
Hill
or stay on till Marble Arch or Victoria –

well, that is how it is at this stage of things:
no right or wrong way, not much turning
on which you choose, or how far the decision
will take you from the straight and narrow."

The heartbreak implicit in this poem is the nearness of death and how limited our choices becomes as we near the end. The poet says truly that "not much turning on which you choose" also indicates the universal truth that, whatever our life choices—those that we have or have not made leads us ultimately to death.

In the eponymous poem: *'The Seasons of Cullen Church'*—underneath the title—there is a terribly disquieting quotation from Emily Bronte, *'Wuthering Heights'*:

"I wondered how anyone could ever imagine
unquiet
slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."

The poem begins:

"Angels on permanent watch: the first holding
the white font inside the door, eyes down
so as not to embarrass you as you dipped
a reverent finger, catching no one's eye.
Two marking the high altar's borders.

August mornings and the cycle past the
field-dew –
Drop down dew, ye Heavens, from above—
on the way to serve Mass
for the visiting priests: natives returned
from California, Manchester or the Far East.

The dark week before Easter when you
practised
for the devotions—*Was ever grieflike mine?*—
when the bell had lost its tongue and they
struck
together flat wooden clappers, not to betray
the least trace of jubilation.

Benediction, and the small hot tablet
**onto which the priest spooned out
the tea-like incense, then to swing
the thurible and throw onto the air
the rich smell of death and consolation.**

**Snow at New Year: walking down to Mass
for the Feast of the Circumcision;
Now dismiss me, Lord! Had we, like Simeon,
lived long enough? But that night
the sky over the graveyard frosted with
stars."**

(Stress by Bernard)

"*The Feast of the Circumcision*" after the Second Vatican Council was renamed: "*The Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God and the Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord*" but it is quite common to hear elderly country people still refer to it as Bernard did.

I looked up the review of *'The Seasons of Cullen Church'* in *The Irish Times* by one (?) John McAuliffe (his biography at the end of the review stated that his fourth book *'The Way In'* by Gallery was joint winner of the 2016 Michael Hartnett Award). He had twinned his review with another poet Martina Evans *'The Windows of Graceland: New and Selected Poems'* (Carcenet £12.99). The heading was: "*Poetry: The sorrows of Cullen and the joy of children gone wild*". Obviously the "sorrows" were those of "Cullen" and the "joy of children" referred to Evans who is "long resident in London, and as articulate on the Brexit fiasco as on the long reverberations of the Rising". McAuliffe warns us from the beginning that Bernard's collection is "no second home" pastoral.

"O'Donoghue is unrelentingly tough and worldly... and has no illusions about its" (Cullen's) "cruelties or how its inhabitants make one suffer".

The human condition is as much in Cullen as anywhere else but, by God, *The Irish Times* makes sure that that kind of thing is noticed above all else and the poet's quiet and mostly gentle recollections are kicked to touch. "*The nicest man in Oxford*", a fact attested to again and again by both academics and students, is neither here nor there for *'The Irish Times'*. And one took away a real sense that the reviewer barely read the poems, except those that reflected his own and the paper's bias.

There is a poem titled: *'And Spoil the Child'*. Can there be anyone living from those years who could not quote the prequel to that mantra? *'Spare the rod'*—well it was never spared. When our Master told all three classes, that he was teaching in the one room, that we had to get up from

our desks and stand around the wall—we knew what was coming. He then got out several sally rods and proceeded to try them out for their flexibility—I was shivering at this stage. To this day, the very phrase *'Mental Arithmetic'* freezes my mind and body to that school room near the cross-roads to Ballydaly.

I never bothered calculating how many dozen eggs cost per dozen because as the sally-rod got nearer and the cries of *some* got closer—the only calculation I was capable of was how many slaps I was going to get and how mad was the master. As usual failure to answer drew my hand out because—if one was slow to the draw—our other hand was alighted upon with another three slaps.

The heroes were the ones who never cried. My older sister was one of those—sometimes the blisters on her hand testified to the Master's rage because he knew he'd never hear her whimpers or see her tears as there were never any. I—on the other hand—could be heard over in Millstreet—even now *that* is the most mortifying part—that I could fight with the best of the lads at the cross-roads for Dev but the Master's rod could render me red-faced with tears and splutters.

Isn't it strange that what shames us as children still holds us firmly in adulthood and onto old age? And I fondly think of my old Master and how he coped with such a huge amount of children in the one room?

Bernard—being brilliant—never got beaten. But he still sees:

"An upright man—a man I learned things from, a man I even in many ways, admired—swung a stick high in the air, to bring it down after one or two preparatory swishes and a light upward clip on the fingertips of the right hand supported at the wrist of Barty, a hopeless speller—with such force and rage that the boy's bare feet danced a tattoo and jiggled on the floor as if he stood on the burning pavement of Hell's judgement."

In *'The Oxford Culture Review'* there is a brilliant piece written by Theophilus Kwek. While the latter acknowledges the importance of this volume (it was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize which it should have won hands down but it was instead bestowed on Jacob Polley for *'Jackself'*—a piece of post-modern puffery in my opinion) Kwek begins his review telling us how, as a young under-

grad in 2013, he sneaked into a series of lectures being given by Bernard O'Donoghue on Séamus Heaney and revelled in the lecturer's brilliance on analysing—

"Heaney's interlinked worlds—many of which, of course are also his. Three years later, after a talk by Julian Barnes at the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing I met him again as we were both leaving the theatre.

"I remember you', he said, smiling, 'and ah, you're a poet now'."

Kwek notices—

"one departure from O'Donoghue's earlier collections—though not his wider oeuvre—is the appearance of many verse translations from both classical and Middle English texts including a retelling of sections from the Aeneid V and IX in memory of Mick Imlah. Perhaps partly in homage to Heaney whose own Aeneid VI was published posthumously this year and was reviewed by O'Donoghue in both *The Irish Times* and *Poetry Review*..."

Virgil, Pindar, Ovid, Dante, the Gawain poet and Piers Plowman all make their appearance here in this work and show the brilliance of the poet's scholarship. In fact, Bernard is now working on "his current project, a translation of *Piers Plowman*".

I wish him God's speed.

Julianne Herlihy ©

Balfour Declaration

continued

millions of Jews were exterminated, it required a global catastrophe to bring about such a dramatic event. That global catastrophe came about as a result of Britain's Great War on Germany and the Ottoman State. Without the Balfour Declaration and Britain's promise of a homeland in Palestine for the Jews, the Zionist movement would have remained a thing of sentiment.

The Round Table, a Liberal Imperialist periodical of the Lord Milner Kindergarten /Chatham House/Royal Institute of International Affairs, movers and shakers of the Empire, explained the background to the British adoption of the Zionist project in its edition of March 1918 and showed how it was facilitated:

"There was... a Zionist movement that... had the... objective of establishing a national state. But the Jewish nationalists did not have the power to realise it themselves in the region. Though... the British Government... had made the

Zionist Movement an offer (which proved abortive) of a territory in East Africa as the home of a Jewish settlement with some measure of autonomy, Zionism was not, and had no apparent prospect of becoming, a factor to be reckoned with in international politics.

"Now, almost suddenly, all that is changed. Thanks to the breadth and sincerity of British statesmanship, to the inherent justice of its own aims, and to the ability with which those aims have been presented, Zionism has received the official approval of the British Government—an approval which, in the circumstances in which it was given, makes the realisation of the objects of Zionism one of the avowed war-aims of the Allied Powers. The way in which the Government's declaration of support has been received shows that substantially it speaks the mind of the whole British nation, and indeed of the whole Commonwealth..."

"The potential value of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine—its value as an indication of what the Jews, and they alone, can make of Palestine—is enhanced by the fact that it has been carried out hitherto in spite of difficulties created not only by the absence of any State organisation behind it, but by the shortcomings of Turkish government. It must indeed be said, in fairness to the Turk, that from the Jewish national point of view his rule has had its good as well as its bad side.

"Talaat Pasha, in a recent interview, made much of the fact that anti-Semitism was unknown in Turkey, and that the Jewish colonies in Palestine had been allowed freedom in local administration and in the use of the Hebrew language for educational and general purposes. He had a right to take credit for this tolerance, which, if it resulted rather from passivity than from active goodwill on the side of the rulers, was none the less of great value to the ruled. It may well be that if during the last thirty years Palestine had been in the hands of an efficient and centralised government, Jewish colonisation might have progressed more rapidly on the material side, though the settlers might have been much less easily able to learn the rudiments of self-government and to retain and strengthen their specific national consciousness. But there is a heavy account on the debit side. Not only has Jewish colonisation been hampered by burdensome taxes, restrictions on the sale of land, and the neglect of the Government to provide those material facilities without which a country cannot be developed on modern lines; but the absence of security has kept out of the country much Jewish energy and capital which would otherwise have flowed into it, to the benefit both of the Jewish national movement, of Palestine, and of Turkey as the overlord of Palestine..."

"It is clear, therefore, that Zionism imperatively needs a substantial change—

whether or not accompanied by a formal change—in the political position of Palestine if the work of a generation is not to be practically wasted, and if the Jewish people is not to be doomed once more to fall back on hopes and prayers."

The Balfour Declaration proclaimed to the world that British authority would bring great improvements to the territory on behalf of its existing inhabitants as well as the new colonists. Let history judge that.

The Balfour Declaration was what *The Irish News* called "an immense and revolutionary experiment in Palestine" (7.9.21). Britain was inaugurating an unprecedented innovation in the region that would alter its fundamental social character.

The Ottomans had for centuries provided stable and functional political structures for the Jews which enabled them to live in relative peace and security with their Arab neighbours, sharing the territory. But the Balfour Declaration brought progress to the region in an unprecedented and great revolutionary act of the rulers of the world.

Two things are necessary for a state—a territory and a population. Zionism had neither of these things that were needed to produce a Jewish state in Palestine. The Jews constituted less than 10 per cent of the population of Palestine (60,000 of 700,000 inhabitants) in 1917. Only a minority of these Jews were Zionists. And only British power could provide the territory.

Zionism could not have achieved its objective without British political and military sponsorship. Zionism was a minority political movement within Jewry and many powerful Jews were thoroughly opposed to it on the basis that it went hand in hand with Anti-Semitism. It was believed that it helped foster Anti-Semitism by encouraging the view that the real home of the Jews was elsewhere. And it was noticed that many Anti-Semites were supportive of Zionist objectives and Zionists were willing to work with these people to gain their objective. Assimilationist Jews, particularly in England, who were the majority interest in Jewry at the time, were startled by the implications of the Zionist movement.

In Palestine itself a Jewish state was highly improbable outside of a cataclysm. The Jews numbered only about 10 per cent of the populace in the Ottoman

province of Palestine. They occupied a minuscule amount of land. There was less basis for a Zion in Palestine than there was for an Armenian state. And a National Home the size of Wales was never going to absorb the 12 million Jews worldwide without ethnically cleansing the native population or expanding its borders.

The Jews were an important community of the Ottoman State, along with the Greeks and Armenians. They lived in many urban areas like Istanbul and Baghdad and constituted not only a bourgeoisie for the Empire but a proletariat in some places. The great Jewish city of the Ottoman Empire had been Salonika. Despite being free to settle in Palestine over the centuries, the Jews had avoided it as a wilderness.

The Zionist objective seemed a pipe dream before 1917 and the Balfour Declaration. But then Zionism was employed by Britain to win its Great War. Why?

"The Central Powers, with startling rapidity, had crushed and overrun Belgium, Serbia, and Roumania, and a large slice of France was in the grip of the invader. It was a case of stalemate with Italy, while Russia, the Colossus with the feet of clay, was in the throes of a Revolution and lost to the Allies.

"Turkey, the so-called 'sick man of Europe', was found not only able to 'sit up and take nourishment', but strong enough to administer some nasty knocks to the surgeon, as we discovered to our cost in Gallipoli, and other places in the Near East.

"The Great Republic of the West did indeed throw-in her lot with us in April, 1917, but many perilous months would have to elapse before she could pull her full weight, or even make her enormous power felt to any appreciable extent on the battlefields of Europe.

"At such a moment as this it was of the very greatest importance that the world should be carefully scanned and every available ideal and policy made use which could be of advantage to our righteous cause.

"The happy inspiration hereupon seized upon our Ministers to win over to the side of the Allies the teeming millions of the Children of Israel scattered through-out the world" (Lieut. Col. J.H. Patterson DSO: *With The Judeans In The Palestine Campaign*, pp.4-5)

Despite mobilising all the resources of Empire and making alliances with France and Russia, Britain failed to defeat Germany in a couple of years of war. It needed the US as an ally to finish what it had started. However, the US had substantial groups which blocked American

involvement.

The Jews had little sympathy for Russia after the Black Hundreds, Pogroms and ghettos. At the same time Germany, Austria and Ottoman Turkey had offered them refuge. As a Chatham House publication later put it:

"In particular, in 1917, it was desirable to check the pro-German activities of the Russian Jews, who were already believed to have done so much to *bring about the disintegration of Tsarist power*" (G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, *A Short History of International Affairs*, p.120).

Britain issued the Balfour Declaration as a means of winning its Great War. The long-term effect of it on the region and the world was a very secondary consideration.

The Balfour Declaration promised a people a homeland in a territory Britain had no historic right to, did not occupy, and which it had already promised to others, at least by strong implication, to lure into war.

Zionists switched sides and Zionism received a massive boost by becoming a client of the most powerful State in the world. In England it was believed that the support of Jewry tipped the scales for Britain in America and the US participation in the War tipped the military scales in Europe against Germany.

Britain stoked up Arab nationalism to gain an insurrection/Jihad against the Ottomans on the basis of a promise that the provinces of Syria/Palestine and Mesopotamia would form an independent Arab state in the post-War settlement.

In late 1916/early 1917 the outlook for the Allied Powers was particularly bleak. England, the mainstay in the great struggle, was in deadly peril, for, just about this time, the submarine campaign was at its height and Britain's shipping losses were appalling.

The character of the new War Cabinet in Britain headed by Lloyd George was an important factor in the making of the Balfour Declaration. In late 1916 an internal Liberal *coup* helped replace the Coalition that itself had replaced the Liberal Government that declared the War on Germany and the Ottomans.

What was established was a dictatorship geared to winning the War that Britain and her allies was failing to win. Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary, called it a "civil dictatorship"—distinguishing it from a purely military dictatorship. It was

much smaller than the normal British Cabinet with only 5 members and it could make decisions with little scrutiny of its doings.

Parliament had ceased to hold the Government to account and the media, which had become the only scrutineer of government, supported the new development wholeheartedly. Real revolutionary work in the world became a possibility.

The new Cabinet contained strong Zionists. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, had a close relationship with Chaim Weizmann, who had supplied him with expertise in explosive manufacture. Lloyd George had made this aspect a popular issue in manoeuvring against Asquith with the Unionists he needed the support of to attain the position of Prime Minister. So Lloyd George was in debt to the Zionists and the Zionists needed Lloyd George.

The new Prime Minister, although a ruthless opportunist, had a sentimentality toward the Jews from his Bible School days. However, Asquith recorded in his *Memoirs* that Lloyd George "*did not give a damn about the past of the Jews, or their future*". He was known to hold Anti-Semitic views and incessantly worried about "*the power of the Jew*" to influence the course of the War that his career depended upon to win.

He was also determined to prevent the French getting Palestine and win the Peace so he saw their great use in this pursuit.

There was also Lord Milner who had little time for democracy and wanted to do what was necessary to win the War. Milner, a vigorous expansionist Imperialist, was interested in employing a Jewish colony to expand the British Empire in the area.

Arthur Balfour, a Zionist of long standing, was moved from the Admiralty to the Foreign Office, replacing Edward Grey. His assistant was Lord Robert Cecil, Balfour's cousin and another ardent Zionist.

At the first meeting of the new War Cabinet in March 1917 Balfour suddenly exclaimed: "*I am a Zionist, but I do not know whether anybody else is.*" Milner answered: "*It is impossible to go into that now.*" From that point on work went on behind closed doors with regard to reconciling British Imperial aims with Zionism. It proceeded with winks and nods.

To support it the War Cabinet had a strong Secretariat headed by Maurice Hankey. His Assistant Secretaries were Mark Sykes and Leopold Amery. All these

men were supporters of a Jewish Palestine project.

Edwin Montague, the strongly anti-Zionist Jew, was supposed to have had Sykes's position but he was vetoed, presumably through a word in Lloyd George's ear.

Samuel Landman, an English Zionist, later published an intimate and knowing account of how the Balfour Declaration was accomplished behind the scenes, away from the gaze of the democracy, by two small and unrepresentative groups of people—the British Zionists and the Lloyd George War Cabinet. "*Those who assisted at the birth of the Balfour Declaration were few in number*" records the participant in this world-historic affair. His account is worth drawing attention to:

"As the Balfour Declaration originated in the War Office, was consummated in the Foreign Office and is being implemented in the Colonial Office, and as some of those responsible for it have passed away or have retired since its migrations from Department to Department, there is necessarily some confusion or misunderstanding as to its raison d'être and importance to the parties primarily concerned. It would, therefore, seem opportune to recapitulate briefly the circumstances, the inner history and incidents that eventually led to the British Mandate for Palestine.

"Those who assisted at the birth of the Balfour Declaration were few in number. This makes it important to bring into proper relief the services of one who, owing above all to his modesty, has hitherto remained in the background. His services however should take their proper place in the front rank alongside of those Englishmen of vision whose services are more widely known, including the late Sir Mark Sykes, the Rt. Hon. W. Ormsby Gore, the Rt. Hon. Sir Ronald Graham, General Sir George Macdonagh and Mr. G.H. Fitzmaurice.

"In the early years of the War great efforts were made by the Zionist Leaders, Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Sokolow, chiefly through the late Mr. C.P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian, and Sir Herbert Samuel, to induce the Cabinet to espouse the cause of Zionism.

"These efforts were, however, without avail. In fact, Sir Herbert Samuel has publicly stated that he had no share in the initiation of the negotiations which led to the Balfour Declaration. (England and Palestine, a lecture delivered by Sir Herbert Samuel and published by the Jewish Historical Society, February 1936.) The actual initiator was Mr. James A. Malcolm and the following is a brief account of the circumstances in which the negotiations took place.

"During the critical days of 1916 and of the impending defection of Russia,

Jewry, as a whole, was against the Czarist regime and had hopes that Germany, if victorious, would in certain circumstances give them Palestine. Several attempts to bring America into the War on the side of the Allies by influencing influential Jewish opinion were made and had failed. Mr. James A. Malcolm, who was already aware of German pre-war efforts to secure a foothold in Palestine through the Zionist Jews and of the abortive Anglo-French démarches at Washington and New York; and knew that Mr. Woodrow Wilson, for good and sufficient reasons, always attached the greatest possible importance to the advice of a very prominent Zionist (Mr. Justice Brandeis, of the US Supreme Court); and was in close touch with Mr. Greenberg, Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* (London); and knew that several important Zionist Jewish leaders had already gravitated to London from the Continent on the qui vive awaiting events; and appreciated and realised the depth and strength of Jewish national aspirations; spontaneously took the initiative, to convince first of all Sir Mark Sykes, Under-Secretary to the War Cabinet, and afterwards M. Georges Picot, of the French Embassy in London, and M. Goût of the *Quai d'Orsay* (Eastern Section), that the best and perhaps the only way (which proved so to be) to induce the American President to come into the War was to secure the co-operation of Zionist Jews by promising them Palestine, and thus enlist and mobilise the hitherto unsuspectedly powerful forces of Zionist Jews in America and elsewhere in favour of the Allies on a *quid pro quo* contract basis. Thus, as will be seen, the Zionists, having carried out their part, and greatly helped to bring America in, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was but the public confirmation of the necessarily secret 'gentleman's' agreement of 1916 made with the previous knowledge, acquiescence and/or approval of the Arabs and of the British, American, French and other Allied Governments, and not merely a voluntary altruistic and romantic gesture on the part of Great Britain as certain people either through pardonable ignorance assume or unpardonable ill-will would represent or misrepresent.

"Sir Mark Sykes was Under-Secretary to the War Cabinet specially concerned with Near Eastern affairs, and, although at the time scarcely acquainted with the Zionist movement, and unaware of the existence of its leaders, he had the flair to respond to the arguments advanced by Mr. Malcolm as to the strength and importance of this movement in Jewry, in spite of the fact that many wealthy and prominent international or semi-assimilated Jews in Europe and America were openly or tacitly opposed to it (Zionist movement) or timidly indifferent. MM. Picot and Goût were likewise receptive.

"An interesting account of the

negotiations carried on in London and Paris, and subsequent developments, has already appeared in the Jewish press and need not be repeated here in detail, except to recall that immediately after the 'gentleman's' agreement between Sir Mark Sykes, authorised by the War Cabinet, and the Zionist leaders, cable facilities through the War Office, the Foreign Office and British Embassies, Legations, etc., were given to the latter to communicate the glad tidings to their friends and organisations in America and elsewhere, and the change in official and public opinion as reflected in the American press in favour of joining the Allies in the War, was as gratifying as it was surprisingly rapid.

"The Balfour Declaration, in the words of Prof. H.M.V. Temperley, was a 'definite contract between the British Government and Jewry' (History of the Peace Conference in Paris, vol. 6, p. 173). The main consideration given by the Jewish people (represented at the time by the leaders of the Zionist Organisation) was their help in bringing President Wilson to the aid of the Allies. Moreover, officially interpreted at the time by Lord Robert Cecil as 'Judea for the Jews' in the same sense as 'Arabia for the Arabs,' the Declaration sent a thrill throughout the world. The prior Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, according to which Northern Palestine was to be politically detached and included in Syria (French sphere), was subsequently, at the instance of the Zionist leaders, amended (by the Franco-British Convention of December 1920, Cmd. 1195) so that the Jewish National Home should comprise the whole of Palestine in accordance with the promise previously made to them for their services by the British, Allied and American Governments, and to give full effect to the Balfour Declaration, the terms of which had been settled and known to all Allied and associated belligerents, including Arabs, before they were made public.

"In Germany, the value of the bargain to the Allies, apparently, was duly and carefully noted. In his *Through Thirty Years* Mr. Wickham Steed, in a chapter appreciative of the value of Zionist support in America and elsewhere to the Allied cause, says General Ludendorff is alleged to have said after the War that: *'The Balfour Declaration was the cleverest thing done by the Allies in the way of propaganda, and that he wished Germany had thought of it first'* (vol. 2, p. 392). As a matter of fact, this was said by Ludendorff to Sir Alfred Mond (afterwards Lord Melchett), soon after the War. The fact that it was Jewish help that brought the USA into the War on the side of the Allies has rankled ever since in German—especially Nazi—minds, and has contributed in no small measure to the prominence which *anti-Semitism occupies in the Nazi programme*" (Samuel Landman, *Great Britain, The Jews and Palestine*, pp. 3-6).

Only a Zionist could get away with saying that the Balfour Declaration had something to do with the rise of the Nazis in Germany!

"The defeat of Germany was not by the arms of the Allies. It was not owing to those who conducted the War, but to the actions and intrigue of International Jews and German revolutionaries, incited and aided by outside influences and propaganda born in the United States and in England, which were brought to bear on the German Nation... and... bent on destroying the house of Hohenzollern, ultimately succeeded in stabbing their Nation's national honour, in the back."

Standard "*stab in the back*" Nazi propaganda? Actually no. This is from a British source *from 1924* (E.J. Jellicoe, *Playing the Game, The Origin of the Great War Unmasked*, pp. 270-71). It seems there was also a parallel British understanding of events similar to Hitler's.

Just before the Declaration, Montague issued a Memorandum to the Cabinet called *'The Anti-Semitism of the Present Government'* which argued that establishing a place for the Jews in Palestine would greatly increase hostility to them in England and elsewhere. As such it was fundamentally an Anti-Semitic programme. He wrote in his diary a week after the issuing of the Declaration that "*The Government... have endeavoured to set up a people which does not exist; they have alarmed unnecessarily the Mohammedan world...*" (11.11.17).

In May 1917 the Foreign Secretary, Balfour, met with Supreme Court Justice Brandeis in America. His meetings were aimed at securing US support for a British annexation of Palestine. President Wilson had proclaimed himself against all annexations and secret treaties, so the Zionist project proved a handy device to make a special case for British expansion in the area. Just as Zionism was used to cheat the French of Palestine, it was employed to sweeten the Americans with regard to British Imperial expansion and colonialism.

At this point the Zionists, as well as wishing to secure a public commitment from the British Government for the Zionist project, had two other aims. Firstly, they wished to prevent a separate peace being made with Turkey in 1917 that might leave the Ottoman Empire largely intact. Secondly, they wished to prevent the French from having any authority in Palestine. This was because the Zionists believed that France would not be

thoroughgoing in the full implementation of Zion. As James de Rothschild remarked: "*She carried her civilisation everywhere and would make the development of a Jewish type impossible*" (C.P. Scott diaries 27 January 1917).

It was Britain and British Imperial power which Zionism banked on to provide a blank slate for a year zero in Palestine. The Anglo-Saxon was "*the great extirpating race*" of the world (in Charles Dilke's phrase) and was needed specifically for the long-term success of the Zionist entity in clearing out the actual inhabitants of the territory it had been gifted.

This is the document that started the process:

"THE BALFOUR DECLARATION.
"FOREIGN OFFICE,
"2nd November, 1917.
"LORD ROTHSCHILD,

"I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet:

'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'

"I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

"Yours sincerely,

"(Signed)
ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR."

Pat Walsh

Available from **Athol Books:**

**The Balfour Declaration:
Why Did they Do It?**

by Pat Walsh. 20pp A4 £7, £5

**Serfdom Or Ethnic Cleansing?
A British Discussion On Palestine.**

Churchill's *'Dog in the Manger'*
Evidence to the Peel Commission
(1937). Intro: Angela Clifford.
48pp.. £6, £5

Britain, Zionism And The Holocaust
by John Smith. 32pp. Index. £6, £5

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A Correspondence

The following is a correspondence between the Aubane Historical Society and *The Sunday Independent* arising from in Eoghan Harris's weekly column on 17th September 2017 when he wrote that:

"At the West Cork History Festival, as local Protestants assembled to watch a screening of *An Tost Fada*, members of the Aubane Historical Society handed out flyers condemning the documentary as "gravely incompetent history as propaganda".

Free speech, you might say - but also a reminder to rural west Cork Protestants that even the testimony of a Church of Ireland Canon would not be accepted as proof of past suffering."

LETTER TO EDITOR

A RESPONSE TO EOGHAN HARRIS

Eoghan Harris criticised our historical society last week (17th September). He reported also that "facts are not fixed".

Mr Harris promotes one interpretation of the War of Independence, facts notwithstanding. The late Peter Hart wrote in 1998 that the killing of ten West Cork Protestant men in the interregnum between Anglo Irish 'Treaty' split and 'Civil War', in April 1922, formed part of an IRA war against Protestants.

Evidence suggests that he (and Eoghan Harris, following) were mistaken.

In late April 1922 a "largely attended meeting" of "members of different Protestant churches in the parish of Schull [West Cork] condemn[ed] the atrocious crimes recently committed in the North of Ireland ... [as] acts of violence committed against our Roman Catholic fellow countrymen. Living as a small minority in the South, we wish to place on record the fact that... we have never been subjected to any oppression or injustice as a result of different religious beliefs".

Schull's was one of many such declarations in southern Ireland. The representative Protestant Convention openly declared two weeks later, "hostility to Protestants by virtue of their religion has been almost, if not wholly unknown in the Twenty Six Counties ...".

The exception noted was the 'April killings' (or 'Bandon Valley massacre'), mentioned above. A debate is on-going about that series of exceptional, apparently unsanctioned though clearly targeted, killings, which occurred after three senior British intelligence officers and their driver were arrested and executed in nearby Macroom.

Eoghan Harris suggested that it 'smear[s]' the victims, if their having played a role on the side of British forces in the preceding (and possibly resuming) conflict is considered. It is not clear why Mr Harris (of all people) thinks evidence pointing in that direction is a smear.

When historical inquiry takes pre-determined pathways, it is propaganda. Mr Harris's alternative facts serve his

'truth'. That was the case in the RTÉ documentary he scripted, *An Tost Fada*. We called it incompetent propaganda at the recent West Cork History Festival.

Why?

The fact is that the programme made assertions that available evidence contradicted, as RTÉ conceded. So sure was Mr Harris of his 'truth' that he announced the wrong date of death of IRA victims by a factor of 14 months, photographed the wrong grave, announced a compensation payment six years before it was applied for, got the amount wrong, and failed to consult the testimony of the alleged victim William Salter.

It is tiresome to repeat that the Aubane Society has no quarrel whatever with the programme's subject, Canon George Salter, who was born three years later in 1925. The argument is with those who fix facts to suit their purpose.

If the IRA was anti-Protestant, West Cork's Sam Maguire, whose image overshadowed Mr Harris's article, and other Protestants, would not have been in it. I fear that the facts, like those Protestants and historians who submit to them, will always be a disappointment to Mr Harris.

Jack Lane,

Aubane Historical Society
18.9.2017

SECOND LETTER TO EDITOR

A RESPONSE TO EOGHAN HARRIS

- NOT PUBLISHED

I am disappointed that you did not publish our response (below) to the comments of Eoghan Harris in his article on 17th September where he said:

"At the West Cork History Festival, as local Protestants assembled to watch a screening of *An Tost Fada*, members of the Aubane Historical Society handed out flyers condemning the documentary as "gravely incompetent history as propaganda." Free speech, you might say --- but also a reminder to rural west Cork Protestants that even the testimony of a Church of Ireland Canon would not be accepted as proof of past suffering."

We responded in order to explain why exactly we believe the film to be "gravely incompetent history as propaganda."

Also, we pointed out the views of representative Protestants at the time about the absence of sectarianism in their relationships with their Catholic neighbours which contradict Mr. Harris's oft stated claims to the contrary. We believe that this contemporary evidence from such sources is more reliable and trustworthy than the assertions of Mr. Harris almost a century afterwards.

I hope that in the interests of fair play and our right of reply you will reconsider your decision and publish our letter.

Jack Lane
24.9.2017

Third LETTER TO EDITOR

You have not published or acknowledged the letter I sent you regarding Eoghan Harris's references to the Aubane Historical Society. Can you confirm that you received it and the follow-up letter. They are below....

Jack Lane
12.10.2017

AN EDITORIAL RESPONSE

Dear Mr Lane,

Your letters arrived while I was on my annual leave and my stand-in decided not to publish your contribution as we have had a lot of correspondence on this matter.

I don't want to reopen this debate on either side at this time.

However I would gladly look again at the issue at another time.

Yours sincerely,
Campbell Spray
Executive Editor - Operations
Sunday Independent
12 October 2017

FOURTH LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Campbell Spray,

Thank you for replying.

I think you will find that most of the correspondence you published was in support of your columnist, Mr. Harris (who relies on a small, but devoted, fan club). He mentioned and criticised our society in his column. I would have thought that merited some claim to a response.

If you shield your columnist from critical comment it will atrophy his critical journalistic faculties. If you do it long

enough the process may be irreversible. Alas, I fear that may now be the case.

I would be obliged if you would copy this to your deputy, who made the original decision to not publish. Perhaps also Mr Harris could be informed of our criticism. I would not like him to live out his days entirely in the dark.

Then, there are your readers to think about. Should they not be enlightened and entertained by alternative viewpoints,

particularly as you say that the matter generated a lot of correspondence?

That demonstrates interest in the issues raised by Mr. Harris. Are you not doing your readers a disservice in closing correspondence rather than facilitating critical expressions of this interest?

Yours sincerely

Jack Lane

Aubane Historical Society
12.10.2017

Book review: *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork University Press)

An Atlas Which Is No Guide

The introduction to this *Atlas* is headed with a quotation from Fr. Michael O'Flanagan in June 1916 "*Geography has worked hard to make one nation of Ireland; history has worked against it.*" It then goes on the claim that "*Geography is not just some 'objective' counterpart to history, however, or even a mere backdrop to historical events and processes. It is often integral to them.*"

It goes on in this vein as if O'Flanagan was giving a geography lesson to the volunteers in 1916 and explains that the title of *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* for the book was chosen to deliberately highlight geography as being the crucial element in this history. Hence the need for the numerous and elaborate maps, tables, illustrations, etc.

It is incredible that the editors seem totally blind to the fact that what O'Flanagan was actually saying was that geography did NOT matter and the national divide among the people in the island of Ireland was what mattered and needed to be faced up to. Geography tended to obscure not highlight that most important fact.

The editors show the usual total blindness to the stark staring reality of two nations in Ireland that O'Flanagan pointed out over a hundred years ago. When will they ever learn?

They go on to acknowledge their inspirers:

"Erhard Rumpf, David Fitzpatrick, Tom Garvin and Peter Hart have been to the forefront in interrogating the geography of revolution in Ireland via their attempts to construct explanatory models based on spatial patterns of revolutionary mobilisation, support, activity and violence. The island maps in this *Atlas* generally confirm the broad pictures that have emerged from their scholarship, such as Munster's centrality to armed conflict; north-east Ulster's long term resistance to Irish nationalist demand..."

So the mountain of labour of these authors and many others have produced the mouse that says Munster was very active in support of Irish nationalist demands and Ulster was very resistant. Thanks a million for that earth-shattering conclusion. Now we know! But it hardly needed 964 pages and a small forest to tell us that.

The whole theme of the introduction is laughable, if not embarrassing, for its pretentious intellectual paucity and complete misreading of Fr. O'Flanagan. They should leave geography to the Geography Departments who can produce good history when dealing with their subject.

Michael D Higgins has a foreword which among other things praises it because "*The Atlas, eschewing any temptation to homogeneity of motive or structure of events documents the sequence of happenings from the outbreak of the first World War in 1914...*" To call any history worthy of the name "*a sequence of happenings*" is oxymoronic.

After this Introduction and Foreword I despaired at reading, never mind reviewing, its nearly 1000 pages and 5 kilos. Life seems too short for some things. With this book it's a case of '*Never mind the quality feel the weight*' to paraphrase a comedy show of some years ago.

However, I noted that John Borgonovo writes a chapter on Cork. He seeks to explain Cork's distinctive role in the War of Independence. He does this by simply lumping together what existed in Cork in terms of the minuscule Sinn Fein, IRB, Gaelic League, GAA and Inghinidhe Na hEireann that existed there before 1916 and then adds William O'Brien and the AFIL. However, the latter put all the other bodies mentioned in the shade in terms of size and influence. But we are left to guess how this might have been the case.

The nearest thing to an explanation of

this phenomenon is a footnote by one of the approximately 100 contributors to a photograph—though it patently deserves a chapter in any book claiming to be an '*Atlas*' of the Revolution.

Borgonovo would find it difficult to provide such an account, as his last book had nothing but a litany, the usual litany, of disparaging and dismissive comments on William O'Brien and the AFIL (see "*The Dynamics of War and Revolution: Cork City, 1916-1918*"). In that book he totally failed to appreciate the unique dynamic of Cork politics which was the AFIL. He has learned something about it since but not much.

We are told that "*Cork did not support John Redmond's constitutional nationalism*". Cork fully supported constitutional nationalism, up to the hilt, in supporting William O'Brien who was a true constitutional nationalist. O'Brien did not have a well organised, well-funded militant organisation like the *Molly Maguires* to support him. They showed their true colours to the world at the Irish Party's 1909 '*Baton Convention*' when its thugs prevented O'Brien and anyone with a Cork accent from speaking from the platform by batoning them from the hall. This was in opposition to O'Brien's and the AFIL's policy of '*Conference, Conciliation and Consent*' towards the Unionists—a very constitutional approach compared to Redmond's. That Convention was Redmond's '*constitutional nationalism*' in action and it showed itself at every election in defence of Redmondism.

Moreover, O'Brien did not put himself at the head of an army as Redmond did with the National Volunteers, going on to put himself forward as an authority on warfare and launching Ireland into a war that destroyed him and his Party.

Redmond was the most UNconstitutional nationalist as O'Brien never tired of pointing out. But Borgonovo feels obliged to keep the revisionist picture of Redmond shining bright by not mentioning these things. He should really remove the revisionist blinkers he took to wearing a few years ago and take serious note of O'Brien and the AFIL.

Borgonovo, though an early critic of Peter Hart's sectarian thesis, now feels obliged to throw a sop to it by claiming that "*the Protestant population in parts of west Cork feared republican intentions. Sectarian and political tensions in that locale later featured in the controversial 'Bandon valley killings' of thirteen Cork Protestants in April 1922*" (564). There is no evidence produced to establish that Protestants *qua* Protestants feared

Republicans and the reference to the Bandon Valley killings is a collection of weasel words equating 'sectarian and political tensions' as the motivation which is all that 'featured' can mean. If Borgonovo believes this, he must know who did the killings and why, and be able to show us how exactly these two elements 'featured' in the episode. He should also include an explanation of the attempted killing of Catholics in the same episode.

However, in another piece on 'Suspected Informants in Munster', after listing the number and backgrounds of those executed, he tells us that "the selectivity of this list should be emphasised. For example, it did not reflect a blanket IRA suspicion of the unionist gentry, former policemen, or even of civilian contractors working for the RIC and military" (570). If these groups, whom we can assume were sympathetic to, at least—and some active supporters of the Crown forces in many ways—were not targets, why should the Protestant community have been considered targets and have reason to fear Republicans?

As Borgonovo well knows, it was Republicans led by Tom Barry and other leaders, who physically protected Protestants during this episode but that is conveniently ignored by him when he has to genuflect to the Hart thesis.

Borgonovo began his career as the very first academic who saw through Hart's historical 'sectarian' chicanery and established a case against it. It is sad and ironic to see that he now feels obliged to give some credence to that thesis when more and more academics are dropping Hart like a hot potato. Borgonovo could have led this movement 20 years ago and saved academia the embarrassment that Hart and his mentors have caused it. But he took another path in the groves of Academe.

Jack Lane

PS PS Readers should access the *Tullamore Tribune* from the 25 October where Philip McConway reviews the book in relation to what it says about County Offaly and lists at least thirteen geographical and historical errors of fact in relation to that County.

the contemporary public and cultural memory of it.

...
Another shortcoming of the Atlas is a certain lack of balance. The editorial line is largely uncritical of the Irish revolution and of the physical force tradition of Irish nationalism. Seminal articles by F.X. Martin and Francis Shaw—dubbed elsewhere by Pádraig Ó Snodaigh as the "two godfathers of revisionism"—are, for instance, marginalised in this volume. Even Patrick Maume's chapter on constitutional nationalism emphasises that Parnell, Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party were happy to honour the physical force tradition as well as the constitutional one. True, but Maume may underestimate the extent to which this appropriation by Home Rulers of a tradition antipathetical to their values was simply an attempt to obviate the danger of being outflanked by more extreme nationalists."

A review in the *Tullamore Tribune*, a County Offaly newspaper, criticises the book from a different angle.

Philip McConway writes (October 25 2017) that its account of the war in Offaly is seriously inaccurate, prejudiced and deficient.

He describes bias, inaccuracy, propaganda and conspiracy theory in an essay on 'The Burning of Irish Country Houses, 1920-21', by Professor Terence Dooley, Director of the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates (CSHIHE) at NUI Maynooth.

According to Dr. McConway, the essay by Marie Coleman of Queen's University, Belfast, regurgitates discredited atrocity propaganda about the IRA killing of the Pearson brothers in Coolacree, Co. Offaly. This was first dished up by Eoghan Harris and Niamh Sammon in an RTÉ programme broadcast ten years ago in October 2007.

So "Atlas" seems to be a very mixed bag. What is the use of this and similar academic publications about the War of Independence? With a few honourable exceptions they serve, not as reliable sources of information, but as a kind of weather-vane indicating which way the political wind is blowing. "Atlas" probably signifies an attempt by some academics to establish some credibility for themselves by distancing themselves from an increasingly tarnished British orientation on the War of Independence.

Pat Muldowney

Editorial Note: Perhaps the term *War of Independence* has been dropped because it raises the question of 'independence from what oppressor'?

Coolacree revisited

The events of 1918-22 (or thereabouts) used to be known as *the Troubles*, but that name has now been transferred in popular speech to the more recent Northern conflict. More formally, the 1918-22 events were widely referred to as the War of Independence, and that is still their popular designation.

But the current academic fashion is "Irish Revolution", a term which was practically unknown until it began to be pushed by academic historians. So what is wrong with "War of Independence"?

I suspect that latter is not 'neutral' enough. 'Revolution' can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your perspective. But 'Independence' is always good, isn't it, not like dependence or compulsion? My God, it's almost the same as "Freedom"! We can't be having that now, can we. Better get this new value-free terminology into the heads of innocent schoolchildren before the more popular title used by the ignorant common people takes hold of them.

Independence was authorised by a constitutional, democratic vote in December 1918. That was not revolutionary. The fact that the people had to then conduct armed defence of their vote does not make it a revolution. Calling it a Revolution

Review: *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*

suggests that the Irish vote was unconstitutional or undemocratic.

A generation earlier there was a change in land tenure when tenant farmers used government loans to purchase their farms. But when Council tenants buy their houses on favourable terms it is not called revolution.

There was a Glorious Revolution in 1688, but the native Irish chose the counter-revolutionary side.

The Editors of the new Revolutionary Atlas are named as: John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy and John Borgonovo. A rather jaundiced review in the *Irish Catholic* newspaper, by Felix M. Larkin, gives the book "two cheers":

"The many plaudits this volume has received since its publication in mid-September are well justified.

It is an epic production, running to almost 1,000 pages and weighing in at five kilos. Even Atlas himself would have difficulty holding it in his hands in order to read it.

The other and more general use of the word 'atlas' is to refer to a book of maps, and what this volume aims to do is to map the Irish revolution of 1912-23 in words and images. It comprises over 150 concise chapters, written by over 100 contributors—on subjects ranging from the 19th Century antecedents of the revolution to

Revisionist Jamboree at Kilkenny Castle

A CHARACTER SKETCH

Given Roy Foster is the author of a bulky two volume biography of the iconic poet, W.B. Yeats, it was inevitable that Fintan O'Toole would bring Yeats into the discussion on Casement. Towards the end O'Toole asked Foster how Casement's impacting on Yeats had gone on to influence how Casement is viewed currently.

Foster explained that Yeats had been involved in the campaign for a reprieve after Casement's conviction for treason. Yeats had never met him but his father, John Butler Yeats, had met Casement in New York. In a personal letter, the elder Yeats had left a brief pen picture:

"Casement is someone like a very pretty girl who is just hysterical enough to be interesting to strangers and a trial to herself and her friends..."

This brought forth a ripple of laughter among the audience. Following on from this "*wonderful character sketch*", as Foster put it, he went on to announce how we needed "*to face up to*" how a lot of people found Casement "*a trial*".

Omitted was any outlining of context. In fact, the two men met on one day in 1914, soon after the outbreak of hostilities. The elder Yeats was hostile to Casement's pro-German sympathies. Casement, for his part, was greatly emotionally exercised by the recent evil turn of international events.

Written accounts of Casement as an individual, from those who knew him well, tend to be very positive. For example, in *Memoirs of Prince Bluecher*, by Bluecher (1932), there is a pen portrait from the aristocratic Austrian Richard Courdenove:

"All I can say from personal experience and a long friendship is that I always found him most sympathetic, clever and fascinating, and that I have met very few men during my whole life who had such an exceptional personality..." (Bluecher, p179).

Casement's trial solicitor, Gavan Duffy, in the text of a public talk given in Dublin in April 1950, "*Lecture on Sir Roger Casement*", stated:

"He was a man of the highest integrity and the highest courage. He was a man of exceptional personal charm, a beautiful

character, one of the most generous I have ever known.... He was impetuous and determined. As to his judgement, opinions will naturally differ. He had travelled widely and could be a fascinating talker..."—(Bureau of Military History, WS0381).

YEATS AND HIS BALLADS

Foster went on to explain how the figure of Casement again intruded into the life of the poet in the 1930s "*when the forgery controversy blows up*". Then Yeats wrote his ballads about Casement. These were part of "*a re-articulation*" of his feelings about Irish nationalism. How exactly this could be so Foster did not attempt to explain.

Yeats "*is sceptical, deeply sceptical, about the forgery theory*", we were told.

Yeats had written to a correspondent "*If Casement were homosexual, what matter?*" This outlook was "*very modern*".

Because the comment is presented without its proper context, the listener was given the impression that Yeats held with the contemporary view that hostility to the notion of the diaries as fully and authentically Casement's own writings was grounded in an antipathy to the notion he could have been homosexual. In reality the citation came from a letter of his to Dorothy Wellesley (18 Feb 1937, *Letters on Poetry*, Wellesley, 1940) where he enthused about the public reaction his poem in *The Irish Press*, a fortnight earlier, had stirred up; a poem which asserted with no little passion that Casement had been the victim of a forgery conspiracy.

Following on, Foster said Yeats believed the use that the diaries were put to was "*utterly nefarious*".

He went on to explain the creative emergence of Yeats' Casement poems in terms of his re-discovery of his old interest in Fenianism and of ballad form and meter. His Casement poems were also written with an eye to the current political situation in Ireland where De Valera had recently taken power. He related how the poems appeared in the Fianna Fáil paper *The Irish Press*.

Foster did not touch on the content and text of the poems, only one of which had, in fact, appeared in *The Irish Press*. That poem appeared in the newspaper on 2nd

February 1937. It is reproduced below with original title, text and punctuation plus accompanying notes from the issue of that date:

ROGER CASEMENT

(After reading "The Forged Casement Diaries," by Dr.Maloney)_ _

I say that Roger Casement
Did what he had to do,
He died upon the gallows,
But that is nothing new.

Afraid they might be beaten
Before the bench of Time,
They turned a trick by forgery
And blackened his good name;

A perjurer stood ready
To prove their forgery true;
They gave it out to all the world—
And that is something new.

For Spring-Rice had to whisper it,
Being their Ambassador,
And then the speakers got it,
And writers by the score.

Come Alfred Noyes and all the troupe
That cried it far and wide,
Come from the forger and his desk,
Desert the perjurer's side;_

Come speak your bit in public
That some amends be made
To this most gallant gentleman
That is in the quick-lime laid.

W.B. YEATS

(Tune: *The Glen of Aherlow*)

When we savour these lines, terse, elegant, and steeped in controlled outrage, we wonder where the Yeats that Prof. Foster described to his audience has disappeared to. For if what Foster said was true then Yeats was merely putting on an act, merely playing a role while being false to his true self; a demeaning accusation to place before the reputation of an acknowledged major poet.

If, as Foster alleged, Yeats was "*deeply sceptical about the forgery theory*" then, in having this poem placed before the public in this way, he was engaging in a charade. Yet, Yeats is generally understood as somebody of more substance than one disposed to engage in public charades.

His correspondence of the time helped shed light on the matter.

YEATS REVEALED THROUGH HIS PRIVATE LETTERS

In his correspondence with Dorothy Wellesley, published as *Letters on Poetry*, Wellesley, Oxford University Press (1940), Yeats repeatedly refers to "*the forgeries*" or "*forgers*" or "*the forgery*". (Yeats to Wellesley Nov 28, 1936, Dec 2, 1936, Dec 23, 1936, Feb 8, 1937) This is

indeed extraordinary language for one “*deeply sceptical*” of forgery.

The correspondence with Ethel Mannin, revealed in *Letters: the Letters of W.B. Yeats*, ed Allan Wade, New York, Macmillan (1955) is yet more interesting.

“I am in a rage. I have just got a book, published by the Talbot Press called *The Forged Casement Diaries*. It is by a Dr. Maloney I knew in New York and he has spent years collecting research. He has proved that the diaries, supposed to prove Casement ‘a Degenerate’ and successfully used to prevent an agitation for his reprieve, were forged. Casement was not a very able man but he was gallant and unselfish, and had surely his right to leave what he would have considered an unsullied name. I long to break my rule against politics and call these men criminals, but I must not. Perhaps a verse may come to me, now or a year hence.” (Yeats to Mannin, 15 Nov 1936)

Here it is, as it is said, from the horse’s mouth; Yeats believed the diaries were forged. He had been convinced by Maloney’s book. Having completed his reading of the book, he experienced a feeling of outrage. (also: *Yeats & Patrick McCartan—a Fenian Friendship*, John Unteracker (1967), Dolmen Press, p377)

How engaged did Yeats feel with the subject matter of his Casement poems? The evidence points to his passionate sincerity. Take for example the testimony of an early biographer, Joseph Hone.

“Meeting W.B.Y. just after his “Roger Casement”, I was astonished by the ferocity of his feelings. He almost collapsed after reading the verses and had to call for a little port wine. Afterwards he admitted having wronged Alfred Noyes and others, who were named in the first version as persons who had spread stories about Casement’s private life for political ends.”—Joseph Hone (*W.B. Yeats 1865-1939*, Joseph Hone, New York: Macmillan, (1943), p450n);

ATTEMPTED EXPLANATIONS

Foster’s explanation that the poems owed their existence to an interest in Fenianism is a lame one. Yeats had written powerfully on Nationalist themes before, without any specific reference to Casement. There is no reason to doubt, if that was the direction in which his thoughts and impulses led him, he could do so again. As for Yeats writing public poetry with an eye to the political realities obtaining under the then relatively new government of De Valera, this implies Yeats was a political toady or that De Valera induced fearful compliance akin to the manner of his contemporary, Stalin. Both these possibilities we can discount

with some degree of confidence.

Similarly, if he found the technicalities of ballad form an interesting challenge for his creative drives, there were themes lying in wait for him in the Ireland in which he lived, and indeed in the world in general of that time. It should be obvious that an interest in ballad form did not imply any requirement to contribute to the public forgery controversy.

THE ARCH POET

The second part of Roy Foster’s Yeats biography *WB Yeats: A Life II—The Arch Poet* made its appearance in 2003. To judge from sample comments provided prior to the table of contents, reviewers’ praise ranged all the way from the fulsomely complimentary up to the near hysterical. Below are two examples:

“‘Magisterial’ & ‘monumental’ are the words for which one reaches in awed response to this second volume of Roy Foster’s biography of Yeats...” Nicholas Grene, *Irish Studies Review*

“A great & important work, a triumph of scholarship, thought & empathy such as one would hardly have thought possible in this age of disillusion. It is an achievement wholly of a scale with its heroic subject...” John Banville (Irish novelist), *New York Review of Books*

As the book deals with the latter stages of the life of Yeats, of necessity, it has to deal with his involvement with the diaries controversy and matters surrounding the two poems arising from it; *Roger Casement* and *The Ghost of Roger Casement*. An illustration (p573) is provided of the poem *Roger Casement* as it appeared in *The Irish Press* of 2nd February 1937. However, this is not complimented by explanatory paragraphs detailing how and why a Yeats poem found its way into the newspaper. Instead there is a vacuum into which various bits and pieces are strewn about; a nuance here, a suggestion there, an equivocation or a half-explanation somewhere else. Nowhere is it mentioned that this is one of Yeats’ best known poems. It is as if the poem was a piece of journey-work, tossed off the pen in answer to somebody else’s request and the reproduction of the newspaper page represented merely some of the public colour of the poet’s life. Yet, on another page Foster says the matter of the diaries was, for Yeats, “*an obsession*”. (p568)

The intellectual conviction, fury, and outrage on completing the reading of Dr Maloney’s book, that launched the poem, is not acknowledged, let alone convincingly explored. “*He had also nurtured a new controversy and new obsession which replaced his interest in Henry Harrison’s*

vindication of Parnell”. (p568) But what was at the root of that obsession? We get no coherent answer.

OPTIONS KEPT OPEN

Yet here Foster took a different line than he did at the Kilkenny event—13 years later. He keeps his options open. Early in the book he refers to “*Casement’s alleged diaries*” (p52). He refers to “*Casement’s alleged homosexuality*” (p568). He mentions that a belief, on the part of Yeats, that forgery took place “*seems to reflect his own opinions*”—not quite a categorical statement, but at least a strained, muffled acknowledgement of what the source material tells us (p572)

Foster quotes part of the letter from Yeats to Ethel Mannin of 15th Nov 1937 (see above) but omits the key initial sentences where he details his rage and how much the Maloney book had made an impression upon him. Instead he quotes from the section beginning with the sentence “*Casement was not a very able man...*” (p569) So truncated; the letter loses most of its substance.

In a reference note (p569 note on p754) he suggests: “*Forensic and scholarly opinion generally accepts that the diaries are genuine*”. The note goes on to say “*The complicated story of Maloney’s book...*” was available in WJ Mc Cormack’s *Haunting the Free State: Roger Casement in the 1930s* (Dublin 2002). The title, on publication actually was; *Roger Casement in Death or Haunting the Free State*.

However, the story went well beyond the merely complicated. It was convoluted as well as occasionally surreal. The Maloney book, rather than being subjected to analysis was misconstrued as well as jeered at, for example; “*the Maloney baloney*”. McCormack, one time Professor of Literary History at Goldsmith’s College, University of London, repeatedly suggests Yeats had no firm commitment to the forgery contention. He claims, without appropriate reference or explanation: “*His calculated naiveté was suspended in private correspondence*” (*RC in Death*, p38) and “*To be sure, Yeats wrote two indifferent ballads, but in private, he thought the diaries might well be genuine*” (*RC in Death*, p42).

Foster refers to the thesis of *The Forged Casement Diaries* being centred around a theory that forgery was effected by means of the “*transcription*” of material from the diary of a vicious criminal named Armando Normand who Casement had encountered in South America. (*WYB: A Life*, p572)

The very same claim appears in Mc Cormack's *Roger Casement in Death*. This is a *canard*.

THE ARMANDO NORMAND ALLEGATION

The Normand diary suggestion is peripheral to the main arguments contained in the Maloney book. It is a suggested strong possibility, as the author saw it. It crops up towards the end of the text. The notion is advanced, in the following extract, with the least circumscribed degree of confidence it finds in the book:

"From the Normand diary seemingly came the Putomayo passages to which the Crown attached importance. Whether it was also drawn upon for the concluding London and Paris passages of analogous nature we do not know..." (*The Forged Casement Diaries*, Talbot Press, 1936, p199).

At the time of writing the diaries' content remained mysterious. The very existence of the documents was neither officially admitted nor denied. Any suggestion as to textual details was by definition conjectural.

VIVID FACES

By 2014, when his book on the revolutionary generation that created the 1916 Rising emerged (*Vivid Faces*, Allen Lane, 2014), Foster had adopted a less cautious position. No longer were the diaries 'alleged' to be Casement's. Now he held a position in line with the unequivocally pro-authenticity stance of McCormack. He repeated the Normand *canard* with gusto:

"*The Forged Casement Diaries* was published in 1936 and presented the case that the 'Black Diaries' were actually constructed by interpolations from diaries kept by one of Casement's immoral antagonists in Peru, Armando Normand..." (p312)

Thanks to archival records based on an a frivolous conversation in the lobby of a New York City variety theatre involving US based republican activist, John Devoy, and two attractive young women in their early 20s just over from Dublin, it could be deduced that Devoy had little doubt that Casement had been an 'Oscar Wilde'.

The reader does not learn the social context of the Devoy 'revelation'.

Gone was any real concern on the part of Yeats that forgery had taken place. His comment by letter to Dorothy Wellesley: "If Casement were homosexual, what matter?" was deployed (see *Yeats and his ballads*, above) unsullied by any reference to context. (p313)

Foster had shown by now he was ready

and set for his performance at the *Body of Evidence* cultural happening at Kilkenny Castle to mark the centenary anniversary of Casement's execution.

TRUTH TWISTERS

Donald McCormick, writing under the name Richard Deacon, wrote a number of books on the world of Intelligence. One was called *The Truth Twisters* (Macdonald & Co, 1987, Richard Deacon). He served in the Royal Navy in the Intelligence field during the Second World War.

In the Forword to that book he explained his concern was with what is called 'dis-

information'. He had originally thought of calling the book "*The Lie Makers*". Then he settled on the title: "*The Truth Twisters*". He wrote:

"For, very often, disinformation is not so much a matter of blatant lies, as of concealing or twisting the truth. Sometimes such disinformation is deliberately circulated, but occasionally (perhaps more often than we should like to believe) it is an involuntary, unconscious form of deception."

Deacon provided worthy food for thought.

Tim O'Sullivan

Che Mo Laoch And Che's Own Hero

See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=JO1HCXDtGhg> for that powerful Irish Jacobite anthem, "*Mo Ghile Mear*", whose chorus begins: "*Sé mo laoch*", and which translates as "*He's my hero*". Well, "*Che mo laoch*" translates as "*Che, my hero*". On October 9th an *Irish Times* report recorded an interview with Che's brother, Juan:

"The father of Che Guevara embraced his Gaelic heritage, especially the rebellious nature of the Irish and their fondness for partying, according to the brother of the Cuban revolutionary figure. Today marks the 50th anniversary of the death of the famous Argentinean-born Ernesto 'Che' Guevara Lynch, at the hands of Bolivian security forces, and his revolutionary legacy is being commemorated in countries around the world. An Post has released a special-edition stamp featuring Dublin artist Jim Fitzpatrick's iconic red, white and black rendering of Guevara, a move which prompted a rebuke from Fine Gael Senator Neale Richmond who accused the company of immortalising someone who committed 'heinous' acts."

Speaking at the launch of an exhibition featuring images of Guevara in his native Buenos Aires, his youngest brother Juan Martin Guevara Lynch recalled their father Ernesto Guevara Lynch's connection to his ancestral homeland:

"My grandmother was North American. A Lynch, but born in the US. She was born in San Francisco. The family moved from here, the province of Buenos Aires, but moved to San Francisco where she was born. But her father yes, he was born in Ireland. Then on the other side the Guevaras were Basque. It is because of that our aunt always said we are the descendants of the Basque and Irish, meaning we have one steadfast idea of how things are and we are not for turning. With my old man a bit, yes. He used to

speak about the rebellious nature of the Irish. Beyond that he liked the Irish because of their party nature; they like to drink a drop of whiskey! He was really fond of all that. The Basque are a bit more serious. So he was more into his Irish than his Basque side."

But who were Che's own heroes? See <https://communismgr.blogspot.ie/2016/04/che-guevara-i-came-to-communism-because.html?m=1> for a rough English translation from Greek of an April 2016 blog by one Nikon Mottas, entitled "*Che Guevara: 'I came to communism because of Stalin'*". Mottas wrote:

"Ernesto Che Guevara is undoubtedly a historical figure of the 20th century's communist movement who attracts the interest of people from a vast range of political ideologies. The years followed his cowardly assassination in Bolivia, Che became a revolutionary symbol for a variety of marxist-oriented, leftist and progressive parties and organisations—from Trotskyists to militant leninists and from Social Democrats to anarcho-libertarians. A significant number of those who admire the argentine revolutionary identify themselves as '*anti-stalinists*', hate and curse Stalin while they often refer to the 'crimes' of Stalin's era. What a contradiction and an irony of history is the following: Che Guevara himself was an admirer of Joseph Stalin... In 1953, situated in Guatemala, the then 25 years old Che noted in his letter to aunt Beatriz: '*Along the way, I had the opportunity to pass through the dominions of the United Fruit, convincing me once again of just how terrible these capitalist octopuses are. I have sworn before a picture of the old and mourned comrade Stalin that I won't rest until I see these capitalist octopuses annihilated*' (Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, 1997).

Years later—after his letter from

Guatemala—in the midst of the revolutionary process in Cuba—Guevara would reaffirm his position towards Stalin:

“In the so called mistakes of Stalin lies the difference between a revolutionary attitude and a revisionist attitude. You have to look at Stalin in the historical context in which he moves, you don’t have to look at him as some kind of brute, but in that particular historical context. I have come to communism because of Stalin and nobody must come and tell me that I mustn’t read Stalin. I read him when it was very bad to read him...”

Mottas went on to quote Guevara on Trotsky:

“I think that the fundamental stuff that Trotsky was based upon was erroneous and that his ulterior behaviour was wrong and his last years were even dark. The Trotskyites have not contributed anything whatsoever to the revolutionary movement; where they did most was in Peru, but they finally failed there because their methods are bad” (Comments on ‘Critical Notes on Political Economy’ by Che Guevara, Revolutionary Democracy Journal, 2007).

In a letter to Armando Hart Dávalos, a Trotskyist and prominent member of the Cuban Revolution, Guevara particularly argued for the study of Stalin’s writings in Cuba:

“It would be necessary to publish the complete works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin [underlined by Che in the original] and other great Marxists. Here would come to the great revisionists (if you want, you can add here Khrushchev), well analysed, more profoundly than any others and also your friend Trotsky, who existed and apparently wrote something” (*Contracorriente*, No.9, Sept.1997).

Mottas further related:

“Four years after the beginning of Khrushchev’s ‘de-stalinisation’, on November 1960, Ernesto Che Guevara was visiting Moscow as an official representative of the Cuban government. Against the advice of the then Cuban ambassador to avoid such an action, Che insisted on visiting and depositing a floral tribute at Stalin’s tomb at the Kremlin necropolis. Che had a deep admiration for Stalin and his contribution in building Socialism. And that because, as Che himself was saying, ‘You have to look at Stalin in the historical context in which he moves [...] in that particular historical context’...”

An Post’s envelope for the first day cover issue of its Che stamp carried a quotation from Ernesto Guevara Lynch, father of Che: “In my son’s veins flowed the blood of Irish rebels”. The father, as the report says, certainly embraced his Gaelic heritage. If Che himself had done so, he might well have sung “Stalin mo laoch”!

Manus O’Riordan

Brexit:

Brexit has been justifiably described as one of the most serious challenges facing Ireland since the achievement of national independence. As such it demands a rare degree of statesmanship, not only of the holders of the offices of Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs, but also of those of Leader of the Opposition and of the leaders of the other parties.

In the recent past the only Irish politician to exhibit statesmanlike ability of the necessary calibre, Charles Haughey, was the subject of unremitting vilification such that memory of his positive achievements has been all but excised from public consciousness. This journal is one of the few organs that recognised the disabling effect that the anti-Haughey consensus wrought among the political elite. Traits that Haughey demonstrated—decisiveness in political decision making, a Burkean sympathy for the mores of the conservative majority, the ability to initiate new developments like social partnership or the Irish Financial Services Centre, a rare understanding of the forces at play in the North and, not least, a sure footedness in the international arena borne of a firm anchor in the national tradition—these traits have been conspicuously eschewed by his successors. It is as though the will of the electorate was manipulated to say ‘no more of that’ and the politicians dutifully complied.

Haughey was immune from the Anglophile disorder that infected many opinion formers in academia and the media even while he was in office; he was a living affront to that agenda and it was Anglophile commentators in the main that led the charge to destroy his reputation. Much could be said on that subject but the point currently at issue is how a coherent national response to Brexit can be developed.

BREXIT STRATEGY AND FARMING INTEREST

At one level building a Brexit strategy seems straightforward: in the economic sphere identify the interests that are at risk; and in the political sphere identify the priorities of voters. Seeking to flesh out this perspective it is unnecessary to go further than the website of the Irish Farmers Association (IFA). Under a heading, ‘Ireland and the UK—a vital relationship’ the point is stressed: “farming has a much higher dependence on the UK market than any other sector”. Under another heading,

Ireland needs a leader of the quality of Charles Haughey

“Priorities for Irish agriculture’ these are summarised as: “we must maintain access to the UK market, at a high value, secure a strong CAP Budget post 2020 and secure support for any market disturbance.” The reference to the CAP Budget reflects a concern that CAP will reduce significantly following the exit of the UK, a big net contributor to the EU Budget. The reference to the high value of the UK market is an acknowledgement that while 45 per cent of Irish beef is exported to the Continental EU market the 50 per cent that goes to the UK achieves a price above the EU average.

The IFA is clear that while €750 million of Irish agri-food moves annually from Ireland across the border to Northern Ireland, over €4 billion moves from the Republic to the mainland UK, so having tariff free trade between the two parts of Ireland, while very welcome, would not be enough; exports from the Republic to the mainland UK are five times more significant than cross border exports. This is stated in a document headed, ‘Brexit solutions have to focus on trading relationship with all of the UK’. While it is the business of the IFA to focus on farming interests it would be wrong to characterise its position as narrow. In a video clip on the website the IFA President, Joe Healy, argues that the threat to Irish agriculture could have a negative impact on the EU as a whole. Irish agri-food exports constitute 10 per cent of EU agri-food. If Irish agri-produce becomes uncompetitive on the UK market following Brexit that produce will divert to the Continental EU market where it will attract lower prices. Such a large influx of product in a mature market will exert a destabilising effect on the overall EU agri-food market.

POLITICAL COMPETENCE?

The farming lobby which has close connections with both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, but especially with Fine Gael, sees Brexit as a threat to agri-food exports. Specifically, 50 per cent of beef exports, 34 per cent of dairy exports, 90 per cent of mushroom exports, 13,000 tonnes of sheep meat exports, the bulk of forestry/timber exports, valuable trade flows in pigmeat and poultry and cheaper input costs and animal remedies, would all be lost in the event of either a hard Brexit or a ‘no deal’ collapse of the negotiations. From the viewpoint of defending economic inter-

ests, therefore, it makes sense that the Irish Government should use all its powers to press for a soft Brexit or some form of free trade deal between the EU and the UK in the event of the UK leaving the EU's Custom Union.

Likewise in the political sphere large swathes of the electorate, arguably with good reason, habitually perceive the national interest to be closely aligned with the farming interest.

On the question of whether Irish allegiance should lie with Brussels or London opinion surveys have consistently shown that a majority of the Irish electorate continues to be pro-EU. There is also widespread sympathy among Southern voters for the people of the North who, having voted against Brexit by a clear majority, must now abide by whatever arrangement is negotiated by a UK Government of Tory Brexiters. And there is sympathy too for making the Peace Process a priority issue that needs to be defended in the Brexit talks. So, viewing the matter from a political perspective, it might justifiably be claimed that, in supporting the unity of the EU-27 while at the same time loudly defending Irish economic interests, the invisibility of the Border and the Peace Process, Leo Varadkar's Government is advancing Irish interests in a manner that reflects the wishes of its electorate.

But this political competence is more apparent than real. Apart from support for a unified EU-27 position these stances amount to little more than posturing, even if such posturing occasionally helps to draw attention to Irish interests. It is one thing to demand that the external frontier between the EU and the UK should have no visible infrastructure, or that the UK should remain in the Customs Union, or that in the event of a hard Brexit that a free trade agreement should be agreed between Europe and Britain, but all of these matters will be decided by parties and factors that are outside the control of the Irish Government. A suitable Brexit strategy requires more than political representation regarding economic interests that are at risk.

APPLYING A HAUGHEY-LIKE STANDARD TO THE BREXIT STRATEGY

One area where the Irish side has been weak following the UK referendum has been in forging strong links with other EU member states and with the EU institutions. While Enda Kenny was Taoiseach there were frequent reports in the Irish media about how well respected he was in the EU despite his close alignment with David Cameron, but this rosy picture was dis-

proved in December 2016 when Mairead McGuinness MEP, by far the most credible candidate for the position of President of the European Parliament, failed to get the nomination of the European Peoples Party because, being a member of Kenny's party, she was perceived as being *'too close to Britain'*.

During Charles Haughey's time no Irish representative would have been hamstrung by that perception. On the contrary, Haughey cultivated effective political relationships with the key players on the European scene in his time, Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterrand, by establishing that Ireland was independent from the UK.

Admittedly Leo Varadkar is at an early stage in his premiership and he has recently met with Emmanuel Macron but the clear message of his diplomacy, in line with Simon Coveney's policy of neutrality between the EU and the UK, is to be equally friendly to both sides. He would be better advised to maintain a businesslike relationship with British representatives, build new relationships in Europe and signal that the Anglophile phase in Irish politics is at an end.

The manner in which the Irish Border is being treated in the Brexit negotiations cries out for a solid dose of realism such as was applied by Charles Haughey when he described Northern Ireland as a *'failed political entity'* while avoiding any involvement in the Northern conflict that might have inflammatory effects. The official British position is that the Border must remain invisible and they have produced some policy papers to show how that could be achieved. But the policy papers have been rejected by the EU side as inadequate or inoperable.

The British seem to view the topic as a strong card in their hand: the blame for reimposing the visible infrastructure of partitioned Ireland is to be lain at the door of the EU. Lest there be any doubt about this it is only necessary to cite a recent statement from Ray Bassett, the authoritative voice of the pro-British side in the Irish Brexit debate. The following is the concluding sentence from a short notice in the *Irish Times*:

"Dr Bassett says the Irish Government should demand no physical border in Ireland, and should also insist that the talks move on to trade and economic matters and that the UK's exit bill be sent for international arbitration." (IT, 23 October)

But the British tactic here is disingenuous. When, as is likely, Britain leaves the Customs Union the EU will need to protect its external border from goods like chlorinated chicken and genetically

modified food products that breach its standards. French farming interests have publicly lobbied on that point. Legitimate traders paying tariffs as their goods move across the Border will also need reassurance that smuggling is being monitored through check-point controls. Unless there is a magic bullet solution that is being withheld from the public domain the return of a visible Border is inevitable.

The Irish Government should avoid being embroiled in the chicanery of the British position. Following the lead of Fianna Fail leader Micheál Martin (and his journalistic alter ego, Noel Whelan), Varadkar and Coveney should conduct their defence of Irish interests on the assumption that Brexit will mean the return of check-point controls along the Border.

THE NORTH AND PRACTICAL INITIATIVES

A recent article by Brian Feeney in the *Irish News* has drawn attention to another aspect of the Brexit strategy of the Irish Government: the absence of any communication line between Taoiseach Varadkar and the nationalist people of the North. Charles Haughey knew how to distinguish between the requirements of party politics and the wider responsibilities of political leadership. He showed this in his dealings with Sinn Fein, especially when, in the early days of the search for peace in the North, he advised the Shinners to stop wasting time with Seamus Mallon and to deal directly with John Hume. The Feeney article is worth quoting at some length:

"Last week there was a ferocious row between Gerry Adams and Leo Varadkar about the doomed Stormont talks.

Adams accused the Irish government of "malicious, shameful, untruthful briefing of the media about the state of the talks".

He said the Taoiseach was behaving "in a reckless way" and should start behaving like An Taoiseach instead of the leader of Fine Gael.

Those views were repeated by Conor Murphy as talks began again on Monday.

Sinn Féin are suspicious that the Irish and British governments will try to shoehorn republicans into some last minute deal they've cobbled together to save Arlene Foster.

This spat is just the latest in a series of rows since Varadkar has become Taoiseach but relations with Enda Kenny, if not so openly abusive, weren't much better.

There are faults on both sides but we know the main reason. Sinn Féin is now a major player in the politics of the Republic as well as in the north, a position unique since partition.

Both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, far from welcoming the development, are determined to keep Sinn Féin out of

government in Dublin. For both of them, particularly Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin is the enemy.

The downside of these circumstances is that the losers are northern nationalists.

In the assembly and Westminster elections this year Sinn Féin polled 70 per cent of nationalist voters who decisively rejected Westminster.

Many now look to Dublin to remedy the disaster of Brexit but discover that the Irish government and Varadkar in particular either ignores or derides the representations of the party which overwhelmingly speaks for northerners." (Irish News, 25 October)

Feeney's point is well made and entirely valid. Later in the article he chides Varadkar for having submerged his policy responsibility regarding Brexit in the negotiating position of the EU-27 and for relying on Michel Barnier to look after Irish interests. This reflects a chasm of difference that exists between Northern and Southern nationalist viewpoints, a chasm that has its origins in the history of the North since the 1920s (see Pat Walsh's books describing the Northern nationalist experience since partition, *Catastrophe* and *Resurgence*).

This journal takes the view that the Government is right to support the unity of the EU-27 and that deviating from that will only give succour to the British side, but we fully acknowledge that Northern nationalist opinion brings a different perspective to the discussion. The work of reconciling nationalists from the two parts of Ireland will be a vital element in the debate about achieving Irish unity but it requires separate treatment from the present discussion.

The main point in relation to Brian Feeney's article is that Brexit requires a greater breadth of political vision than is currently being provided. The leadership of Fine Gael need to understand that in its dealings North of the Border, treating Sinn Féin as nothing more than a party political enemy is equivalent to cutting off an entire community from participation in the Brexit process.

One final area in which the Haughey approach might strengthen Ireland's Brexit strategy is in re-orientating the official mindset through practical initiatives. The practical initiative from Haughey's career that comes to mind is the Irish Financial Services Centre (IFSC). When the businessman Dermot Desmond first approached Government with the idea he was politely informed that it wasn't a runner. Then an administration headed by Haughey came into office and Desmond once again presented his proposal. Haughey immedi-

ately saw merit in it and notwithstanding the opposition of the local banks and the civil service he directed one of his most senior officials, Pádraig Ó hUigín, to head up a high powered committee to oversee the project. The IFSC duly came into being and currently employs about 33,000 people.

One such practical initiative might be upgrading the infrastructure of the airports and ports to facilitate more trade with the Continent as distinct from using the UK as a landbridge for haulage trucks. Others might include expediting the electricity interconnector between Ireland and France, propelling trade missions to parts of the world where Irish agri-food might gain access to new markets and intervening in the housing market through a programme of public house building so that Ireland would become more attractive to UK companies and European agencies post-Brexit. Many projects along these lines are already happening but by being openly endorsed by Government they could come to symbolise a change in mentality commensurate with the new reality of Brexit. The point is that economic change often needs to be guided by well considered political leadership.

MICHEÁL MARTIN & HAUGHEY LEGACY

Recalling Haughey's political legacy in relation to the Brexit debate raises an obvious question: why has the party that he headed disowned him? The short answer is that Fianna Fáil is currently led by Micheál Martin, a politician who has strong associations with the anti-Haughey wing of the party. There are deeper reasons connected to the intellectual climate generated by globalisation in which the very idea of the nation state, let alone concepts like 'tradition' and 'national culture' were deemed irrelevant to modern life. However, the globalisation project has not gone to plan. First there was the rash of disastrous military invasions by Western Governments that have had the effect of undermining the authority of the West, especially the US. Then the financial crash of 2008 shattered faith in free market ideology and more recently the phenomenon of right wing populism expressed in the Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump have challenged the most basic belief of the globalisation project, the primacy of economics.

An interesting recent essay entitled 'Why nation-states are good' by Dani Rodrik makes a strong case for calling off globalisation. Rodrik, who is an influential Harvard professor and president of the

International Economics Association, states:

"Markets need regulatory and legitimising institutions to thrive—consumer-safety rules, bank regulations, central banks, social insurance and so on. When it comes to providing the arrangements that markets rely on, the nation-state remains the only effective actor, the only game in town. Our elites' and technocrats' obsession with globalism weakens citizenship where it is most needed—at home—and makes it more difficult to achieve economic prosperity, financial stability, social inclusion and other desirable objectives. As we've all seen, elite globalism also opens political paths for Right-wing populists to hijack patriotism for destructive ends."

(Aeon digital magazine, 2017, <https://aeon.co/essays/capitalists-need-the-nation-state-more-than-it-needs-them>)

Some members of the Irish elite may benefit from reading that essay in full; in any case they might appreciate getting a heads-up that the nation state is about to come back into fashion. Micheál Martin has in recent years shown an interest in re-discovering his party's tradition. He has said some positive things about Eamon de Valera. Just the other week he defended de Valera's reputation in the course of reviewing the first volume of a biography of 'Dev' that sounds positively dreadful.

The volume is by David McCullagh, an RTE broadcaster. Martin identifies three failings in the work which he describes euphemistically as 'concerns'. His first concern is with 'de Valera being subjected to a level of microscopic examination applied to no other figure—placing him at an obvious disadvantage'. The second is that McCullagh's 'personal narrative deprives us of the broader context of de Valera's times and how he was very much representative of those times both in Ireland and internationally'. One would think that both these failings are elementary errors for a biographer. The third concern is more interesting again. Martin states:

"The final, and surprising, concern with McCullagh's valuable book is that it fails to convince on why so many chose to support de Valera and his parties. It is impossible to understand de Valera without accepting that he was incredibly successful in persuading people who had previously opposed him, and who were exposed to substantial propaganda directed against him, to switch their support to him.

A simple illustration of this is that in 1923, the republican side, led by de Valera, received 280,000 votes and nine years later Fianna Fáil, led by de Valera, received 560,000 votes. This was achieved with zero access to patronage and in the face of the aggressive hostility of the majority of the media.

His rise to power simply could not have been achieved just with “magnetism” enrapturing his supporters and “parish pump” politics. What about the role of an obviously radical programme? Or the conspicuous governing failures of his opponents?” (Ir. Times, 21 Oct. 2017)

This is insightful historical analysis from Micheál Martin. Not only is he connecting up cause and effect in a way that throws light on an important historical development but in doing so he is challenging the prevailing narrative. It would be good to see these skills being put to use more often by the Leader of the Opposition. We can only hope that his re-discovery of the contribution made by de Valera might be extended to Charles Haughey. And if he were to go down that road who knows where it might lead to? He might even discover the core principles once held by the party he has been leading these past seven years.

To conclude, the Government’s Brexit strategy is most likely representative of opinion in the country but the complexities of the situation require more than representation; the thinking needs to be top down as well as bottom up. Brexit requires statesmanship of the quality demonstrated by Charles Haughey throughout his political career. At this juncture it is difficult to see any of the present crop of political leaders rising to that standard.

OTHER BREXIT DEVELOPMENTS

In the last month there has been more talk than development in the negotiations. As was widely predicted the verdict of the October summit of the European Council was that insufficient progress had been made to move the talks to Phase 2, discussion about a future trade relationship between the EU and the UK. The focus of attention has moved to the next meeting of the European Council which will take place in Brussels over two days from December 14th and is being described as the crunch date for the negotiations. Despite much hyperbole in media discussions the likelihood is that agreement will be reached at that meeting.

The unstable element in the process continues to be the division in the British Tory party. The distrust of the Brexiteers for Theresa May has not lessened even as former manager of the Vote Leave campaign Matthew Eliot is being offered a key role at Conservative head office. It’s notable that the consensus across the EU, reported by Stephen Collins in the Irish Times (26 October), is that the British Prime Minister’s survival is seen as the best hope of an orderly Brexit.

The key legislation pertaining to Brexit that will need to be passed at Westminster, the EU (Withdrawal) Bill will be debated at committee stage on 14 and 15 November. While Theresa May will want this to pass with the minimum of amendments, 400 have been tabled. The important principle for critics of the Bill is that the withdrawal agreement that will eventually be agreed with the EU should be secured by statute before the exit from the EU takes place.

An interesting report from the *Daily Shakeup* blog of the Open Europe think tank on October 26th sheds light on where the talks will lead in the New Year, assuming that agreement is reached about Phase 1 in December. The report reads:

“Sir Ivan Rogers, former Permanent Representative of the UK to the EU, has said that the UK “cannot expect simple continuity, in energy, telecoms, financial services” after Brexit because the EU believes “there’s a radical difference between a free-trade agreement and being inside the single market and customs union.” Speaking to the Treasury committee yesterday, Sir Ivan said while there would be “appetite on both sides” for an effective deal, the UK would find a Canada-style arrangement to be “grossly inadequate”. He added, “The jargon in Brussels is Canada or Canada dry, the jargon in London is Canada plus plus plus. If you talk to people I know well in Brussels and other capitals about Canada plus plus plus, they regard this as British fantasy land and they say that’s not on offer.”

On the Continent the important development is that the negotiations to form the next German Government are moving speedily along despite the hiccup that on October 15th Angela Merkel’s party lost the State Election in Lower Saxony to the Social Democrats. The negotiations began after the Lower Saxony election and the parties of the *Jamaican* (Christian Democrats, FDP liberals and Greens) Coalition have already agreed a common budgetary and financial programme.

As Angela Merkel’s prestige has dipped on the European stage following the recent Federal and State election setbacks in Germany, that of Emmanuel Macron has grown. Macron is increasingly being seen as the driver of reform in the EU. On the same day that he met Leo Varadkar, October 26, he advanced his ‘*social Europe*’ agenda when the Social Affairs Ministers of the Council of Ministers voted to modify the ‘*posting-of-workers*’ directive, introducing the principle of equal pay for equal work. For some time Macron has indicated that he would like to see democratic conventions held in all the member states to debate the future shape of the EU. The

proposal is known to have the backing of Germany and Italy, the Commission and Donald Tusk. Following the meeting with Varadkar Ireland became the first State to formally commit to the idea.

Dave Alvey

Israel has demonstrated A 50-YEAR CONTEMPT FOR DEMOCRACY

Doris Cotton describes Israel as “the only democracy in the entire Middle East” (*‘Help us stop the Israel bashing’*, **October 10**).

But is it really a democracy?

In 1967, Israel took over the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) by force.

It has occupied these territories militarily, ruling over millions of Palestinians there without according them any democratic rights whatsoever.

To my mind, that demonstrates a 50-year record of contempt for democracy rather than a commitment to it.

Also, Israel has colonised the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), transferring upwards of 600,000 of its own Jewish citizens into this territory which it is occupying.

Transfers of population of this kind are war crimes—Article 8.2(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines “*the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies*” to be a war crime.

Jews who live in these illegal settlements in the West Bank have a vote in elections to the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), but Palestinians living next door to them in the West Bank, and who are also governed from the Knesset, don’t have a vote.

That is akin to the voting system that operated in apartheid South Africa, where black people were excluded from the franchise.

While this voting system continues I can’t see how Israel can be regarded as a democracy, let alone the only democracy in the Middle East.

In any case, other states in the Middle East have some claim to be democracies, for example, Iran where President Rouhani was re-elected last May with 23 million of the 41 million votes cast.

Dr David Morrison

Belfast Newsletter, 19 October 2017

The Russian Revolution

Two interconnected events that happened 100 years ago this Fall have been affecting the course of world affairs profoundly ever since. The Russian Revolution set out to destroy Capitalism, and Britain, the main force of Capitalism in the world, awarded Palestine, which it had just conquered, to the Jews as the site of a Jewish state under British Imperial hegemony if they colonised it.

The Russian Revolution, which threatened the survival of Capitalism, was widely regarded amongst leaders of the capitalist world as being the work of an international Jewish conspiracy. That is how Winston Churchill saw it.

The deal made between the British Government and the Jewish nationalist movement about Palestine also presumed something in the nature of an international Jewish conspiracy. It is presumed that Jewry had considerable influence internationally as a nation dispersed amongst the nations, and it sought to gain that international influence for the British Empire.

Jews were deeply embedded in German life, both economically and culturally in 1914, so much so that in the British (and Home Rule Irish) war mania they were treated as Germans. The immediate purpose of the Balfour Declaration was to alienate Jews from Germany and establish a German/Jewish antagonism. In that project it was all too successful.

The Bolshevik *coup d'état* in Russia in October 1917 (November according to the Papist calendar that was universally adopted soon after) survived against all expectations and became a force of social revolution which destabilised Capitalism in Europe in the situation, close to anarchy, that followed the Great War and was a result of it.

European Capitalism, with its accompanying civilisation, was saved by the emergence of Fascist politics.

Fascism was pioneered in Italy during the War by Britain's ally, Mussolini.

Mussolini was a revolutionary socialist before the war. When the European War begun in August 1914 the Italian Government declared itself neutral. It was supported in this stance by the Catholic Church and the main body of Socialists. But

Mussolini, the revolutionary Socialist, combined his Socialism with irredentist Nationalism. He advocated Italian entry into the war against Austria for the purpose of expanding the state by incorporating Austrian territory south of the Alps and on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Britain supported his agitation by means of a secret Treaty (the Treaty of London, 1915) offering to incorporate these territories into the Italian state when it broke up the Austrian Empire.

The essential thing about Fascism, when it came on the scene as a saviour of Europe from the Bolshevik international socialist revolution in the crisis of 1919-20, was this combination of radical socialism with assertive nationalism.

Britain offered to Palestine to the Jews for colonisation, offering to provide them with a framework of Imperial protection, but the work of colonising a territory that was already populated, and displacing that population, had to be done by the Jews themselves.

A moderate British socialist, Richard Crossman, later criticised the Government for not doing the necessary dirty work—was it a ethnic cleansing or genocide?—as an act of Imperial power. But the Government had to think of relations with all the vast Arab majority in the Middle East and therefore it left the dirty work to the Jews themselves.

The West European and American spokesmen of the Zionist movement did not care to dwell on the harsh realities of the project. They fantasised about ingenious means by which the foundations of the Jewish State could be fitted into spaces in existing Arab society without unduly disturbing the Arabs. If the project had been left in their hands, it would never have been realised.

The energy that carried through the colonisation, and then waged terrorist war against Britain for independence, came from Eastern Europe, disrupted by the collapse of the Tsarist Empire, the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the radically disorientating effect of the Bolshevik Revolution. Movements of the east European Jewry faced up to the fact that the colonisation of Palestine would be a conquest that would be resisted by the Arab population, and they got on with it.

And they were not embarrassed by the strong resemblance between realistic Zionism and Fascism. In fact, some of these groups formally adopted a fascist position. And the post-1945 Jewish State, which is mainly their achievement, is still a work in progress. It remains the state without borders, engaged in *de facto* expansion, and determined not to define its borders until the entire *Irredenta*, lost two thousand years ago, is redeemed.

The action of East European Jewry in realising the Zionist project in Palestine lent plausibility to the idea that the Bolshevik Revolution was the achievement of international Jewish conspiracy—but it wasn't. The Jews in the Bolshevik Party would never have made the October Revolution. The Jews in the Bolshevik leadership lacked the fierce realism in pursuit of their object that was shown by the East European Zionist leaders.

In Bolshevism everything depended on Lenin. If he had not managed to get back to Russia from Switzerland, across the European battlefield, in the Spring of 1917, there would have been no Bolshevik Revolution. The Bolsheviks who came out of prison in Russia after the February revolution and re-assembled in Petrograd and Moscow as the Bolshevik Party, intended to function as an opposition within the structures of the February Revolution, which was understood to be bourgeois revolution inaugurating an era of capitalist democracy. But, when Lenin was returned to Russia by Germany, he announced that the Bolshevik policy was to overthrow the bourgeois Government of the February Revolution and establish a Communist Government which would be a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The most eminent Jew in Russia in 1917 was Trotsky, who did not acknowledge himself to be a Jew because he was an atheist. He was an internationalist revolutionary journalist and orator who repudiated Judaism. Nevertheless he was regarded as a Jew, not only by anti-semites, but by the Jewish community. Judaism was clearly something more than simply a performance of religious formalities:

"Trotsky considered himself and all-out internationalist, but he was never successful in his attempt to cast his Jewishness overboard. Much to his regret, the Judaism he spurned proved to be with him an incurable 'disease'. He was identified as a Jew for better or worse..." (*Trotsky And The Jews* by Joseph Nedava, Jewish Publication Society of America 1972 (or 5732) p34).

Trotsky was the leading Jew in this

situation but he was not a Bolshevik, and he did not have a party of his own. He had predicted, about ten years earlier, that when the Tsarist state fell and a bourgeois Government was established in its place, the revolutionary turmoil set off by the fall of Tsarism would not calm down under bourgeois government, but would continue until there was socialist revolution.

Lenin had not predicted that the fall of Tsarism would lead to socialist revolution, skipping over the bourgeois phase. What he had done was organise a political party for the purpose of preventing the bourgeois revolution from settling down and for carrying out a socialist revolution against it by exploiting the peasant issue.

The vast majority of the population of Russia consisted of peasants living under a landlord system. Lenin reckoned that the urban middle class who came to power in the city as the bourgeois revolution would not be able to deal with the land question in the countryside, and that therefore a worker-peasant alliance could be formed for the purpose of overthrowing the limited bourgeois regime in the cities by means of a socialist revolution that would abolish landlordism and transfer the land into peasant ownership.

But the establishment of peasant ownership would itself be a bourgeois revolution. So Lenin's scheme was to overthrow the brittle bourgeois revolution in the cities by means of a bourgeois revolution in the country, and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat in the cities which would guide the peasantry towards Socialism.

Lenin organised for a socialist revolution that would trample over the bourgeois revolution. Trotsky predicted that something like this would happen. But Trotsky rejected absolutely the party organisation that was developed by Lenin for the purpose of making a socialist revolution. He said that what Lenin was doing was establishing a party that would act in place of the proletariat.

Implicit in Trotsky's criticism of Lenin was the assumption that in the revolutionary situation that would come about when Tsarism fell, the proletariat would take over political power from the bourgeoisie by a kind of spontaneous class action spurred along by revolutionary oratory.

That assumption came from seeing the socialist revolution is happening in much the same way as the French Revolution had happened.

In the Summer of 1917, Lenin was expanding his disciplined Party and watching for an opportunity to strike while

Trotsky heated up the unstable atmosphere with revolutionary speeches. And then it seems that Trotsky suddenly saw that this was not a replay of the French Revolution after all, and that directing the masses with speeches was not enough. He set aside his profound criticisms of Lenin's authoritarianism, joined Lenin's Party, and was publicly pre-eminent in the making of the Revolution both by effective speech-making and by defending Lenin's strategy and method against the strictures of orthodox Marxism. He became the most famous revolutionary in the world and a figure of historic significance in the course of world affairs:

"Trotsky's prominence as a Bolshevik leader... was received in Russian Jewry with mixed feelings. In the midst of total ruin, indescribable havoc, bloodshed, famine, homelessness and universal distress, Russian Jewry was confused, torn between conflicting loyalties and contradictory feelings, placed between hammer and anvil, and completely in the dark as to what the future had in store for it. Memoirists of those turbulent days reflect this state of ambivalence: 'On the one hand the Jews of Russia were proud that Trotsky stood at the pinnacle of heroic struggle against the *pogromchiks*, but, on the other hand, they feared lest, if the Bolsheviks were to fail, heaven forbid, they would have to pay for Trotsky-Bronstein'..." (Nedava, p160).

The orthodox view, most comprehensively expressed by the theorist of the mass Social-Democratic Party of Germany, Karl Kautsky, said that socialism would come about through a full development of capitalism, when capitalism began to be an obstacle to the further development of the productive forces of the economy. Socialism would take over from fully developed capitalism in a society in which the working class created by capitalism and exploited by it, had become the major social class. The transition from capitalism to socialism would be democratic because it would be the action of the class that was not only the most numerous but was also, when organised, the most powerful social body.

In Russia in 1917 there were clusters of capitalist economy, and in these clusters the working class of capitalism was intensively organised, but Russia as a whole was predominantly pre-capitalist and the industrial working class was a very small percentage of the total population. The preconditions for the construction of socialism as understood by Orthodox Marxism did not exist. But a revolutionary socialist party existed, and a revolutionary situation existed, and the political representatives of the weak capitalist force in the economy

were conducting a weak bourgeois state, and supporters of the overthrown Tsarist State—or, more accurately, the Tsarist state which had collapsed at the centre—were organising in the hinterland and preparing to restore the Tsarist state.

In these circumstances Lenin enacted a revolutionary socialist *coup d'etat* against the ineffective bourgeois state, decreed that the land now belonged to the peasants who worked it, and prepared for civil war. But the civil war was not mainly fought between the Bolsheviks and supporters of bourgeois state which they had overthrown: it was fought between the Bolsheviks and the landlord forces that had been mobilising to overthrow the bourgeois state that had replaced Tsarism. The Bolshevik revolution pre-empted the Tsarist counter-revolution in its action against the bourgeois state.

The essentials of the Bolshevik policy were what would have been the policies of a competent bourgeois state, and in the Civil War with resurgent Tsarism many elements of the overthrown Bourgeois system were driven to the support of Bolshevism.

The Bolshevik Government gave the land to the peasants and made peace with Germany, having made it clear beforehand that it would do both of these things.

Its first crisis was caused by Lenin's peace deal with Germany. The German Government had transported him from Switzerland to Finland in 1917 in return for an undertaking that, if he succeeded in seizing power, he would end the war that the Tsar had launched on Germany in 1914. But, when the moment came to make a Peace Treaty with Germany, there was strong resistance to it within the Bolshevik leadership.

Bukharin, an Old Bolshevik, more of a theorist than a politician, advocated revolutionary war against Germany in order to stir up socialist revolution in Germany. The Bolsheviks had opposed the Tsarist war, and peace propaganda had played a large part of its agitation against the Provisional Government which had continued the Tsarist war, and they had made an Armistice with Germany soon after seizing power. Trotsky, the Foreign Minister, saw that they could not now summon up the military force needed to break the Armistice and launch a revolutionary offensive with any prospect of success, but he did not want to make a Peace Treaty with Germany either. He advocated a "*Neither War, Nor Peace*" stance to leave the situation open while

waiting for the European revolution, which most of the Bolshevik leaders were convinced was imminent, to break out. He gained a large majority against Lenin on the Central Committee for this policy.

Negotiations with Germany at Brest-Litovsk went on for about three months, until March 1918. They were conducted in public and on the Bolsheviks side they consisted largely of propaganda on the rights of nations to self-determination, and they seem to have been effective in stirring up various nationalisms in the region, particularly in the Ukraine.

The Germans eventually indicated that the relationship must be either Peace or War. Lenin got his majority on the Central Committee. A Peace Treaty was signed in March. The German Army was transferred to the Western Front for the Ludendorff offensive. And "*Socialism in one country*", which became an issue of dispute within the Bolshevik leadership five or six years later, began *de facto* at that point. The Bolshevik State, having made a separate Peace, was not engaged in the European situation when the War ended in November 1918 and the chaos set in around Europe.

The Brest-Litovsk dispute also determined that the Bolshevik State was to be Leninist. Although Trotsky had only just joined the Party in the late Summer of 1917, his joining had something of the character of the merger of forces. He was publicly pre-eminent in the period of the seizure of power. Bolshevism was an affair of Lenin and Trotsky. But, during the long Brest-Litovsk dispute, Lenin schemed within the Party to exert pressure on the Central Committee—a thing Trotsky could not have done—and finally Trotsky abstained on a vote in order to let Lenin have his way. Thereafter there was no serious question but that Lenin's will was to be the directing force.

Brest-Litovsk also ended the period of Coalition Government. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries had joined the Bolsheviks in October, but resigned when the Treaty with Germany was signed. Single-party Bolshevik government became the norm.

The Civil War then began. It was not fought between the Bolsheviks and forces supporting the Provisional Government which had been overthrown. It was fought between the Bolsheviks and Tsarist forces which would probably have overthrown the Provisional Government if the Bolsheviks hadn't done so. The Western Allies intervened in support of the Tsarist reaction. This made it impossible for the bourgeoisie to act independently and many were driven to support the Bolsheviks.

The Socialist/Capitalist War was sub-merged in the Bolshevik war of defence against feudal reaction.

The Bolsheviks pressed ahead with socialist measures that were warranted by the necessity of mobilising all resources for the war of defence. There was a great leap forward into War Communism. The War ended in outright victory for the Bolshevik State. Lenin's strategy of adding the cause of peasant land ownership to the proletarian revolution paid off handsomely.

The situation in Russia at the start of 1921 is described as follows in a Preface, by an English socialist observer, to the first piece of Marxist political writing that I ever read. (I had read *Capital*, which is not political.):

"With Socialist leaders and organisations we and our fathers have been familiar for three-quarters of a century. There has been no lack of talent and even of genius among them. The movement has produced its great theorist in Marx, its orator in Jaures, its powerful tacticians like Bebel, and its influential literature in Morris, Anatole France and Shaw. It bred, however, no considerable men of action, and it was left for the Russians to do what generations of Western Socialists had spent their lives in discussing. There was in this Russian achievement an almost barbaric simplicity and directness. Here were men who really believed the formulae of our theorists and the resolutions of our Congresses. What had become for us sterilised and almost respectable orthodoxy rang to their years as a trumpet call to action. The older generations had found it difficult to pardon their sincerity. The rest of us want to understand their miracle.

"The real audacity of the Bolsheviks lay in this, that they made a proletarian revolution precisely in that country which, of all portions of the civilised world, seemed the least prepared for it by its economic development. For an agrarian revolt, for the subdivision of the soil, even for the overthrow of the old governing class, Russia was certainly ready. But any spontaneous revolution, with its foundations laid in the masses of the peasantry, would have been individualistic and not communistic. The daring of the Bolsheviks lay in their belief that the minute minority of the urban working-class could, by its concentration, its greater intelligence and its relative capacity for organisation, dominate the inert peasant mass, and give to their outbreak of land-hunger the character and form of constructive proletarian revolution. The bitter struggle among Russian parties which lasted from March, 1917, down to the defeat of Wrangel in November, 1920, was really an internecine competition among them for the leadership of the peasants... Many circumstances explain the success of the Bolsheviks, who proved once again in history the capacity of the

town, even when its population is relatively minute, for swift and concentrated action. They also had the luck to deal with opponents who committed the supreme mistake of invoking foreign aid. But none of these advantages would have availed without an immense superiority of character...

"This book is, so far, the most typical expression of the Bolshevik temperament which the revolution has produced. Characteristically it is a polemic, and not a constructive essay. Its self-confidence, its dash, even its insolence, are a true expression of the movement. Its author bears a world-famous name. Everyone can visualise the powerful head, the singularly handsome features, the athletic figure of the man. He makes in private talks the impression of decision and definiteness. He is not rapid or expansive in speech, for everything that he says is calculated and clear cut. One has the sense that one is in the presence of abounding and disciplined vitality..."

That is from H.N. Brailsford's Preface to the 1921 English translation of Trotsky's *Terrorism & Communism*, published under the title *In Defence Of Terrorism*.

✱

I was drawn into Marxist fringe politics in London in 1962 by Pat Murphy. Pat was interested in producing worthwhile socialist publications on Irish affairs and he asked me to go along with him to a discussion with a group of free-ranging Irish Marxists of various kinds. The core of the group consisted of Republicans who had taken some part in the 1956 invasion of Northern Ireland and had concluded that Republicanism needed a socialist dimension. They turned for guidance to the Connolly Association in London, which was attached to the Communist Party of Great Britain but found that it was strongly opposed to complicating pure-and-simple Anti-Partition propaganda with socialist ideology. They had gone to it because it had been denounced by the Irish Bishops. They turned from it in disillusionment to the Trotskyist movement, which was then springing up very vigorously, and they had contact with its three main forms, conducted by Gerry Healy (SLL), Tony Cliff (IS), and Ted Grant (The Week).

Our first meetings were held in the offices of *The Week*, in the Lighthouse building near King's Cross Station, at the point which is now part of the 5 Guys Burger Bar.

The group also included people who had been members of the CPGB for many years, were active on its behalf in the Trade Union movement, and had come to

the conclusion that its influence had become bad for working-class development. Gerry Golden was one of these. He had tried to get the Party leadership to remedy the conduct of the Party functionaries in the Trade Unions before the ballot-rigging scandal in the ETU broke, and had got himself beaten up for his persistence. He had, as I recall, been a member of the Free State Army but was tolerant of those who had been members of the IRA and had not quite left it. I don't know if he was a Jew, as his name suggests. We had no interest in the religious aspect of things. (I wouldn't be surprised if one or two members were practising Catholics.)

On the sidelines, though he never took part in the meetings, was the Father of Irish Trotskyism, Joe Quinn, a very thoughtful person—too thoughtful to write anything down—with whom I had many interesting conversations.

Pat Murphy was a thorough Dubliner, but was unique among Dubliners in his understanding of rural Ireland. He was comprehensively uneducated and had a unique ability to see what was going on around him and make sense of it. Like Pat, I was uneducated, but I had come straight out of peasant Ireland and was only lightly touched by urbanisation though I had been living in London for a few years

A wide range of experience was brought to bear on these discussions. As the group consisted chiefly of Trotskyists and CP members, the issue of the course of the Russian Revolution could not be set aside. Pat got a general agreement that we should go through it stage by stage to see how far we could go without disagreement, and then try to establish in the light of the facts of the situation, as far as we could discover them, what the ground of disagreement was.

The arrangement worked well for a while. There was no problem before 1922.

What was the case in 1921? The Bolshevik Party had absolute state power in a predominantly peasant society in which the peasants had been made landowners by the Bolshevik State. The industrial working class, which according to orthodox Marxism was the agent of social revolution as well as its subject, remained a very small fraction of Russian society, and the politically active working class of 1917 had been largely used up in the making of the Revolution. A new working class was being forged out of the peasantry under Bolshevik direction. There had been a kind of workers' revolt which had been suppressed by the proletarian State representing a working-class future, there

being no substantial working-class present. The expectation of most Bolshevik leaders in 1917 was that capitalist Europe was on the verge of bursting into socialist revolution, and the revolution in Russia was undertaken on the assumption that international socialist revolution would soon break out. It was widely agreed that, the Russian Revolution could not maintain itself. But a Treaty had been signed with capitalist Germany giving borders to the Russian Revolution.

What happened at the end of the World War was not European socialist revolution but something very different. In 1920 Russia invaded Poland in an attempt to break out of isolation and into European affairs. The invasion was routed by the Polish national Socialist, Joseph Pilsudski—the only European socialist with whom James Connolly had expressed long-term agreement.

The Russian proletarian revolution was isolated in Russia with the problem of building socialism in an overwhelmingly peasant—petty bourgeois—society. And Lenin suffered a disabling heart attack in 1923 and died a few months later.

Rosa Luxemburg was probably the West European Marxist closest to Lenin in revolutionary spirit: but she was strongly critical of his peasant policy as raising up an enemy of his socialist policy, of his policy of national self-determination, as being divisive of class unity, and of his disciplined and purposeful method of Party organisation as putting the Party into the face of the working-class, instead of being its representative.

In the course of 1918, she wrote in prison a pamphlet about the Russian Revolution which was published after her release in November. The first chapter was enthusiastically supportive of it. She was carried away by it. But all the following chapters repeated her pre-war criticism of Lenin's method of organisation and his strategy of adopting aims that were properly the business of the bourgeoisie: land distribution and nationality.

She was particularly furious that during the Brest-Litovsk negotiations—

"The formula of the right of the various nationalities to determine their fate independently... was proclaimed as a special battle cry of Lenin... and it constituted the entire platform of the Bolsheviks at Brest-Litovsk."

She said that Lenin's obstinacy in the matter, after it had served its only useful function as a slogan for use against the Provisional Government, and the publicity

it received during the months of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, was creating nations where none had existed before, and was thereby raising anti-Socialist forces. She mentioned the Ukraine particularly in this connection.

Lenin was disabled by a stroke in 1923 and died in 1924. Stalin held the Party to Lenin's obstinate course with results that are obvious today in the Eastern region of the European Union.

The Brest-Litovsk nation-states, in their independence within the vacillating bourgeois-Imperialist system of the inter-War era, were usually represented in fiction as comic-opera states. I think particularly of the influential thrillers of Eric Ambler.

They fell within the Leninist sphere in 1945, not by Russian conquest but by the Russian defeat of Nazi Germany which had been brought to European dominance in the War that resulted from the devious British manipulation of European affairs that it would be charitable to call 'bungling'.

The world was divided between Washington and Moscow, between Capitalism and Communism, and each was free to keep its own half an order as it saw fit. Nothing else was viable in the world at the end of Britain's second World War in forty years. Washington kept its half an order by regularly invading and overthrowing Governments that it considered to be deviant. The first, as I recall, was Guatemala in the early 1950s.

Moscow, which had a strong political base within each of the East European states, did it without invasion—until 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia. But in 1956 Leninism, under the name of Stalinism, had been denounced by Moscow, and the myth of Leninist democracy had been invented.

A few years ago the influential do-it-yourself Internet Encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, had an entry on the B&ICO, which said that we had supported the invasion of Czechoslovakia. A reference in the *Irish Times* was given as proof. BICO was classified as "*Stalinist*" because it held that Stalin continued Lenin's system.

What BICO did was to describe the Czech/Russian conflict as a conflict between two states that were reverting to capitalist political economy, one slightly faster than the other. We were surprised that the nation of the Good Soldier Schweik was behaving so rashly, and were inclined to assert the national principle in the situation, but we accepted the NATO/Warsaw Pact arrangement of Europe as stabilising and had no wish to precipitate

the stand-off into war. It was only when the Warsaw Pact dissolved and NATO became a force of global aggression that we opposed it. In all of this we ran counter to the general Left.

The *Irish Times*, a Protestant Ascendancy Unionist paper that was surviving without visible means of support was trying to establish a base in nationalist Ireland by recruiting intellectually disabled Marxists to itself. If it did say what Wikipedia alleged, I assume the writing was done one of these lapsed Marxists whose dogmatic mindset, which could only understand stereotypes, had accompanied him in his metamorphosis..

The Brest-Litovsk nations were held within the region that the Red Army entered in the course of defeating the German Army and, in accordance with Lenin's fixed idea about nationality, they were organised as nation-states within the socialist culture of the State that had broken Nazi power in Europe. Each developed a sense of its national history under Soviet tutelage operating through the substantial Communist stratum that was present in each of them, but they did not have the freedom to leave the Warsaw Pact system and join NATO, any more than states in the Western capitalist segment of the world were free to go Communist and join the Soviet alliance. That was an absolute in the condition of the world as it was during a long generation after the liberation/conquest of much of Europe by the Red Army in its resistance of the Nazi assault on Russia, which was a German assault.

If the matter had been left to the British Empire (the hegemonic Power under the Versailles/ League of Nations system), or to Germany itself, the probability is that Europe would have settled down contentedly within the Fascist system that had sprung up everywhere independently of Nazism, and that was belatedly adopted in Germany when the ultra-democracy of the Versailles system was generating chaos.

Britain facilitated the restoration of German power in the form of the Nazi State for five years before suddenly, and capriciously, deciding to make war on it in March 1939 without any serious intention of waging that war itself. Nazism flourished under British handling of it, whether by collaboration until March 1939 or a merely provocative hostility thereafter. It was broken by Russia. After the Russian victory became a virtual certainty at the end of 1943, Britain scrambled back to the Continent did take over as much ground as possible from a wilting Germany—

ground that would otherwise have been liberated/conquered by Russia.

The Continent was divided more or less where the Armies met. Antagonistic world systems were developed behind the frontier lines. There was no freedom on either side for any state to go over to the

other side, and any serious attempt to do so would have led to war.

(What happened in Russia after 1922 will be returned to in a future article, along with discussion of it in the group that began to call itself the Irish Communist Group.)

Brendan Clifford

Review, Part 3

[The Editor regrets that this instalment was inadvertently omitted from the October ikssue.]

Vincent Morley and the Poets

I began a discussion of Vincent Morley's latest book, *The Popular Mind in Eighteenth-century Ireland*, in last month's *Irish Political Review*. Up to a point, Morley has a cast-iron case. He shows that there is consistent hostility to the (English, Protestant) established order in the Irish-language literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. For a long time this is expressed in Jacobitism, but afterwards it mutates in a variety of political forms. The subversive Gaelic culture, which is mainly expressed in poetry, is sustained by a broadly shared view of the history of Ireland. In the early 19th century this Gaelic conception of Irish history begins to migrate into English-language culture on a large scale.

Morley can show all this with a wealth of evidence. But he misunderstands what he demonstrates. His work is flawed by a basic misinterpretation, which is concentrated in the following passage:

"Poets did not constitute a 'profession' in eighteenth-century Ireland. At most, an author might receive a once-off payment if a eulogy of his happened to please a local gentleman, or be plied with drink if one of his songs struck a chord with his neighbours. Neither am I aware of any eighteenth-century poet who claimed to be descended from one of the hereditary bardic families of earlier centuries, although a small number were descended from other branches of the *aos dána*. Far from being members of a profession in terminal decline, or the degraded descendants of professional forebears, the creators of Irish literature in the eighteenth century were a heterogeneous set of 'new men' drawn from diverse backgrounds. In social status, they ranged from a labourer like Art Mac Cumhaigh to a member of the minor gentry like Piaras Mac Gearailt, but most of them belonged to the middling sort: they were tenant farmers, priests, publicans and craftsmen. If any occupation predominated, it was undoubtedly that of schoolmaster. For all of them, whatever their station in life, versifying was an

activity of their leisure hours: they composed as others read, sang, recited, told stories, copied manuscripts, or played the fiddle. As might be expected, most Irish-language authors lived in rural areas but some were residents of Dublin (e.g. Pól Mac Aogáin, Seán and Tadhg Ó Neachtáin) or of Cork City (e.g. Uilliam English, Éadbhard de Nóglá, Seán Ó Muláin). They were nearly all Catholics, though a small number were members of the Established Church either from birth or through conversion (Micheál Coimín and Pilib Mac Brádaigh are respective examples). The only common bond among them that I can discern is the obvious one: an interest in Irish letters. This interest was often associated with scribal activity, and manuscripts in the hands of several prominent poets are extant. None the less, some of the most prolific were blind (Séamas Dall Mac Cuarta, Liam Dall Ó hIfearnáin, Antoine Ó Raiftearaí) and a few are known to have been illiterate (Máire Bhuí Ní Laoire, one of a handful of female authors, comes to mind). In addition, many anonymous compositions are preserved in the literary manuscripts and it seems reasonable to suspect that a higher proportion of these may have been the work of illiterate versifiers from humble backgrounds. I cannot conceive how such a disparate and scattered body of amateur authors could have either developed or maintained a sectional perspective of their own that diverged in any significant respect from the outlook of the people among whom they lived and for whom they wrote" (*The Popular Mind*, pp. 5-6).

Much of this is true in detail, though it doesn't support the central argument. And more of it *might* be true—for example, what is said about Máire Bhuí Ní Laoire. Máire Bhuí lived near Keimeneigh in mid-west Cork, which was where the Rockite agrarian rebellion was sparked off in 1822. The Rockites audaciously attacked a body of soldiers and tried, unsuccessfully but heroically, to rescue their prisoners. To celebrate the event, Máire Bhuí composed

the famous *Cath Chéim an Fhia*. She was obviously a woman of bold and adventurous spirit. At the age of 18 she had run away from her mid-Cork home and gone to Skibbereen to be with the man she intended to marry, a horse-dealer. Later they bought a small farm near Ballingearry, and later again they moved to a larger farm near Keimeneigh.

Various songs of hers have survived, including some good examples of the traditional vision-poem: political *aislingí*, love *aislingí*, and mixtures of both. I note that she evidently has the respect of local poets, in a region which did not lack poetic tradition; that one of them calls her "finest flower of the authors", *a bhláth is craobh na n-údar* (a word that would usually have connotations of literacy); furthermore, that she has a taste for the Trojan War and seems to do Greek mythology as well as most. Yet the local priest who first edited her poems in the 1930s said that she couldn't read or write, without further details or discussion. And it may indeed have been so—she perhaps never wished to read or write, since if she'd wanted to, is it likely that such a strong-willed person would have let anything stop her? Maybe it was so . . . or maybe it was not so. I'm surprised that Triona Ní Shíocháin, her most recent editor, never seems to have doubts.

HIGH SPIRITS AND CLEAR INTELLECT

Details aside, essentially Morley's argument is wrong, and it misses the whole point of what happened in Ireland. An ancient culture fought with extraordinary tenacity to continue its life and evolve in its own way, against a teleologically-driven 'modernity' imposed from outside. The 18th century poets were at the heart of this culture of resistance. They were not 'new men', if that signifies men without tradition. Rather, they were the representatives at that point in time of an ancient Irish poetic culture which went back beyond Christianity. They were drawing on a vast heritage, though their access to it was disrupted by the multiple aggressions of the occupying power.

And of course, they say all this themselves. They say it all the time!

One of the outstanding 18th century poets, Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill, died in 1754. (At least one of his Jacobite songs, *Sé mo laoch mo ghille mear*, is still in the repertoire.) In response, Seán Ó Tuama called a general assembly of the poets of County Limerick and the south of Ireland generally, to be held in Croom on the 21st of October of that year, for the

purpose of reviving and emulating the generous, clear-minded and fruitful activities practised by *Seán geal Clárach mac Domhnaill, árd-ollamh Inse iathghlaise oileánaighe Éireann ina chomhaimsir*. "Chief poet of Ireland", *árd-ollamh na h-Éireann*: that's the title which is given in the annals to Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh in the 14th century. Seán Ó Tuama refers to his summons as a *scol-ghairm*: that is the term which Gofraidh Fionn uses for a summons to an extraordinary assembly of poets. Ó Tuama announces himself as one of the principal judges of poetry, *aon de phríomh-bhreitheamhain na suadh-éigse*; that's close enough to the term Gofraidh Fionn uses, *breitheamh sgol*, for the person who would issue such a summons.

Ó Tuama said that they must face a very difficult situation boldly and with high spirits, and above all in solidarity. The poets needed their sense of unity. He called on them—

"to help one another in a friendly way to cultivate high spirits and clear intellect and to exhibit those qualities always before those who follow us, as the many-gifted poet whom I've mentioned, and numerous forebears of ours, did from one period to another. For the little that survives of our inspired Irish language, not submerged in oblivion by all the evils that have assaulted it up to now, will soon decline to nothing unless we make our best endeavour to cooperate lovingly and willingly so as to keep it alive".

(... *chum cuidiughadh go cáir-deamhaíl ria aroile le greann agus le glé-mhian do chothughadh agus do shíor-choimeád diaidh ar ndiaidh fá chomhair ár lucht leanamhna fein, amhaíl do rinne an t-éigse iolbhudhach adubhramair agus mórán eile dár sinsearaibh romhainn ó aimsir go h-aimsir. Óir dá laighead mhaireas anois dár dteangain ghaois-bhriathraigh Gaedhilge gan dul i mbáthadh agus i mór-dhearmad tré gach doilgheastré n-ar hionnarbadh í go nuige seo, rachaidh go comair go neimh-nídh muna bhféacham meón-dícheallach le cuidiughadh go caoin caomhchumainn le chéile go toileamhail re n-a coimeád ar bun.— Éigse na Máighe, p. 215).*

Is this how someone would address "a disparate and scattered body of amateur authors"? Sean Ó Tuama, at least, must have thought a bit more of them than that.

THE "NEW MEN"

As for the 18th century poets not being descended from the earlier poetic families: it is probable that many of them were, though they don't make an issue of it. The point, so far as they are concerned, is their descent from the *saoithe* and *draoithe* in general. But, for example, John O'Dono-

van traced the genealogy of John O'Daly, the 19th century Dublin-based publisher of poetry, back to the Ó Dálaigh poets of 13th century Cavan. Maybe, if he'd cared to, he could have done something similar for the Ó Dálaigh poets who were still around in Munster in the late 18th century? There was one in Mitchelstown, and there was Séamas Ó Dálaigh in Limerick City, a friend of Seán Ó Tuama's and the author of some stirring anti-English poems. These Ó Dálaigh, and the prominent 18th century poets called Ó hIfearnáin, Ó Maoil Chiaráin, Mac Craith and Ó Murchadha (surnames found among the professional poets), and the lesser lights called Mac Aogáin and Ó Dabhoireann (Brehon family surnames) probably all had some literary tradition in their families. There is no dispute about the two Mac Cruitín, Aindrias and Aodh Buidhe, who came from a line of chroniclers.

However, all of this is beside the point. If what is meant by "new men" is people who were not from established poetic families, then we can grant that many "new men" seem to appear in poetry in the 17th and 18th centuries. But we shouldn't exaggerate the difference between this state of affairs and what obtained in the 15th and 16th centuries, when the professional poets were powerful. There had always been such "new men"! The hereditary families had never, in fact, had a total monopoly.

Eleanor Knott observed:

"There was a tendency to restrict certain professions to certain families, but as we see fresh names appearing in the poetic profession again and again, there was evidently some means by which those not immediately of the blood could at least learn to make verse" (*The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUigín*, intro.).

But this is too restrained a way of saying it! Formally there was a rule (or for some there may have been a rule) that a high-status poet had to be the son and grandson of high-status poets. In reality, "those not immediately of the blood" could break into the system, if they had the talent, and could reach the highest levels. (Even the surnames of some of the poetic families bear witness to this: Mac an Bhaired, Ón Cháinte, both mean that someone is descended from a low-status poet.)

One of the last great flowerings of poetry occurred roughly during the active life of Hugh O'Neill, from about 1580 to 1616. It seems that for about a century previously the poetry schools had been

broadening their intake. The sons of the nobility were coming in greater numbers to be educated by the poets. Some of them proved to have literary talent: Maghnus Ó Domhnaill, author of one of the most important lives of Columcille, and Domhnall Mac Cárthaigh, first Earl of Clancarty and a fine love poet, spring to mind.

As time went on, with the great political upheavals, the tendency for people from such families to emerge as literary figures became more marked. In the 18th century we find poets named Ó Domhnaill, Ó Briain, Ó Conchúir, Ó Súilleabháin, Mac Carthaigh, Mac Gearailt, for example. But we find poets of those names in the 17th century also, and in some cases earlier. (In the mid-17th century we encounter poetic MacCarthys who are father and son: Donnchadh an Dúna and his son Éamonn.)

How far these developments had gone by the last years of the poetry schools, around 1650, is hard to say. How much further they might have gone, if allowed to evolve, is anybody's guess.

PRESERVING THE CULTURE

In his absurd attempt to separate the 18th century poets from their predecessors, Morley contradicts his own argument again and again. He acknowledges, for example, that there was a shared view of Irish history. Where did it come from? From Keating, and from distillations of Keating, or of materials used by Keating, in lengthy poems. But what is Keating's own history? It is a distillation of the culture of the professional poets and poet-historians, which they had preserved down to his times, and which in all probability he first encountered at the poetry school in Burgess, County Tipperary, run by the Mac Craith.

Furthermore, the 18th and 19th century poets continue to copy, circulate and read Keating for themselves. Morley cannot avoid coming upon the evidence, but he either downplays it or misinterprets it. For example, there's a reference by Pádraig Ó Gallóglaiigh (1820s) to the original English invasion of Ireland, for which King Henry II was given approval by Pope Adrian IV:

Henry chuir bréag i gcéill do Adrian uair

Henry who once convinced Adrian of a lie

Morley comments:

"It is striking that Ó Gallóglaiigh offered a defence of the pope's actions: the pontiff had not been motivated by ill-will or greed when he bestowed the lordship of Ireland on Henry II, but had been the

honest victim of the king's lies. This singular interpretation may have been a product of the increasingly clericalist atmosphere in the opening decades of the nineteenth century" (p. 129).

What is singular here is the academic's comment, not the poet's interpretation. That interpretation is not a new growth of the 19th century. We find it two centuries earlier, in none other than Keating. By the terms of Adrian's Bull, he says,

"Henry II was bound to build up and reform the Catholic faith which had fallen down in Ireland. For it is not likely that the Pope would put that condition in his bull unless some party had given him to understand that the Faith had lapsed in Ireland. But whatever party told him this told a lie" (*History of Ireland*, Vol. III, p. 353).

And Keating wasn't the first to say so: Philip O'Sullivan Beare (*Historiae Catholicae Hiberniae Compendium*, tom. 2, bk. 1, ch. 7) had said it before him.

The obvious conclusion is that Pádraig Ó Gallóglaiigh had read Keating. But Morley prefers his poets not to read, wherever possible.

This means he must also downplay the vast scribal activity, though he can't ignore it entirely. But it's something astonishing: I don't know if anything like it can be found elsewhere in the world. These "amateur authors" didn't just produce their contemporary love songs etc. and political poetry, keeping up high spirits and optimism as far as possible, maintaining hostility to the imposed order, watching like hawks for British reverses in Europe, America or wherever, celebrating these in poems, often attaching them to some of the all-purpose prophecies, and looking forward to a day when Ireland would be free to grow and evolve again. They also set themselves to preserve the vast Irish literature of the past.

There was no grand strategy. Seán Ó Tuama, quoted above, and many others have the idea of a large collaborative activity, but that's all. Simply, all over the country those who could did whatever they could.

Twentieth century editors bear witness to the results of those labours. All but two of the 30-odd manuscripts used by Cecile O'Rahilly for her edition of five long political poems of the 1640s and '50s are from the 18th and 19th centuries. Going back to the 16th century poet Tadhg Dall Ó hUigín: a good three-quarters of the more than 70 manuscripts used by Eleanor Knott are 18th/19th century. Going back further to the 13th century, to the poems of Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe: 18th /

19th century manuscripts make up slightly over half of the principal manuscripts listed by his editor (most of the others being 17th century). And, even with the very earliest of the extant poetry, we find that the case is often similar.

There's a tremendous poem called *Amhra Shenáin*, composed by Dallán Forgaill about the year 600. It's a rhapsodic address to Saint Senán of Scatterry Island in the Shannon Estuary. To all appearances, it draws much of its material and poetic power from old rhapsodic poems to the moon and the River Shannon. About 30 years ago Liam Breatnach produced a miserable, pedantic, anti-poetic edition of this masterpiece. Essentially for no better reason than to fit in with a contemporary academic fashion, he claimed that the poem was composed by Cormac Ó Cuilleannáin about the year 900. What concerns me here, though, is the manuscripts: about half of those listed by Breatnach are from the 18th and 19th centuries.

THE "SONS OF THE POETS"

One of those who preserved the *Amhra Shenáin* was a Clareman called Mícheál Ó Raghallaigh. In a manuscript of his, written in 1853, he asks the reader not to be too hard on him for the poor quality of the script, because he's a tradesman who has compiled this collection in his spare time. For that reason it cannot be as neat as something written by a trained scribe:

"A léitheoir ionúin, ná tabhair aithis nó milleán orm tré olcas an scríbhinn atá sa leabhar so, óir is fear ceirde mé agus is im aimsir dhíomhaoín do rinneas an chnuasacht seo. Dá bhrí sin ní féidir é bheith chomh slachtmhar le scríbhinn do dhéanfadh fíorchléireach" (cited by Eoghan Ó hAnluain, *Seon Ó hUaithnín*, p. 10).

Ó Raghallaigh was writing at a point of rupture, when this huge endeavour was finally going over into the English language, the institutional frameworks and the print culture. But his remarks are reminiscent of what Tadhg Ó Rodaighe, a poet living in Fenagh, County Leitrim, said a century and a half previously. In a long letter in English to Edward Llwyd, Ó Rodaighe explained that traditionally the poets and historians possessed estates which supported their schools, but their lands had been lost in the confiscations and the schools could not continue. This had resulted in a serious decline of knowledge. However, he himself was doing what he could: he had written up histories and genealogies. Though he didn't have the specialised training of a historian, he was

"a gent. that has more antient books of Ireland, and that learned, and that understands them as well at least, as any now in Ireland, all which pains I take for my country's sake, for my own satisfaction, and to preserve so noble and singular a monument of honour and antiquity" (Seosamh Ó Muirí, *Tadhg Ó Rodaighe, an scolaidhe tréitheach*, p. 23).

Ó Rodaighe was always conscious of how much had been lost. When some of his fellow-poets overpraised him, he warned them of his limits. Among the blind, he said, the one-eyed man is esteemed for acute vision; I am the one-eyed man, who has no good grounding in perfect reason:

*Fear aenshúil idir dhallaibh
bidh faoi mheas mar ruinn-dhearcaigh.
Is mé an fear aenshúil nach maith
a réasún foirfe fosaidh.*

But another Connachtman of that time, Seán Ó Gadhra, was more upbeat. A long poem of his is conventionally titled *Tuireadh na Gaeilge agus teastas na h-Éireann*, "Lament for the Irish Language and Testimony of Ireland"—but the title must be somebody's blunder: it is not appropriate to the content, which is about the "silver lining", cultural strengths that have emerged in a time of catastrophe. Ó Gadhra reviews essentially positive developments in the writing of Irish history over the past 80 years or so. There was, first of all, Keating, who wrote in Irish, confronting all the slanderers of Ireland from Cambrensis on. John Lynch, in *Cambrensis Eversus*, built on Keating's work in Latin. Sir James Ware wrote truthfully in Latin about ancient Ireland, assembling much detailed information. Colgan and O'Clery gathered the lives of the saints. And Peter Walsh wrote elegantly in English, telling the story of Ireland from Partholon, and following on from Keating.

The most recent group of those with a powerful understanding of Irish, who tirelessly gathered every work and probed the author's right to the roots, lived in Connacht:

*Is i gConnachta bhí an chuideachta
déidheannach
bhí cumasach i dtuigse na Gaedhilge,
do chruinnigh gan tuirse gach saethar
is do scrúdadh na h-ughdair gofréamha.*

This group consisted of Ruaidhrí Ó Flaithbheartaigh (author of *Ogygia*, a work on ancient Ireland composed in Latin), Tadhg Ó Rodaighe, and Seán Ó Gadhra. With no false modesty, we are told that nothing defeated Ó Gadhra!—no history in Latin, English or Irish was too tough for him. And those three Connachtmen mastered everything in Irish, including

the many very difficult old metres with their complex rules (the poet says with perfect truth that *ní feasach i Laidin ná i Gréigis/ leath righlach le riama na Gaedhilge*, "Latin or Greek do not know/ even half the rules for rhyme in Irish"). Through the literature they made their way into the marvellous atmosphere of Gaelic Ireland, as it once was. Currently the Gaels were dispossessed, they had nothing; however,

*Sé an Dia bhí an uair sin, an Dia
céadna.*

The God who was then is the same God now.

Ó Gadhra specifically says that these three Connachtmen had no connection with the families of poets or historians, nor did they have poetry schools of their own. As he puts it, the authors mentioned here, who wrote about the Gaels without deceit, had no professional community and were not related to any of the druids of poetry; all they had was the noble spirit and sound sense of strong men:

*Dáimh ná gaol le draoi den éigse
ní raibh ag na hughdair dubhraidh san
réim seo
do scríobh gan chlaon ar Ghaedlaibh,
acht uaisle is stuaim na dtréan-fhear.*

Ó Gadhra was the only one of them still living. (So the poem was written not earlier than 1716, when Roderick O'Flaherty died.) He ends with essential optimism about what can be done in Gaelic culture. Now that the histories are in Latin and in English, the cultured people will preserve them in Irish; and may the sons of the poets reap the reward! It's known who they are in the regions of Ireland:

*Ó tá na staracha i Laidin 's i mBéarla,
beidh na saoithe dá gcaomhnadh i
nGaedhilg;
is bíodh an duais ag luain na n-éigeas,
tá fios chia h-iad i n-iathaibh Éireann.
(*Irisleabharna Gaeilge*, 1905, p. 715).*

Or: wherever you are, you know who you are!—And they did know. "The sons of the poets" knew who they were. Being who they were, they set to work.

THE THEFT OF THE AMHRÁN

"In the upheavals of the Confederate War and the Cromwellian conquest a new style of polemical verse in Irish appeared which abandoned the complex syllabic metres of the professional poets in favour of popular stressed metres and used a language that was close to contemporary speech. The authors of these works were not members of the

former learned caste, which was in terminal decline by the middle of the seventeenth century, but they were men of some education and standing in the community" (*The Popular Mind*, p. 36).

Morley has got this all wrong. It's a shame that he's not allowed to read *The Poems of Geoffrey O'Donoghue*, since it's published by Aubane and hasn't come through the academic mill. If he did, he might get some idea of the poetry of the Confederate war. His knowledge of this probably comes from writers like Michelle O'Riordan, a lazy professional academic who chose to deal only with published poems—though she missed many of those also—and wrote her survey without taking a fresh look at the manuscripts. (See her essay in *Ireland from Independence to Occupation 1641-1660*, ed. Jane H. Ohlmeyer.)

To begin with, much of the Confederate war poetry is in those complex syllabic metres, including some of the finest agitational poems. Take, for example, Pádraigín Haicéad's rousing blast against the 1646 peace, *Músgail do mhisneach, a Bhanba* ("Rouse up your courage, Ireland!"); Toirdhealbhadh Ó Conchubhair's scornful poems about the Fabian tactics of Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill's army in 1647 and about the mess that Ormond made of the siege of Dublin in 1649; and the poems composed by Gofraidh Óg Mac an Bhaird in the early days of the war.

A tremendous poem from the early months of 1642, calling on Viscount Muskerry to join the rebellion, is composed partly in a resounding, multiply-rhymed song metre and partly in one of the syllabic metres. Its author was Diarmaid Óg Ó Murchadha, who there is every reason to believe was a professional poet. There are other poems which are entirely in song-metre or a variant called *caoineadh* (the lament metre, with a constant é (ay) sound in the second last syllable of the lines). The most dramatic of them was addressed to Murchadh Ó Briain, the fearsome baron of Inchiquin, early in 1648, calling on him to come over from the Parliamentarians to the side of the King.

One could say that the language of the poem to Inchiquin is close to contemporary speech. (It includes a few lines in fluent English, which fit the metre nonetheless.) In metre it's quite similar to, or only slightly more elaborate than three or four of those five or six long poems from the 1640s and '50s which Morley knows about. And it was composed by a professional poet, Seán Ó Críagáin (who is praised in two poems by Dáibhí Ó Bruadair, the favourite pupil in his poetry school).

Some of the stressed-metre war poems, though, are on a higher level of art. The finest of them are by Pádraigín Haicéad. They're packed with thought, they move fluently, and they're marvels of harmonious rhyming. These poems are not in syllabic metre, but no one could say they aren't complex. And where does one find those complex stressed-metre poems emerging?

Some may find it surprising, but the answer is: among the professional poets. During the late 16th century, in the latest and perhaps most spectacular of their literary larcenies, the professional poets 'stole' the *amhrán*, the popular stressed song metre. Tadhg Dall Ó hUigín and other master-poets produced various forms of the *amhrán* which were highly artistic, with elaborate vowel-rhymes and other adornments. And the lead given by Tadhg Dall etc. was followed not only by Haicéad and Ó Bruadair in the 17th century but by Seán Clárach and Seán Ó Tuama in the 18th.

Tadhg Dall has a version of the *amhrán* with the same five rhymes running through all the lines, from beginning to end of a fluently-moving poem that communicates thoughts without padding. One will find that identical metre in several poems by Seán Clárach, Seán Ó Tuama and others in the marvellous collection compiled by Risteárd Ó Foghludha, *Éigse na Máighe*. There was plenty of less elaborate poetry, of course. But the leading poets kept their literary standards high and they set the tone.

Daniel Corkery knew a few things about the craft of poetry, in English and French as well as Irish. In the essay he wrote for *Éigse na Máighe* he remarked on the craftsmanship that was evident in all of Seán Ó Tuama's poetry, or in any one of his lines. Ó Tuama was never satisfied with anything less than the best. And his friend the Mangaire Sógach wasn't far behind him.

Let's take a verse to illustrate. In 1745, a year that was promising for a while after Bonnie Prince Charlie landed, Ó Tuama addressed a poem specifically to Seán Clárach and generally to all the poets. In the opening verse what he 'literally' says is this: poets of Ireland, what's this depression that's come on your clever company, though before this time you were active, all of you, making your musical art? See the help of God near us, and a secure happy life: the leader of our army is coming, and his troops are powerful and full of joy.— But you might as well try translating Mozart from music:

*A shaoithibh Éireann créad an tuirse
D'éirigh anois don dáimh ghlic,
Is roimhe seo féin gur saothrach sibh
Go léir ag seinm dánta?*

*Féach cobhair Dé i bhfogus saoghail
sochair sásta*

*Ár dtaoiseach féine ag téacht 's a truíp
Go tréan le h-iomad áthais.*

(*Éigse na Máighe*, p. 115)

To hear the fifth line with its internal rhymes the 'i' has to be elided, *saoghail* is one syllable, and the first syllable of each three is stressed:

**Féach cobhair Dé ' bhfogus saoghail
sochair...**

The six verses are all on this pattern.

An "amateur author"? Will you meet a verse like that in a writers' workshop?

ABSENT PRESENCES

Morley deals effectively with Louis Cullen, the main academic critic of *The Hidden Ireland*. There are other critics who are never mentioned at all, though one feels they ought to be. They are suspiciously absent. Or is it just that they go unnoticed, though in fact they're somewhere here, after all? I think those critics have a quiet presence in Morley's book, and it isn't a positive one.

The people I am referring to are Sean O'Faoláin and Frank O'Connor. They were not academic writers, of course, which is doubtless why Morley scorns to mention them. But a previous generation of Celtic Studies mandarins, Daniel Binchy *et al.*, gave them associate mandarin status. It was freely acknowledged that the instinct of the literary man could lead him to true insights—I remember Proinsias Mac Cana citing O'Connor in one of his learned articles, and saying exactly that. O'Faoláin and O'Connor were not shy about promoting their ideas, and they have had broader and deeper influence than Cullen or anyone of that kind.

In the present context, what they principally had to say was that the professional poets were monsters of selfishness and anti-popular snobbery and bigotry. They were "tribal poets" (O'Connor's term), mere cynical mouthpieces of individual lords, without any kind of larger view. O'Faoláin in *King of the Beggars* allows that there was some improvement among their 18th century successors, an evolution towards a more democratic spirit. But the noxious heritage of the ancient *filidh* was too strong, and by the 19th century all those poets could be worthy of was extermination. Daniel O'Connell is specifically described as "their exterminator" (*King of the Beggars*, 1970 ed., p. 36).

Yes, O'Faoláin does use that word—at less than a century's remove from the Great

Famine—with a positive implication, with sardonic approval! He knew its normal connotations, but by his brutality he doubtless intended to show his seriousness.

It may be the influence of such thinking, reinforced by some of the professional Celtic scholars, which makes Morley so anxious that the 18th century poets should escape a tainted association. And it's all unnecessary. The *filidh* weren't such monsters. But this theme must be left till later.

John Minahane

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The Naming, Name-Dropping, And Shaming Of A Child Sex Abuser—And A Questionable Testimonial From Fintan O’Toole

On Tuesday, October 3rd, journalist Tom Humphries was found guilty of two counts of defilement of a child in Dublin between 5th December 2010, and 19th February 2011, and four counts of inviting a child to participate in a sexually explicit, obscene or indecent act between January 2010 and March 2011, to which charges Humphries had pleaded guilty.

“Defilement of a child” is the equivalent of statutory rape under Irish legislation. The fullest coverage of the conviction—in all its nauseatingly graphic detail—was carried in the *Irish Times*. And well it might, for Humphries was its own star journalist. The heading and subheading read:

“Tom Humphries ‘exchanged thousands of texts’ with girl. Many were sexually explicit and included obscene pictures from Humphries.”

It also reported:

“The journalist, who has not written for *The Irish Times* since 2011 and was let go from the newspaper after pleading guilty to sexual offences charges last March, went on to sexually abuse the girl on five occasions after asking her to meet him.”

It further reported:

“Mr Hartnett (defence counsel) handed in two testimonials about Humphries’ journalism career and his involvement in the GAA. One was from the ‘chief sports writer of the *Sunday Times*’ who called Humphries a ‘hugely regarded, hugely respected national figure’. The other was from a ‘well-known sportsman’ in the GAA who detailed Humphries’ volunteer work in the GAA and expressed ‘shock and disappointment’ at his offending.”

The report concluded:

“In a statement issued on Tuesday, *The Irish Times* said it was advised of allegations against Humphries in March 2011. Humphries has not written for the newspaper since then and was suspended in March 2014 when he was formally charged with the offences. His employment was terminated ‘with immediate effect’ in March of this year when he pleaded guilty. ‘The disclosure that Mr Humphries was the subject of serious allegations and of a criminal investigation was a source of shock and distress to his colleagues’, the statement said.”

Humphries had himself waxed elo-

quently on such evils during his *Irish Times* heyday. “*We must bite the bullet on abuse*” had been the headline on 16th February 1998, when he wrote of “*the cunning of paedophiles*”, and he continued: “*Sport, with its youth and its trips and its opportunity for building relationships between coaches and participants, is a fine feeding ground for those few sick minds who prey on kids.*”

Two years later, however, he maintained that child sex abuse was primarily a Catholic Church issue, claiming on 9th May 2000: “*Now I’ve seen so many Christian Brothers who once had nicknames and reputations leaving courtrooms with anoraks on their heads and cuffs on their wrists that I wonder. I search the reports for familiar names. I take care with the jokes that I make.*”

Following Humphries’ own conviction this October, the *Irish Independent* set about “outing” that fellow-journalist of Humphries who had provided such a testimonial in court. On October 5th the *Indo* heading read:

“*Sunday Times* silent over letter written for disgraced journalist. The *Sunday Times* has failed to say whether it condones the actions of one of its senior journalists, who provided a testimonial letter for paedophile Tom Humphries.”

On October 6th it named him, and charged:

“*The Sunday Times* has failed to say whether it condones the supply of a reference letter written by sports journalist David Walsh for child sex abuser Tom Humphries. The testimonial from *The Sunday Times* chief sports writer was handed in to a court earlier this week as shocking details emerged of how Humphries groomed and defiled a teenage girl.”

On October 9th, the *Irish Independent* headline was “*Call to sack writer over court letter supporting paedophile Tom Humphries*”.

The *Irish Times* was not going to have its agenda set by a newspaper that was continuing to outstrip it in sales, and it had refrained from any mention of Walsh up to that point. The very same day, however—Monday, October 9th—saw it come to

the conclusion that it could not ignore a significant radio broadcast earlier in the morning. Its headline ran:

“David Walsh told Today FM in 2012: Tom Humphries a ‘fine man’. Interview took place after allegations against former *Irish Times* sports writer became public.”

This *Irish Times* report continued:

“Journalist David Walsh described Tom Humphries as ‘a fine man’ on numerous occasions during an interview recorded in 2012 which has just been broadcast. Humphries, a former *Irish Times* sports journalist, will be sentenced later this month for grooming a girl when she was 14 years old and sexually abusing her over two years. Walsh, chief sports writer for the *Sunday Times*, provided a character reference for Humphries along with a former GAA player. Today FM’s *The Last Word* programme broadcast a previously unheard interview on Monday between Matt Cooper and Mr Walsh, recorded in December 2012, but not then broadcast. No charges had been brought against Humphries at the time of the interview but the allegations were in the public domain and a Garda investigation had started. Cooper asked Walsh was it ‘a little bit provocative’ to describe Humphries as “a fine man too” in his book *Seven Deadly Sins: My Pursuit of Lance Armstrong* given ‘what is out there in the public’. ‘No I don’t believe it’s provocative at all, Matt. I believe it’s a statement that I believe to be true and we’re not really in a position here to discuss the minutes of the case. That will be decided’, Walsh responded.”

The *Irish Times* was indeed correct in recording that Humphries’ name had already been in the public domain by the time of Walsh’s December 2012 testimonial on radio, even if no charges had yet been brought. “*THE STAR WRITER, THE CAMOGIE PLAYER (14) AND THEIR SEX AFFAIR*” and “*Writer Humphries accused of underage sex with GAA girl (14)*” had been the headlines of the *Sunday World* front page story on 17th April 2011. That report detailed:

“The *Sunday World* today names the top sports writer accused of having a sordid sexual relationship with a schoolgirl camogie player. Irish Times journalist Tom Humphries is the man at the centre of the sex scandal which has rocked the GAA and the media... Gardai plan to quiz the 48-year-old father-of-two about the allegations which surfaced when members of his family found a mobile phone said to contain naked photographs and explicit texts... Senior Garda sources say they believe there is enough evidence to charge him with abusing the girl... They have copies of text messages, email exchanges and sordid picture messages exchanged

between Humphries and the teenager over the last 18 months. The ‘relationship’ began when the girl was just 14 and continued up until just three weeks ago... Even if Humphries eventually argues that any sexual contact with the teenager was consensual, this is not a valid defence under the law and he could be charged with statutory rape.”

The *Irish Times* might have looked before it belatedly leaped. The more substantial issue for which Walsh might have been condemned was his behaviour this October when, even after Humphries had pleaded guilty last March to all the squalid crimes with which he had been charged, Walsh still persisted with his testimonial. But the *Irish Times* held back from following the *Irish Independent* lead in that regard. Instead, it fingered Walsh for a testimonial given five years previously, arguing that while “no charges had been brought against Humphries at the time of the interview... the allegations were in the public domain and a Garda investigation had started.”

But what of the behaviour of Fintan O’Toole, alternately listed by the *Irish Times* as its assistant editor or literary editor, depending on the occasion? While the *Irish Times* had decided to drop the name of Tom Humphries from any mention in its own columns, its Assistant Editor was determined to name-drop him elsewhere. The *Sunday World* exposure of Humphries as a child sex abuser had been published on 17th April 2011. True, a charge of statutory rape had yet to be made, not to mind been proven, as a result of either a guilty plea or after weighing the balance of possibly conflicting accounts. But physical evidence of the crime of child sex abuse through grooming had already been established in the shape of the volume of text messages discovered by Humphries’ own family and handed over for Garda investigation. And, after all, the fact that Harvey Weinstein has not yet been subject to sex assault charges by any police authority, has not prevented either O’Toole, other *Irish Times* columnists, or indeed myself, from already finding many of the allegations levelled against him more than credible.

It was against the background of the *Sunday World* exposure that an article entitled “Can the Queen win over Croke Park?” was published by the *English Observer* on 8th May 2011. No doubt O’Toole was chuffed by the accompanying blurb:

“There are few more hallowed corners of Ireland than Croke Park, home of

Gaelic sport and the ground where British forces slaughtered 14 people in 1920. Yet next week the Queen will visit the stadium. Leading Irish writer Fintan O’Toole charts this remarkable turnaround.”

And it was here that O’Toole chose to acclaim “the laureate of the GAA, Tom Humphries”, in the wake of Humphries having been already nailed publicly as a child sex abuser. Let me not be misunderstood on this issue. I do not believe in any necessary link between virtue and talent. Nor do I believe that every acclamation of, for example, Roman Polanski as an outstanding film maker, must be accompanied by a statement of the fact that he has also been an evil child rapist. There is no gainsaying that Humphries was a talented writer, and this is not blotted out by his crimes. Nor could I object to Humphries being cited by O’Toole as an authority on the GAA, were it not for the fact it was O’Toole himself who had gratuitously dragged the issue of child sex abuse into the same article:

“A century ago, if you asked a typical Irish nationalist what was distinctively Irish, they’d have listed the big forces that defined their culture: the Catholic church, nationalist politics, attachment to the land, the Irish language and the GAA. Today, almost all of those markers of identity are gone or weakened. **The church may never recover from the child-abuse scandals that have destroyed its authority in the past decade.** (My emphasis—MO’R)... The one part of the package that still functions is the GAA, which is not merely surviving but thriving.”

And so to O’Toole’s plaudits for his *Irish Times* colleague:

“The laureate of the GAA, Tom Humphries, captured this perfectly when he wrote: ‘The GAA player who performs in front of 70,000 at the weekend will be teaching your kids on Monday, or he’ll be selling you meat or fixing your drains or representing you in court’...”

Yes indeed. In the wake of the *Sunday World* exposure, O’Toole’s testimonial for Humphries was highly questionable, and lacked the moral compass that should have been brought to bear in the light of O’Toole himself raising the issue of Catholic Church child sex abuse.

O’Toole nonetheless continues to moralise about the failings of others. This October 17th, he charged another media performer with failing to rise to appropriate moral standards and responsibilities. “Key questions Ryan Tubridy didn’t ask Rich-

ard Branson: Tubridy interview with Branson avoided issue of ‘fun’ manhandling of women” ran the heading, as O’Toole continued:

“Sometimes, it is the silences that are most eloquent, the unasked questions that provide the most interesting answers. Richard Branson was interviewed by Ryan Tubridy on RTE radio last week for nearly half an hour. The news headlines that preceded the show featured the latest revelations about Harvey Weinstein’s career of sexual harassment... Tubridy’s question was: ‘So do you regret the way you’ve made such a public point of grabbing beautiful young women, lifting them off their feet and, in some cases turning them upside down?’ This is Branson’s signature move. He is not shy about it—on the contrary it is part of his personal brand... This is not Harvey Weinstein-style behaviour—it is open and public and there is no suggestion that Branson was seeking to bully these women in any way. But it does very deliberately create a set of images for public consumption, images of beautiful young women in a working environment being bodily manhandled by a man who, in most of these shots, is employing them to promote his businesses... The subject was surely unavoidable. Except Tubridy completely avoided it... And Tubridy, who is utterly decent and genuinely nice, clearly doesn’t think it’s even worth discussing, even when Weinstein and Monika Lewinsky have just been on his lips. And this silence is eloquent...”

However reprehensible the behaviour to which these women have been subjected, they are adults, and it is a world apart from providing a testimonial for a child sex abuser. And the *Irish Times* silence on how—a month after one of its star journalists had already been named and shamed—one such child sex abuser could be acclaimed as a “laureate” by that paper’s assistant editor / literary editor, does indeed possess an “eloquence” that only the *Irish Times* itself could have the effrontery to sustain.

Manus O’Riordan

WEST CORK’S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Sectarianism, the Kilmichael Ambush, Tom Barry, and Peter Hart.

A Southern Star (Cork), Irish Times, Irish Independent (Dublin), discussion with:

TOM COOPER - GERRY GREGG - EOGHAN HARRIS - CAL HYLAND - BARRY KEANE - SIMON KINGSTON - NIALL MEEHAN - EVE MORRISON - JOHN REGAN - DONALD WOOD PLUS MEDA RYAN AND PAT MULDOWNY

€4, £5 postfree in Ireland and GB

'Paper of Record' Refuses To Correct Misinformation

THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE *IRISH TIMES* WAS NOT PUBLISHED

The correspondence starts with a covering letter to the *Irish Times* Editor

Dear Editor,

I am submitting the following as a letter.

Apologies for it being so long after publication of the story I comment on. I missed it at the time.

I correct at least four factual inaccuracies in your report and for that reason you may wish to publish the corrections.

I can give you a copy of the documentary in question, should you want to check my first correction. Two of the remaining three are,

I think, self-evidently correct, while the last is historically verified.

I attach also a copy of the complaint I made to RTE in 2012, which you may find of assistance.

Can you let me know how you intend to deal with this matter?

Tom Cooper

Sir,

Belatedly, I would like to correct four mistakes in a report by Patsy McGarry and Barry Roche ('West Cork Protestants "dread" Civil War centenary, bishop says', *Irish Times*, 11th September). It asserted that Canon George Salter "disclosed" in *An Tost Fada* (RTÉ, 2012) "how in 1922 his father, six aunts and two uncles fled Dunmanway in 1922 after getting a warning following the massacre of neighbouring Protestants".

Canon Salter never said that and, for all of its faults, the RTÉ documentary did not assert it. The programme insinuated the point and tacked on a further claim without evidence. It appears to have misled at least one of your reporters, who also mixed up aunts and uncles.

Scriptwriter Eoghan Harris narrated: "George's father had six brothers and two sisters but every one of them had left Ireland by April 1922. A sense of fear and a series of threats had forced them to leave." Mr Harris gave an impression of an immediate relationship between April 1922 and the departure of members of the Salter family. No evidence of any kind

sustained the point. It was a propaganda rather than fact.

As I pointed out to RTE in 2012, such evidence as I could uncover contradicted Mr Harris's assertion. I also made the point that *An Tost Fada* made demonstrably false claims about Cannon Salter's father's departure in June 1922. It failed to check assertions based on family lore. The reaction of the programme makers was to suggest, falsely, that critics like me have a problem with Protestants telling their story. They claimed that attention to detail distorted a greater truth about republican sectarianism. This latter is a long-standing Eoghan Harris claim, reiterated recently when he wrote, "facts are fluid".

Everyone, irrespective of their opinions or background, is entitled to tell their story. When media organisations present it as a factually based account they should check out the detail as professionally as possible. Otherwise they do a disservice to the teller and to the community at large. The *An Tost Fada* controversy is due less to critics and more to the incompetence of

programme makers.

There are three further points. Stating that *An Tost Fada* was "first" broadcast in 2012, implies that RTÉ showed it subsequently. It was not re-scheduled after RTÉ admitted that the programme contained factual errors. Similarly, stating that it was "shown again" at the West Cork History Festival is also not correct. Three glaring errors were removed after I brought to RTÉ's attention the intention to show it publicly. A re-edited version was shown.

The final point concerns the IRB, IRA, GAA and Church of Ireland member Sam Maguire, the ostensible subject of the *Irish Times* story. He was not on the 'losing side' in the Civil War, as he supported the pro-Treaty position. He appears to have had second thoughts later. Maguire fell out of official favour through, amongst other things, supporting the 1924 army mutiny.

If getting facts such as these right is 'nitpicking', as *An Tost Fada* producer Gerry Gregg asserted (letters, 8th August), I plead guilty.

Tom Cooper

Letter continued from p34:

Shortly thereafter Atkins was raised to the Peerage, under a new name. In Britain the Press Council was recognised as toothless, so it was renamed *The Press Complaints Commission*. Atkins, under his new name became a *Press Complaints Commissioner*, which I believe was a well-paid sinecure.

In 1994, when Taoiseach Albert Reynolds sought a US visa for Irish Passport-holder Gerry Adams in order to

further the Peace Process

Simon Jenkins descended on Washington in order to scupper it, presumably acting for John Major. He told White House Staff that, since 1969, the IRA had killed 3,000 Britons. If he was to be believed no Irish people were killed in the conflict and no British agency killed anyone. Some years later in the columns of *The Times*, Jenkins boasted of his failed stunt. Adams got his Visa and was indispensable to the process which ended the war in Ireland.

Jenkins and Evans were both Knighted simultaneously.

It appears that for over a century THE GREAT LIE that Irish nationalism and republicanism)(whose heroes, leaders and thinkers have frequently been Protestant) is an essential weapon of British statesmanship. The late Professor Peter Hart, his mentors and his admirers belong to an old and ignoble tradition where the wages of sin can be knighthoods, peerages and university chairs.

Donal Kennedy

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

KILMICHAEL - LEST WE FORGET

In the Irish War of Independence, a serious escalation of the war was to take place when the British decided to recruit men in Britain to double the numbers of the Royal Irish Constabulary and at the same time to form a new force called The Auxiliaries. The Royal Irish Constabulary had originally in 1836 been established as the police force for Ireland but to quote Sir Walter Scott:

"the public peace is secured chiefly by large bodies of armed police, called by the civil term of constable but being in fact soldiers on foot and horse, well armed and mounted."

The RIC was formed by the English Parliament passing *The Constabulary (Ireland) Act 1936* under which the RIC was set up with headquarters in Dublin Castle and police barracks (not police stations as in England) placed all over Ireland, except Dublin city which had its own Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP). Both the RIC and the DMP were under the control of the English Lord Lieutenant in Dublin representing the English Parliament in Ireland.

For about 700 hundred years England had been attempting to govern Ireland from Dublin Castle and it did so by force of arms. At all times, during those 700 hundred years, Ireland was heavily garrisoned. British Army barracks were mostly established about every twenty miles and RIC barracks usually set up five to ten miles apart in rural areas and one to two miles apart in urban areas.

Manpower was a problem. Recruitment of the local indigenous population was necessary. A recruited RIC man was posted well away from his former home area and it was much more difficult for a Catholic to be promoted to Sergeant and very rare to be made an Inspector. Protestants were considered to be more loyal to England because the Protestant Church of Ireland was in the Anglican Communion with the King or Queen of England at its head.

However, the Revolution started in 1916 was changing all of that. RIC men were having to live in barracks behind steel shutters and to be estranged from fellow Irishmen. The members of the RIC began

to resign. Slowly at first but after 'Listowel' the resignations became an avalanche. Somebody in the British Administration got a bright idea which proved fatal to them in the outcome. The idea was to pour thousands of British Army troops into Ireland and use the RIC with their local knowledge to guide the British troops to the IRA and thus wipe out the latter in a show of terror that would restore order and stop the IRA in their tracks!

In Listowel, Co. Kerry on 17th June 1920 the RIC were ordered to hand over their barracks to the British military. Three RIC men were ordered to act as guides for the military. The RIC men held a meeting and decided not to obey the orders. On 18th June 1920 fourteen RIC men offered their resignations which were not accepted. On 19th June 1920 a group of military under General Tudor arrived with Colonel Smyth, the Divisional Commissioner for Munster RIC. Colonel Smyth addressed the RIC men in the barracks. He is reported to have encouraged the men by saying, amongst other things:

"I am promised as many troops from England as I require. Thousands are coming daily. I am getting 7,000 police from England. Police and military are to patrol the country at least five nights a week. They are not to confine themselves to the main roads, but to take off across country, lie in ambush and when civilians approach shout 'Hands Up!' and should the order not be immediately obeyed, shoot and shoot with effect. If persons approaching carry their hands in their pockets, shoot them down. You may make mistakes occasionally, and innocent persons may be shot but that cannot be helped. No policemen will get into trouble for shooting any man."

The spokesman for the men in the barracks replied:

"By your accent I take it you are an Englishman. You forget that you are addressing Irishmen' and he took off his belt, his bayonet and his cap and laid them on the table and he said: 'These too are English. Take them as a present from me and to hell with you, you murderer'."

Colonel Smyth ordered the man's arrest but, because of the threatening attitude of the other policemen present, he desisted and departed the scene. Five of the men later resigned. A few weeks later, Colonel Smyth was ambushed and shot dead at The Cork and County Club, South Mall, Cork. There was a war on and Colonel Smyth had seriously underestimated his opponents. The latter's speech in Listowel and the new British Government Policy of all-out terror against the Irish,

polarised public opinion world-wide.

In August 1920 in the British Parliament, it was announced that the RIC continued to resign in great numbers and that the strength of the RIC would be doubled by recruitment in England and a new force was formed called The Auxiliaries which was composed of former British Army officers who had served in World War 1. They were well paid, had no particular discipline, being former officers, and no responsibility for consequences of looting, burning, killing and torturing the Irish people. These were terrorist troops and they ran amok in their lorry-loads from August until November 1920 when General Tom Barry commanded an ambush at Kilmichael in which two lorry-loads of Auxiliaries were killed in combat.

Then came the declaration by British Field Marshal Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for the British Crown of Martial Law throughout Cork City and County, Tipperary, and Limerick City and County. At the same time, the British Propaganda machine turned out lies, smears and untruths led by Sir Hamar Greenwood's blatant lies in the British House of Commons.

The English administration increased their activities in Cork City. Burnings and public floggings and casual murdering of innocent civilians were increased and the city centre of Cork was burned on the night of 11/12th December 1920. The City Hall and the Carnegie Public Library were destroyed by the English Auxiliaries.

There was a reign of terror throughout Ireland, egged on and supported by the English Parliament in London. But as usual the British went too far. The Kilmichael Ambush showed what could be done by untrained volunteer soldiers who were fighting for their lives, their homes and for their freedom against fully trained battle-hardened English soldiers fighting for their wages and in some cases for the pure thrill of it.

General Tom Barry and his men and others like them around Ireland were motivated by the awfulness of the English terrorism and they fought back and won Independence for 26 of Ireland's 32 counties. Every Irish person who values who they are and where they come from should read the following highly commended books:

'Guerrilla Days in Ireland' by Tom Barry. Mercier Press. 1950 (Irish Press 1949).

'The Black and Tans' by Richard Bennett. Four Square Books. 1961.
 'Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter' by Meda Ryan. Mercier Press. Hb 2003, Pb 2005.
 'The Irish Bulletin' Vol. 3. Published by Belfast Historical and Educational Society.

Recently I noticed a cynical memo written by a colleague who obviously does not know his history yet. He said he saw a reference to Tom Barry and the Battle of Crossbarry in a book he was reading and he stated:

"Tom Barry wrote 'Guerrilla Days in Ireland' to support his election campaign for a Dáil seat?"

This is untrue and a scurrilous attack on a great patriot.

I can confirm that the book was first published in instalments by The Irish Press newspaper from 10th May 1948 onwards and the book was first published as a book by 'The Irish Press' Ltd. in 1949. Tom Barry was a somewhat unwilling Independent candidate in the Cork City bye-election of 15th June 1945, an election in which Michael O'Riordan stood for the Communist Party of Ireland. Neither of them had a chance against the winning candidate—Alderman Patrick McGrath, Fianna Fáil, who was a blacksmith in Morgan Street, Cork and a very popular Lord Mayor of Cork City.

How come the Irish who are feted for their memories have forgotten so much of their history to the point where the slogan 'Lest we Forget' is associated with the Poppy wearers commemorating English foreign wars—not only in the UK but here in Ireland too. Our commentariat tell us it's because we have "matured" and have "moved on" but try telling that to the British and see how far you'd get!

Let us remember our own history and not theirs.

My colleague was reading 'A Hard Local War' by William Sheehan who is in my opinion and that of many others a biased and propagandist writer. He does not deserve the title 'historian'. It is a fact that is well known that the British falsified their reports of engagements with the enemy and they did this then and still do. It is a fact that after the Battle of Crossbarry the British released no numbers or names of their dead. The *Daily Mail* in London stated the British losses were 35 casualties. Another report stated 39 dead and 47

wounded. Tom Barry can only have estimated the casualties because he commanded seven sections and was surrounded by British forces on three roads. Locals said after the Battle that the road was littered with bodies.

William Sheehan quotes British sources and documents to make his false contentions when it is well known that British documents were propaganda to a large extent. And it was not a "Local War"; it was a national war which was fought throughout Ireland, successfully bringing British politicians to the negotiating table.

Sheehan's book does not stack up!

Michael Stack ©

Ballybricken Redmondites

continued

the Ballybricken Redmondites. It is quite certain that he was a marked man after that speech—if he had not already been noted as an agitator and as one who was stirring up revolutionary ideas among the masses.

Two of the people who were attacked by Edwards were the newly elected Mayor Cassin and John Hearne. The latter was the leader of the Master Builders Federation in the city and was a prominent member of many of the city's Catholic organisations. He was, also, a personal friend of Archdeacon Byrne..."

<http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-EdwardsWaterford.htm>. Slightly edited extract from FRANK EDWARDS The man that fought the Bishop irelandscw.com

*

Pat Muldowney adds that further references to the Ballybricken Pig Buyers can be found as follows:

Blue Plaque erected at [17 Ballybricken](#) (site of Pig Buyers premises), June 2016: <http://waterford-today.ie/waterford-lifestyle/8332-waterford-civic-trust-remembers-the-pig-buyers-of-ballybricken-8332.html>

RIC armed guard escorting pigs to execution during Pig Buyers 1897 strike: <https://www.facebook.com/waterfordcivictrust/photos/a.128723807236071.23945.128687730573012/899968556778255/?type=3>
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=899968556778255&id=128687730573012&substory_index=0

Picture of Ballybricken Fair Green today: <https://www.facebook.com/BallybrickenWaterford>

Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback

Letter sent to *History Ireland*, but not published

Secret History Of Sinn Fein

The *English Review* of May 1916 published "THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE (sic) SINN FEIN" "carrying "the *Sinn Fein oath*" bloodcurdling promise to wade through the blood of Protestants. The article had gone to press before the *Rising* and the June 1916 Issue carried a further article by its author.

When British troops were deployed in Belfast in 1969 they were given a booklet with a similar oath, described by *The Sunday Times Insight Team* as similar to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in both its tone and its falseness.

The *Insight Team* was founded by Harold Evans who went on to edit *The Times* as did another *Insight* veteran, Simon Jenkins.

Covering the funeral of Bobby Sands in May 1981 when Evans was Editor, its Ireland Correspondent Christopher Thomas, wrote of the IRA's "2,000 plus PROTESTANTS killed by SANDS' accomplices". I wrote to *The Times* requesting they check their figures and correct them. The Managing Editor wrote me saying their correspondent had checked with several sources. So I complained to the *Press Council* which stonewalled and I wrote many letters to it before it finally found in my favour and censured *The Times* in February 1982. The evening following the publication of its adjudication I turned on the TV to see Harold Evans presented with the accolade of EDITOR OF THE YEAR by his fellow British Editors. If I remember correctly I spied the Editor in Chief of *The Observer* in the gathering, a fellow-traveller of mine in the 1950s on the Hill of Howth Tram. Neither *The Observer* nor its stablemate *The Guardian* carried a report of the Press Council's censure of *The Times*.

In May 1982 three morning newspapers, *The Daily Express*, *The Daily Star* and the *Daily Mail* carried central spreads attacking Ken Livingstone and each of them repeated the falsehood for which *The Times* had been condemned by *Press Council* some three months before. A Mr Conlon in Birmingham complained *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Star* to *The Press Council*, which deliberated for nine months before upholding his complaint. I myself complained to *The Press Council* about the *Daily Mail*. *The Press Council*, against my protests arranged for a couple of well-buried sentences correcting its story, which had gone out over the name of Sir Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,

Continued page 32

REDMONDITES continued

some reparation to his Lordship for the unfilial attitude of an insignificant section of his flock in the city.

Signed,
Matthew McCloskey, Chairman..."

Over the following week, many more groups filed similar expressions of loyalty. On Monday morning, however, about half-a-dozen boys carrying banners with inscriptions such as

WE WANT OUR TEACHER BACK
WE ARE ON STRIKE WE STAND FOR
JUSTICE STRIKE ON HERE

appeared outside Mount Sion. They paraded in front of the schools and urged other pupils to join them. About ten pupils responded and the demonstrators then marched through the principal streets of the city cheering loudly for Edwards. They halted for a meeting on Ballybricken and two of the strikers declared that they were not going back to school until the teacher was reinstated and victimisation was stopped.

A few Civic Guards remained on duty outside the schools until after the luncheon interval, by which time the demonstration had withdrawn, several of the boys returning to their homes. The *Irish Times* reported "*speculation is rife as to the number of boys, if any, who will take part in tomorrow's one-day strike*".

Edited extracts taken from: <http://ireland.scw.com/ibvol-dwardsWaterford.htm> where references will also be found. First published by the Waterford Archaeological & Historical Society

Frank Edwards [International Brigader] had joined the IRA in about 1924 but in the latter part of the decade, he had become inactive. He joined Saor Éire, the political wing of the IRA, at its foundation in 1931. The local Waterford IRA was involved in various activities, such as when three men visited all the local cinemas, in August 1932, and requested the managers not to show films "*of a decidedly British type*". The manager of one city cinema admitted to a *Waterford News* reporter that—

"as far back as two years ago he himself had noticed that the news films supplied by Pathe... and Fox Movietone were being utilised for propaganda purposes. The men who visited him were very courteous, he said, and... he promised... that whenever possible, he would censor the film in future where it appeared to him to carry the taint of propaganda"...

Edwards was involved in the 'Bass' protest. This meant the entering of public houses and the smashing of all the stock of Bass Ale on the premises as a protest against British goods being sold... He later regretted having partaken in this activity.

In the late twenties and early thirties, Waterford was a hotbed of republican and working class agitation in which Edwards played a leading role. The *Unemployed Association* in the city was so strong that it succeeded in having two of its members, David Nash and Thomas Purdue, elected to the City Council on the platform '*Bread, Blood and Work*'. For the next few years the local scene was enlivened by numerous and often boisterous marches and meetings in City Hall and in the People's Park. An example of the type of rhetoric that was used can be gained from a speech made by Councillor Purdue when he said, "If we [the unemployed] are not going to get what we want, we will leave this city like the Temple of Jerusalem—we won't leave a stone upon a stone"...

The first recorded speech by Edwards was in 1932 and the context is indicative of the type of political action in which he was engaged at the time. On Sunday 4th September 1932, a public meeting of Cumann na nGaedheal, to which admission was by ticket only, was scheduled for the Large Room at City Hall. Mayor Matthew Cassin presided, the Marquis and Marchioness of Waterford were guests and Mr. Paddy McGilligan, ex-Minister for Industry and Commerce was the principal speaker. At the same time, a counter demonstration was staged on the Mall outside. The '*Soldier's Song*' was sung with much enthusiasm by the gathering on the roadway, and as its strains came through one of the open windows of the Large Room, someone on the Cumann na nGaedheal platform left his place and closed the window.

A number of the Mall protesters then tried to gain admittance to the Large Room. They got a little more than halfway up the stairs when they were charged by the Cumann na nGaedheal supporters and a general *melee* ensued. Two of the protesters were injured in the clash, Robert Walsh, Carrigeen Lane, a member of the St. Declan's Pipe Band receiving a kick in the stomach (for which he was detained in the Infirmary) and Joseph Tobin a kick in the shins. At the close of the meeting a vote of thanks to the ex Minister was proposed by Mr. John Hearne, builder...

On the following night, another demonstration, timed for eight o'clock, was held on the Mall, presided over by Edwards. However, the owner of the lorry that was to be used as a platform was visited at his home shortly before the meeting and threatened with dire consequences if he permitted his vehicle to be used for the purpose for which it was hired. The owner declined to proceed to the meeting venue and a second lorry had to be procured from Mr. T. Power, garage proprietor, the Quay. When this lorry arrived at the scene the meeting had already begun, with Edwards addressing the large attendance from a jarvey car. The *Waterford News* reported:

"Mr. Edwards, who spoke first in Irish, and continued in English, said the meeting that evening had been arranged in order to appeal for their support for Fianna Eireann—the only national boy organisation in Ireland that was doing its best to educate the future manhood of the country to become loyal citizens of the Irish Republic, which they would attain, and which they were bound to strive to attain (cheers). They were all agreed that it was absolutely essential now for the workers of Ireland to unite to fight the forces of reaction and British Imperialism which were so strong in the country. They could see how those reactionary forces were united against the workers. The people who were associated with the gang of traitors in the Town Hall the previous day were the bosses, the men who exploited the workers, the men who had accumulated wealth from the sweat and the blood of the workers (loud cheers). Then they had the solicitors—it was not necessary for him to make any comment about them—and the rent collectors and the landlords—the Marquis and Marchioness of Waterford. These were the reactionary forces in the country who were backing up the Cumann na nGaedheal party—the organisation that was masking under a Gaelic title, but that was really the force of British Imperialism that was driving the Gael out of the country (loud cheers)... I forgot to mention... the Ballybricken bullies who were associated with Mr. McGilligan and his gang in the Town Hall yesterday. The IRA has been accused by Mr. Blythe of being a thug organisation. You people of Waterford can judge for yourselves on which side are the thugs; and let me tell you that the cause of Irish independence has not been killed, and it will not be killed, by these thugs (loud cheers)... Mr. Edwards concluded, amid loud cheering, as he had begun—in Irish..."

Edwards' speech is interesting for the various groups that he attacked—bosses, solicitors, rent collectors, landlords and

continued on page 34, col. 2



LABOUR

Comment

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Redmondite Politics:

More On the Ballybricken Pig-Buyers!

David Smith describes how the Pig Buyers backed the Bishop's 1935 sacking of Frank Edwards (for membership of Saor Éire) from his teaching job in Mount Sion school adjoining Ballybricken (where Edmund Rice started the first Christian Brothers school). Frank Edwards, a Republican/Communist, was later to give his life for the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War. Our story starts with a Bishop's Pastoral Letter

A PASTORAL LETTER AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

It was clear that the [Bishop's] Pastoral [letter] had only inflamed an already tense situation. The notice of dismissal was due to expire in nine days. A meeting of support, to demand the withdrawal of the notice of dismissal, had been called for the following Saturday 12th January 1935. This meeting had the support of the local INTO branch, two Cumann of Fianna Fail (P.H. Pearse and Gracedieu), the IRA, the Republican Congress Branch, the Gaelic League, *Gasra an Fháinne*, Waterford Workers' Council, the Irish Citizen Army, and various Trades Union branches.

On 11th January 1935, Mgr. Byrne wrote a letter to the press cautioning people to stay away from the meeting

"which is to be held in flagrant opposition to the authoritative teaching and ruling of the Bishop of the Diocese... The Bishop has spoken; the Church had spoken; and the opposition to the Church is opposition to Jesus Christ"...

Despite the Monsignor's warning and driving rain, which fell continuously for the two hour duration of the meeting, a large crowd numbering several hundreds turned out in Broad Street to hear the speakers, Peadar O'Donnell, Frank Ryan and Seamus Malone, Secretary of the *Edwards Defence Committee*, under the Chairmanship of Jimmy O'Connor, Poleberry. A motion from Malone was passed calling for a strike of pupils on the following Tuesday...

The support for Edwards appeared to be very strong, and widespread. The Mayor had assured Frank Ryan that ninety per cent of the people were behind Edwards but, in truth, the city was deeply divided... On Saturday 12th January 1935 (the day of the Broad Street meeting) the Waterford Pig Buyers' Association passed unanimously a resolution—

"That we... pledge ourselves as faithful Catholics to give our unqualified support in every way possible to our beloved Bishop, Most Rev. Dr Kinane and his clergy; and we further desire to express our wholehearted approval of his Pastoral read in all the city churches on Sunday, the 6th inst."

On the following day, both Dr. Kinane and Monsignor Byrne were given a

tremendous reception when they attended the annual tea party at St. Joseph's Boys Club. When they entered the Club, the assembled boys cheered for several minutes and then sang the hymn, *Faith of our Fathers*. Messages of unqualified support for the Bishop poured in to the newspapers from many sources including the Legion of Mary, the Mount Sion Sodality, the United Ireland Party (John Redmond Branch), the Sodality of Mary, the Aquinas Study Circle and Fine Gael, Waterford Central Branch.

The Dockers' Society of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union (ATGWU) held a special meeting on 14th January 1935 at the Union rooms, O'Connell street. The meeting passed, unanimously, an extraordinary expression of loyalty and support. I quote it in full

"We, the members of the Dockers' Society assure our beloved and revered Bishop, Most Rev. Dr Kinane that, conscious of our duty as Catholics, we accept and will loyally obey his authoritative teaching given us in the Cathedral on the 6th inst. Mindful of the warning conveyed in that solemn pronouncement, we can assure him that we shall do all in our power to keep our Union free from the virus of Communism and Socialism. We will endeavour to see that our Union shall be guided by the principles laid down by Pope Leo XIII and the present Holy Father rather than by the anti-Christian maxims of Communist and Socialist agitators. We wish this expression of our Loyalty and obedience to be

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