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## Unity By Consent?

Simon Coveney, Foreign Minister of the Republic, and Colum Eastwood, leader of the former majority Nationalist party in the North, have both gone on record recently against the political unification of Ireland by majority consent.

"*Unity by consent*" was the slogan used against Sinn Fein during the War years by "*Constitutional nationalists*" who had no Constitutional policy for uniting the island that was anything but evasive fantasy, but who lacked the nerve to delete the assertion of Republican sovereignty over the Six Counties made in the Constitution.

That Constitutional assertion remained in place until the IRA, having won the Good Friday Agreement by war, said it would be OK to delete it.

Under the Good Friday system Sinn Fein has become the dominant Nationalist party in the North. The Unionist community, damaged by the undemocratic system of government which was the means by which the area maintained its "*connection*" with Britain, has been declining relative to the Nationalist community. The Agreement lays down a simple majority arrangement for the poll and implies that, if a majority of the Northern electorate expressed consent in a vote to making the 6 Counties part of the Republic, the British State would facilitate the transfer.

Sinn Fein wants the referendum provided for by the Agreement to be held, and unity to be implemented if the vote shows 50% plus 1 in favour of it.

But "*unity by consent*" is suddenly off the agenda. A special meaning is given to "*consent*" which has the effect of negating it:

"Any new Irish constitution must include a commitment not to use violence to enforce unity, the SDLP leader has said" (Irish News 11 August).

The effective meaning of this is that, if the Unionists lose the referendum vote on unity and threaten to use force to prevent the referendum result from being implemented, then

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## Brexit: can Varadkar and Coveney be trusted to hold the line against Britain?

The message behind a statement from Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney on August 15th in response to the publication of British Government position papers on the Irish border is that the Government is keeping open the option of pursuing its perceived interests independently of the EU. This raises the question of whether the new Varadkar-Coveney Government can be trusted to hold the line

against Britain when the heat turns up in the Brexit negotiations.

Coveney said: "*We will be realistic and fair but we will also be stubborn in relation to defending Ireland's interests*" and that "*we are not going to be used as a pawn here in any bigger negotiations*". Elsewhere in his statement Coveney was careful to placate Brussels by re-affirming

## Micheál Martin's Agonising

Micheál Martin is a worried man. He is agonising about the commemorations of the next few years.

"Anniversaries of the revolutionary period will be fraught, says Martin. Commemorations should not be used for political point-scoring, FF leader suggests ... The commemoration of the War of Independence and Civil War will be difficult... He said no one should underestimate the challenges that were posed by the centenary commemorations of both the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme last year but Ireland was now a much more mature nation that recognised the diversity of its history... we should not use it and exploit the commemoration period for the purpose of modern political day advancement and that's a worry I would have" (Irish Times, 31 July 2017)

If we are now such a mature nation how come there is an increasing problem about commemorating our past? Surely we are not the same as Tony Benn, who Harold

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Ireland's commitment to the EU-27 position and by revealing that his officials are in daily contact with the Barnier team, but all that that shows is that the headline part of his statement is contradicted by later parts. Whether his stance can be described as deliberate incoherence or constructive ambiguity, it is signalling that Ireland is less than a fully signed up member of the EU team.

Nor is it the case that Coveney is taking a less pro-EU line than Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. Varadkar's scatter-blast of

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

Irish Bulletin

Frank Gallagher

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there must be no attempt to implement the referendum result. Armed opposition is thus invited.

Also, the SDLP does not seem to have considered what effect this bad faith in *redefining* democracy would have on the nationalist community. Is Eastwood content to fight a war against dissident Republicans so that a Unionist revolt against the outcome of a democratic referendum result might be placated?

Britain is leaving Europe as a result of a narrow Referendum outcome—one with which the Unionists have been content—but it seems that where Ireland is concerned, different standards must apply!

Colum Eastwood continued:

"It would ensure that those of us who wish to bring about the reunification of Ireland know that it will only ever be worthwhile if unionism and the British identity find opportunity, comfort and belonging in it..."

If this statement is taken in earnest, it means that worthwhile reunification can

only take the form of a return of Ireland as a whole to the United Kingdom. Nowhere else will the "*British identity find comfort and belonging.*"

The opponents of Irish unity by consent should discard their empty rhetoric of "*Constitutional nationalism*" and organise themselves into an all-Ireland Unionist Party and campaign for Irexit.

Fintan O'Toole, who chose to be his master's voice in order to have an affluent career, seconds Coveney and Eastwood in his *Irish Times* column (August 15):

"In the context of Ireland's future, 50 per cent + 1 is not, as Adams claims, 'what democracy is about'. That kind of crude, tribal majoritarianism is precisely what the Belfast Agreement is meant to finish off..."

What the Belfast Agreement finished off is the system of undemocratic British government established in the Six Counties by Westminster when it was Partitioning the island.

Northern Ireland, an integral part of the

British state, was excluded at birth from the democratic system of the British state. It did remain an integral part of the British state in most ways, but it was excluded from the party politics which is the substance of British democracy, and the Unionists were obliged to operate a local system of devolved government in which the British parties did not participate. Westminster pretended that the regional system it had imposed on the Six Counties was a kind of democracy, until 28 years of warfare persuaded it to concede that it was not, and to make new arrangements for the region which were patently non-democratic, so that there might be peace.

This journal campaigned for twenty years to bring the 6 Counties within the democratic system of the British state. We never heard a word of support from Fintan O'Toole. The *Irish Times* refused to publish letters stating our case, and was commended for it by Martin Mansergh. And Dublin Governments lobbied Whitehall against us. The Unionists refused to embrace the idea. We gave up the project as hopeless about 25 years ago.

What was the alternative?

We opposed the War while advocating British democratisation, but acknowledged that the War was the only alternative to democratisation. When the combined influence of two States, the SDLP and the Unionists made the democratisation project hopeless we gave it up and let the War run its course as the inevitability of the situation. Northern Ireland had no internal dynamic that would enable it to evolve under the mere influence of evasive moral condemnation by politicians who refused to see realities.

Northern Ireland was undemocratically governed because it was not governed within the democracy of the state. What passed for democracy outside the democracy of the state was a gross caricature. But the case against that caricature does not apply to a referendum, which is not the election of a government.

Nor would that case apply to government in an all-Ireland state unless that state governs the Six Counties undemocratically, as the British State did.

'Constitutional nationalists' always refused to discuss the British governing system in the North which accompanied Partition. They only wanted to talk about Partition and berate the Ulster Unionists for operating the system that was imposed on them. But they are beginning to have some inkling of thought about the North as part of an Irish state, and they seem to

be inclined towards continuing the Northern Ireland system.

Fortunately that will not be possible, regardless of Simon Coveney and Micheál Martin. Sinn Fein is a major party in both parts of the island and would therefore be a major force structuring the political situation.

Functional democracy is a structure rather than an ideal. Democracy as an ideal has an inherent tendency towards fancifulness. Edmond Burke said the basic right of a people is *to be governed*, and stable, organised political structures are most of all required to tolerable democratic government in mass society.

In 1922 Lord Londonderry, a Tory politician, assumed that the Tory Party would be active in Northern Ireland as in the rest of the state. He had a base there and he went there to take part in governing. He was ridiculed by his cousin, Winston Churchill, for failing to understand that the purpose of Northern Ireland was to help to break up the Sinn Fein rebellion, rather than to have good government as part of the British state. Londonderry soon got the message. He returned to British politics and became a senior Cabinet Minister in Ramsay MacDonald's Labour-led National Government.

If the Tory Party had done what Londonderry expected it to do—if it had done the normal thing—in the Northern Ireland region of the state, the normal dynamic of political life would have led the newly-formed Labour Party to do likewise, despite its nominal anti-Partitionism, and the course of events in Northern Ireland would have been essentially different. There would have been no *"tribal majoritarianism"*. There would have been Tories and Socialists.

We take it for granted that, in the event of an all-Ireland state being established, Sinn Fein will not withdraw from the North to the 26 Counties, and that the 26 County parties will therefore have to contest elections against it in the North, and that there will therefore be an all-Ireland democratic structure of politics in which the Unionists can find a place.

It is a sign of the frivolousness that has overcome Irish politicians recently that Ulster Unionism, reviled for so long, should now be regarded as a treasured national possession that must be preserved in aspic.

Ulster Unionism made a grave mistake in 1921 when it let itself be set up as a sham democracy for use against the elected Sinn Fein Government. It is one that is beyond the resources of Irish democracy to remedy under Partition. ■

## "The Embers of Revisionism"

Thanks to Niall Meehan and Brian Murphy in particular, and to Aubane Press for these articles on Revisionism. It is very healthy to see the truth told.

Today's news that the *Sunday Times* dismissed Kevin Myers because of his disparaging comments about two journalists, with particular reference to their being women and Jewish, highlights the nonsense that he has been retailing in Ireland for years, and yet various branches of the media repeatedly invited him back again. We are very tolerant of people saying disparaging things about us.

One quibble I have is the reference in the article to Myers having the *"good grace, eventually, to repudiate some "errors"*, and a reference to him retracting an allegation about Terence MacSwiney after 'representations', made by my mother, Máire MacSwiney Brugha, and me.

Your readers should know that this particular 'error' was to repeat an allegation put out by the British propaganda machine in 1920, when the Irish were beginning to get the upper hand in the War of Independence, which was that Lord Mayor MacSwiney had a plan to assassinate the Bishop of Cork. Locally this was laughable, because MacSwiney had been negotiating with the Bishop on very friendly terms about his forthcoming marriage to Muriel Murphy against the wishes of her mother, and how to resolve the situation with the least upset to all.

In our meeting with him Kevin Myers was very charming. However, better words to describe our meeting with him would be 'confrontation' or 'challenge', and an insistence that he withdraw the allegation which he made as if it had just come to light in 1989 having been hidden since 1920.

Of all the unfortunate legacies that we accepted from the British was its policy of 'divide and rule' through 'false denigration', especially of people connected to their own, for example against Countess Markievicz, and against Michael Mallin. MacSwiney's mother was a Wilkinson from London.

Cathal MacSwiney Brugha

## Moral Equivalence?

Recently I met with a Dublin City Council official to discuss a proposal to erect a plaque on the Oakley Road environs to commemorate Thomas Mac Donagh, poet, playwright and signatory of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic who was executed as one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising.

I explained that I was thinking of something simple which might include the lines from his poem,

### On a Poet Patriot:

But his songs new souls shall thrill  
The loud harps dumb  
And his deed the echoes fill  
When the dawn is come

I was taken aback to be informed that planning permission was conditional on the "other side" being acknowledged. I enquired where this condition emanated from. "High up," I was told.

I responded that unless I was able to get the names of the Firing Squad, it would be impossible for me to comply.

Simon O'Donnell

## Re-writing American History?

The progressives in the American world super-state are intent on purifying it of its history—its history being the means by which it became a superstate.

The fundamental fact in its history is the multiple genocides by which it cleared half a continent of peoples in order to make room for itself. That fact has been celebrated in a thousand Hollywood movies and is not an issue. Peoples who have actually been exterminated are not present to make an issue of it, and their exterminators, purposeful people, naturally do not undermine their own morale by making an issue of it. For that reason the great genocide issues to which the world gives some consideration concern peoples who survived their extermination and may themselves be exterminators.

The second great fact of United States history is slavery. The US began as a group of English colonies established in the medium of the English system of slavery, England at the time being the main slave trader in the world, and also the main organiser of commodity production by means of slave labour.

England's American colonies declared themselves independent of England in the 1780s and formed themselves into an alliance of states called the United States. For the next half-century the position of slavery was much the same in the USA as in Britain. Everybody who counted was involved in slavery in one degree or another, but the application of slave labour to the process of production varied from place to place. In some parts of the USA, as in some parts of the British economy, wage-labour was found to be more productive, and more convenient, than slave labour, and this led to an agitation in the free capitalist sector of the economy for the abolition of slave-capitalism which was unprogressive and was a drag on the vast potential of development of *capitalism without responsibility* that lay in the employment of a free proletariat that was obliged to look after itself.

The immense power developed by Manchester Capitalism led to the phasing out of British-owned slave labour in the 1820s and 1830s. The slaves were treated as having been legitimately owned right up to the moment of their 'emancipation'. They were emancipated by being bought

from their owners by the Government and then being set free to fend for themselves.

This gave rise to no social difficulties that might disturb the moral smugness of the emancipators because the great British slave labour camps, though an integral part of the British economy for close on two centuries, were separated from Britain, where the civilised people lived, by the Atlantic Ocean. (The Labour Camps were all based on Caribbean islands.)

England, as its way, felt itself to be enormously virtuous because it had abolished a system that was no longer useful to it. And it began to posture as a moral champion of freedom on the ground of principle, especially against its Colonies that had set up on their own and had not kept pace with it.

There was a strong Abolitionist movement in the USA—stronger than the one that had existed in England. But it was not so easy for the US to abolish the slave system it inherited from Britain, and that was part of its internal life, as it was to buy-out the West Indian slave owners and then forget about it.

In 1861 the Southern States of the USA decided to secede from the general Union and form a Confederacy of their own. The issue of slavery was a contributory cause to this decision. President Lincoln declared that States would not be allowed to secede from the United States. He acted as Britain had done with relation to the Colonies in the 1780s, but much more forcefully—more fanatically, one might say.

He made war on the secession. But the purpose of that war was not the abolition of slavery. If he had won an easy victory, slavery would have continued.

A State of the Confederacy which left the Confederacy, and joined the Union, was permitted to maintain the slave system. But a State which abolished slavery would no more be allowed to secede from the Union than a slave State.

For Lincoln the Union was the issue, and nothing but the Union. His purpose was to forge a strong, integral State across half a continent. And, whatever was the human cost of forging this Super-state, it would have to be paid.

Lincoln's relentless will, combined with his slippery political ability, won out in the course of four years at the cost of a

kind of slaughter amongst whites that had never been seen in the European homeland. Once the superstate was secured, it set about completing the genocide. The native Americans were finished off by the liberators of the slaves. And General Sheridan, a hero of the Civil War, declared that *the only good Indian was a dead Indian*. From the end of the Civil War to Wounded Knee was about 30 years.

The problem of Slavery became a more active political problem after Abolition than it had ever been before it. The problem was what to do with these slaves that had been emancipated by Decree but were not citizens.

Slavery was abolished by Decree as a military tactic at a moment when the war was not going well. Lincoln needed to enlist the energy of the abolitionists on principle. But it was never his intention that the emancipated slaves should be treated as US citizens. His plan was to send them home to Africa.

But Lincoln was assassinated before he could begin the work of repatriating the Blacks and reconciling the Whites of the Confederacy. And his very sudden death put policy in the hands of the remarkable individual who had handled Congress for him at a critical point, Thaddeus Stevens, who has been treated very shabbily by American history. Insofar as he was remembered, it was as a morally-deformed ogre whose moral deformation was mirrored in physical deformation: he had a clubbed foot.

Stevens expected the worst of Lincoln, who in victory for a time would have had absolute power and would have used it to bring the Confederacy back into the Union by enabling it to over-rule the slavery Abolition Decree at the level of the voting franchise and reshape slavery into a kind of indentured labour. Congress was disputing authority over the defeated Confederacy with the President and the President was winning. But then Lincoln was assassinated and Stevens asserted the authority of Congress. And he treated the Confederate States much as the US intended to treat Germany in 1945, and probably would have treated but for the looming presence of Communist Russia. He treated the Whites of the Confederacy as having collectively committed a crime against humanity. That crime was to be punished by disfranchisement.

The Blacks were to be made into the basic citizenry of the Confederate States. Stevens was not such a doctrinaire humanist that he believed the Blacks would

instantly become competent citizens, in a polity in which they had no experience, simply by ceasing to be owned by Whites. So he acted much as Lenin did when making a proletariat into a ruling class. He sent cadres amongst them to initiate them into their new role.

This led to the emergence of the White movement known as the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK was an effective terrorist movement directed against Blacks to deter them from participating in Stevens' reconstruction of the South. The Blacks were beaten into a subordination to the Whites which was maintained informally at first but was later, when the United States settled down again, put on a Constitutional basis.

Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, was charged by Congress with High Crimes and Misdemeanours because he held to Lincoln's policy. The active spirit in the impeachment process was Stevens. Johnson escaped impeachment by a single vote and decided not to stand for another term.

The Confederacy in the moment of its defeat asserted itself against the Jacobinism of the Congress and by means of the KKK restored its morale and made terms with the Union. The USA of 1860 was restored with the slavery issue settled by means of a compromise. And it became an authoritative opinion, set out for example in Woodrow Wilson's *History Of The American People*, that the Ku Klux Klan had saved the United States when Stevens' policy of reconstructing the Confederacy into Black States would have undermined it—a view that seems to have been in accordance with Lincoln's.

The first classic of the American cinema was the *Birth Of A Nation*. It is a hymn of praise to the Ku Klux Klan. It was premiered in the White House in 1919 by the historian who had become President, Woodrow Wilson.

The KKK system was a stable part of the United States system for a century. It was brought to an end by President L.B. Johnson. Remember President Johnson: "*Hey, hey, L.B.J./How many kids did you kill today?*"

The Civil War was not about slavery, it was about establishing a powerful state. The abolition of slavery by Lincoln was incidental and he did not intend that the slaves he freed should remain in the Land of Liberty.

The USA is about Power. Since 1863 many other issues that serve for the moment as principles have been incidental to its pursuit of Power.

The replacement of the Confederacy

by Black States in 1865-6 would possibly have disrupted the Union—and defeated Lincoln's purpose in launching the war. The enfranchisement of the Blacks a century after the abolition of slavery added to the power of the United States in its drive for dominion of the world.

It was no consolation at all to the peoples whose lives were broken during the eight years between George W. Bush and Trump that it was a black President that was doing it.

If the current purifiers of American history are in earnest about principle they should erect statues of Thaddeus Stevens and tell the truth about Lincoln.

## Micheál Martin's Agonising

continued

Wilson described as *immaturing with age!* Rather should we not find these commemorations less and less of a problem?

But the exact opposite is what seems to be happening, to Mr. Martin at least. His '*maturity*' is a weasel word for not having, or wanting to have, any particular view at all about the events which are being commemorated. This is certainly odd for a leader of Fianna Fail—which is—or should be—the great heir to the events being commemorated.

There seems to be a need for a history catechism to deal with the commemorations that so worry Mr. Martin. Catechisms have had a bad press in recent years. They are a victim of the postmodern world—they relied on certainties—for God's sake! But the baby was thrown out with the bathwater because their one great virtue was that they provided for clear thinking.

There was no room for weasel words and ambiguity.

There were certainties and there were mysteries. And any mystery, of which there were many, was described plainly as a mystery and one just had to contemplate on such matters for oneself.

A catechism then that might help Mr. Martin in his anxieties might go something like this:

*Q. Who made the independent Irish State?*

A. The Irish electorate in the December 1918 General Election.

*Q. When was it established?*

A. On 21st January 1919, as now agreed by all in the Oireachtas, with the inauguration of "*The Declaration of Independence Day*" on *that date each year*.

*Q. What happened to that state?*

A. In 1922 it voted itself out of existence under the threat of an escalation of the war that Britain had waged against it since 1919.

*Q. Was it right to do so?*

A. No. It was not right because it had no right to abolish itself. No democratically elected state has such a right.

*Q. Did everybody agree to this?*

A. No!

*Q. What happened then?*

A. The British established a new regime/junta under the Crown with those who abolished the existing independent state.

*Q. What happened next?*

A. The new regime found it difficult to consolidate itself and Britain compelled its junta to commence war against those who wanted to maintain an independent state.

*Q. Who won this war?*

A. The new regime won militarily and those who wanted independence then formed Fianna Fail to re-establish an independent state by a combination of military and constitutional means and went on to establish an independent democratic state as confirmed by the 1937 Constitution.

*Q. How did the old regime react?*

A. It went fascist for a while and then decided to accept the new constitutional order established by Fianna Fail.

*Q. Why is Micheál Martin so worried about commemorating all this?*

A. God only knows!

*Q. Is it a mystery then?*

A. Perhaps it is because he is the very model of a post-modern politician; he may even be a post-post-modern one.

*Q. What does that mean?*

A. His brain goes into a sort of meltdown when thinking about these things. A widespread condition in Ireland today.

*Q. Is there any cure for this affliction?*

A. A subscription to the *Irish Political Review*—or prayer!

Jack Lane

## A Policy Of Exclusion?

### *Unpublished Article and Letters to Irish Times from Brian Murphy osb*

Since the appointment of a new Editor to *The Irish Times*, Paul O'Neill, the following items were submitted but ignored.

**For the editor**—I submit this article as a possible article for your Saturday edition or anywhere you see fit. I hope you will see that, in the context of the last paragraph, it has an unusual relevance to our present political situation. If you decide to publish it, then the words in Irish would need to be checked for proper inflections. Previously, when items of mine have been published by the *Irish Times*, I have been described as Dr Brian P Murphy, o s b, a member of the Benedictine Community at Glenstal Abbey. Sometimes some of my publications have been listed. Thank you for your consideration, **Brian Murphy osb**

### Prayers at the early meetings of Dail Eireann

In the context of the current debate on the merits, or otherwise, of saying a prayer at the start of each session of Dail Eireann it may be instructive to consider the practice of the early Dail gatherings. The first Dail met at 3.30 pm on 21 January 1921 at the Mansion House, Dublin. Immediately prior to the meeting, in an event which illustrated the divided loyalties of the Irish people, the Mansion House had hosted a reception, in the words of the *Irish Times*, 'for the gallant soldiers of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who have been prisoners of war in Germany'. The report in the *Irish Times* was 'Passed by the Censor' and it served as a reminder that Irish life was still under the authority of Lord French, appointed as a Military Governor in May 1918, and a regime of martial law. A further reminder of this martial law regime was provided by the response of the elected deputies to their presence in the chamber: '*Fé ghlás ag Gallaibh*'—'In foreign prisons', was the reply given to the names of over 30 deputies. The names of some other deputies out of the total number of 105, such as Edward Carson and the Unionist Party, were recorded as 'absent'. In all about 30 of the 73 elected Sinn Fein deputies were present: there is some uncertainty as to the exact number owing to the rumour, denied by some, that Michael Collins and Harry Boland were called 'present' to conceal the fact that they were on a mission to rescue de Valera from prison in England.

Before the roll was called, Count Plunkett, as chairman of the elected

republican deputies, proposed that Cathal Brugha should be elected Speaker and it was Brugha who proposed that the meeting should begin with a prayer. Speaking in Irish he declared (in translation): 'friends, there is important work to be done here today, the most important work done in Ireland from the day the Gael came to Ireland, and it is holy work. We are all people who hope in God, people who are interested in God's laws, and therefore we should ask God for help for the work we have to do. I shall now ask the most zealous priest that ever lived in Ireland, Father Michael O'Flanagan, to pray on our behalf to the Holy Spirit to guide us favourably on the road we have to go.'

Frank Gallagher, who was present, recorded that there was generous applause from those present for Fr O'Flanagan and that they rose to their feet for the prayer which he delivered in a 'deep musical voice in lovely Irish'. Fr O'Flanagan enunciated the traditional prayer to the Holy Spirit as requested by Cathal Brugha. He said (in translation): 'Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of thy love. Send us thy Spirit and they will be created, and thou will renew the face of the earth. Let us pray: O God, who instructed the hearts of the faithful with the radiance of the Holy Spirit, grant us the same Spirit that we shall enjoy our due rewards and rejoice eternally because of His consolation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

The deputies then elected four clerks and it was they who proceeded to administer the roll call. At first glance it would appear that the deputies of Dail Eireann were prepared to share their newly established independence from England with the Roman Catholic Church. A second glance reveals a more complex reality: Fr O'Flanagan was, in fact, a suspended Roman Catholic priest and it was publicly known that such was his status. Far from being an act of subservience to the Roman Catholic Church, the choice of Fr O'Flanagan to say an opening prayer was an assertion of the Dail's independence from the Church. Fr O'Flanagan had been suspended from acting as a priest; that is forbidden to say

public Masses or to administer the sacraments, at the end of May 1918, by his bishop, Dr Bernard Coyne of Elphin. Speeches by Fr O'Flanagan in favour of Arthur Griffith's election campaign in East Cavan were the immediate cause of his suspension but difficulties between the two men went back over several years. Following the Easter Rising, Fr O'Flanagan had played a major part in the election of Count Plunkett at the North Roscommon by-election of February 1917 and he had continued to play a leading role in the formation of the new republican Sinn Fein party at meetings on 25 and 26 October 1917. At this foundation meeting, de Valera was elected President and Fr O'Flanagan and Arthur Griffith were elected as vice-presidents.

In a strange way the suspension of Fr O'Flanagan proved a providential benefit to the emerging Sinn Fein party, especially after the arrest and deportation of de Valera, Griffith and other Sinn Fein members which followed the so-called German Plot of 16/17 May 1918. Moving to Dublin, Fr O'Flanagan played a leading part in the general election campaign of 1918 and in the private meetings afterwards which shaped the Declarations of Dail Eireann. The three Declarations (that of Independence, the Message to the Free Nations of the World, and the Democratic Programme) expressed both individual and national rights in ways which were revolutionary and relevant both then and for the present time. There was one reference to God in these declarations. The Declaration of Independence concluded: 'in the name of the Irish people we humbly commit our destiny to Almighty God who gave our fathers the courage and determination to persevere through long centuries of ruthless tyranny... (and) we ask His divine blessing on this last stage of the struggle we have pledged ourselves to carry through to Freedom.'

The prayer said by Fr O'Flanagan was the only prayer said prior to the holding of any other meetings of the First Dail Eireann. All of the other meetings, and there were 21 in all (14 in 1919; 3 in 1920; 4 in 1921), began without a prayer, as did the meetings of the Second Dail which met

for the first time on 16 August 1921. Most of these meetings were held in private, especially after the Dail was proclaimed an illegal association by an edict of Lord French on 10 September 1919. It is significant that Fr O'Flanagan's endorsement of the republican ideals of Dail Eireann was not shared by Cardinal Logue and the Roman Catholic hierarchy with the exception of Archbishop Walsh of Dublin and Bishop Fogarty of Killaloe. Indeed, from the first formulation of a republican policy by Sinn Fein, in October 1917, Cardinal Logue had expressed ridicule and rejection. In a letter to be read at all churches, on 25 November 1917, he had declared that the aim of an Irish republic was 'a dream which no man in his sober senses can hope to see realised'. He maintained that attitude throughout the War of Independence. During the peace negotiations with England, de Valera met the Irish bishops at Maynooth, on 21 June 1921, and requested that they would publicly express support for an Irish Republic. His request was rejected. By this time Archbishop Walsh was dead (he died on 9 April 1921) and Cardinal Logue was in touch with Dublin Castle officials concerning a Truce which was signed on 11 July 1921. These officials remained in touch with Logue and other bishops during the Treaty negotiations. This context provides the background to the saying of a second prayer before a meeting of Dail Eireann; this prayer was said by a bishop.

Bishop Robert Browne of Cloyne was asked to say a prayer by Eoin MacNeill, the speaker, to mark the start of the Treaty debates on 14 December 1921. The meeting was held in the Council Chamber, University College Dublin. The day before this meeting the Archbishops and bishops of Ireland, with Cardinal Logue in the chair, had met in the same venue, and issued a statement which praised 'the patriotism, ability and honesty of purpose with which the Irish representatives have conducted the struggle for Irish freedom' and asked priests to say Masses and the people to pray for a successful outcome to the Dail meeting. The statement was signed by Cardinal Logue, Bishop Denis Kelly of Ross and Bishop Browne of Cloyne who was to say the prayer the following day. By this time the terms of the Treaty (the Articles of Agreement) had been approved by the British Parliament and had been published on 6 December 1921. It was known that article four, concerning the oath, required members of the Dail to declare that 'I will be faithful to H.M. King George, his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the

common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain'. It was also known, following the publication of letters by Eamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith, that there were deep divisions in the Sinn Fein party following a Cabinet meeting on 9 December. It was in this precise context that Bishop Browne said a prayer to open the debate on the Treaty. The Roman Catholic hierarchy, which had distanced itself from the aspirations of an Irish Republic, was prepared to associate itself with the constitutional limitations of the Irish Free State.

It is clear, in conclusion, that the saying of prayer before every meeting of the Dail was not the custom of the republican Dail Eireann. As we approach the centenary of that First Dail Eireann, it seems reasonable to suggest that it would be fitting to continue that tradition: to say one prayer at the start of each new Dail to be followed by the reading, and affirming, of the three major proclamations of that Dail—those of Independence, the Message to the Free Nations of the World and the Democratic Programme. Granted the present political situation, in which, I believe, an agreement between the political parties is due to last until the end of 2018, it would be a marvellous way of marking the centenary of the Dail, if an election could be called for the end of 2018 and the new Dail could meet on 21 January 2019 in the Mansion House. In that way present politics and past history would combine to create a truly unique centenary celebration. One might even say a prayer that this would come about!

30.5.17

**Dr Brian P Murphy osb**  
Glenstal Abbey, Murroe  
County Limerick

## **Subject: Eunan O'Halpin and the Centenary of the Irish Convention**

Thank you and Professor Eunan O' Halpin for marking the centenary of the Irish Convention (Irish Times, 25 July). May I qualify, however, one of the first statements in the article. He writes: 'Sinn Fein alone declined to participate.' In fact the new Republican Sinn Fein party, which embodied the ideals of Patrick Pearse and the Irish Republic, was only formed on 25/26 October 1917; that is three months after the first meeting of the Irish Convention. Prior to the announcement of an Irish Convention by Lloyd George on 16 May, the dominant voice giving expression to the ideals of the Easter Rising was not Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein party but that

of George Noble, Count Plunkett, who had won the North Roscommon by-election on 3 February 1917.

While Griffith's Sinn Fein did decline to take part in Lloyd George's Convention, it was the action of Count Plunkett and his supporters that was most significant at this time. Over 1,000 people had responded to his call to attend a meeting in the Mansion House, Dublin, on 17 March 1917. As a result of that meeting, a Mansion House Committee (including Griffith) was set up in order to create one united nationalist organisation. It was this Committee which rejected Lloyd George's Convention unless it was 'free from English influence, and free, if it so decides, to declare for the complete independence of Ireland'.

**Dr Brian P Murphy osb**

31.7.17

## **Sectarianism In West Cork**

The claims made in Cal Hyland's letter (August 12th) about sectarianism in West Cork require clarification and correction. Although the document he cites (the Irish Claims Commission in the National Archives London) refers to events from 11 July 1921 to 12 May 1923, the impression is given that the charge of sectarianism may have extended to the War of Independence. This topic has been debated in your pages over many years so I will simply recall the words of Richard Beamish, the Cork Protestant alderman, who told Lloyd George personally, on 4 August 1920, that 'the Protestants of the South had no fear on grounds of creed'. Many other references could be given to show that this was, indeed, the point of view of Protestants during the War of Independence.

During the Civil War the attitude of the IRA towards Protestants did change: not because of religion but rather because, almost as a body, they supported the Treaty and the Irish Free State. However, it should be noted that the Irish Free State also attacked some Protestants because they supported the IRA. For example, Albinia Broderick (the sister of the Earl of Midleton), Charlotte Despard (the sister of Lord French) and Countess Marcievicz were all imprisoned by the Free State.

If we are to follow the logic of Cal Hyland, we are led to conclude that the Irish Free State was sectarian. Of course, it was not! The actions of both the Free State and of those opposed to the Treaty were based on political reasons alone. Neither side was motivated by sectarianism.

**Dr Brian P Murphy osb**

14.8.17

[With address and phone number]

From: Letterised  
Sent: Monday, August 14, 2017 5:44 PM  
To: brian@glenstal.com  
Subject: automated response

## Automated response

Thank you for your letter to The Irish Times. Please note that we require writers to supply a postal address and telephone number. IF YOU OMITTED THESE DETAILS, please RE-SEND your letter including them. Otherwise, please do not respond to this notice. If you have sent your letter by attachment, please RE-SEND as a single e-mail message. Attachments are deleted automatically by our editorial publishing system.

Please note that this address is ONLY for letters intended for publication.

General enquiries to the editor may be sent to editor@irishtimes.com

From: Brian Murphy OSB  
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 5:05  
To: letterised@irish-times.ie  
Subject: Re: automated response

Editor, Thank you for acknowledgement. I must, however, register a complaint that my letter has not been published. It may have had failings but it was a genuine attempt, with significant historical information, to rebut the information which you had allowed to be published in a previous letter.

Your approach raises grave questions over the editing process of the IT.

Are you allowing your letter page to facilitate an open and genuine historical debate or are you using your pages to purvey a hidden political agenda? Sadly your rejection of my letter indicates that you are more committed to an agenda than to an open debate. I hope that you can prove me wrong.

**Dr Brian P Murphy osb**

16.8.17

## Brexit

continued

suggestions for Britain made in Belfast earlier in the month—form an EU-UK customs union, join the European Free Trade Area, agree a transition period staying in the customs union and single market—sounded very much like a solo run that was planned without consultation with Brussels.

In the same speech Varadkar came close to endorsing a Redmondite view of World War I. It must be conceded that when he announced that efforts by Irish civil servants aimed at devising schemes to moderate the effects of a hard border should cease on the grounds that the UK

should be responsible for sorting out problems of its own making, he showed a modicum of leadership skill, but it takes more than one swallow to make a summer.

### POSITION PAPER PROPOSALS

Two key proposals in the UK Position Paper, *'Northern Ireland and Ireland'*—regarding the transport of traded goods across the border—are *"streamlined customs arrangements"* and *"a new customs partnership"*. The first would aim to *"continue some of the existing agreements between the UK and EU, put in place new negotiated facilitations to reduce and remove barriers to trade and implement technology-based solutions"*. This suggests a scenario in which Britain would leave the Customs Union but continue to enjoy its benefits, an outcome that would undermine the existing customs regime in the EU. The second would entail *"the UK mirroring the EU's requirements for imports from the rest of the world where their final destination is the EU"*. This would place an administrative burden on businesses on the UK side that import from non-EU countries and export their goods across the Irish border and runs the risk of deterring trade.

Some ramifications of such proposals could suit Ireland but not the EU and *vice versa*. The EU authorities and the Irish State would have different priorities in relation to them. A priority for Brussels must be the protection of the Union's external frontier regarding goods that meet different standards to those of the EU, while maintaining the flow of North/South trade is crucial from a Dublin perspective. Such differences provide ample room for driving a wedge between Ireland and the rest of the EU.

The same proposals could easily bounce the Brexit negotiators into discussions about trade that are supposed to be dependent on the progress of the first phase of the talks. On two grounds, therefore, the British proposals provide scope for shifting the focus of the negotiations in a way that advantages the UK. Notwithstanding all the talk about British *"disarray"*, the trade proposals in the Position Papers reflect a negotiating strategy that has been carefully planned.

### WHELAN'S DISTRUST

The possibility that a policy of deliberate incoherence on the part of the Government may mask a divided allegiance between London and Brussels is borne out by the reasoning employed by Noel Whelan, an *Irish Times* columnist known to be close to Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin and representative of a group of Irish media

commentators. Whelan is deeply distrustful of the EU. He bemoans that we are *"no more than a single voice"* in the EU-27, a *"minnow among the many"*. Betraying his legal training, he quibbles about a deficiency in Article 50 that makes no allowance for neighbouring states to have a direct input into the negotiations. He then proceeds to accurately summarise the British strategy.

"In them [the recent Position Papers] the British government trumpets its preference for retaining the position where there are no physical Border controls between Ireland and Northern Ireland, but they do so knowing that if, as is currently proposed, Britain leaves the Customs Union then such controls are inevitable" (Irish Times, 18 Aug 2017).

By any standards, legal or political, Whelan's reasoning is incoherent. He understands that the British proposals are a ploy, yet he wants Ireland to differentiate itself from the EU negotiating position. The following paragraph from an article by Patrick Smyth headed *"European Commission pours cold water on UK's Brexit paper on North"* underlines his faulty logic:

"The idea of leaving both the single market and customs union but of maintaining an 'infrastructure-free' Border at Newry was a central thrust of the UK paper published on Wednesday, but it remains in the eyes of both Irish and EU officials an unrealistic expectation" (Irish Times, 17 Aug).

In other words Irish and EU officials share his own view. Whelan wants to bring an element of distrust into the relationship between Irish and EU officials that is unnecessary. He wants to make the tactical thinking more complex than it needs to be. It is beyond him to understand that, in a large scale confrontation like the Brexit negotiations, the imperative is tactical simplicity. The Government needs to have an effective line of communication with the Barnier team and to maintain solidarity with the EU institutions and member states. That strategy is too simple for Whelan's convoluted thought processes.

Noel Whelan is not new to the Brexit debate. He made waves in January by arguing that Ireland should threaten to follow Britain out of the EU, as had been proposed by former diplomat Ray Bassett, as a tactic for getting the attention of EU negotiators. At the time the tactic was compared by Minister Dara Murphy to *"taking yourself hostage"*. However, the notable point about Ray Bassett is that he



explicitly argued that Ireland's relationship with Britain was more important than the relationship with Europe. Support for the Bassett position in the Irish media became an indicator of pro-British sympathy and, given the amount of official effort expended over the last thirty years in matters like commemorations of the 1914-18 war, sanitising the 1916 narrative and promoting a close Anglo-Irish relationship, the existence of pro-British sympathy among sections of the political Establishment and the media is not surprising. Both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail invested heavily in Anglicisation and historical revisionism; the existence of a strong residue of those mindsets inside the Varadkar Government and within the Fianna Fail shadow Cabinet is to be expected.

Noel Whelan's article is a reminder that pro-British undercurrents are still present in the Irish Brexit debate. His reasoning throws light on the probable motivation behind Coveney's 'stubborn' defence of Irish interests.

#### OTHER BREXIT DEVELOPMENTS

Other Brexit-related developments taking place over the past month include: a letter in the *Irish Times* (27 July) from Brendan Halligan of the International Institute for European Affairs (IIEA); publication of a large opinion survey showing British attitudes to Brexit (11 August); an article on the economic effects of Irish membership of the EU from economist Kevin O'Rourke (15 Aug); and a development in France which saw Emmanuel Macron defer his reform programme to bring the French deficit under the 3% limit imposed in the Fiscal Treaty.

Brendan Halligan's letter was significant in that in it he stated that Ireland will need to fully support common defence policies and corporate tax harmonisation in the EU, and play a full part in the Franco-German "re-launch" of Europe, thus "finally cutting the umbilical cord with Britain". (A defence of Irish neutrality in reply to the IIEA position is published in this edition of *Irish Political Review*.)

The results of a relatively large opinion survey of attitudes to Brexit in Britain showed that many Remain voters favour a hard Brexit once the decision to leave was passed in the referendum. An article on the *Buzz Feed News* website stated:

"A groundbreaking project by the London School of Economics and Oxford University surveying more than 3,000 people—which BuzzFeed News has seen exclusively ahead of its official publication—reveals that when the British public

are asked in detail what they want from the negotiations, there is more support for harder Brexit options because Leavers and a significant number of Remainers back them." ([https://www.buzzfeed.com/jamesball/remain-and-leave-voters-are-surprisingly-united-on-backing?utm\\_term=.rc8bkpZyl#.kf0pozrjW](https://www.buzzfeed.com/jamesball/remain-and-leave-voters-are-surprisingly-united-on-backing?utm_term=.rc8bkpZyl#.kf0pozrjW)).

Drawbacks of the survey are that it was conducted before the General Election which changed the public mood somewhat, and that a peer review is yet to be carried out. Nonetheless the survey provides strong evidence that Brexit is unlikely to be derailed.

Kevin O'Rourke's article, which had the title, "*Brexit a reminder of how EU membership has benefited Republic*" is important because it adds weight to a shift that is occurring inside the Irish intelligentsia away from the Anglophilia of recent decades. The following paragraph constitutes a significant departure from the narrative that has characterised Irish economic thinking in recent decades:

"I don't share the view that Irish economic policymaking since independence was an unmitigated disaster. In particular, our interwar economic policies were entirely typical for the period, and were in many respects more benign than those pursued elsewhere. However, there can be no doubt that our economic performance between 1950 and 1973—decades which in France are remembered as the *Trentes Glorieuses*, and in Germany as the *Wirtschaftswunder*—was very poor" (Irish Times, 15 Aug).

The explanation that O'Rourke provides for why the economic performance in the fifties and sixties was so poor is equally ground breaking. Referring to a

graph showing the progress of the economies of Europe measured by GDP per capita in 1954 and average annual growth during the period 1954-1973, he says:

"In that context, Ireland was a spectacular underperformer. It grew slightly less rapidly than Switzerland, despite being poorer than Italy. To be sure, it grew faster than the United Kingdom, but growing faster than the sick man of Europe was nothing to be proud of. While we might have been gradually catching up on Britain during this period, we were falling further and further behind France.

Strikingly, the graph shows that Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland were also underperformers during this period; they and we were all hampered by an excessive dependence on a sluggish and crisis-prone British economy" (Irish Times, 15 Aug).

A decision made by President Macron in July to defer much of his reform agenda, to concentrate instead on getting the French deficit below the 3 per cent mark set in the Fiscal Treaty partially explains his drop in popularity, but it shows that he is serious about re-charging the Franco-German relationship and getting the Eurozone established on a more stable basis. Actions speak louder than words. It remains to be seen what changes the Macron presidency will bring to France and the EU but, by placing a priority on adherence to fiscal discipline, he has signalled serious intent regarding the Euro. Had he chosen to play to domestic pressure, his promised reform of the EU would have fallen at the first hurdle.

Dave Alvey

## A Special Brexit Arrangement For Northern Ireland ?

The wording of the position paper published by the British Government on Northern Ireland and its future relations with the Republic of Ireland, the UK and EU is a clear attempt to use the Good Friday Agreement as a battering ram to achieve objectives not limited to Northern Ireland. In particular it is an attempt to use the GFA as a means of leveraging its position in the talks and, as pointed out elsewhere in this issue, between the Irish position and that of the rest of the EU 27.

However, there is one concrete proposal in the document which has been given little consideration in the media and that relates to the derogation or 'exemption'

sought for Northern Ireland's small and medium businesses (defined as businesses with less than 250 employees) from whatever future customs relationship is eventually established between the UK and the EU. This would enable them in theory to continue to trade with minimal restriction with the Republic, and thereby the wider EU. According to the data provided with the Position Paper such businesses account for up to 80% of all exports from NI to the Republic.

It falls well short of the 'designated special status within the EU' demanded by Sinn Fein, but is nevertheless a recognition that some sort of special status is required.

Obviously such a derogation would be a significant concession from the EU, would be potentially open to abuse to the detriment of businesses in the Republic and the EU, and would therefore have to be governed by EU law, regardless of whatever legal procedures may be subsequently established to govern UK/EU trade in general. In order to have clarification as to whether further discussion on this proposed derogation is worthwhile, therefore, it is essential to know if the British Government, and in particular its DUP supporters, are willing to let the European Court of Justice have jurisdiction in this essentially internal EU matter.

It also implies that NI would have to have a different relationship to the rest of the UK *vis a vis* any future trade agreements concluded by the UK, particularly as they related to food. If the UK continues to insist that the European Court of Justice

will have no jurisdiction over any part of the UK on the other hand, then the proposal can be considered a dead letter, and a hard border, with infrastructure on the Republic's side at least, will become a reality.

This would have implications for cross-border shopping as well as trade, as it is difficult to see how the significant losses faced by the Irish exchequer as a consequence of allowing present arrangements to continue could be justified after Brexit.

Also, given the substantial costs that will be incurred by the Republic in establishing a hard border, it is inevitable that the part played by its customs agents in enforcing anti-smuggling activities will be reduced. Given the proposed absence of customs controls on the Northern side of the border a sharp increase in the illicit trade in uncustomed booze and cigarettes is only to be expected.

Sean Owens

#### Part Four

## The Remaking Of Hubert Butler

This article is not a continuation of my past articles on this particular subject. Because Johnny Gogan pulled off a masterstroke by getting our national broadcaster to broadcast his DVD titled *Hubert Butler Witness to the Future ... but silenced in his own country*—except had he allowed the same title to be used obviously nobody would have given it a glance and it would have therefore got zero attention in the media. I have always contended that the name Hubert Butler is not—contrary to the assertions of the contributors to the documentary—widely known here in Ireland (not to mention anywhere else!) and now I have my proof. Because Gogan re-titled his DVD for RTE 1 when it was broadcast on Tuesday night 8th August 2017 at 10.35 pm as *The Nuncio and the Writer*, suddenly there was media attention from all the usual suspects whose bigotry against the Catholic Church is getting more vitriolic with each passing day it seems.

The print media billed it as a—

"bitter conflict between Hubert Butler, a human rights activist and an ecclesiastical diplomat. The Kilkenny native's writings earned him the lofty title of 'Ireland's George Orwell'.... His career hit a crisis when he was deemed to have insulted Papal Nuncio Gerald O'Hara during a meeting of the International Affairs Association on October 3rd 1952" (*Irish Independent* 6th August 2017).

*The Irish Daily Mail*, 8th August 2017, had it on their Critics' Choice for that night, writing:

"Hubert Butler smuggled Jews from Vienna and then blew the lid on the Nazi inspired genocide of Serbs in war-time Croatia. For his outspokenness, the Kilkenny man was branded a communist in 1950's Ireland. Decades later, the essayist became an overnight publishing sensation... at the age of 85. Filmmaker Johnny Grogan (sic) looks at Butler's story."

Other media had the same kind of coverage so they were all writing from promotional literature which had been supplied to them by—either RTE or in this case it could have been from the Gogan himself or his Bandit Films Company. Here in Cork, the *Evening Echo* on the 5th August 2017 had a piece under the block heading *'Human rights activist who fell foul of Church'* by-lined by a Sinead McCarthy. She began on an off-key note:

"As a man heralded as Ireland's greatest human rights voice of the 20th century, the name Hubert Butler hardly trips off the tongue."

But she quickly segued into what was expected of her by acknowledging that Butler had to be this *"remarkable talent"* when august voices as distinguished as John Banville and Roy Foster said so! And she wrote that when Fintan O'Toole no less an eminence stated that Butler:

*"almost single-handedly saved Ireland's reputation in the face of the crisis faced by European Jews and minorities"*, well that was the gospel that had to be spread.

Hubert Butler, was according to Mc Carthy "deemed to have insulted 'a prince of the tribe'..." (a quotation from Olivia O'Leary herself), and—

"it resulted in a media storm and unbeknownst to him, he was effectively black-listed by the Irish President Sean T. O'Kelly who invoked a secret 'caveat' against the writer."

It was left to an *"aspiring publisher, Anthony Farrell ... who set up Lilliput Press"* and published three collections of Butler's essays which then saw him *"hooked up"* in *"New York, London and Paris"*.

After the showing of the *"very fine documentary"*, the *Evening Echo*, 12th August 2017 had another banner headline: *"Church's shameful role in WWII horror"*, by-lined by T.P. O'Mahony (a former priest known in the city for his repugnance for the Catholic Church), who first attacked the Vatican, then specifically Pope Pius XI and startlingly used a play (obviously fictional) *'The Deputy'* by Rolf Hochhuth, which was first performed in Berlin in 1963, as his basis for attacking Pope Pius.

Of course O'Mahony didn't engage with recent biographies of Pope Pius, which provide objective analysis from all the records that are now available to scholars and reveal a very different story. That just shows what kind of journalist he really is—biased to the core. Rolf Hochhuth all but accused Pope Pius—in that infamous play of his—of being responsible for the Holocaust and that is the kind of source that O'Mahony uses!

The outrageous distortions of this play turned Pius—the greatest friend of the Jewish people during the World War 11—into an anti-Semite. No less a person than Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel lauded Pius XI after the War and the chief rabbi of Rome became a Catholic, taking the name "Eugenio" in tribute to Eugenio Pacelli—Pope Pius XI when he witnessed the extent of the Pope's involvement in saving some 800,000 Jews from extermination by the Nazis. Our own Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty is only now being honoured here for being part of that great life-saving mission with other Irish priests and indeed the great singer Delia Murphy who was the wife of the Irish Diplomat to the Holy See, Professor T.J. Kiernan. (See her biography *I'll live till I die: The Story of Delia Murphy* by Aidan O'Hara. Drumlin Publications.

Dublin. 1997. See especially Chapter 8, 'Fr. O'Flaherty's spies' parlour'.)

Need I add that in the Gogan DVD, Dr. Michael Kennedy, Royal Irish Academy and Executive Editor, *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy Series*, casts sly aspersions on the ability of Professor Kiernan to do his job, when he knew well the opposite was the case. But then in the business of propaganda all is grist to the mill it seems!

The *Irish Political Review* and its sister magazine *Church & State* has demonstrated with facts from 2000, when the Hubert Butler Centenary Celebrations took place between 20th—22nd October 2000 (co-funded by the British Council and The Irish Times), over the intervening years the truth about Hubert Butler. During that Conference—which Professor Edna Longley, Queens University, Belfast publicly called a "revisionist retreat", in a Q & A Session at the end of the conference—Jack Lane read from Hubert Butler's political pamphlet *The Minority Voice* (published in 'In the Land of Nod' pp 26-31) when he ran for a County Council seat in 1955 and was spectacularly unsuccessful and Lane's quotations showed Butler to be a racist and a bigot. When Lane asked the panel to account for Butler's appalling notion of "democracy being in the blood of Protestants and not Roman Catholics" there was at first silence and mutterings amongst the panel of speakers. In the end, it took Professor Terence Brown, Trinity College, Dublin, after hedging around about that being a time when that sort of language about "blood" was used so we must contextualise it—Lane eventually got him to agree that it was in fact "crude, offensive and in effect somewhat racist". Ultimately though—the panel couldn't find it in themselves to call a spade a spade unless it was a Catholic one!

What was curious about that panel discussion, where Brendan Clifford also made a lively intervention and wiped the floor with Neal Ascherson, a British journalist about the Serb matter—was that it was completely elided—Foster's favourite word—or censored when the book of the Centenary Conference was brought out. Called *'Unfinished Ireland' Essays on Hubert Butler*, Edited by Chris Agee. Published by Irish Pages, The Linen Hall, Belfast. 2003, it purported to be an account of the Conference and yet its liveliest contributors were silenced.

Hubert Butler was never silenced in this country. But I must say that when a friend brought to my attention a letter to *The Irish Independent* that appeared on

16th August 2017 by Dr. Kevin McCarthy I asked a friend to email it to me. It soon transpired that this was the infamous Dr. McCarthy, Kinsale, Co. Cork, who is a devoted friend of Zionism and who has letters frequently published in *The Irish Examiner*. The strange thing is that none of our friends in Kinsale have ever come across this rather seemingly reclusive man except through the letters pages of *The Irish Examiner* and some other papers that I don't normally read. But what the doctor wrote that really stunned me was that he saw our President, Michael D. Higgins attending the annual Hubert Butler Memorial Lecture on 12th August 2017 in St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny for Eva

Hoffman's lecture.

Does that mean that President Higgins has no problem being seen to give credence to a bigot and a racist as Butler's own writings attest to? Really?

Is that the point of all our historians pontificating on our shared past? Is forgetting more important than remembering?

And, in that act of forgetting our national past, is it made easier to falsify that past so new false gods can be erected for our abject devotion?

In the end maybe it is as simple as that but what poverty of historicism there now exists in this land of ours!

**Julianne Herlihy ©**

## Kevin Myers

So Myers has been caught by the vagaries of English anti-Semitism and has become a notorious anti-Semite.

England operates a noisy campaign against anti-Semitism while maintaining an effective anti-Semitic culture. That is the kind of thing it does well. And it is the kind of thing that Ireland cannot do at all.

About once in every ten years a book is issued by a mainstream publisher exposing English anti-Semitism and the hypocrisy surrounding it. About twenty years ago that book was written by Princess Margaret's lawyer—a Jew who had come close to the top of his profession in England without quite understanding the English way of things. He expected his book to have an effect. It had no discernible effect. His facts were not disputed. The book was reviewed with polite praise and put away.

English anti-Semitism is not a vulgar phenomenon of disrupted elements of the lower classes. It is not what Bebel described it as being in Germany: "*The Socialism of fools*". It has its source in the upper class that was for centuries an actual ruling class and that still maintains the attitudes of a ruling class.

The three great classics of English anti-Semitic writing are the author of Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, and T.S. Eliot—the American who was the last major poet in the tradition of English literature from the 16th century to the early 20th. The masses do of course participate in anti-Semitic feeling, but it is important for its effectiveness that it is maintained and directed from the top.

There is, however, an etiquette governing its expression. And the ham-fisted

English provincial petty-bourgeois, Myers, who came to Southern Ireland in the 1970s and over-achieved in the cultural wasteland it was making of itself, broke that etiquette, thinking he was safe in an Irish edition of an English paper, and was given the chop.

His fall is lamented by the mere Irish, like Fintan O'Toole, who are the product of no national culture, but have constructed themselves to a formula of cosmopolitan political correctness and dare not let themselves go. They prized having a brash Englishman amongst them who could blurt things out with impunity. They are hurt by his fall. It has made the world a smaller place for them.

## TOURIST CLASS

3000 bombs and missiles hit Mosul  
in three years  
this RAF pilot  
on TV appears  
his temper  
ultraviolet  
they hate us down there  
he says  
but we don't kill civilians  
for we've counted none  
only villains  
and when we have polished them  
off  
he interrupts with a little  
cough  
it's off to Raqqa  
to you Syria  
for another fling  
where our bombs will groom  
and our missiles will sing  
out of tune  
with the Assad aria

**Wilson John Haire**  
6 July 2017

## West Cork History Festival

### —some background on sources

The First West Cork History Festival has again made topical some issues in the debate over Peter Hart's methodology. These two letters deal with the issue of sources that were central to that debate.

The first letter is by Meda Ryan, one of the people who was to the fore in challenging Hart's 'history'. She has been among the most respected historians on the history of the War of Independence in West Cork for some years. She has that position because of her hard work and diligence over the years in collecting and recording the facts of the period. And also, because she was trusted by participants and others connected with the War, she gained unique insights on the subject. She was the first to point out that Peter Hart had claimed to interview a participant in the Kilmichael Ambush after all participants had died. *The Irish Times* refused to publish her letter of 9th February 1999 pointing this out.

However, as she drew attention to the revisionist arguments set out by Peter Hart and his admirers, she encountered hostility by some historians.

One encounter she had was a criticism by Eve Morrison of TCD published in *History Ireland* (May/June 2014). Ms Morrison questioned the validity of her research and her personal honesty. This was a most serious allegation, well beyond the bounds of normal book reviewing. Meda Ryan's reply was relegated to the electronic version of a later issue of *History Ireland*. *The Irish Political Review* asked her for permission to reprint this letter and she kindly agreed.

The second letter by Niall Meehan complements Meda Ryan's letter and was published in the *Southern Star* on 4th August 2017 and explains how crucial sources have been dealt with by Fr. Chisholm and Eve Morrison.

Jack Lane

## Meda Ryan Letter to *History Ireland*

In her review of Barry Keane's *Massacre In West Cork* (HI 22.3, May/June 2014), Eve Morrison is critical of my use of documents left behind in 1922 by departing Auxiliaries in Dunmanway Workhouse. She questions whether I had 'actually seen them'. I stated publically in a 2011 TG4 Documentary, *Scéal Tom Barry*, that I had.

In 1981, while researching a short commissioned Mercier Press biography of Tom Barry, I interviewed former flying column volunteer, Dan Cahalane. I want to stress that in my work, I had already built *trust* with people—this is important. In the course of an interview with Cahalane, he showed me the documents he had received on loan. He studied them carefully and was able to pin-point names plus details regarding the 13 men killed between 26-29 April 1922. During the course of interview/discussion he constantly referred to the named 'helpful citizens' as 'loyalist'. Religion was not a factor for him in discussing the many named people. However, being from the locality, it was possible for me to discern religious denomination (sometimes mentioned) and families known to me.

Tom Barry's *Guerilla Days in Ireland* drew a distinction between 'spies' and 'informers'. He reported, 'we knew men were being sold'. 'Spies', he noted, 'took blood money'. 'Loyalist informers' were far more dangerous than the spy—they weren't 'doing it for money', they 'hated

the Republican movement' and were 'therefore worse'. He always stressed that 'Loyalism' was not confined to a particular Christian denomination.

I did not use the information in my first short Barry biography. However, after the introduction of the IRA sectarianism argument in Peter Hart's *The IRA & Its Enemies* (1998), I felt motivated to use relevant material in *Tom Barry IRA Freedom Fighter* (2003). Hart wrote: (a) of the IRA targeting Protestants because of their religion during the War of Independence; (b) 'These men were shot because they were Protestant', regarding the April 1922 killings.

As well as other details, in *Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter* I wrote, 'In the course of my extensive interviews over the years with ex-IRA participants of the period I did not hear of "ethnic cleansing" and "ethnic conflict" as Hart wrote'.

It is important to note that there was a Truce in April 1922—sometimes uneasily observed. In the absence of policing and an acceptable functioning court system, this was broken many times in areas of Ireland. Law and order had receded. However, most of the IRA and its leadership observed Truce terms.

Regarding the April 1922 incidents, my book mentioned the names/surnames of the men who were killed because Peter Hart had named them. I found that chapter personally difficult to write. To reiterate the point, I was from the area. I do not know what has become of the documents. Dan Cahalane did not tell me to whom he was returning the material. Flor Crowley,

I understood, also had them on loan. After the publication of my book in 2003, when a controversy arose, I tried to locate the 'Dunmanway Find' and so far have failed.

I have written that some of the men who were killed during that period were discussed in correspondence between Risteárd Ó Glaisne and Tom Barry in 1949. Ó Glaisne wrote that he was only 'acquainted with the "over-ground"', and appreciated getting "the whole truth" from Barry. They discussed attitudes among some "loyalists" at the time. No other details were in Barry's private papers other than Ó Glaisne's correspondence, which I reported. However, I am informed by Niall Meehan that a subsequent letter from Barry to Ó Glaisne is in the latter's papers—that does not discuss the April killings.

As I had Barry's papers on loan I returned them once my work was completed. I do not know who refused Morrison 'access' (as she does not say), but I have no control over those private papers.

With regard to Morrison's reference to my use of private collections and personal interviews, I feel fortunate that many families *trust* and have *trusted* me, to give me their private collections on loan, which I always return. I hold my personal interviews, as many historians do. Fortunately, most of my interviews have been with active participants (primary sources) in an important period in Irish history. I use them prudently for on-going research and writing.

It is unknown exactly who carried out the April killings and I won't speculate.

The West Cork IRA leadership wished to maintain Truce terms and were in Dublin at the time endeavouring to ward off civil war. Upon return, they initiated 'guards' on the homes of those thought vulnerable. Former flying column volunteer, Jim Kearney wrote to me, (quoted 2003), 'I was one of the guards, so I should know'. AJS Stephen Brady's father was a Rector; in his memoir *Briar of Life*, Brady confirmed 'guards' outside their Macroom home at that period. Professor John A. Murphy later stated that his father guarded the Rector's home.

At this stage I do not wish to continue this controversy. Like most people in West Cork, I have no desire or intention of adding to any distress for any family. As I wrote in *Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter*, 'After hostilities ceased, Republicans in West Cork took a decision not to expose the names of known spies or of Loyalists informers within the community. This decision was taken to protect relatives and also to preserve neighbourly stability. Family members were generally unaware of the underground activities their relatives were engaged in and for harmony in the area Republicans aided this protectionist policy of nondisclosure.'

**Meda Ryan,**  
16/5/2014

## Niall Meehan Letter

Eve Morrison repeats her demand that Meda Ryan, a historian, give her interview notes to a public archive (*Southern Star*, 27 July 2017).

Why this fixation on Ryan's research? Should all historians do likewise?

Is Morrison's demand a form of quid pro quo for criticism of Peter Hart's use of anonymous interviews and the confusion his doctoral decision (agreed by TCD) produced?

Is it also because of the request that the so-called 'Chisholm tapes', that Peter Hart misreported and censored in *The IRA and its Enemies*, be placed in a public archive? If so, I would like to explain why Morrison's demand is misconceived.

The recordings in question might perhaps also be termed the 'Deasy tapes'. Liam Deasy made them, with the late Fr John Chisholm's assistance, as research material for Deasy's 1973 book, *Toward Ireland Free*.

Before she died, Liam Deasy's eldest daughter Maureen, who typed the 1973 manuscript, requested in writing, both privately (2009) and publicly (2013) that the tapes be given to UCC.

Maureen Deasy made her request because she thought Chisholm an unreliable custodian. Her concerns were evidentially based.

For example, Fr Chisholm agreed to let TV programme maker Jerry O'Callaghan listen to all eight tapes, as research for the 2011 TG4 documentary *Scéal Tom Barry* ('The Tom Barry Story').

O'Callaghan then attended an October 2011 Eve Morrison talk in TCD, at which some of the Chisholm material was played back. He was surprised to hear, for the first time, Kilmichael veteran Ned Young's voice on one recording. Chisholm, who was there too, said that when he allowed O'Callaghan to listen he had 'lost' and forgotten that ninth tape. He remembered and 'found' the recording when Morrison came looking. Whereas O'Callaghan had to sit and listen, while constructing a transcript, Eve Morrison was fortunate in being given the actual recordings.

Even more surprised by this development was Ned Young's son John, who previously had asked Chisholm for a copy of recordings of his father. Chisholm wrote to John Young in 2008, "I greatly regret having to inform you that I have no recording of an interview with your father, though I remember him with affection as a man of real character".

Maureen Deasy observed in *History Ireland* in 2013:

"I am not in good health. It is my fervent wish that Fr Chisholm make a thorough search for all material belonging to my father which he may also have mislaid, and that the material be given to UCC for use by researchers. This scandalous situation has to end and can only end with full disclosure of the tapes and their contents."

Not unreasonably, in 2012 the UCC historian John Borgonovo suggested that Chisholm had "polluted this evidential well". The only rational acceptable solution to the mess Chisholm created was, as Maureen Deasy suggested, that the material be placed in a public archive.

It is a welcome development that Eve Morrison intends, finally, to make this happen, at some future date. TCD is an acceptable choice if access is open (with usual procedures). Since UCC was the last recorded wish of the late Maureen Deasy, perhaps TCD should consider giving UCC copies of the recordings, in the spirit of all modern collaborative research, and in light of UCC's commendable efforts in this context.

Separately, I note that Morrison has not responded to the point that, while Peter Hart may have spoken to him, William

Chambers was probably not Peter Hart's mystery interviewee on 19th November 1989 (six days after Ned Young, the last surviving Kilmichael Ambush participant, died).

Not for the first time, Morrison fails to acknowledge something I first noted, that Chambers could not have seen and heard events at the Ambush, that took place 15 kilometres from where he claimed he then stood (on Enniskeane bridge).

Since the 19 November 1989 interviewee described what he saw at the ambush, as yet undiscovered evidence can never 'resolve' that particular 'contradiction', despite Morrison's suggestion. Unless Morrison has definitive undisclosed proof, it is not sensible to declare that Chambers was the mystery man. If proof is to hand, it would demonstrate that Peter Hart's Kilmichael Ambush chapter, in *The IRA and its Enemies*, is a shambles.

**Niall Meehan**  
*The Southern Star*  
4.8.2017

## Did Gerry Accept An 'Office of Profit' under the Crown?

When Gerry Adams resigned his Westminster seat, did he accept an Office of Profit under the Crown? Here is how the matter is explained:

"Members of Parliament (MPs) sitting in the House of Commons in the United Kingdom are technically not permitted to resign their seats... To circumvent this prohibition, a legal fiction is used. Formerly, appointment to an 'office of profit under the Crown' disqualified an individual from sitting as an MP. Hence an MP who wished to give up his or her seat would ask to be appointed to such an office—one which no longer has any duties associated with it—thus causing disqualification and vacation of the seat. Offices of profit are no longer disqualifying, but appointment to various specified offices is, and two offices are specified as disqualifying for this purpose: the Crown Steward and Bailiff of the Chiltern Hundreds and of the Manor of Northstead..."

"On 20 January 2011, Sinn Féin MP Gerry Adams submitted a letter of resignation to the Speaker, but did not apply for a Crown office, which would be politically unacceptable for a Sinn Féin politician... On 26 January, a Treasury spokesperson said 'Consistent with long-standing precedent, the Chancellor has taken [the letter] as a request to be appointed the Steward and Bailiff of the Manor of Northstead and granted the office'... Although David Cameron said during Prime Minister's Questions that Adams had 'accepted an office for profit under the Crown', Adams denied this... and hence continued simply to reject the title, albeit not its effect of removal from office..."

"Another Sinn Féin MP, Martin McGuinness, resigned and was formally appointed as Steward and Bailiff of the Manor of Northstead on 2 January 2013, leading to the 2013 Mid-Ulster by-election.[12] McGuinness has also said that he rejects the title." (Wikipedia)

**Madawc Williams**

# A Pro-EU Defence of Irish Neutrality

As testified by recent statements from Professor Brigid Laffan, Director of the *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies* in Florence, and Brendan Halligan, President of the *Institute of International and European Affairs* (IIEA), the official pro-EU lobby in Ireland is pressing for Ireland's military neutrality to be abandoned. The rationale behind this attack on what is a cornerstone of the traditional policy is a belated recognition from both writers that Ireland needs to distance itself from Britain and move closer to Europe because of Brexit. If Ireland is now to tie its colours more firmly to the EU mast, they argue, we must commit fully to all the common EU policies, including those pertaining to the Union's security and defence.

The purpose of this document is to state the case for retaining Irish neutrality while actively supporting the integration of the EU. The urgent priority following the sovereign debt crisis of recent years must be the further integration and consolidation of the Eurozone, but that is a separate topic. This document, which is confined to the topic of Irish neutrality, begins with relevant extracts from media statements by Professor Laffan and Brendan Halligan and proceeds to treat the topic under four main headings: Hard geo-politics; Historical orientation; *Realpolitik* and the EU-US relationship; and Nation states in a supranational union. The case concludes with a discussion of possible conditions under which a review of Irish neutrality might be warranted.

## THE CASE AGAINST NEUTRALITY

Brigid Laffan considers it important in the longer term that "*Ireland adjusts to the EU27, as opposed to the EU28*". Viewing neutrality in this context she says:

"Moreover, a second sacred cow needs attention and that is the Republic's policy of military neutrality.

Irish policy in this regard was always conditioned by the safety of its geographical location.

However, the return of hard geopolitics in a world of Putin and Trump challenges European security and means that the State's neutrality deserves sustained scrutiny.

The so-called triple lock which binds the State into a UN resolution before committing to the deployment of Irish troops does not do justice to the Irish Republic.

The consent of the Oireachtas should be sufficient for such a move, and the Republic should take full part in the further development of the EU's security capacity" (Irish Times article, 16 May 2017).

For Brendan Halligan the EU is essentially a Franco-German project whose engine is about to be kick-started following the election of Emmanuel Macron as President of France. He argues that Ireland will need to adopt the agenda of Macron and Merkel (assuming she wins a fourth term in September) and adapt it to our own requirements. He places the question of neutrality in a historical context as follows:

"Ireland volunteered to join the EEC in 1961 and gave certain commitments that now need to be revived. The then Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, fearing that Ireland would otherwise be isolated, virtually broke down the doors in Brussels to get into the community. Our application was opposed on many grounds, of which non-membership of Nato was the biggest. Lemass took this head-on and asserted that Ireland agreed with the objectives of Nato, was not neutral in the conflict between democracy and communism and implied that, if admitted as a member, would be prepared to join in the common defence of the EEC.

But defence remains a legacy issue because that commitment got lost after Lemass's retirement, and is now forgotten. Discussion is off-limits and neutrality has become more a matter of theology than international politics. We have failed to update what it means in practice, as the Finns and Swedes have done.

But we won't be able to do that for much longer because the Franco-German alliance has undergone a renaissance with the arrival of President Macron and with the imminent re-election of Mrs Merkel. European defence is back on the agenda, not least because of the US retreat from global affairs and the re-emergence of a truculent Russia" (Letter, *Ir. Times*, 27.7.17).

Halligan's focus is on extracting EU aid in compensation for the losses that Brexit will impose on sectors of the Irish economy. Arguing that a cost will have to be incurred for procuring such aid he identifies "*playing a full part in the future common defence*" [of the Union] as a necessary part of the cost. Ireland, he advises, should invoke the principle of solidarity and show that solidarity works both ways. He describes the strategy he is proposing as being based on "*realpolitik*" as opposed to woolly "*sentiment*". His text reads:

"We will inevitably be looking for assistance in building a new economic model while absorbing the shock of Brexit. To succeed at both we will need something analogous to the cohesion funds that eased our way into monetary

union as well as special measures to offset the loss of competitiveness in the UK market, a consequence of the inexorable decline in the value of sterling.

This will be a tough case to make given the competing needs of the less well off member states. But it will have to be made and will be best done by invoking the principle of solidarity. Common sense dictates, however, that to win solidarity we must show solidarity and that means playing a full part at the centre of the Union. It's a question of *realpolitik*, not sentiment.

In sum, playing a full part at the centre of the Union means playing a full part in the future common defence and security policies, playing a full part in creating a fiscal union involving corporate tax harmonisation, playing a full part in the Franco-German re-launch of Europe and finally cutting the umbilical cord with Britain and accepting the full consequences of the hard Brexit being brewed up by the Tories" (Ibid).

Laffan and Halligan both argue that Ireland will need to strengthen its relationship with the EU as a result of Brexit and the new political landscape that is forming on the Continent, especially the renewed Franco-German relationship, and they both consider the ending of Irish neutrality as necessary because of a perceived threat to European security from Russia and Donald Trump's retreat from global affairs. Brendan Halligan adds a further dimension by proposing that neutrality should be dropped as a gesture of solidarity with the EU at a time when Ireland will need to procure funding from Brussels in compensation for the damage that Brexit will eventually cause.

## HARD GEOPOLITICS

"*Hard geopolitics*" means the reality of military power, influenced by geographical factors, that lies at the back of international rivalries and relationships; we should thank Professor Laffan for introducing it, except that it should be widened beyond current Western concerns about Russia. Since the end of the Cold War in November 1989, the overwhelming geopolitical reality has been the hegemony of the US. A '*new world order*' initiated by the US at that time has not gone to plan; and the repercussions provide the context in which all major questions of international alignment and peace-keeping need to be addressed.

In geopolitical terms the EU is part of the West and the military strategies of the West are determined by the Anglosphere, a long standing alliance between the US, the global Super-power, and the UK, the sixth strongest military Power in the world, but also including minor Powers like Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Why should Ireland's defence forces become integrated with EU military structures that are

ultimately a minor cog in an alliance that exerts a destabilising influence in the world?

The invasion of Iraq by a multi-national force in 2003 destabilised a volatile region, and the effects of the destabilisation continue to pose a security threat to the nations of the West. The involvement of NATO forces in Afghanistan arising from the September 11th atrocity in New York in 2001 has failed to end the destabilising effect of military conflict in that country and contributed to Europe's migration crisis. Nor is there much evidence that lessons have been learned from these entanglements. In 2014 rebels backed by Western air strikes toppled the Qaddafi regime in Libya with the result that the country has been wracked by conflict between three rival groupings of jihadists ever since. As is well known the ensuing chaos has been a major factor in the trafficking of immigrants across the Mediterranean into Italy.

The other conflict that has contributed significantly to Europe's migration crisis is the war in Syria; it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that US involvement there, being focussed mainly on the prevention of Russian success, is having the effect of prolonging the distress of the Syrian population. The Syrian War also raises the question of the antagonism between the US and Russia and why it has been escalated by the US. The opportunity created by the collapse of the Soviet Union to forge a mutually supportive relationship between the West and Russia was squandered through misconceived efforts to implant the US variant of Capitalism during the Yeltsin era, but, even allowing for that as an honest failure, the wilful aggravation of relations with Putin in the years following 9/11 are difficult to fathom. The tensions arising from disputes between the US and Russia, over Ukraine as well as Syria, are a direct concern for Europe.

Professor Laffan's reference to *"hard geopolitics in a world of Putin and Trump"* and Brendan Halligan's reference to *"the US retreat from global affairs and the re-emergence of a truculent Russia"* both reflect a viewpoint that sees President Trump's attempted *rapprochement* with Russia as misconceived. The logic of their position, widely shared by anti-Trump media commentators, is that the opponents of Trump in the US Congress, who recently voted to codify and strengthen economic sanctions against Russia, have the right idea. But have they?

When anti-Russian sanctions were initially imposed by the US and the EU in 2014 following a referendum vote by the population of Crimea to leave Ukraine and join the Russian Federation, the trade links most affected were those between

the EU and Russia. Essentially the US was using the EU as an instrument to damage the Russian economy. Following the recent vote in the US Congress, which if followed through on will inflict far greater damage on European interests than the earlier sanctions, the EU Commission has vigorously opposed the new measures to the point of drafting *"WTO-compliant retaliatory measures"*. However that story turns out, the underlying message is that US dominance over the present geopolitical system is harmful to European interests and detrimental to international peace.

The debate in the US Senate (early August 2017) over sanctions against Russia included some illuminating comments on the US relationship with Europe. The legislation is described by Alistair Crooke as a measure designed *"to hurt and incapacitate the US President in any future dealings with Russia"*. According to Crooke this objective takes precedence over the risk of causing collateral damage to Europe. He writes:

"Congress Senator Dianne Feinstein, D-California, blandly stated that the concerns of U.S. allies come second to the need to punish Russia for its election interference. When asked whether the bill took account of the European Union's interests, one of the main authors, Senator John McCain, R-Arizona, said simply: 'Not that I know of. Certainly not in the portion of the bill I was responsible for'."

Another of the bill's authors, Bob Menendez, D-New Jersey, laconically replied to the same question: 'Not much, to be honest with you.'

McCain carelessly then quipped that essentially it was 'the job of the E.U. to come around to the legislation, not for the legislation to be brought around to them'."

A different take on the US/EU relationship is to be found in a recent briefing from the IIEA. Referring to Angela Merkel's Munich beer tent statement *"we Europeans must take our fate in our own hands to some extent"*, the briefing author counsels against overstating the significance of the Chancellor's comments during the run-up to a Federal Election or seeing them as *"heralding a dramatic shift in Germany's and Europe's approach to geopolitics"*. Later in the briefing, a statement from a senior Fellow from the Brookings Institute, Dr Constanze Stelzenmüller, is quoted and what she says highlights an ambivalence in the European view of US-EU relations. The statement reads:

"None of this means that Europeans are turning their backs on America, the trans-Atlantic relationship, or NATO, its military arm—or are attempting to set up

a counterweight. But it is a declaration of emancipation".

The first sentence seems to be contradicted by the second, a sequence that aptly summarises the true position. Subservience to the US is not popular with European electorates but European elites are well aware of the geopolitical reality that the West must abide by the leadership of the leading nation of the Anglosphere.

The relevance of all this to the Irish debate on neutrality is that for all intents and purposes the EU is subject to the leadership of the US. If war were to break out between the US and Russia, not as unlikely an eventuality as may seem, the EU would quickly fall into line with its master across the Atlantic. In terms of hard geopolitics the EU is a subsidiary of the US. In these circumstances and given that the *new world order* has turned out to be disastrous in its major initiatives, there is a strong case for withholding Irish involvement in the security affairs of the EU, and for defending the traditional neutrality policy.

Criticism of American foreign policy will appeal in normal circumstances to a relatively small percentage of the population. Because of the magnitude of the catastrophe in Iraq, however, an intervention described by the pro-Western author, Jason Burke, as a *"grotesque strategic mistake"*, defending neutrality is likely to resonate with a clear majority of the electorate. It will be said that Irish neutrality has been effectively negated to an extent by the stop-off at Shannon used by the US military for re-fuelling en route to Iraq, but Ireland must bend to geopolitical realities no less than the EU. Even in its compromised form as a result of the use of Shannon, Irish neutrality stands out among the policies of European states and is worth defending.

#### HISTORICAL ORIENTATION

Viewing the policy on its merits it is absurd to judge contemporary developments by the standards of fifty years ago; the world has changed too much in the meantime, not least as a result of the Soviet collapse and the consequent emergence of a controversial world order under US hegemony. That a clear majority of the Irish electorate would want Irish defence force personnel participating in US-led military interventions, like those that have dominated international affairs since 2001, is highly questionable. On the other hand, if Irish neutrality is to be viewed as a quasi constitutional matter, a policy that cannot easily be changed, then Lemass and his successors failed to remove the policy in establishing the Irish relationship with Europe; changing that constitu-

tional arrangement now will require a major national debate.

The reference to Lemass in Brendan Halligan's letter to the *Irish Times* has the merit of being an attempt to place Ireland's relationship with the EEC/EU in a historical perspective, but it rests too heavily on economic criteria. In this Mr Halligan is representative of a great number of contemporary commentators who portray Ireland as a basket case that was belatedly rescued by the modernising effects of Free Trade in the 1960s. The following paragraph from a previous essay by Professor Laffan published in 2001 is an example of such commentary. Speaking about Ireland's entry into the EEC in the course of a Thomas Davis lecture she said:

"The Taoiseach and his party were seen off at Dublin airport by the then President, Eamon de Valera. The photograph capturing the departing Taoiseach and the ageing President was hugely symbolic. This tableau captured the ties but also the tensions between the Ireland of 1972 and the Ireland of 1916. Jack Lynch's departure to sign the Rome Treaty represented the end of the Ireland that de Valera would have wished for and experienced. Right up to the mid-1950s de Valera's idea or ideal of Ireland was that of a rural and preferably Gaelic-speaking society committed to spiritual rather than material values. The Ireland of the twenties, thirties, forties and fifties was an Ireland fearful of the consequences of economic modernisation, urbanisation and growth" (Hourihane, 2002, p. 54).

The basic message informing the Laffan/Halligan view of Irish twentieth century history is: Lemass—good; De Valera—bad. Under this 'narrative' neutrality belongs on the opposite side of the equation from economic modernisation; it was devised by De Valera and is consequently tainted by pre-modern conservatism.

Before setting out an alternative narrative in which neutrality is viewed from a historical perspective, it will be instructive to briefly answer Professor Laffan's skewed portrayal of the relationship between Sean Lemass and Jack Lynch on one side and De Valera on the other.

Policies implemented by Governments headed by De Valera in the 1930s and 1940s included industrialisation in the form of increased industrial employment enabled by protectionist tariffs, a failed drive to increase agricultural employment through the expansion of tillage, an accelerated provision of public housing, a system of family allowances aimed at reducing poverty, rural electrification, and the development of the bogs. Many of these policies entailed increased public spending and on that ground were

vigorously opposed by Fine Gael and the large farmer interest. They were also opposed by the civil servants heading the Department of Finance and the Central Bank, especially Joseph Brennan and James McElligott. In a nutshell De Valera confronted and disproved the conservative view inherited from the British that agriculture should form the mainstay of the Irish economy and in this he was ably assisted by Ministers like Sean Lemass and Frank Aiken.

Jack Lynch is not a politician that the *Irish Political Review* would single out for praise, quite the contrary given his role in the Arms Crisis of 1970. Like Lemass his abilities and contribution to Irish politics are greatly exaggerated. Nonetheless his political career was not without achievement. He served in the Cabinets of both de Valera and Lemass and admired both. In a short memoir published on the Politico website entitled, '*Jack Lynch: My Life and Times*', Lynch makes two points regarding the EEC that show the degree of his sympathy for the De Valerite worldview: that he was proud to have led Ireland into the European Monetary System in 1979 when Britain remained outside of it; and that the great effect of EEC membership was "*to remove Ireland's almost complete dependence on the British economy and to abolish the exploitative element, that was inherent in that dependence, primarily through the operation of the British cheap food policy*" (Lynch, 1979).

In old age De Valera is reported to have been apprehensive about Ireland's joining of the EEC. This was probably due to a fear, widespread at the time, that Irish industrial employment would collapse in the face of international competition. In the event many Irish jobs were gradually lost but the losses were compensated by other jobs created through foreign direct investment. That '*Dev*' would have been pleased by the later developmental successes of Irish involvement in the EU is a reasonable assumption.

In short the Laffan/Halligan view of the Irish experience of the EEC/EU is based on a false dichotomy between anti-modern nationalism symbolised by De Valera and economic liberalism led by Sean Lemass. De Valera and Lemass shared the same nationalist outlook; they both contributed to the creation of the modern Irish state, one as a State builder, the other as a political administrator; of the two the contribution of De Valera was by far the more important.

In dismissing the Irish commitment to military neutrality as "*a matter of*

*theology*", Brendan Halligan demonstrates a notable lack of historical understanding. The maintenance of neutrality by the Irish state throughout the six years of World War II was the culmination of a long campaign by De Valera and the Fianna Fail party aimed at rolling back a British policy of curtailing Irish sovereignty. The Irish drive to unwind the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, waged by De Valera during the 1930s provides a clear example of the *primacy of politics* principle in practice. Even though the Irish Government was pursuing radical economic policies by increasing public expenditure and maintaining protective tariffs during that time, thwarting British plans to retain Ireland within its sphere of influence was of a higher priority; the establishment of meaningful independence from Britain, a political objective, was considerably more important than the economic reforms; it laid the basis for the subsequent emergence of the Irish Republic as a successful modern state.

In a study of the common travel area (CTA) between Ireland and the UK, historian Elizabeth Meehan describes a policy conflict faced by the Irish Government between the aims of asserting independence from the UK while upholding the CTA on pragmatic grounds. She concludes that "*Irish governments were remarkably successful in realising this uncomfortable pair of objectives*" ("*Free movement between Ireland the UK: from the 'common travel area' to the COMMON TRAVEL AREA*" by Elizabeth Meehan, produced by the Policy Institute, Trinity College Dublin in association with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2000, p. 10)

She describes the process as follows:

"The Oath of Allegiance had been abolished by constitutional amendment in 1933 and, in 1934, during consideration of the Nationality and Citizenship Bill, instructions were given by the Executive Council to the Department of External Affairs to delete 'specific references to the British Commonwealth of Nations'. Following its enactment, Ireland introduced its own Aliens Act under which anyone who was not a citizen of Saorstát Éireann was an alien. This made the British as alien as any other nationality but an exemption Order (S.R. + O. No 80 of 1935) excluded them and the peoples of the Commonwealth from the application of the 1935 Act and, hence, permitted the continuation of free movement. In 1936 the External Relations Act was passed. This Act reflected de Valera's position at the time of the 1921 Treaty; that the King should not be Head of State in Ireland, though he would be Head of



the Commonwealth with which Ireland might have an external relationship. Thus, the Act brought into being a 'state internally a republic' but with 'an act of parliament [i.e. a statute, not 'a fundamental law'] associating us in certain respects with the states of the British commonwealth' for the duration of the legislation 'and no longer'. The 1937 Constitution, for which preparation had begun in 1935, the year of the Nationality and Citizenship Act and the Aliens Act, contains no direct reference to the British Crown or Commonwealth. Article 29, however, maintains a general possibility for legislation allowing the state to associate itself with 'any group or league of nations'..." ( *ibid* p. 13, 14).

The political and economic objectives of the De Valera Government became intertwined in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938. That Agreement had the purpose of ending the economic war between Ireland the UK which arose out of a decision by De Valera to cease paying land annuities to the British Government. In the negotiations the Irish agreed to pay the relatively low amount of £10 million as a final payment, a settlement usually adjudged a triumph for the Irish side. Also decided in the Agreement was that the UK would return to Dublin three sea ports which had been retained by Britain as part of the 1921 settlement. Having control of the ports allowed the Irish Government to take a neutral stance in future international conflicts, a power that was used by De Valera's Fianna Fail Government with the support of the Opposition to keep Ireland neutral during the Second World War. The exercise of neutrality in that context was the ultimate expression of Irish independence from Britain; it was the culmination of a long campaign to establish Irish sovereignty.

One further aspect of the historical aspect of Irish neutrality needs to be noted. It would be wrong to conclude that the policy had no purpose other than to take up a position different to that of the UK. In important respects the policy had its origins in the stance taken by the leaders of the 1916 rebellion, a stance of opposition to John Redmond's support for the British war effort in 1914-18. Two of the leaders in particular, Roger Casement and James Connolly, viewed the war from an international as well as a national perspective. It was Casement's opinion that Britain's decision to wage war on Germany reflected an unjustifiable attempt to destroy a trade rival. Connolly had the same view but added a socialist perspective. For Connolly socialist reforms had brought immense benefits to Germany and lay "at the back

## Ulster Scots

In the August issue of *Irish Political Review*, Brendan Clifford is to the point when he writes:

"There is going to be an *Irish Language Act*, and not as a '*Sinn Fein cudgel*' either—whether or not accompanied by a face-saving '*Lallans*' Act."

The DUP has never had any serious interest in Ulster-Scots as anything other than a sectarian weapon to play in opposition to a real, living, Irish language. Eighteen years ago, the DUP's Nelson McCausland was banging his drum, while wearing as his hat the Ulster Scots Heritage Council, but remained noticeably silent when I pointed out that the last Northern Ireland person of note who proclaimed himself to have been, in his childhood, a native speaker of Ulster-Scots, was the Catholic Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal Cathal Daly.

The following letter from me, under the heading of "*Language or Dialect?*", was published in the "*Irish Times*" on 3rd March 1999, and received no reply from McCausland:

Further to Nelson McCausland's letter on behalf of the Ulster Scots Heritage Council (February 23, 1999), I remain unconvinced of the appropriateness of the term "the Ulster-Scots language". I would be equally sceptical in the unlikely event of anyone materialising to speak of "the Donegal Irish language". Precision would require one to speak of the Donegal dialect of the Irish language, while the shorthand reference to Donegal Irish is also acceptable since it does not presume to credit Donegal with having a language all of its own. Since Nelson McCausland himself cites the fact that Ulster-Scots has been described as a "variant" of the Scots language, that "variant" is surely a dialect rather than a language in its own right distinct from Scots.

None of these observations seeks to detract from the cultural contribution of Ulster-Scots, a terminology which I accept when used without the appendage of "*language*" to suggest provincial linguistic uniqueness. I have also observed that the most significant public figure in Northern Ireland to have highlighted the Scots heritage of his own childhood, has written of it no less lovingly while referring to the Ulster variant as a dialect. He recalls with great warmth how he and the neighbouring children spoke Scots or Lallans when at play in their Co Antrim schoolyard, before being required to conform to English as soon as they crossed the classroom threshold. He also brings to life an uncle reciting verse after verse of the world-renowned Scots poet Rabbie Burns and points out that neither he himself nor any other listener needed recourse to a dictionary, as they understood every word of the Scots that they themselves spoke.

I am referring to the recently-published memoirs of the retired Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal Cahal Daly, who goes on to lament the loss of such a rich cultural diversity in the succeeding Co Antrim generations. Indeed, if the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council wishes to dispel suspicions that it is operating to some narrow political or confessional agenda, it should cross the sectarian divide and invite Cardinal Daly to speak on some mutually convenient occasion on Ulster-Scots as a common heritage of both Protestants and Catholics in Co Antrim. Such an invitation would be a positive contribution to improving community relations.

Finally, since Nelson McCausland also refers to the Ulster-Scots poet James Orr, I have found that the best way to recall the eye-witness account of 1798 by that one-time United Irishman is to sing the poem '*Donegore Hill*'. But what tune to use? Appropriately enough, the same tune used by Rabbie Burns for '*A Man's A Man for A' That*'.

**Manus O'Riordan**

of her military achievements". The Casement/Connolly view—which might be summarised along the lines that a superior social system in Germany was in danger of being crushed by a more capitalist, rapacious and, in relative terms, socially backward system in Britain—became the position of the 1916 leaders and subsequently of the Irish national movement as a whole. It might be summarised that the Irish national revolu-

tion was basically a foreign policy matter.

In calling for Irish neutrality to be dropped in place of support for a common EU defence policy, Brendan Halligan and Professor Laffan are acting in ignorance of the policy's historical significance. They are calling for a major national policy change on the basis of an inadequate and partial analysis.

**Dave Alvey**

**To be Continued**

## Strategic Aspects of the Balfour Declaration

In March 1915 Britain reversed its Foreign Policy of nearly a century and consented to Russia's possession of Constantinople/Istanbul after the War. This was done to secure the continued services of the Russian 'Steamroller' in the field and dissuade the Tsar of any thoughts he might have of making peace with the Kaiser.

To secure the agreement of France to this, Edward Grey agreed to accept French designs on Syria. Taken with Britain's own designs on Mesopotamia this amounted to a break-up of the Ottoman Empire. At a meeting of the War Council, in the same month, Asquith stated: "*If for one reason or another... we were to leave the other nations to scramble for Turkey without taking anything ourselves, we should not be doing our duty*" (cited in Aaron S. Klieman, *Britain's War Aims In The Middle East In 1915, Journal Of Contemporary History*, July 1968, p.242).

In April 1915 Asquith appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Maurice de Bunsen to consider "*British Desiderata In Turkey-in-Asia*". The Report concluded that it was always an Imperial objective "*to strengthen ragged edges*" of the Empire so "*we have to take advantage of the present opportunity, and to assert our claim in settling the destiny of Asiatic Turkey*".

Strengthening ragged edges was Liberal talk for Imperial expansion. Because of the Indian Empire the main area of importance for Britain in the Middle East was the Persian Gulf. Because Basra was essential to the control of the Gulf, it was invaded and occupied a few days after War was declared on the Ottomans. The Indian army had left for the conquest a month before Britain had found its excuse for War.

Since Baghdad was important in relation to Basra it became a further necessary acquisition. And Mosul had to be taken to protect the area north of Baghdad. Then Persia had to be controlled to guard the Eastern flank. And, at the Western gate, the acquisition of Palestine was essential to protect Mesopotamia, and Egypt, and the Suez Canal, and on and on . . .

That was what strengthening the ragged edges of Empire meant.

The Report of the Committee showed Britain desired a belt of territory between

Arabia and the concession to the French in Syria and it would not permit a Foreign Power to occupy the area next to Egypt and the Suez Canal. It recommended support for a devolutionary scheme preserving the Ottoman Empire in five regions, Anatolia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine and Jazirah-Iraq, with the latter four being capable of being detached in the future.

However, the Report's recommendations were shelved and the Asquith Government took up one of its rejected policy options instead—the partition of the Ottoman Empire between the Imperialist Powers. This option was described by the Committee as having the advantages of: providing Britain with freedom of commerce; a granary and oil reserves in Mesopotamia in which an British Indian colony could be established; and the chance of detaching the Southern part of Syria (Palestine) from Turkey (and France) to construct a buffer zone linking up the Indian Empire to Egypt.

The process of implementing this policy began with the Sykes/Picot Agreement of May 1916.

Therefore, at the same time as the British agreement with Shereef Hussein, promising him an Arab state in return for military services, England began making a secret treaty with the French and Russians (The Sykes/Picot Agreement of May 1916) which sought to divide up the Middle East amongst the Western Christian Powers after the War.

Under this Agreement Russia was to have the Dardanelles, Constantinople and a large area around Erzurum and Trebizond. France was to get Cilicia and Lebanon, above Acre, whilst the vilayet of Mosul, north of Mesopotamia, and the areas of Syria were to be included in a large "*Arab State A*", under French control. England was to have the vilayets of Basra and Baghdad, and a large tract of land stretching from Kirkuk in the north down past Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf and west to the Jordan, called "*Arab State B*". Under Sykes/Picot Palestine was to become a condominium of England, France and Russia.

Hussein knew nothing of this Agreement that aimed to balkanise the region so that the Arabs could not establish a state as promised. The Turks warned him of British duplicity but he chose to have faith in the

promises made.

This plan of balkanisation was a most unsuitable way to administer the region because divisions within the Arab world were not national in any way. They were religious and cultural. But the different religions and cultures were spread right across the region and could not be delineated by national boundaries or through nation states drawn in the sand. That was why the Ottoman *vilayet* structures worked—because they enabled different religious groups and clans with different cultures, ways of life and allegiances to live next to each other, and move freely, with no lines in the sand to bother them or be fought over.

When the lines in the sand were imposed on the Arabs they were forced to see themselves as nationalities (with no historical meaning) and to see others (who had the same history, religion or culture as themselves) as alien, because they were on the other sides of the newly imposed lines in the sand.

It should be understood that Britain coveted Palestine long before it discovered the Zionists. It was not Zionism that drew England to Palestine, or the Zionists who brought the issue of Palestine up within the British corridors of power. England had its eye on the territory long before the Balfour Declaration or the negotiations that brought it about (which were instigated by Britain and not the Zionists).

For the first two years of the War England showed little interest in Zionism and pursued its objective of getting hold of Palestine without reference to it. Zionism didn't interest the de Bunsen Commission, Britain negotiated the Sykes/Picot Agreement and the deal with Hussein of Mecca without reference to it and basically took the future of Palestine to be decided without taking into account the views of either ordinary Jews or Zionists. What Britain was mainly concerned about was whether it could wrest the area from France at the hour of victory.

Palestine had not been explicitly mentioned in any of the agreements concluded between Britain and Hussein. The Arabs naturally took this to mean that it was simply included within the area of an Arab State, because it had not been specifically excluded, as other areas west of Damascus had been. However, England carefully avoided mention of the area because it had other ideas for Palestine after the War, and it had other deals to do with other people. Britain is very skilled at this sort of thing, relying on the good nature of others whilst shafting them, good and proper.

Under the Sykes/Picot Agreement the status of Palestine had been left unclear. England, France and Russia all had an interest in administering it, but Britain, despite having the least claim to it, had its heart set on acquiring it for its expanding Empire.

The problem, from Britain's standpoint, was how to devise a scenario whereby the Empire could get control of Palestine. And that is where the Jews came in and Zionism became a significant element in Imperial affairs.

It was certainly the case that the French had much greater historical ties to Palestine than the English (from the time of the Crusades) and if any of the Imperial Powers had a right to supervise the region it was the French.

As far back as the 1840s Lord Palmerston recognised the potential value of utilising the Jews in relation to gaining influence within the Ottoman Empire. Palmerston noticed that both of England's rivals, France and Russia, had achieved leverage over the Sultan by adopting a religious minority in Jerusalem for "protection". But Reformationist England had no such influence due to the lack of Protestants there. So, to achieve influence in the region, another religious group would have to be adopted and the obvious candidates, given England's Old Testament orientation, were the Jews. In the 1880s Laurence Oliphant contacted Lord Salisbury with a scheme for Jewish colonisation in the Holy Land.

The first argument used by England to counter the French claim to Palestine was that the existence of the Holy Places in and around Jerusalem called for a special régime. But when this did not convince the French they produced the Jews from their hat.

With regard to Britain's manoeuvrings against France, Lady Hamilton explains the use that England had for the Jews:

"Imperially minded Britons knew that ever since Napoleon's massive fleet had landed in Alexandria in 1798 the French had wanted to hold the Holy Land. French missionaries were active throughout Syria and Palestine, and their schools had transformed thousands of intelligent but illiterate Arabs into well-informed intellectuals, writers and poets. A Jewish homeland would provide a rational reason to block the French from taking too much territory in the Levant, and create a reliable and strong client population. Their presence would guarantee Britain a hold on this strategic area. If the Allies won the war, France would take the place of Germany and would be the most powerful nation on the continent. France's power

would need to be checked. Britain did not want France also to be the dominant power in the Middle East" (God, Guns and Israel, p.136).

This was the Balance of Power policy and it remained an Imperial constant after temporary enemies e.g. Germany and the Ottomans were seen off.

Britain calculated that a proposed Jewish Homeland in Palestine would tip the balance in moral claims to the territory in England's favour. Since it was England who would give the Jews a solemn undertaking of a National Home in Palestine, it was only fitting that Britain should govern the territory to see that this promise was fulfilled. So England would get Palestine for the Jews and the Zionists would get Palestine for Britain.

It could be said that England cheated the Arabs of Palestine by saying it had been promised to the French and then cheated the French of it by promising it to the Jews. And all the time the objective was to keep it for the British Empire.

The strategic reason for the alliance between British Imperialism and the Zionist Movement was the British desire to enlist the support of International Jewry in the War effort against Germany, and then to manoeuvre itself into control of Palestine, through the use of the advocacy of the moral right of the Jews to settle there.

Britain is used to setting the moral standard for the world and the Balfour Declaration was a new standard for it to live by.

By 1916 it was coming to be understood in Britain that the French, Russian and Italian Allies it had procured to destroy Germany and the Ottomans were not up to the job. The United States was needed not only to finish the War but to save it from being lost, or drawn—which was seen as a loss. And this introduced another factor favourable to a Anglo-Zionist alliance.

James Malcolm was an Oxford-educated Armenian who acted as an adviser to the British Government on Eastern affairs. He was a personal friend of Mark Sykes and, upon hearing Sykes's concern that Britain was having no success in persuading Jews to support an American entry into the War, Malcolm advised him that he was approaching the wrong Jews. It was the Zionists who were the key to the problem, he suggested.

Sykes had a problem with this solution because he knew the terms of the secret Agreement he had concluded with the

French and Russians. Although he told Malcolm that to offer to secure Palestine for the Jews was impossible Malcolm insisted that there was no other way and he urged Sykes to take the suggestion to the Cabinet. The matter was taken up by Lord Milner who asked for further information.

Malcolm pointed out the influence of Judge Brandeis of the American Supreme Court on President Wilson and the fact that the President himself held strong Zionist sympathies. Sykes and Malcolm were then authorised to engage in a series of meetings at Chaim Weizmann's London house, with the knowledge and approval of the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey.

*A Programme for a New Administration of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement* was issued by the English Political Committee of the Zionist Organisation in October 1916, and submitted to the British Foreign Office as a basis for discussion and in order to give an official character to the informal discussions.

It contained the main Zionist demands for an International recognition of Jewish rights to Palestine, nationhood for the Jewish community in Palestine and the creation and recognition of a Jewish chartered company in Palestine with rights to acquire land.

But it did not reach the Cabinet because it was known that Asquith was unsympathetic to the Zionist ideal.

With Lloyd George replacing Asquith as Prime Minister (and Balfour replacing Edward Grey as Foreign Secretary) from December 1916, Zionist relations with the British Government gathered momentum. The *Balfour Declaration* was now a possibility.

Chaim Weizmann and the Zionists were presented with something of a problem when the Tsarist State began to collapse during early 1917. The Zionists had argued that Tsarist oppression made a sanctuary for the Russian Jews necessary and that this was estranging the US from the *Triple Entente*. So the Tsarist collapse threatened to remove some of the rationale behind providing a Home for the Jews and the antagonism they had for the *Entente*, which Zionists promised they could counter if they were given a Declaration.

Weizmann overcame the fall-out from this event by utilising it to the advantage of Zionism by planting the idea in the new Prime Minister's head that Russian Zionists could affect the course of the Russian Revolution and undermine the defeatist policy of the emerging Bolsheviks, saving

Russia for the Allies.

The Balfour Declaration appeared for the first time in public view in *The Times* on 9th November 1917—a month after the Bolshevik takeover and a month before the British capture of Jerusalem. The momentous announcement was produced

from behind closed doors and was never debated in Parliament.

Its timing was important. To have made it earlier would have had a disorganising effect on the Arabs who were doing the fighting for Britain against the Turks.

**Pat Walsh**

**To Be Continued**

## Challenging The Dominant Canon On The IRA Burning Of The Custom House

In *Michael Collins*—his 1990 hagiography of the "Big Fellow"—Tim Pat Coogan reached for yet another stick with which to beat Éamon de Valera:

"But de Valera wanted to exert his authority, to prove he was back in charge. He continued to develop his theories of a different form of warfare, one fought with an eye to public relations. He felt it would be better to change from hit and run guerrilla tactics to having a series of battles with the British. The one operation of this nature in which de Valera did get his way was, both a publicity success and a military debacle, the burning of the Custom House on 25 May 1921.... The operation yielded a world-wide propaganda success. Not only was the finest building in Dublin destroyed, local government administration and the collection of income tax were paralysed. However, from the military point of view, it was a disaster. Six (it was actually five—MOR) Volunteers were killed, twelve wounded and some seventy of the best IRA fighters of the time were captured... In Collins' own immediate sphere of activity just before the Truce the Dublin Brigade had suffered a body blow in the Custom House operation" (pp 206-7 and 218).

Liz Gillis and Mícheál Ó Doibhilín, of Kilmainham Tales Publications, in their Introduction to Gillis's recently published book on the operation, have also recorded the prevailing judgement of the academic establishment:

"The burning of the Custom House was a watershed moment in the War of Independence, yet in the many books that have been written on the period, this event gets far less attention than one would expect. For example, Michael Hopkinson in his book *The Irish War of Independence* (2004) refers to the operation twice in passing, stating that it was a 'botched operation' and 'disastrous episode'. Joost Augusteijn in his 1998 book *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare* also refers to 'the disastrous burning of the Custom House'."

See [http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/ipr/2007/IPR\\_March\\_2007.pdf](http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/ipr/2007/IPR_March_2007.pdf)—

page 16—on how, back in the March 2007 issue of *Irish Political Review*, I had regarded it as anything but disastrous:

"Last year (2006) RTE and the Irish Film Institute issued a DVD of a historically significant print, only discovered as recently as 1991 in Washington's Library of Congress, of the first ever feature film to be set during the War of Independence—*Irish Destiny*. Filmed during 1925 and released in 1926 to mark the 10th anniversary of the Easter Rising, it performed a healing function in the aftermath of the Civil War by re-instilling a pride in the unity of purpose that had prevailed during the War of Independence itself. A product of its time, this silent movie has all the schmaltzy scenes of other movies of that era that now seem so anachronistic to modern audiences. It was, however, a pioneering feature film, through its incorporation of newsreel documentary footage that ranged from the burning of Cork City to the burning of Dublin's Custom House. In addition, it had an actual adjutant of the IRA's Dublin Brigade, Kit O'Malley, not only playing the role of an IRA Commandant in the movie itself, but also acting as its military advisor for a staged ambush sequence somewhat reminiscent of Kilmichael. The DVD cover also reproduces the original poster advertising the film: '*Irish Destiny*—The Great Spectacular Film of the War in Ireland; The Burning of the Dublin Custom House 25th May 1921—Presented by Eppels Films Ltd, Dublin'... *Irish Destiny* had been both written and directed by a leading member of Dublin's Jewish community, the general practitioner and pharmacist, Dr. Isaac Eppel. He showed himself to have been extremely clear-sighted about every single word he scripted... As regards the attack on the Custom House on 25th May 1921, it cannot be denied that—as a 'spectacular' given headline news worldwide—it had the effect of forcing Britain to agree six weeks later to the Truce of 11th July. Moreover, the artistic celebration of the Custom House fire that went on to have the greatest impact both nationally and internationally... was provided by the patriotic Irish Jewish filmmaker Isaac Eppel... who presented

the May 1921 fire as the dialectical antithesis—in every sense—of the December 1920 burning of Cork city centre by the British. In celebrating the former he did not minimise the fact that it had brought with it its own human cost. Eppel did not flinch from incorporating into his movie still more documentary footage from the post-battle round-up of Dublin citizens by the Black-and-Tans, in which their prisoners are shown lined up on the Custom House footpath alongside the bodies of dead IRA volunteers. But Eppel's patriotic pride is both to the point and unashamedly expressed in his accompanying sub-titles: '*A crackling Hell of Fire. The news of this daring act is flashed throughout the world, and for three days and three nights the firemen fought the flames*'."

Ten years on from my *Irish Destiny* tribute, on this past May 28th, I also paid a Facebook tribute to the memory of one of the IRA casualties of the Custom House operation. Under the heading of "*In memoriam Volunteer Sean Doyle; fatally wounded in action May 25; died May 30, 1920*", I posted:

"In *Connolly Column - The Story of the Irishmen who fought for the Spanish Republic 1936-1939*, my International Brigade father, Micheál O'Riordan (1917-2006) wrote of the youngest Irish International Brigade fatality, Tommy Wood (17), killed in action on December 27, 1936, fighting in defence of the Spanish Republic: 'Tommy Wood, Buckingham Place, Dublin, had been a member of Na Fianna Éireann (the Republican Boy Scouts). His uncle, Patrick Doyle, was hanged by the British in Mountjoy Jail, March 14, 1921. Another uncle, Sean Doyle, was killed in the IRA attack on Dublin's Custom House—the record section of the British administration—May 25, 1921. Before leaving for Spain, Tommy left a letter for his mother: '*I am going to Spain to fight for the International Column. I left a message to be delivered on Sunday. We are going out to fight for the working class. It is not a religious war; that is all propaganda. God bless you.*'"

"The last week of May marks the 96th anniversary of the death in action of Sean Doyle. It was therefore fitting that this May 27 should see the Custom House itself host 'The Burning of the Custom House Conference', as well as the launch of the book by Liz: *The Burning of the Custom House—May 25, 1921*. Liz writes of James Slattery's account: 'James Slattery and Sean Doyle decided to take their chances... '*Sean Doyle broke through. He did not want to be arrested because he knew he stood no chance. When we were about halfway across the square there was a burst of machine-gun fire and I was hit on the hand. I called Doyle who was slightly in front of me,*

and I saw blood trickling down his chin. I told him to keep going in the direction of Gardiner Street.' Slattery... made his way to the Mater Hospital. When he got there he found Sean Doyle was also being treated. Doyle had been shot in the lung... Sean Doyle died five days later on 30 May. He was thirty-three years old."

"Following Liz's own opening address at the Conference, I said it was appropriate that, in addition to commemorating Sean Doyle himself, she had also commemorated his executed brother, Patrick Doyle. I said I further wished to commemorate their nephew, of whom Christy Moore wrote, in his song *Viva La Quince Brigada*:

Tommy Wood, aged seventeen, died in Cordoba.  
With Na Fianna he learned to hold his gun.  
From Dublin to the Villa del Rio,  
He fought and died beneath the Spanish sun'."

See, however, [www.theirishstory.com/2012/05/23/today-in-irish-history-the-burning-of-the-customs-house-may-25-1921/#.WWfU0tq9KSM](http://www.theirishstory.com/2012/05/23/today-in-irish-history-the-burning-of-the-customs-house-may-25-1921/#.WWfU0tq9KSM) for a more recent, 2012, put-down by historian John Dorney, showing how the combined Coogan/academic establishment judgement—that the life of Tommy Wood's uncle, Sean Doyle, had been uselessly sacrificed for a Dev vanity project—has continued on into more recent years:

"The Burning of the Custom House, 25 May 1921: *A famous act of symbolic destruction by the IRA in Dublin during the War of Independence, but also a military disaster for the organisation.* (Dorney's own italics)... The affair was a debacle for the Dublin IRA. Five of their number were dead and three wounded. More importantly, up to eighty had been captured—losses the IRA in the city could not afford. Another three civilians had been killed and seven more wounded."

All the more reason, therefore, to welcome Liz Gillis's thoroughly researched book. For it demolishes so many of the myths and prejudices that have hitherto prevailed. As Gillis and Ó Doibhilín put it in the Introduction:

"Our interest in this operation began many years ago when we were both working as tour guides in Kilmainham Gaol. While looking at a photo album which belonged to a Volunteer named Cyril Daly, we saw page after page of photographs of young men, members of the IRA held prisoner in Kilmainham Gaol in 1921... but who were they? Deciding to investigate further, we discovered that many of those in the photo album had made Witness

Statements for the Bureau of Military History, and on reading these testimonies, one thing became very clear—they had all been involved in the burning of the Custom House. But what these men were saying in their interviews did not tally with our understanding of the operation. In fact, they were saying the complete opposite to what we had been told or read. These men were describing not only what it was like to be there that day, but also how they felt after it—although they had been arrested, they had not failed..."

"It became obvious to us that this was not the disaster we had previously understood it to be... For example, through our research we have discovered that the Custom House was always going to be targeted by the IRA. Even before the War of Independence there had been a plan to destroy the building, a suggestion that came from Dick McKee, O/C Dublin Brigade, and not Éamon de Valera" (pp 20-21).

Indeed, when it came to May 1921, it had not been Dev, but one of Collins's own Squad (who would later follow Collins to the bitter end, in commanding the Free State troops in the June 1922 Civil War battle for Dublin)—the 1921 IRA 2nd Battalion O/C Tom Ennis—who had, as the officer in command of the Custom House operation, shot down Collins's objections. As John Dorney himself noted:

"Michael Collins, for one, who had seen much more of the conflict in the city up close than de Valera, tried to keep the Squad, whom he had assembled since 1919, out of the attack, only to be overruled by Tom Ennis, who had been put in charge of the operation."

And, as the Gillis/Ó Doibhilín Introduction continues:

"Also, we had believed that 120 men of the IRA, namely, the 2nd Battalion, ASU (Active Service Union) and Squad, had taken part in the operation and over 100 were arrested, decimating the Dublin Brigade. Now, thanks to the release of records from Military Archives, most importantly, the IRA Pension Files, we have found that this operation was bigger than previously thought. We have discovered that more than 270 men were involved in the attack, making it the largest operation under by the IRA since the Easter Rising. And, far from being decimated, the arrests after the operation did little to impact the membership of the Brigade... The burning of the Custom House was indeed a pivotal moment in the War of Independence and when taken into consideration with what was happening in Ireland at the time, we believe it did contribute in some way to the eventual truce between Britain and Ireland

in July 1921" (p 22).

In this 210 page book, there next follows Liz Gillis's own fact-packed narrative. For, indeed, it is important to record that the reference to the "*more than 270 men involved in the attack*" is not a figure plucked out of thin air. As her first Appendix begins: "*On the following pages are a list of every Volunteer identified from each of the battalions of the Dublin Brigade who took part in the burning of the Custom House*" (p 165). The next eleven pages provide that list, name by name (pp 166-174). In terms of later years, of course, many of them took sharply divergent paths. I will note but two, as details of their subsequent activities fall outside the remit of Gillis's book.

Bill Gannon, of the Dublin Brigade's First Battalion, switched to the re-vamped ASU, subsequent to the operation. Unlike, however, most ASU volunteers who followed their mentor Collins into the Free State Army, Gannon took the anti-Treaty side and fought the 1922-23 Civil War as a member of IRA Four Courts garrison, alongside the quartet of O' Connor, Barrett, McKelvey and Mellows, subsequently judicially murdered in December 1922 by Cosgrave, Mulcahy and O'Higgins.

In 1927, Gannon was one of the three assassins of Kevin O'Higgins. He would go on to be a foundation member of the Communist Party of Ireland in 1933, and would later be responsible for recruiting Irish International Brigade volunteers for the Spanish Anti-Fascist War 1936-39.

Jimmy Conroy, one of Collins's Squad of assassins, would seem to have developed a taste for killing, as evidenced in Gillis's Four Courts narrative of how eager he had been to "*take out*" the building caretaker Francis Davis, fatally wounding him (p 107). A Collins man to the hilt, Conroy was the driver of the Free State Army Crossley tender during the August 1922 IRA Ambush at Bealnablath, where Collins stood out to fight, rather than drive on, and was killed in action.

In the March 1934 Dáil debates on the menace of the Fascist Blueshirts, Fianna Fáil Minister Sean MacEntee pointed out that within their ranks was the self-same Jimmy Conroy, and that in November 1923 he had gratuitously engaged in the sectarian murder of a Jewish Department of Agriculture civil servant, Emmanuel Kahan. Throughout his life, Collins's "Spy in the Castle", and later architect of Free

State war crimes in Kerry, David Nelligan, would continue to champion the cause of Conroy.

But back to the impressive achievement that characterises Gillis's book in challenging an error-filled Custom House canon that has persisted for far too long. She writes:

"The burning of the Custom House... was a watershed moment in the War of Independence ...(and) a much bigger one than has previously been suggested. In addition, it has often been said that the Volunteers involved were inexperienced fighters. Pádraig Yeates, in his otherwise excellent *A City in Turmoil: Dublin 1919-21*, wrote (in 2012): *'The few stray shots of poorly armed and ill-trained part-time soldiers of the 1st Battalion failed to slow the enemy.'* Granted, the Volunteers were poorly armed, a fact that existed throughout the conflict, but to say that they were ill-trained or inexperienced is not true. The majority of the Volunteers who took part in the attack had either fought in the Easter Rising or joined soon after. Looking at their pension files it can be seen that they were involved in numerous engagements with Crown forces, and so did not lack in experience in the field. There is no doubt that the arrest of over 100 active men and death of five Volunteers including many members of the ASU and Squad was indeed a high price to pay for achieving the objective of the operation. However, the objective **was** achieved, the Custom House was completely destroyed..."

"Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff, IRA (subsequently chosen by Collins to conduct the Treaty War as Chief of Staff of the Free State Army—MOR), later said: *'There was no hesitancy on the part of the Volunteers in Dublin to undertake the job, nor was there any hesitancy at the level of GHQ staff to pursue it or argue against it in any way.'* This is slightly inaccurate as there was a disagreement between Michael Collins (on the one hand) and (on the other hand) de Valera and Oscar Traynor (appointed O/C Dublin Brigade in November 1920, following the Bloody Sunday murder of Dick McKee in Dublin Castle—MOR), as to the exact nature of the operation. Collins... was not against the actual operation, he was against the plan of erecting barricades throughout the city. This, he believed, would look too much like an insurrection ... This was not the first time that it was suggested to attack the Custom House. Dick McKee had first suggested an attack with full barricades at the city's army barracks in 1918 in retaliation if the British tried to enforce conscription. This plan would have been put before GHQ, of which Collins was a member, and it was not dismissed. The only reason the attack did not take place was because World

War I ended and conscription was not introduced. McKee suggested another attack in 1920. This was again submitted to GHQ which did not support it at that time, not because it would be a failure, but because GHQ had a much bigger operation in mind—the destruction of the local tax offices around the country... To get rid of the local records first would mean when the Custom House **was** eventually attacked, any copies of tax records held there would also be destroyed, leaving no records at all... So, the attack on the Custom House was not the idea of Éamon de Valera. It had always been in the sights of the IRA. It was not a matter of **when** it would be attacked, **not if**..."

"Despite the imprisonment of over 100 Volunteers that day, the Dublin Brigade was not wiped out. In all, from the material presently available—Witness Statements and IRA Pension Files—we have recorded at least 271 active Volunteers who took part in the operation. Less than half were arrested. Liam O'Doherty, O/C 5th Battalion ... was emphatic about this: *'There was also the fact that within three or four days of the burning of the Custom House a new Active Service Unit of forty men was formed from the various Battalions.'* The 'IRA Membership' series held in Military Archives lists the strength of the Dublin Brigade at the time of the Truce in July 1921 and corroborates O'Doherty's statement. These records, compiled by the officers of each battalion, show that the Dublin Brigade was **not** decimated... Out of a total of **4,510** Volunteers, **429**—less than 10%—were in prison..." (pp 143-146).

Liz Gillis finally concludes:

"The destruction of the Custom House has... been the subject of intense debate among historians and people in general. But as long as the War of Independence continued in Ireland, the building was always going to be attacked. It was the symbol of British civil administration in Ireland. It was not an operation that was decided on a whim. It was fully thought out and as stated in the *Irish Bulletin*, the weekly Republican newsheet: *'We, in common with the rest of the Nation, regret the destruction of historic buildings. But the lives of four million people are a more sacred charge than any architectural masterpiece. The Custom House was one of the seats of an alien tyranny. If it had been possible to strike effectively at the tyranny it represented without injury to the structure, the Custom House would have been spared. But it was not possible. The destruction was an unavoidable military necessity.'* This sentiment was reiterated by President Sean T. O'Kelly at the unveiling of the Custom House memorial in 1956 when he said: *'That nobody regretted more than those who authorised and executed the operation that damage had to be done to so noble a*

*building as the masterpiece of James Gandon to whose genius so much of Dublin's finest architecture was due. When peace was restored it was one of the Irish Government's earliest cares to have the damage repaired.'*"

"One possible reason why the operation is seen as disastrous could be to do with the legacy of the Civil War. A little over a year after the attack, Ireland was again at war. Men who had fought with each other on that day in 1921 were now enemies. Both sides had their enigmatic leaders—Collins on the pro-Treaty side, de Valera on the anti-Treaty side. The question must be asked, was it the fact that de Valera suggested this attack that has led to so much debate about this event and the argument that it was a disaster? This I cannot answer, but it is a question that would be worthy of further investigation. One thing is certain, despite the fact that those in the Dublin Brigade were enemies for a time they never forgot their comrades who were lost that day. The first commemoration took place on the first anniversary of the attack... The major newspapers covered the celebrations (as they referred to them) in depth, and wrote of the attack itself in glowing terms. (Note: This was post-Treaty, but only one month before Civil War hostilities commenced, as Collins was applauded by Churchill for consolidating the Free State by bowing to his *diktat* to attack—and if needs be, destroy—that other iconic Gandon building, the Four Courts. *'If I refrain from congratulations it is only because I do not wish to embarrass you'*, Churchill wrote to Collins. *'The archives of the Four Courts may be scattered but the title deeds of Ireland are safe.'*—MOR)... As the wounds of the Civil War slowly began to heal, commemorations grew and both sides of the Civil War divide came together to remember, the gatherings taking place at the Custom House itself... Looking back over the evidence that is available at present, the accepted view of the burning of the Custom House has to be questioned. Although it was not the event that brought about the Truce, it most certainly helped the British come to the conclusion that a settlement through negotiation rather than coercion should be sought" (pp 154-156).

But, enough already! Go read Liz Gillis's excellent book in full—from cover to cover!

Manus O'Riordan

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## Vincent Morley and the Hidden Ireland

Nearly a hundred years ago Daniel Corkery wrote a book called *The Hidden Ireland*. He was concerned with four poets of the late 17th and 18th centuries, whose work "touched every active, every unclouded mind in the community" (*Hidden Ireland* 1924, p.152). Their themes were various: politics, religion, land, conditions of life, hopes, fears (and wine, women and song, which he may have downplayed a bit). Corkery maintained that if one wanted to understand the majority population of those times, which was Irish-speaking, this poetry gave the deepest insights. It was more important than State Papers.

*The Hidden Ireland* was superbly written and made its themes intriguing. Though the high culture of European literature was behind it, really it was addressed to anyone at all out there who was curious and open-minded and keen to do some thinking. Vincent Morley aims to update *The Hidden Ireland* in his new book (*The Popular Mind in Eighteenth-century Ireland*), but his approach differs greatly from Corkery's. Rather than seeking to connect with an open-minded reader who might be anyone, Morley is addressing himself to *the academic mind* (which is supposed to study the popular mind). The situation is quite interesting. Part of the academic mind, in this odd country called Ireland, is oddly closed, and Morley is out there with his crowbar, intending by main force to prise it open.

"The culture of any society will remain inaccessible to those who cannot understand its language or read the written sources it produced... The historian of eighteenth-century Ireland who discounts the evidence of the vernacular sources introduces a pervasive and systematic bias into his work. Irrespective of an author's subjective intentions, an exclusively Anglophone methodology cannot fail to privilege the élite over the popular, the colonial over the native, the Protestant over the Catholic, the loyal over the disaffected, the urban over the rural, and the eastern seaboard over the rest of the island" (pp. 309-310).

Historians of that kind have published all sorts of nonsense, for example that in Irish-speaking Ireland there was no political culture.

Though he wants to put an end to this closed-mindedness, Morley seems to have

only the haziest idea of where it comes from. Essentially it belongs to a mutating culture of *Hibernia Anglicana*, "English Ireland", which has appeared in many forms since the book of that name was published in 1689-90 by the great Ascendancy historian Richard Cox. In Cox's view, whatever the non-English Irish had written in their own language was baseless fable and could be discounted. The *Hibernia Anglicana* approach has often been challenged (Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín published a spirited challenge in Dublin, 30 years after Cox's book first appeared, and was thrown into prison for his pains), and with varying success, but it keeps reappearing in new forms. Its most powerful manifestation in 20th century Ireland was in *Irish Historical Studies* and the History Departments in TCD and UCD associated with that journal, led by T.W. Moody, R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams.

*Irish Historical Studies*, founded in 1938, was never openly partisan like Richard Cox. Its founders Moody and Edwards had been trained in British universities as Positivists. They made a parade of impartiality and objectivity. But they were voices of *Hibernia Anglicana* nonetheless. Their conscious aim was to counter the new approaches to Irish history developed in widely differing ways by such people as Patrick Dinneen, Daniel Corkery, Tadhg Ó Donnchadha, James Hogan, Eoin MacNeill and Edmund Curtis. The IHS professors wanted to sanitise Irish history and to make the record of British rule look respectable. They may have gone a little too far in *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History 1845-1852*, published in 1956, where Kevin B. Nowlan in his Foreword declared that the British famine relief effort was "impressive"! But that publication exemplified their intense commitment.

All those under IHS influence were made aware that the Irish language was unsanitary and its recorded materials were to be avoided. Morley remarks:

"When the eighteenth-century volume in the 'Gill History of Ireland' series was published in 1974, not a single Irish-language text or author from the eighteenth century was mentioned in the body of the work..."

"With a focus on high politics and excursions into the academically respectable fields of religion and the economy, the book stood very much in the tradition of *Irish Historical Studies*. Irish popular culture was all but invisible in its pages and an uninformed reader would have remained unaware that English was the first language of a minority throughout the eighteenth century" (p. 8).

Actually, by the late 1980s even some in the history-writing establishment were fed up with IHS. Joe Lee complained that the IHS approach "could not illuminate vast tracts of Irish spiritual, intellectual, cultural and material experience" (cited by Morley, p. 1). The Editors of the *Age of Atrocity* collection pointed out that IHS had systematically avoided the issues of violence, killing and atrocity in 16th and 17th century Ireland for the first half-century and more of its existence—quite some achievement!

Has this malign influence receded in recent times? Is any improvement noticeable? In Morley's opinion, yes: the 18th century volume of the *New Gill History* (2009) seems a big advance on the old one, because it mentions over twenty Irish-language writers where none were mentioned before. He credits this to the work of Breandán Ó Buachalla, who made Irish Jacobite culture harder to ignore or dismiss.

"Historians are now generally willing to admit evidence from the vernacular literature if it sheds light on issues of concern to them. However, their research agendas still reflect a purely Anglophone and, consequently, an essentially anglocentric perspective" (p. 11).

And changing that will be a long haul.

Morley proceeds to try to drum some basic facts into these historians' resistant heads, in eight simple lessons. Each lesson is preceded by an exemplary poem (mostly 35-100 lines, with dates from 1691 to 1830). The business of instruction is taken very much in earnest, there's no time here for frivolity. Even when Raiftearaí, celebrating the election of the Catholic Sir John Burke for Mayo in 1830, says:

Imríodh an cluiche is bhí an muileata  
in uachtar

*The game was played and diamonds  
came up*

Morley says curtly in a footnote, "*the significance of the card suit escapes me*" (p. 272).

Is he serious? Someone who has read so much of the literature surely must know

that diamonds are Stuarts or Gaels, whereas spades are Cromwellians or Williamites.

From the 1650s on, poets were calling Cromwell the *cionán spéireat*, "five of spade-trumps"—the five being the strongest card in twenty-five, a very popular card game in West Cork when I was growing up.

The *cionán spéireat* was said to have taken the trick against the king, or swept the whole hand.

At other times Cromwell was the seven of spades, while William of Orange was the Jack or *deich daol spéireat*, "the ten of beetly-black spades" (in a poem by the Clare gambler and Spanish soldier Seon Ó hUaithnín). Spades were the suit that one didn't want to be trumps. In another poem by Raifteraí he prays to the Virgin Mary that at the critical point of the game

an muilead go n-iompaítear i mullach  
an spéirid.

*let the diamond be turned on top of the  
spade* (Seanchas na sceiche).

To be sure, not everyone likes cards. Morley, who has certainly read all these poems, may not have picked up the culture of card-playing. Or perhaps he doesn't want to pass it on to his readers, lest it disturb their concentration.

#### POETRY OF POPULAR DISCONTENT

The core of Morley's argument can be summarised as follows: Irish poetry of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century expresses a deep and abiding discontent among the Irish-speaking population.

Central to this poetry is the *aisling*, the vision poem, where the poet typically meets a beautiful woman in a lonely place and asks her, "*Are you Juno, or Venus, or Deirdre, or Helen of Troy?*", only to be told, "*No, none of those, I am Ireland!*" Some people have claimed that the *aisling* is an empty literary form repeated over and over again, a kind of linguistic opium that conveys no message. In fact, the message is the whole point of the *aisling*, especially when it's a prophecy of better times to come. Innumerable poets reported basically the same prediction: the Gaels will recover their lands and the foreign boors who now occupy them will be driven out; the Catholic Church will be free; Ireland will be free. And there will be a legitimate Stuart King, who will not prejudice these freedoms.

There were poets who couldn't tune in to that message, or only at rare moments; there were poets who despaired (including, late in life, Piaras Mac Gearailt, who had

once composed such a rousing Jacobite poem as *Rosc Catha na Mumhan*). But there was an enduring poetic energy that kept the culture of optimism going. And it wasn't dependent on the Stuarts. When the Stuart cause collapsed (with the Pope and other major supporters refusing to recognise the new Pretender in 1766), Irish Jacobite poetry didn't collapse along with it: some of the finest *aislingí*, by Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, were written in the years that followed.

Irish political poetry mutated. When the American War of Independence broke out, the poets were following the news closely and celebrating every British loss, and hoping that the King of France would seize his opportunity and let the Irish also have theirs. During the French Revolution there was a phase of Jacobite Jacobinism: theoretically maybe that should be impossible, but one finds it in the poetry of Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin, who was a key United Irish organiser in Co. Cork. There was a whole raft of Bonapartist poems later on. And ultimately the focus of hope in poetry (Ó Longáin's included) was trained upon Daniel O'Connell, and this was kept up till the time of the Famine.

On the other side of the scale, so far as Morley knows and so far as I know, essentially there's nothing. He says,

"Why have we no poem in Irish from the eighteenth century which praises a reigning monarch? Or rather—as one could easily compile a substantial anthology of Irish verse in which French or Spanish monarchs are extolled—why have we no poem from the century which praises a *British* monarch? Why are songs and poems that celebrate defeats suffered by British armies and fleets so common, while I have yet to encounter even a single composition in Irish from the eighteenth century that celebrates a British victory?" (p. 5).

Some have argued that this poetry represents the interests of a dispossessed aristocracy. But, while early in the 18th century, one can indeed find laments for the losses of particular lords and patrons, later on there is neither the reality nor the prospect of aristocratic patronage, yet the campaign of spiritual resistance still goes on. A variant argument is that the poets were a sort of mandarin corporation, who voiced their own interests as a caste. But this is at odds with the facts. They were blacksmiths, millwrights, tailors, coopers, schoolteachers, scribes, priests, publicans, small and middling farmers—everything from labourers to minor gentry. A distinct economic interest is what they clearly were not.

It seems impossible that the work which these poets produced could have been sustained if it wasn't actually popular, if the thoughts it expresses weren't broadly shared among the Irish-speaking population. And when that population ceased to be Irish-speaking, they didn't simply abandon those key poetic thoughts. This important point, which Morley first made in *Ó Chéitinn go Raiftearaí*, is reiterated here.

"The Irish-speaking populace was becoming bilingual in the early nineteenth century, but they were not discarding their established world view. Instead, they were taking it with them into the new language" (p. 270).

That is true, and infinitely more evidence than Morley musters could be found to substantiate it. (One man's name will symbolise all that could be said: Eugene O'Curry. This landmark figure in Irish intellectual life began as Eoghan Ó Comhraí, an O'Connellite poet continuing the rich tradition of political poetry in Clare. Morley calls him "*a schoolmaster who rose to become professor of history in the Catholic University*" (p. 287). But there was a sense in which he *fell* to become Professor of History at the Catholic University, since he would much rather have been head of a *scoil shenchasa*, communicating his vast knowledge in his own language.)

#### TAKING LEAVE OF LOUIS CULLEN

Not the least of Morley's merits is his decisive way of dealing with Louis Cullen. It had taken *Hibernia Anglicana* quite a long time to come up with an answer to Corkery, apart from simply ignoring him. True, there was Sean O'Faoláin's reckless assault on the poets in *King of the Beggars* (1938), but that violent diatribe left Corkery's influence untouched. Then in 1969 Cullen produced a long article which all who were so inclined could regard as the last word on the subject: *The Hidden Ireland: Reassessment of a Concept' in Studia Hibernica*, since republished by Lilliput.

Cullen is an expert in economic history. Economic awareness, the sense of economic interest, drips from everything that he writes. He had a good grounding in Irish, and intellectual curiosity led him to explore the records of a culture that, truth to tell, he despised. From his point of view, the poetry of the 18th century, and still more so that of the 19th, was a waste of precious time that might have been better used. In recent years he has praised

"(Brian) Merriman's abandonment of



literary composition for the roles of progressive small farmer... and upwardly mobile schoolteacher... Merriman's silence for his last two decades is less a measure of the unknown (though we would like to know more) than a case of an intelligent man, fortunate, bold or disillusioned, in a changing society exercising over two decades a series of choices" ('Merriman in a world of schoolmasters', *Eighteenth-century Ireland 2011*, pp. 80-81, 94).

That is to say, Merriman, who produced the great comic poem *Cúirt an Mheon-Oíche* in 1780, went on to teach mathematics in the 1790s and to win two prizes from the Linen Board for his flax crop. Yes... and Rimbaud, too, gave up poetry for slave-trading... and is that of great relevance for the culture of France? Cullen would no doubt object that we aren't comparing like with like. The man has a nose for *progress*.

In his *Studia Hibernica* article he proceeds coolly and soberly. The main thing he wants to say is that eighteenth-century Ireland wasn't all that bad. James Anthony Froude and Patrick Dinneen had exaggerated its evils, and Corkery's *Hidden Ireland* idea was simply an outgrowth of their errors. In reality, though, if you were prepared to get up in the morning (which some of those poetic rakes admitted they wouldn't do), then, Catholic or not, in 18th century Ireland you had real opportunities to get places in life!

I must confess that I'm grateful to Cullen for introducing me to one of those poets who wouldn't get up in the morning: Uilliam Ó Maolchiaráin, a Meathman and a fine comic songwriter. Uilliam's life rather revolved around alcohol. If he praised Drogheda as the best town in Ireland, it was not least because it had Ireland's best pub. And I don't remember another poet who actually said, "*I think boozers are holy people*".

Dá mbeadh ceardcha gach lá agam ag déanamh airgid is óir,  
agus cláirseach in mo phárlus ag méadughadh ceoil,  
mile b'fhearr liom bheith mar tá mé,  
gan maoin gan stór,  
na cártaí teacht i láthair chugam is mé bheith ag ól.

*If I had a smithy making silver and gold  
and a harp in my parlour playing grand music,  
I'd a thousand times rather be as I am,  
without wealth,  
the cards coming up and me having a drink.*

Uilliam had a go-getting wife called

Síghle, who rather spoiled his drinking. She was forever abusing him for being an idler and saying how, if only she wasn't married to a good-for-nothing, she could get a handsome hard-working man. To which Uilliam replied that she ought to be content with what she had: of late she was getting very broad in the beam... And yet, when Síghle went off to Ulster to buy flax, what was she doing up there, and who was she doing it with? Uilliam muses on his relationship with Síghle in a kind of confessional poetry that always has humour in it and charm.

A poet like this didn't really have the energy to make a proper Jacobite *aisling*. But he knew the language of *aisling* and prophecy and was very well able to employ it in a poem for a pretty woman. Poets did that all the time, as a matter of fact, but Uilliam had his own special flair.

"I fear that a fleet will come to Ireland,  
Tara will be destroyed and the market towns by the Boyne, there'll be raging battles, and they won't accept ransom in silver or gold—until they get Nancy Dolan!"

And again,

"If I got the rent of Scotland without arrears, and a hundred fleets laden with wine and brandy, silk and cambric, I would rather *only get a share of it*—and spend it with Nancy Dolan!"

Louis Cullen found Uilliam and Síghle useful and cited them several times. They provided evidence against Corkery, who had seen Gaelic Ireland in the 18th century as tending towards an undifferentiated misery. Cullen, drawing on the wide range of poetry that had since been published, showed that this was not true: there was a good deal of economic differentiation. Why, then, was there such a sustained negativity in the poetry?

As Corkery saw it, the aristocratic spirit that prevailed in the early 18th century poets became democratic as the century wore on. The change could be seen in the difference between Aogán Ó Rathaille and Eoghan Ruadh. But Cullen, looking closely at Eoghan Rua, couldn't find much of the democrat in him. Eoghan Rua had airs that the economist could only identify as aristocratic. And so, to make a long story short, Cullen wrote off Irish poetry of the 18th and 19th centuries as a prolonged hangover from aristocracy, denied its connection with popular aspirations, and declared *The Hidden Ireland* a misunderstanding.

Morley sweeps all this aside in a couple of pages. He throws Cullen a couple of

bones (very well, the poets were not predominantly peasants; very well, there was no total immiseration of Gaelic Ireland). And then he pronounces judgment:

"Although valid criticisms can be made of his book, Corkery sketched a more accurate picture of the popular mind than Louis Cullen was able to do some forty years later" (p. 7).

#### REDUCTION OF THE POETS

In many ways Morley's book is admirable, and one wishes him well in his battles with *Hibernia Anglicana*. But problems arise with the narrow focus that he imposes on his materials. He reduces the poets to less than their proper dimensions.

How are we to describe these poets? "*A disparate and scattered body of amateur authors*", Morley calls them (p. 6). There were men among them who, if they had heard him say such a thing, would have issued a richly-worded *Barántas* not designed to enhance his reputation.

Nowadays Morley doesn't seem to be such a fierce devotee of progress as when he wrote his unsympathetic biography of Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín (*An Crann Os Coill*, 1995). But he still has some overwhelming sense of the power of economics and the centrality of funded institutions. He can't quite imagine a body of men with a mission or vocation in culture, continuing to function in some fashion even when the institutional backing that they once enjoyed had long been swept away. And besides, he feels that the only way to defend the poets against charges made by the likes of Cullen (that they were pining for a long-dead aristocracy) is to show that they didn't have any significant connection with the professional poets of past times.

"I have never found any evidence to suggest that there was an organic connection between the 'courts' of poetry—convivial gatherings of versifiers which convened in scattered locations and at irregular intervals during the eighteenth century—and the professional bardic schools of previous centuries... 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" (pp. 3, 6).

What does "*an organic connection*" mean? That the funding streams were at no point discontinued? Is the mind to be considered an organ for this purpose? Or

are any such ideas, disconnected from funding considerations, to be regarded as foolish?

Consider Uilliam Mac Cairteáin an Dúna, socio-economically to be labelled a farmer (p. 43). He was a Major in the army of King James II, who later became President of the Court of Poetry at Carrignavar. Morley may not recognise him as the successor of the professional poets, but that is what Mac Cairteáin himself thought he was. In 1703 East Cork Jacobite notable Sir Séamas Mac Éamoinn Mac Coitir died, and Mac Cairteáin produced a lament. He first of all mentions an outstanding poet who was lately deceased:

if only Diarmaid Mac Sheáin Buí were here, he would be the best to make an elegy. Next he says that, since Tórna Éigeas and Mac Bruaideadha and Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh no longer live, it's difficult to make poetry. And, since Ó Dálaigh and Ón Cháinte aren't at their peak, it's hard to get the dead man's praises right. But, since none of those masters are now living, he himself will lead the poets in mourning (*Eighteenth-century Ireland* 2016, p. 157).

Some further thoughts on this theme must be held over

**John Minahane**

**To be continued**

## WHILE YOU ATE AMERICAN PIE

I remember when only the song was left  
and even that began to fade  
we had our sixties but not like you made  
for we had that feeling of bereft

we ate of 50 year old stew  
and our fighting spirit grew  
some thought of us as brothers and  
sisters  
but mostly as landscape blisters

I was sitting by that babbling brook  
when comes a tweedy man with the  
stolen name he took  
but who came to our aid  
when he sang of our blood in which to  
wade

so so-long to polite manners  
and ignoring provoking banners  
our hides are not for the tanner  
buses block our street to hosannas  
to fix the machine needs more than  
spanners

when they preached it wasn't love  
when they prayed there were no white  
doves

for their padres carried guns  
the moon was theirs even the sun  
they had their walk their talk their faces  
ours they described as fenian being  
racists

then my girl fell in love with him  
and sang a very different hymn  
went to the other side of the wire  
adopted their hatred and felt inspired

I was a discarded teenager with a rusty

bike  
searched in the thatch for that pike  
but maybe it was a bit too soon  
boilin' hot after watching high noon

so so-long polite manners  
and ignoring provoking banners  
our hides are not for the tanner  
buses block our street to hosannas  
to fix the machine needs more than  
spanners

the flag in the window some would buy  
others came with wrecking bars to take  
the foreign lie

it was chains deep north with no keys in  
the south  
suddenly a baton across the mouth  
blood and gristle with each tooth spat  
out  
32 makes one a year for the coming  
clout

the girl up high on anderson and  
mcauley  
sucks her thumb and cries for her dolly  
the crowd below watch the narrow  
ledge  
inside knowing it's the thin edge of the  
wedge

the coming end of a beautiful thing  
a love lost though there was an  
engagement ring  
now it's death dressed in a summer  
frock  
when compassion fails a few begin to  
mock

so so-long polite manners  
and ignoring provoking banners  
our hides are not for the tanner  
buses block our street to hosannas  
to fix the machine needs more than

spanners

they lifted my uncle to the crum  
some royal figures were coming over  
for fun

high street saturday night and the  
branch  
my girl wants to dance not have my  
views enhanced  
she danced too long with another man  
love and hate love and hate that night  
ran

sunday on napoleon's nose before the  
pill  
when passion died and anxiety had its  
fill

there was no other way to keep her  
get a ring before the usual occurs

on that ledge she represents their views  
it is the end of what they knew  
the whole city is in shock  
then a rainbow with munitions in the  
crock

so so-long polite manners  
and ignoring provoking banners  
our hides are not for the tanner  
buses block our street to hosannas  
to fix the machine needs more than  
spanners

when the fatted goose leaves beware  
we don't casually look anymore but  
stare

it's almost jackets off and defensive  
stance  
soon will come that deadly dance  
I know who you are and you know who  
I am  
were we friends when things seemed  
calm

the world watches like she's the only  
one that day  
one sneaks to cross herself as a man  
glares and prays  
that it's not a sacrifice a warning  
that the gates of hell are only yawning

a butcher would recognise such a sight  
an animal downed in full flight  
but within that human wreckage  
something gleams  
not a diamond only glass-paste throws  
its beam

so so-long polite manners  
and ignoring provoking banners  
our hides are not for the tanner  
buses block our street to hosannas  
to fix the machine needs more than  
spanners

Letter submitted to *Irish Times* on 14th August but not published

## West Cork History?

My August 7th letter (IRA, spies and west Cork killings) merited three critical responses.

Taking the last first, Cal Hyland (12th August) reported the religious denomination of Cork loyalists applying for compensation to the British government. The memoir of former *Irish Times* journalist Lionel Fleming, *Head or Harp* (1965), dismissed "anti-Irish propaganda" in right wing London newspapers during the 1920s and 1930s, based on the allegedly sad fate of southern loyalists. Fleming, son of the West Cork Rector of Timoleague, noted that the campaign culminated in the awarding of generous compensation amounts.

Mr Hyland's photographs are of loyalist claims, stating that they paid an arms levy to the IRA and that they accommodated and fed groups of IRA personnel. Some, suspected of aiding Crown Forces, said they were ordered to leave. These predations were not peculiar to Protestants. They may have affected Protestants in West Cork disproportionately for two reasons.

First, due to the sectarian nature of British rule, Protestants were relatively more affluent than their Roman Catholic neighbours and therefore paid more. Second, some Protestants in West Cork (like some Roman Catholics) actively sided with the British *status quo*. Other Protestants were disgusted with British methods and said so. Some others were with republican forces. The official British Army history, *The Record of the Rebellion*, noted that some West Cork Protestants, unlike Protestants elsewhere, gave information.

No one is asked "to believe that there was no sectarianism in west Cork". There was and the republican campaign was designed to end it.

Simon Kingston (August 9th) referred to sectarianism 'continu[ing] to exercise those engaged in honest scrutiny' of the period. He might tell us who this remark excludes. A debate surrounds the controversial methods of the late Peter Hart. Perhaps there is a connection. He is correct: images I complained of did not feature in the An Tost Fada screening at the West Cork History Festival. Simon Kingston knows that is because I complained and RTE removed the images plus some audio.

Finally, Tost Fada producer Gerry Gregg accuses me of 'nit picking' his programme (8th August). If he is not prepared to painstakingly comb through the detail of history to present a factual account, he should try another method, called fiction.

I pointed out that Gregg and scriptwriter Eoghan Harris presented inaccurate information in relation to compensation paid to a William Salter and that the programme conflated over two days events 14 months apart. If the programme makers had examined Mr Salter's loyalist compensation application, mistakes could have been avoided. But that might have upset the programme makers' message, similar to the one Lionel Fleming complained of in his memoir.

I have been reading the recently published, *The Embers of Revisionism*, by Dr Niall Meehan. He gives writing history about the War of Independence period a degree of honest scrutiny. I recommend it to those wishing to know more.

**Tom Cooper**

## Irish Times Self-Censorship

The former Political Editor of the *Irish Times*, Stephen Collins, gave an Address at a commemoration of Michael Collins hosted by the Collins/Griffith Commemoration Society at Glasnevin on 20th August.

An *Irish Times* report of this event 'neglected to record' that its columnist pointedly criticised President Michael D. Higgins, by name, for "*simplistic analyses*", and that he also denounced what he called the "*extreme left*" leadership of the British Labour Party (see [www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/irish-politics-is-the-outraged-versus-those-who-want-to-govern-1.3192528](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/irish-politics-is-the-outraged-versus-those-who-want-to-govern-1.3192528)).

**Manus O'Riordan**

now all you hear is suicide suicide  
suicide  
like a song in your head you can't abide  
a man jumps off a bus too soon  
the conductor cries there goes a loon  
though he does it all the time without  
harm  
a child goes too near the kerb and  
there's alarm

the traffic screams as if awaiting its fate  
I look over my shoulder and walk at a  
faster rate  
they can't see the problem though it's in  
their face  
two corpses on the pavement with some  
haste

the problem hangs on for a minute  
it's still alive and will fight without  
limit  
the girl on that ledge was someone's  
daughter  
there can be no peace now only  
slaughter

was what I felt sometimes peace  
munitions making it until it ceased  
then it made some more  
until peace became a whore  
with munitions adored

so so-long polite manners  
and ignoring provoking banners  
our hides are not for the tanner  
buses block our street to hosannas  
to fix the machine needs more than  
spanners

**Wilson John Haire.**  
10 April 2015

## Ghost Estates

It is worth noting that in the course of a long and rather tedious article on ghost estates (*Irish Times*, 12/8/17) it was mentioned that most of the financing of ghost estates came from foreign banks: ACC (owned by Rabo bank Netherlands); Bank of Scotland; Ulster bank (owned by Royal Bank of Scotland); National Irish Bank (owned by Danske bank).

The number of ghost estates (unfinished developments) was 2,846 in 2010; it is now 420. NAMA, which took over all development loans from the Irish banks, had had exposure to 332 in 2010 (less than 12% of the total of 2,846). In 2017 it had exposure to just 11 (less than 3% of the total of 420).

**John Martin**

Does  
It  
Up

Stack  
?

#### TROTSKY AND SILICON VALLEY

Leon Trotsky was killed by Ramon Mercader wielding an ice-pick on 21st August 1940. Trotsky had been living in exile in Mexico. Mexico is very near California. Right next door in fact. It is really amazing that much of the unrest in the world today seems to be emanating from Silicon Valley, California. A small number of billionaires based in California are using computerisation in all its forms to earn for themselves enormous wealth and enormous power.

The world is becoming a vast madhouse as a direct result of the abuses enabled by the intensification of computer use. Computers are excellent when properly used—for keeping track of multiple transactions in banks, for example—but computers are being abused in banks when proper control is not exercised over loans given out to customers. Banks are not able; it seems, to know the extent of their bad debts and doubtful debts and in this area of their operations the banks drifted into a very false sense of their stability which eventually became a disaster for society.

The Insurance Industry is based on calculating the odds against each particular type of loss occurring and the cost of covering individual losses which are covered by the premiums charged to all. Thus, prior to a time when insurance cover was available, an individual merchant or ship owner could be and quite commonly was bankrupted by an uninsured shipwreck. And so, before insurance was 'invented', international trade was limited. The Insurance Industry is therefore now an essential part of international trade.

Computers are ideal for calculating the enormous data and multiple factors involved in arriving at the costs of losses arising from individual loss events as compared with the total events where no losses occur. This sort of calculation has up to now been the method of arriving at insurance quotations which are on the one hand competitive and on the other hand are collectively sufficient to cover the costs of losses from individual loss events plus a reasonable commercial profit for the insurance company.

Normally losses arising from wars or civil riots are excluded because in wars or

riots too many individual losses are likely to occur all at once. Now this is where abuse of computerisation arises:

In a recent spate of cyber attacks millions of dollars and euros were lost due to unnecessary overuse of computerisation. The Shipping Group A.P. Molter-Maersk has admitted that a cyber attack last June cost the Group some \$300 million US dollars. That is just one company who was willing to go public (most of them obviously don't if at all possible as their share positions could be badly dented—except if it happens as publicly as it did to British Airways last year) and other companies downplay how much the cyber attacks have cost. Of course some companies could be using the cyber attacks as ways of diverting monies away from prying eyes for their own use in off-shore companies.

In the case of Maersk the company was unable to accept or deliver orders for several days. Computers held all the details of their container traffic and their customers and while this was very convenient, it was not absolutely necessary. With a little more manpower and more paper-work the Bills of Lading for ships and details of movements within loading areas could have been recorded either in the former manner or by use of dedicated non-communicating computers. Computerisation had gone too far because it was too easy—not to mind being cost effective in terms of man-power reduction.

Computer hacking is "*war by another means*" and it will not be long before the Insurance Industry will not cover losses where certain excessive types of computerisation is involved.

In Ireland, most of the income of the State is collected by The Revenue Commissioners and the Revenue have relentlessly pursued their objective of the paperless society. This is demonstrably foolish because their system is to have every taxpayer's computer in communication with the Revenue Commissioners system so that not only the Revenue but also all of the taxpayers are hackable. Some day, inevitably, a terrible price will have to be paid for this utter folly. A huge price is probably being suffered already by the State because tax evasion is greatly enabled by the intense computerisation. Records are becoming un-auditable.

Many small and medium-sized retailers will have more than one till and one of the tills will be "cash only" transactions. It is not too difficult for a business to develop an "app" which will keep track of the ratios which Revenue uses to measure the tax compliance or otherwise of a business. And

just in case a taxpayer does not know how to go about fiddling the electronic records, the subject of computer coding is now being generally taught in schools so that the chaos can be brought about ever more easily.

Social engineering, which is foreseeably going to lead to chaos, is also now firmly on the agenda of the Bank of Ireland which has designated certain of its branches to be "*cashless branches*". Are the retailers in Dunmanway to refuse payments in cash because the retailer would have to travel to Bandon to lodge cash? Yes, that is what the Bank of Ireland demands. Perhaps the Bank of Ireland want to close down their Dunmanway branch? Does the Bank of Ireland also intend to stop servicing their cash machines?

(Incidentally how is it that Banks have managed to conduct much of their business through machines on the public street without Street Trader's Licences?)

The Trotsky-style chaos really got going in the USA leading up to bankruptcies of 2007-2008 and the Irish Taxpayers were ruthlessly milked to bail out the Irish Banks. Either the Irish Banks lied to the Government at the time or were ignorant of their true position? Or was it a case of a bit of lying and a lot of ignorance? At great cost the taxpayers paid the Banks instead of which it might have been better to guarantee bank depositors directly and let the banks to their fate. The National Debt is now costing the State and the taxpayer huge interest charges and with little prospect of repayment.

If the Banks want a cashless society they may get it and, if they do, it may be a *Bit Coin* society in which the Banks will be sidelined. Likewise, if the Revenue Commissioners and the other Government Departments achieve a paperless society, there is no good reason why it should stop there—it may proceed to be a recordless society leaving the State with diminishing, and ever more diminishing, income.

There is all the evidence present now that a chaotic revolution is taking place. It does not stack up that no one in Government can't see what is happening and the scale of the coming disaster. If no one shouts STOP, Silicon Valley will win. But what they in Silicone Valley will win is very likely to be chaos—but isn't that what they seem to want with their genderless, cashless, denationalist society of the future?

We are in a LOSELOSE situation now. Look at Housing, at Health Services, at Security etc. Our great patriot and founding

PTO, column 1

## IRISH BULLETIN continued

official daily paper from November 1919 to December 1921 of the Government of the Irish Republic. Its aim was to provide those outside Ireland with the Government's case and the daily facts of the war that it had to wage to maintain its Independence. It was unadorned with any other content except straightforward factual and irrefutable information. This is what made its reputation and because of that it became one of the most powerful weapons in the war that eventually proved successful.

Republication of the *Bulletin* is ongoing, with three volumes appearing so far.

Cost €25 Euros per Volume.

**IRISH BULLETIN: Volume One:**  
July 12, 1919—May 1, 1920

**IRISH BULLETIN: Volume Two: May**  
3, 1920—August 31, 1920

**IRISH BULLETIN: Volume Three:**  
Sept. 1, 1920—January 1, 1921

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**FRANK GALLAGHER** (1898-1962). Born in Cork. He was educated at Presentation Brothers College and for a short period he attended University College, Cork. He was employed as a young journalist by William O'Brien on the *Cork Free Press* (1910-1916) daily organ of the All-for-Ireland League and sent to London to cover the parliamentary debates on Irish Home Rule.

Following the Easter Rising of 1916, he joined the IRA. He took the anti-Treaty side during the Civil War. He assisted Robert Brennan with publicity during that conflict and wrote an Open Letter to Dr. Byrne, Archbishop of Dublin, criticising his pastoral's support of the Pro-Treaty side.

Imprisoned in Mountjoy 1922 and Kilmainham 1923, he embarked on a series of Hunger Strikes, varying from three days to forty-one days.

In 1931, he became the first Editor of

the *Irish Press* through his appointment by Eamon de Valera : later that year he was imprisoned under emergency legislation introduced by the Government of W.T. Cosgrave. He left the "*Press*" in 1936, following a clash with the directors, but remained close to de Valera. On leaving the "*Press*", de Valera appointed him as Deputy Director of Radio Eireann. He was also Director of the Government Information Bureau for two terms (1938-48 and 1951-54).

He worked at the National Library from 1954 until his death, working on preparations for a dictionary of national biography. He died in Dublin on 16th July 1962.

He published *Days of Fear* (1928), a jail journal and, under the pseudonym 'David Hogan', *The Four Glorious Years* (1953), and *Indivisible Island* (1957), a history of partition.

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## Stack

continued

father Padraig Pearse once referred to the Education System (he should see it now!) as "*The Murder Machine*". But if he was alive now he would truly see a real murder machine which indeed would have as its source a very real machine—the computer—and we would be living in the horrors of the computerised age where computer-manned Drones would deliver death and destruction to peoples far away from where they would be based.

This now is our World and for those people that don't matter, i.e. the 99%—well the machines will do whatever is necessary for the one percenters. Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Amazon etc dominate the world and the State itself is finding out now how incredibly difficult it will be to ensure its very own survival amidst the ravaging maw of globalised chaos.

Will any State take on these giants—even the USA is now *talking* about dismantling these mammoths but will it and other States succeed? President Trump is looking into the abyss and the abyss is trying to devour him and this is not said figuratively. He is literally fighting for his life and I wouldn't bet on his survival right now.

Michael Stack ©

## Northern Ireland And The *Blitz*

An argument is going on in Belfast City Council over the erection of what is being called a *Blitz Memorial*—a memorial to a few German bombing raids. Jeffrey Dudgeon, who is now an Ulster Unionist Councillor, appeared on Radio Ulster (22.8) to argue for its establishment as a one-off, outside a general agreement made in the Council about a balanced putting-up of memorials. He said the "*Blitz*" issue was "*non-sectarian*".

It is not very long since the Unionists claimed that the World War was very much a sectarian issue because the Irish nation did not make war on Germany and the Northern Nationalist community was on the German side. Weren't they lighting up their windows to guide the bombers?

But there is another aspect to it. Councilman Dudgeon's Unionist colleague, Lord Bew, the eminent historian, has countered the description of Northern Ireland as an undemocratically governed region of the British state by asserting that Northern Ireland was itself a state.

Why did Germany bomb the Northern Ireland state? Presumably because the Northern Ireland state declared war on Germany.

Northern Ireland was certainly at war with Germany. And, if it was a state, it must have itself declared war on Germany. Germany certainly did not declare war on it.

Another certainty is that the Nationalist population had no responsibility whatever for the declaration of war on Germany, whoever declared it.

Northern Ireland, whether in itself or as a willing subordinate and effectively disfranchised region of the UK was active in the declaration of war on Germany, and it could not reasonably have expected to be able to bomb Germany and not be bombed back.

But it would be interesting if Lord Bew clarified the detail of the matter with regard to his Northern Ireland State.



**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## Irish Bulletin

by

**Frank Gallagher (1930)**

The *Irish Bulletin* was the daily organ of the Irish Government during the War of Independence. It was first published (in the cyclostyled form it always kept) in November, 1919. It seems to have originated with a typewritten sheet issued to the press about once a fortnight in the Spring and Summer of 1919 from the Dail Eireann Publicity Department, giving a summary of British acts of aggression. This was first compiled under Laurence Ginnell's Directorship of Publicity. I was then his assistant.

In November, 1919, the Director of Publicity of Sinn Fein, Robert Brennan, planned an organ for the Government, and the *Irish Bulletin* was the result. At first it took the form of listing acts of violence and aggression by the British, and it was not daily in its publication. Afterwards it became the daily organ, and published elaborate statements of the Irish case, and a full history of the contemporary growth and development of the Republican Government. Later still it published a regular weekly supplement called the *Weekly Review*, which gave a running history of the guerilla war, compiled from the official reports of the I.R.A. Commandants in the field.

The *Irish Bulletin* was published under the general editorship of whoever was Director of Publicity—first Desmond FitzGerald and then Erskine Childers. In the main it was compiled by me. When Erskine Childers became Director (February, 1921), the *Bulletin* was a joint work, except in the case of numerous brilliant issues which were written by him alone. At first only a few hundred copies were printed, but as the war continued and

the interest in the struggle grew abroad the number increased until at the end over two thousand copies went out daily to the British, Irish, and foreign press, to Heads of States and leading politicians in England and America, to writers everywhere who showed any sympathy at all with freedom, and to heads of Churches. It also went to all the Republic's foreign representatives, being translated into the language of the particular country, and circulated in large numbers.

Its main circulation was, of course, to the Press in London, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Berlin, etc., and to every national paper in America. Most of the critics of the Black-and-Tan regime in the British Parliament, platform, and Press received their information through the *Bulletin*.

Its last number appeared about a week after the Treaty was signed [6.12.1921]. There is a full file of the *Bulletin* in the National Library, and I have heard of

other complete files in private hands, but it is now exceedingly rare and of prime historic value.

In March, 1921, the *Bulletin* office was discovered by the British, and its whole extensive plant and files carried off. There was a staff of seven. Dublin Castle afterwards issued forged editions to those named on lists captured in the same raid. The genuine *Bulletin* continued without missing an issue.

— *The Irish Book Lover*.

(This is a brief account of the history of a remarkable "underground" journal, issued by the Irish resistance movement in 1919-21, when the liberty of the published press in Ireland was greatly restricted. Mr. Frank Gallagher, the main contributor to the "Bulletin", was head of the Irish Government Information Bureau before and during World War II. He is now Chairman of the Research Committee on the Partition question. The "Irish Book Lover" is published by Mr. Colm O Lochlainn, a specialist in fine printing and himself a veteran of the Insurrection of 1916.

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

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### Irish Bulletin—Volumes 1, 2 and 3

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