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## Nationalism Here And There

On the eve of Brexit a Northern Ireland English policeman has been appointed Commissioner of the *Garda Síochána*. Prior to this appointment Drew Harris OBE was Deputy Commissioner of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, which is the Royal Ulster Constabulary as re-made by the English police after 1969 to be an instrument of the British State in the North, rather than an instrument of the devolved Unionist communal body. His duties were to liaise with British Intelligence.

The appointing body of nine, chosen by Justice Minister Flanagan, included a former Chief Constable of the Hampshire Constabulary, Alan Marshall; and the Interim Chief Constable of the Scottish police, Ian Livingstone. There was nobody on it from a European state. And of the 76 applicants for the job, there was not one from any European state.

Applications were solicited. So the Government, on the eve of Brexit, decided that there should be no European connection and that there should be a strong connection with the state that is on the way to becoming a foreign state, even by Martin Mansergh's reckoning.

Freemasonry has a traditional relationship with British policing. At the time of the 1922 'Treaty', Britain insisted that Secret Societies should be curbed in Ireland—except for the Freemasons. The Secret Society of Freemasons was regarded as a pillar of British civilisation. The Free State was therefore required to allow it to operate freely and, when there were sings of backsliding in the late 1920s, the *Irish Times* issued an editorial warning to the State.

We are not saying that Drew Harris OBE is a Freemason. In the nature of the thing, that is something we cannot know. But also, in the nature of the thing, the probability is that he is. And it is therefore worth noting that the question has not been raised at all in connection with his appointment.

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## The No Hard Border Mantra

*No hard border post Brexit* is the oft-repeated mantra from Dublin, Belfast, London and Brussels and it is echoed by every politician and party across Europe and further afield. All are agreed it should not and will not happen. Why therefore is there any need to be concerned about the possibility of such a border?

Leo Varadkar felt the need to issue another rallying cry in the *Sunday Independent* (22 July):

"Ireland will not once again become collateral damage in British policy. One hundred years ago this country was forced to accept partition. We can never go back to the borders that followed".

This is the simpleton's—or the Taoiseach's PR—view of why there is a Border in the first place. Varadkar appears to have learned nothing from those 100 years that, *inter alia*, included 30 years of

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## Ireland, Brexit and the future of the EU, Part 6

## A Straight Narrative Of The Greek Crisis

Greece is an unavoidable topic in the Irish Brexit debate. The crisis that started there in 2010 has reduced an EU Member State of nearly eleven million people, with an economy only marginally smaller than Ireland's, to the status of what James K Galbraith calls a "*Caribbean dependency of the United States*", except that the

dependent relationship is with Brussels. The EU's treatment of Greece added to the groundswell of opinion that led to the Brexit vote in the UK; and in Ireland, notwithstanding the current high satisfaction ratings for EU membership, it remains a potent source of disaffection against the Brussels institutions, especially

on the Left.

Ireland has chosen to align with the European Union rather than Britain in the Brexit negotiations. The implication is that Dublin needs to forge a closer relationship with Europe. To do that it is necessary that a clear political understanding of the EU needs to be developed, an understanding that does not shy away from the more intractable controversies.

Available sources on the Greek crisis fall into three categories: first, anti-EU works like *Adults in the Room* by Yannis

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

A Land Value Tax!

(back page)

Freemasonry seems to be a useful part of the British system of government. But its usefulness is entirely British.

In the Irish context, the association sets itself the task of unifying North and South within the British scheme of things.

And just what is wrong with the Gardai that a foreign policeman is needed to sort them out. Or is it part of a '*cunning plan*' by Varadkar to get the North?

\*

Ireland is lobbying to be elected as one of the minnows on the UN Security Council. It was on the Security Council in 2001, when the World Trade Centre was demolished. It distinguished itself by giving a moral lecture to the Palestinians for celebrating the event. They were told that they would not achieve their aims by behaving like that. But the Palestinians knew that they way they behaved had nothing whatever to do with the probability of achieving their aims. However badly or ingratiatingly they behaved, the Security Council would make certain that their aims were not achieved. And so they celebrated openly a resounding blow struck at the enemy. Their conduct was

not irresponsible because there was no kind of responsible conduct that would achieve anything for them. Their only duty in the eyes of the dominant Power on the Security Council is to die out, or go away, and let a 'better' people take over the space that they leave.

Their death knell was rung by Britain, when it conquered the Middle East with the help of John Redmond and decided to colonise it with Jews.

The *Irish Times* supports the Irish bid, even though the Security Council "*is a flawed, unrepresentative institution too often rendered impotent by the vetoes of its five permanent members*", because "*When it is united it can be a force for immense good*" (4.7.18).

The Vetoes do not render it impotent. They are necessary to its existence. It could not exist without them The USA is an absolute sovereignty, prevented by its Constitution from joining any international body which infringes that sovereignty.

The UN was formed in 1945 when the Soviet Union and the United States brought an end to the World War launched by Britain which Britain itself was incapable

of ending. The UN was envisaged by Roosevelt as a power-structure of world dominance, to be operated jointly with Russia. He envisaged the two victorious states ensuring peace in the world by means of a monopoly of force.

Britain was added as a third, out of charity. Britain wanted France as an ally against the US. And the US added China, which was then its client state. And so it remains.

It was effectively a two-state system until the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990. It might conceivably have been changed then if the US had exerted insistent pressure on Britain and France, but for the fact that China had shrugged off American hegemony and become independent and powerful. It is now unalterable.

(And we recall that the last time it was united, when Russia was in disarray, it launched the war on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the first event in the modern destabilisation of the Middle East.)

The *Irish Times* says that the Government "*should state clearly that it will not enter into reciprocal deals with states that abuse their citizen's human rights or flout international law*".

International Law is law made my agreement between the Veto Powers. Everything else is mere opinion. Human Rights once had a kind of dependable meaning that lasted from decade to decade, but new ones are now being invented every year and the greater part of the world is in breach of the Human Rights that are currently in fashion in Western Europe.

"Brexit has prompted a long overdue recognition that Ireland has neglected many of its foreign relationships. At a time when we need to be more present in the world, a stint on the security council would be well-timed. But there is no point in being there unless we have something to say."

The Security Council is the last place in which states engage in relations with each other. That is not its purpose.

And Ireland will enter a real world of foreign relationships if Brexit is completed, and it is left alone in the EU without Britain, and it is obliged by circumstances to relate to Britain as a foreign state.

The ventriloquist's dummy, the *Irish Times*, is anxious to ward off that evil day. It wants the Irish Government to see things from the British viewpoint and inveigle the EU into becoming entangled in British problems and confusing relationships—as was done with Arthur Griffith in the

'Treaty' negotiations—instead of tending to its own affairs while Britain tries to follow its separate destiny.

The Irish Government appeared all too willing to play that part a couple of years ago. But it now seems to have been caught by the will to existence of the European Commission, and there are moments when Simon Coveney might be mistaken for Charles Haughey.

Meanwhile the *Irish Times* warns us that Europe is going fascist. It does this in the highly excited way that is usual in the ventriloquist's dummy.

Fintan O'Toole (June 26) writes about "*The trial runs for fascism*" that are now under way: "*Millions and millions of Europeans and Americans are learning to think the unthinkable*":

"Fascism doesn't arise suddenly in an existing democracy... You have to do trial runs that get people used to something they may initially recoil from; and they allow you to refine and calibrate. That is what is happening now and we would be fools not to see it.

"One of the basic tools of fascism is the rigging of elections—we've that trialled in the election of Trump, in the Brexit referendum and (less successfully) in the French presidential elections".

Which fascism arose in an existing democracy? And did Mussolini's rule rest on rigged elections?

The only fascism we can think of that made a serious attempt to rise in a functional democracy is the Treatyite fascism of the early 1930s. It was stifled by the democracy.

However, Professor Garvin—the pioneer revisionist—suggests that, as between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, it was the fascist Fine Gael (which said it was fascist and which raised the Blueshirts) that was democratic, while the real fascist party was Fianna Fail, which masqueraded as democratic.

Anyhow, Fianna won a series of elections—rigging them by telling lies, no doubt!—and it wore down the Blueshirts without Concentration Camps or Martial Law.

Another tool of preparatory Fascism is "*the generation of tribal identities, the division of society into mutually exclusive polarities*".

Well, in the pioneering fascism, the Italian, the "*generation of tribal identities*" was done when Mussolini blended irredentist Nationalism with Socialism in 1914-15 and, against the opposition of the

## Fenians And The IRB

In his memoirs, John Devoy suggested that the reason the Irish Republican Brotherhood in America was known as the *Fenian Brotherhood* (rather than IRB) was because of its leader John O'Mahony's immersion in Keating's *Foras Feasa*—"Fenian", as in Fionn Mac Cumhaill's legendary band of Fianna.

In America Devoy joined Clan na Gael, not the Fenian Brotherhood. It seems that the latter fell apart over their attacks in Canada, while a remnant promoted dynamite attacks in England, possibly at the instigation of British agents in their midst who used these attacks to subvert Fenian popular and international support, and to mop up the foot soldiers involved in them.

Here are some frequently-quoted lines from Keating's *History of Ireland (Foras Feasa)*:

"...Whereof the testimony given by Cambrensis, Spenser, Stanihurst, Hanmer, Camden, Barckly, Moryson, Davies, Campion, and every other new foreigner who has written on Ireland from that time, may bear witness; inasmuch as it is almost according to the fashion of the beetle they act, when writing concerning the Irish. For it is the fashion of the beetle, when it lifts its head in the summertime, to go about fluttering, and not to stoop towards any delicate flower that may be in the field, or any blossom in the garden, though they be all roses or lilies, but it keeps bustling about until it meets with dung of horse or cow, and proceeds to roll itself therein..." <https://www.exclassics.com/ceitinn/foras.pdf>

John O'Mahony's 1857 translation of *Foras Feasa* can be read on-line here:

[https://books.google.ie/books?id=dE7pMtIozskC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ie/books?id=dE7pMtIozskC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Pat Muldowney

Socialist Party and the Catholic Church, brought Italy into the Great War as an ally of Britain on the British promise that Italy could annex large regions of the Austrian state. Fascism, in the sense of irredentist national socialism, was forged with British approval in the Great War.

As to "*the division of society into mutually exclusive polarities*"—a system of party conflict, in other words—that was what existed in Italy after the War because of the spread of Bolshevik influence. A situation of class antagonism existed which neither side could resolve by becoming dominant. Democracy wasn't functional because the party-political differences were too deep. So Mussolini entered with his already-created nationalist socialism, drew elements from both sides into a workable combination, and established a regime that lasted into the next World War.

Fascism was the means by which Capitalist civilisation was saved from Communist civilisation in Europe when the party conflict became too intense for the Parliamentary system to cope with.

There was some discussion in English political circles around 1920 about the limits of Parliamentary democracy. This was caused by the crumbling of the Liberal

Party and the rise of the Labour Party in its place. Winston Churchill was frankly of the opinion that, if the party system became the expression of the conflict of a Capitalist Party and a Socialist Party, the Parliamentary system could not cope with it.

A few years later he went to Rome to praise Mussolini for finding the way to save European capitalist civilisation from Communism. He said that, if he lived in Italy, he would be a fascist.

The way Britain coped with the stresses of the Depression was to suspend the operation of the party-system without suspending Parliament. This was done by the Labour and Tory Parties forming a *National Government* and taking turns at being Prime Minister. That system of National Government continued from 1931 to 1945. This sophisticated exercise was made possible by the continuing influence of that distinctive English institution, the ruling class—which was not a mere upper class.

Churchill went on to become the hero of the Anti-Fascist War of post-1945 mythology. But he never subscribed to the notion that it was a crusade against Fascism.

He praised Hitler for pulling Germany together again after the dreadful things

that were done to it in 1919. In 1919 he had wanted to form an alliance with it to make war on Communist Russia. When he came to power in 1940, the war that Britain had declared on Germany was lost, and the only alternative to a settlement was to try to bring about a war between Germany and Russia.

When that happened, he had to go into alliance with Russia, but he never wavered in his opinion that the basic enemy was Russia. And he never became an anti-fascist. He let fascist Spain and Portugal be. He would have let Mussolini be if he had not joined Germany in the War at the moment when Germany seemed to have won it.

*Fascism does not need a majority*", the ventriloquist's dummy says. But it does, you know. It is only functional of decisive majorities.

The doctrine continues: *"it typically comes to power with about 40 per cent support and then uses control and intimidation to consolidate that power"*—and maybe brings about full employment where there was mass employment before?

The impending Holocaust in Britain is not mentioned in the litany of awfulness set in motion by Trump and Putin. Is there a spark of sense in the dummy, after all?

The three Jewish papers in Britain have declared that there is now *"an existential threat to Jewish life in Britain"*. They exhort any Jews in the Labour Party to leave it, and advise Jews in general to make plans to leave Britain if Jeremy Corbyn, the new Hitler, becomes Prime Minister.

The leading campaigner against Corbyn as a *"fucking anti-Semite"* is Margaret Hodge, MP, who was for many years his close ally on the way-out Left of the British Labour Party. Hodge—who is part of the Oppenheimer connection—has discovered after all these years that Corbyn has a fierce racial animosity against Jews.

Corbyn is perhaps the most thorough anti-racist in British politics, but Hodge spied his cloven hoof in the form of refusal to denounce Hamas as anti-Semitic.

The existential danger to Jewish life in Britain has sprung up in connection with the latest measures of Jewish racist legislation, enacted democratically by Israel, which is *"the only democracy in the Middle East"*—as ideologists of Zionism like to point out.

The demand made on Corbyn is that he should put hostility to Jews by those who

are suffering oppression by Jews on a par with the European hostility to Jews that led to the attempt to exterminate them—an attempt in which many more than Germans were involved, and most actively involved.

(The great secret of European history is that anti-Semitism was unleashed, or perhaps *stimulated* would be a better word—by the break-up of Empires, a move that is usually presented as a progressive achievement of the Great War, and the hurried establishment in their place of national-democratic states with inadequate national development, whose nationalism lay ahead of them.

Anti-Semitism was stimulated by democratisation. It was the expansion of the German state after the British declaration of war on it in 1939—after collaborating with it since 1933—that opened the way for drastic anti-Semitic action. But that German initiative would not have been so effective if it had not met with a friendly response around Eastern Europe.)

Jewish colonisation in Palestine under British Imperial protection began in 1919. In 1936 Britain made war on attempted Palestinian resistance. After Britain suddenly, and unexpectedly, declared war on Germany—after six years of collaboration with Hitler—Palestinian leaders looked to the enemy's enemy as a friend. Zionist propaganda made much of this Palestinian response to oppression by colonial Jewish nationalism and merged it with the European oppression of Jews.

British sponsorship of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine was intended to create a Jewish state within the British Empire, kept within bounds by the Empire, but after 1945 it broke loose and launched an unrestrained terrorist campaign against the British authorities. Britain meekly threw in the towel, and the Zionist terror turned on the Arab population.

The United Nations—a handful of states then—decided that the world belonged to it to do what it pleased with. It awarded half of Palestine to the Jews to be their state. But, despite a quarter of a century of colonisation, half of the population of that half of Palestine was Arabic. The construction of a Jewish state within it was not a practical possibility.

The first act of the new Jewish authority recognised by the UN was to reduce the Arab population by direct action. Hundreds of thousands were driven out.

That act of ethnic cleansing in the foundation of the Jewish state has, imprud-

ently, been made an issue of in the Zionist campaign to brand the British Labour Party as anti-Semitic. It has focussed attention on a past that was all but forgotten. But perhaps the Zionists reckon that their position is such that brazenness is the only prudence—that Danton's maxim is the only one for them: *"L'audace, et encore l'audace"*.

A Jewish *"self-definition"* of anti-Semitism has been drawn up. Most of it has been written in a newly-drafted Labour Party *Code of Conduct*. The sticking point is a Jewish insistence that it is anti-Semitic to describe the foundation of the Jewish State (Israel) as a *"racial endeavour"*. If accepted, this would mean that a description of the foundation of the Jewish state, as experienced by Palestinians, would have to be disciplined by the Party as anti-Semitic.

Jewish influence on the British media is sharply concentrated. Interviewers are clearly intimidated by the Jewish question and are on edge whenever the case of the Palestinian side intrudes. It took months before the point at issue found any expression. But eventually a vigorous young man, interviewed along with a Jewish spokesman on Sky News, managed to get it out—despite efforts by the interviewer to distract him. As soon as he got it out, the interview was cut short. The Jewish spokesman was relieved of the necessity of replying.

Here is an excerpt from Sky News on July 26th:

*Interviewer:* Do you understand why some people feel that the Labour leadership is dragging its heels? Because they can point to evidence. For example, Seamus Milne... saying that the creation of Israel was in and of itself a crime.

*Aaron Bastoni* (Novara Media): Several hundred thousand people were forced to be removed from their homes. That was obviously not a good thing. Should Jewish people have a right to self-determination, a homeland of their own? Absolutely. But if we're looking at a historical event, 1944, 46, all the way through to today, clearly there are things that I think are unforgivable. Israel in that regard is not unique. The British State has done innumerable terrible things. Far more. The same with the United States. The same with France. The same with Italy. But the idea that we can just pretend that Israel was not guilty of crimes is, I think, not to be fair to them, is to treat them unequally as a nation state.

*Interviewer:* I am terribly sorry, gentlemen. We are going to have to leave it there."

But it does not meet the requirements of the Jewish State to say that its foundation was no worse than that of any other colonialism that rode rough-shod over an existing population in the territory that it desired. At this very moment, when its exclusive racist character is becoming plainly evident, it demands that everyone must sign a certificate of its immaculate conception.

It demonstrates the demoralised condition of the British Labour Party that its leaders would not dare reply to Zionist slander with the moderate statement of fact made by Aaron Bastoni. We describe it as moderate because he did not mention that the Labour Party was in Government in 1945 and had responsibility for ensuring that the Jewish colonialism which Britain set in motion in 1917 should not wreak havoc on the lives of the Palestinian population, but reneged on its obligations in the face of Jewish terrorism.

And the right of Jews to self-determination: a right which required the rooting-out of another people!

Now it might be that human existence centres on the Jews, and that all others have meaning only in their relationship with the Jews, but that is something we cannot know until it is too late. We must proceed on other assumptions for the time being.

In the 19th century the approved view of the Jews was that they were a religious body like any other, owing national allegiance—like any other—to the various states in which they lived. The suggestion that they were not a mere religion but were also a nation, and did not really participate in the life of the nations in which they lived, was condemned as anti-Semitic. The major book on the question, by the German Marxist, Karl Kautsky, asked *Are The Jews A Race?* And the right answer was that they were not.

The right answer was changed in 1917 by the *Balfour Declaration*. The Jews were now to be regarded as a nation—perhaps *the* nation—though dispersed amongst other nations.

The Balfour Declaration was introduced as a British war measure, designed to turn the Jews against Germany. It was opposed by many Jews who were at ease amongst the Gentiles and who protested that the establishment of a Jewish state would not be possible without a revival of fundamentalist Jewish Millenarianism. And the tendency of development within the Jewish state bears out that prediction.

The journalist to the fore in branding Corbyn an anti-Semite, because he does not accept without question the Jewish self-definition of what anti-Semitism is, is

Jonathan Freedland of the *Guardian*. Freedland says that the self-definition allows for the most vehement criticism of the Israeli state, and even the characterisation of its policies as racist, but it disallows description of its foundation as "*a racial endeavour*". But the Chief Rabbi has stated repeatedly that, while criticism of Israel is theoretically possible without being anti-Semitic, it is hardly possible at all in practice.

There was until recently a strong element in religious Jewry that was not Zionist. It dressed in traditional Jewish style, observed Jewish customs, and lived a self-contained life, but did not recognise Israel as the authentic Jewish State because it pre-empted the coming of the Messiah. We gather that this element has recently become Zionist because the Messiah has come. And a letter condemning the Labour Party as anti-Semitic, signed by 68 rabbis was published in *The Guardian* of 16th July.

In the BBC's coverage of the anti-Semitic charge made against the Labour Party, *Newsnight* interviewer Emily Maitlis took it that reference to Nazism had been cut out of the Party's *Code of Conduct*. It had to be explained to her that it was there, under its proper name of *National Socialism*. Was that a sign of elementary ignorance on her part, or was it an indication that accurate use of titles is now to be treated as a form of anti-Semitism, and perhaps even of Holocaust Denial? (The historian, David Irving, who described in detail the large-scale extermination of Jews, and the circumstances in which it was carried out, has been legally branded a Holocaust Denier.)

Fascism was the National Socialist response to the Internationalist Socialism of the Bolshevik movement in the generation when it was a powerful force within European politics.

In June 1941 the War that Britain had declared on Germany in 1939 became in substance a war between Fascism and Communism. Within the British ideology of that War, National Socialism was depicted as a force that had somehow arisen within the defeated and disarmed Germany of 1919 to become a threat to civilisation.

Before the Second World War, Fascism and Communism had been characterised as forms of Totalitarianism in the Catholic circles which were equally opposed to both, and from which the post-1945 regimes of Christian Democracy developed.

This concept of Totalitarianism came to be widely adopted in the West after 1945 in its Cold War antagonism with the Communist force that had destroyed

National Socialism, and taken possession of Eastern Europe in the process.

In Germany Christian Democracy quickly restored political viability in the zones occupied by Western Armies. It did so by minimising British influence, and largely incorporating the personnel of the National Socialist administration into the Christian Democratic regime. And it absolutely refused to recognise the legitimacy in the eastern part of Germany of the Communist force that had destroyed National Socialism—and without which it would probably have continued. There are certainly no grounds for thinking it would have been overthrown by internal forces.

Germany was united after the Soviet system collapsed in 1990, and the East was subjected to political colonisation from West Germany.

The various East European nationalities within the Soviet system, whose nationality had been cultivated by the system, quickly found their feet as Western nation-states. But, within Russia itself, there was political and economic disintegration.

Property was 'privatised' and thrown onto a market that did not really exist. Privatisation took the form of giving large chunks of state property into the ownership of individuals close to President Yeltsin, who had done nothing whatever to build up these properties. Those were the Oligarchs. They were immensely wealthy owners of property, but they were not capitalists at all in the proper sense.

The system developed by Putin out of the Oligarchic anarchy of the Yeltsin era is now denounced as "*kleptocratic*"—a regime of robbers. That might have been accurately applied to the Yeltsin regime, but it wasn't.

Many of the Oligarchs created by Yeltsin still exist in Russia. Putin, in restoring national economy, has had to tuck his way amongst them. The demolition of the Soviet regime by Yeltsin means that the State Power does not exist for brushing them aside and replacing them without major disruption. The construction of a capitalist system in Russia, and the reorientation of democracy to the functioning of capitalism—that is a work in progress.

This is *a propos* a hysterical denunciation of Putin in the *Irish Times* (Weekend Supplement, July 21st), which takes a step backwards to denounce Yeltsin too—and, if it had taken further steps, would undoubtedly have denounced the Soviet system as well, and the Tsarist system before it: Russia, in short—except when it made war on Germany in alliance with John Redmond, of course. ■

## es ahora \*

"They shall be spoken of among  
their people  
The generations shall remember  
them  
And call them blessed"

Patrick Pearse. **'The Mother'**  
1916.

"The new O'Connell Street seems to me to hold now all that is most modern of Irish life. There are cinemas with restaurants and ballrooms attached, and cafés, and the young men and women who throng them might belong to any continental city. At evening, when the illuminated signs flash across the streets or over the river, and the pavements are crowded, one does not recognise the Dublin one knew."

Pamela Hinkson,  
**'The Light on Ireland'**. 1935.

"The Irish have not forgotten what it's like to live in danger, in desperation. It's the air we used to breathe, even in Dublin of my youth."

Bono at New York launch of Irish bid for UN Security Council seat.  
*The Phoenix*. 13th July 2018.

## Clair Wills

As I wrote previously in the June issue of the *Irish Political Review*, Professor Clair Wills went from lecturing at Queen Mary College, University of London, and the University of Essex (both considered to be "*red-brick universities*") to the heights of becoming the Leonard L. Milberg Professor of Irish Letters at Princeton University and also Chair of Princeton's Fund for Irish Studies series of events and seminars. She now has real power in academia and a clout that very few attain to quite so quickly.

I wrote about her demolition job of the English Department's academics at UCC in the December 2009 issue of the *Irish Political Review*; and again in the June issue, when she was giving the plenary lecture about Elizabeth Bowen called *'Elizabeth Bowen and the Vanishing Irish'*, with particular reference to her book *'A World of Love'*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1955. (The theme of the Conference was: *'Elizabeth Bowen: Visions and Revisions, School of English, University of Cork, 6th-7th November 2009'*).

## It Is Time

At this Conference she made a never-to-be-forgotten gesture when asked by Dr. Eibhear Walshe if she thought William Trevor was as good a writer as Bowen. (She didn't—to put it mildly!) After that, everyone became very cautious and those other academics present who voiced their own opinions of Bowen's work meekly accepted Wills' *emphatic rejections* of their views. She was having none of it—and truly she was impressive. This slight, elegant Englishwoman showed what she was made of but, more important, showed up how easy it was to rattle the Irish academics by making mincemeat of them—and, really, they deserved it!

As I wrote, I next met Clair Wills in Mitchelstown for the Trevor/Bowen Literary Festival and had the great fortune of finding her alone in the lecture room and, having introduced myself, recalled for her our last meeting at the event in UCC. How, I asked her, did she feel finding herself in Trevor-land after her performance in Cork and she burst out laughing and putting her hand to her face asked in a whisper would anyone else know of it and I assured her that other than my husband—she was out of the woods!

What impressed me was how assured she was, her elegant style of clothing, her beautifully-modulated, slightly posh, English accent, her friendliness, her charm and her charisma. From our talk she knew I was a Bowen scholar and I told her with what lens I was framing my take on Bowen and she showed genuine excitement to hear of my researches. She—as I wrote—also unusually for a scholar had great *craic* with the locals and apparently the session lasted late into the night.

But—and oh-how-it-kills-me-to-say-it—she played me. And she did it with such *élan* that I still have trouble accepting it—but now that the evidence is before me in black and white I just have to accept the bitter truth! As I wrote in my June article for the *Irish Political Review*, after dealing with the Windrush Scandal which in no small part was brought to me by reading Professor Wills' new book *'Lovers and Strangers; An Immigrant History of Post-War Britain'* (Allen Lane, London, 2017), I found that she had written another book previously to that and I decided that *'The Best are Leaving: Emigration and Post-War Irish Culture'* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) would have to be reviewed first. But it took ages to get hold of it and in the meantime I kept reading and researching. Which brought me to Andy Beckett alack and alas.

*My first intimation that something was off* was only when I read some weeks ago the review by Andy Beckett in the *London Review of Books* (Vol. 39, No. 21, 2nd November 2017) of Wills' latest book *'Lovers and Strangers: An Immigrant History of Post-War Britain'* (Allen Lane, London, 2017). In the text of the review Beckett refers to Clair Wills as being "*Irish*", and I thought 'what tosh and how ignorant those reviewers can be'. But again, at the very end of the extensive article, he refers to her Irishness and gives the facts as she gave them in the book itself.

Quickly leaving the review I went to the book and there on page 353—literally in the last few pages—Wills finally confronts her past and acknowledges that her mother came from a small farm of 30 acres in Skibbereen and got work in the NHS where she trained as a psychiatric nurse in 1948. She went on to marry an Englishman. Wills explained that being a psychiatric nurse and not a State Registered Nurse (SRN) or better still a Royal Nurse (RN) was seen as being in the lower strata in the "early NHS which was steeped in social hierarchies", so that prejudice, or simple concern, about 'lousy' Irish nurses seeped easily into opinions about their working capability. It was rare for Irish trainees to be taken on in the teaching hospitals, for example, which thought of themselves as a cut above the rest, a 'better class' of hospital.

And, added to the hierarchy of hospitals, was a hierarchy of grades within the hospitals. Most large institutions still had separate dining rooms for domestics, orderlies, and nurses, much "*like a caste system*". Wills goes on to write that, as late as 1951, "*a series of interviews with Irish nurses in England published in the 'Irish Democrat' was titled: 'They Treat Us Like Dirt'...*".

Indeed they would rather have employed—

"nice clean Baltic women, not of the 'peasant type', instead of the Irish... If they could manage without the Irish they would".

Within a few years the role of 'undesirable' nurse had been expanded to include women from the West Indies. They were fine as cleaners, but not in caring roles. As a Ministry of Labour official explained in July 1953:

"Most employers to-day are reluctant to engage coloured workers... Because of the constant and unsatisfied demand in some areas for domestics in hospitals, institutions and private domestic employment, it is not unduly difficult to find openings for coloured females, but it was reported recently that a Jamaican

girl anxious to become a nurse could *not be accepted* in Preston."

During the War it was a different tune that the UK played. Because the Irish were—

"recruited for munitions factories and wartime construction sites and British hospitals had determinedly sought out Irish labour... In 1943 the Ministry of Labour posted a UK 'liaison officer' in Dublin, whose job was to channel Irish labour to the most needed areas in Britain... By 1944 Mr. Toms, the chief liaison officer, had a small team working for him on hospital recruitment, including nursing officers stationed in Cork. Limerick, Athlone and Sligo, whose job it was to visit the girls who had applied 'for England' and decide how suitable they would be. They were loud in their complaints. The girls, they claimed, were more often than not dull-witted and unkempt, and in order to get about the country to interview them the nurses had to travel on trains that 'are most uncomfortable and in almost all cases verminous'. Lice, as we have seen in relation to the delousing stations at Holyhead and Liverpool, featured rather heavily in discussions of wartime and post-war immigration".

"One wartime nursing recruitment officer on a visit to Dublin claimed that even among the 'better class' of applicant, the rate of women found to be 'verminous' was very high:

'I was very exercised in my mind about the advisability or requiring women coming over for nursing to undergo this ordeal, but when I saw the records and realised that 85% of the women were *dirty*, I felt it was most essential that they should be examined, even if they are quite a different type from the women being submitted for work in factories.'

"By 1948 the Dublin authorities were arguing that there was no further need for medical examinations, since most women left under their own steam and therefore did not go through the Liaison Officer procedures."

Wills stresses that the Liaison Officer—

"organised permits, sorted out transport and hostel arrangements, helped with tax allowances, and, in a good number of cases, paid both the fare and a subsistence grant to tide the workers over until their first wages came through".

Thus the necessities of labour shortage during the war required such measures to attract the Irish and others to Britain. But, with the arrival of the insecticide, DDT—

"now distributed throughout the country—the threat of typhus was negligible. But the British Ministry of Labour was still concerned, fearing they would attract 'public odium' for billeting lousy Irish. A visit to the Dublin recruitment service in May 1948 suggested lice checks were still necessary:

The need for cleansing treatment is very real: on the evening when the Service was inspected, 26 out of 55 men and 18 out of 22 women examined required treatment... It cannot be dispensed with, and it is better that it should be carried out by their own people who understand the conditions under which they have been living rather than risk the girls being ostracized by their fellow workers or room mates in Great Britain."

Wills writes wryly about a certain Doctor Ethna MacCarthy who thought that Irish girls were 'dirty' due to various superstitions and rural customs:

"She certainly seems to have treated these young women from small, poorly equipped and unmodernized farms with disdain. Her condescension acts as a useful reminder that there are no national boundaries on snobbery."

MacCarthy—

"was the young woman whom Samuel Beckett had loved when they were both students at Trinity College in the mid-1920s. She appeared as 'Alba' in his early fiction and poetry, and was the most likely source of the dreamlike memory of lost fulfilment in his play 'Krapp's Last Tape'."

Wills tartly observes that she was the kind of doctor who would most certainly have treated the Irish labourer 'Dónall Mac Amhlaigh—whose first encounter with the NHS he was to recall with wonder—would "give him to understand he was *not a person but a beggar*". (The latter's book was *An Irish Navvy: The Diary of an Exile*, trans. Valentin Iremonger. Collins Press, Cork. 2003.)

So, no wonder Professor Clair Wills became the *persona* that she must have carefully constructed as an immigrant's child. No one could possibly realise that, behind the beautifully elegant posh academic, was the small "*unmodernized farm*" in Skibbereen. Reading about the "*delousing stations*", created here in Ireland and England by the British, was a complete revelation for me.

In all the accounts of the Irish emigrating to England written in recent times, there has not been a word about this hideous practice. Why? Irish history has been so ferociously revised that maybe it needs to whitewash accounts of the British/Irish '*special relationship*'. So, while our academics and journalist look for brutish behaviour in this isle of ours with the fervour of 16th witch-hunters, they carefully avert their inquiring gaze from our next door neighbour.

While Eamon de Valera's comment about '*homely maidens*' is so often (mis)

quoted, there is nothing about George Lansbury, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party in Britain, who really wrote:

*"I just long to see a start made on this job of reclaiming, recreating rural England. I can see the village greens with the Maypoles once again erected and the boys and girls, young men and maidens, all joining in the mirth and foll of May Day"*.

John Betjeman wasn't the only one to hope to *reset* Britain's culture, nor indeed Prime Minister John Major in more recent times. And now they have Brexit—is not that the real *reset* wanted by the majority of British people today?

Wills goes back to her personal story and now I understand much more about her and don't blame her for putting on her particular armour because this is how success is earned in Britain and now in Ireland too. She recalls:

"But every summer, 'we went 'home' to the farm where my mother was born and sometimes at Christmas too. And for years after that I would take my own children on the same journey, in which we played out the contradictions of emigrant belonging. Each July back in the 1960s and 1970s, the six members of my family, plus the dog, would load ourselves into the Vauxhall Viva to drive the six hours to Swansea (before the M4 motorway was finished) to board the Swansea—Cork ferry, and then drive a further couple of hours to West Cork. When we climbed stiffly out of the car at my aunt and uncle's farm we were greeted by a *gentle ritual which never failed to unsettle me*. As our parents bundled off to pour tea and open a bottle with the grown-ups, our six cousins would gather awkwardly round the four of us and one by one they would say, rather solemnly, 'Welcome home'. They were echoing their own parents, of course, and the many greetings they had heard to returning emigrants over the years. But I was not at home."

Clair Wills also goes on to state that the Irish Government got in on the act by holding—

"Welcome Home Week festivals in towns and villages across the country. These were mostly damp-squib affairs consisting of a parade home-made floats down an often rather chilly main street in the middle of August."

I lived in the hinterland of Millstreet and never once heard of these events. But then as a family we too were busy welcoming home *our people*—even those who had gone to work and live in Dublin! My mother's open arms and her quite often tearful '*welcome home*' were for everyone who had left our fold and had made lives

for themselves in places ranging from Canada, England to Dublin and all roads in between. But she would never have put up with the response of a Professor Clair Wills and really who else would?

But perhaps now I can see there is a self-protectiveness about Wills and not the arrogance that I first thought! All the time that Wills was *mar-eadh* wide-eyed about her forays into literary festivals here, she knew the terrain as well as a native.

So, why the pretence at Mitchelstown when she had spent all her holidays in West Cork some 85 miles away? I felt at first like a proper eejit because I genuinely answered her questions thinking them to be actual truth-seeking enquiries when all the time she knew the lay of the land.

But, as I read her book, I have mellowed my opinion of her to the point of utter understanding. One does what one must and in the end it really is that simple. To navigate from Skibbereen to Princeton—now that is a story worth telling and pursuing which I fully intend to do in my next article.

Julianne Herlihy ©

## No Hard Border Mantra

continued

war. If Britain simply created the border, no doubt it can get rid of it. Hence the constant requests that Britain explain, and make a legally-binding declaration on, how it will ensure no hard border. Apparently, it's a matter that can be solved by such declarations. Naiveté would be too kind a word for such views.

He goes on to explain that

"The United Kingdom has ruled out the easiest and most obvious solution which is to form a customs union with the EU and to stay in the single market. So, we must find other solutions that respect the integrity of the single market and don't permit any cherry-picking by Britain. This won't be easy and no matter how close, will most likely involve the need for some new checks in our ports and airports."

So we have the prospect of new checks at ports and airports, and hundreds of new custom officers, to protect the integrity of the European Single Market—but none at the more than 300 mile border of the same

market! This is cloud cuckoo land or more accurately, a paradise for the smuggling/entrepreneurs.

The *no hard border* mantra is based on the belief that any such border would give rise to another war similar to the last. But the last war was not fought over the border. It was fought, and succeeded, because it was based on the inferior position of the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland, despite taking the form of demanding a united Ireland.

Nationalists fought for a '*place in the sun*' and they got it. The war was sustained for decades on that reality.

There was a war about the border in the 1950s and it was a total failure because it was only about the border and not the situation that Nationalists were actually experiencing in Northern Ireland. They ignored that war.

The inevitable attacks on any new border infrastructure will not sustain a war similar to that of 30 years. A situation may arise that could sustain such a war again, and is very likely to do so, at some stage, but it will not be over the EU border in Ireland. It will be over something more fundamental.

Jack Lane

## The ICC Prosecutor Warns Israel About Gaza Killings

In a statement on 8th April 2018, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatou Bensouda, warned that those responsible for the killing of Palestinians near the Gaza border with Israel might be prosecuted by the ICC. She said:

"It is with grave concern that I note the violence and deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip in the context of recent mass demonstrations. Since 30 March 2018, at least 27 Palestinians have been reportedly killed by the Israeli Defence Forces, with over a thousand more injured, many, as a result of shootings using live ammunition and rubber-bullets. Violence against civilians in a situation such as the one prevailing in Gaza – could constitute crimes under the Rome Statute ... " [1]

She continued:

"I remind all parties that the situation in Palestine is under preliminary examination by my Office [see below]. While a preliminary examination is not an investigation, any new alleged crime committed in the context of the situation in Palestine may be subjected to my Office's scrutiny. This applies to the events of the past weeks and to any future incident."

Since the Prosecutor's warning, the toll of Palestinian deaths and injuries has soared, 60 being killed on 14th May, the day the US transferred its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. By 12th July, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 146 Palestinians had been killed and 15,415 injured since the protests began on 30 March [2]. Of the injured, 8,246 required hospital treatment. No Israeli civilians or soldiers have been killed as a result of the protests.

These protests, which are demanding an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza and the right of return for refugees, took place in the weeks leading up to the 70th anniversary of the Nakba, when, as the Israeli state came into being, around 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and have never been allowed to return. About 200,000 of these refugees were forced into Gaza, where they and their descendants live today and make up approximately 70% of Gaza's 1.8 million population. They live in miserable conditions under a severe economic blockade imposed by Israel more than a decade ago.

Small wonder that thousands of Palestinians were prepared to risk life and limb to protest about their conditions.

### PALESTINE GRANTS JURISDICTION TO THE ICC

The Prosecutor's warning is entirely justified. The ICC can try individuals accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, if it is granted the jurisdiction to do so. The Palestinian authorities granted it jurisdiction on 1st January 2015 by submitting a declaration to the ICC under Article 12(3) of the ICC's Rome Statute

"declaring that the Government of the State of Palestine hereby recognizes the jurisdiction of the Court for the purposes of identifying, prosecuting and judging authors and accomplices of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court committed in the occupied Palestinian territory including East Jerusalem, since June 13, 2014". [3]

By backdating the acceptance of ICC jurisdiction to this date, the Palestinian authorities hope that it will be possible for the ICC to indict Israeli military personnel for actions on or after that date, including during Operation Protective Edge, Israel's military assault on Gaza in July/August 2014, when more than two thousand Palestinians were killed.



This is not the first time that the Palestinian authorities have attempted to grant the ICC jurisdiction by means of a declaration of this kind. On 21st January 2009, shortly after *Operation Cast Lead*, the first of Israel's three major military assaults on Gaza, they made a similar declaration [4]. But this was not accepted by the ICC Prosecutor, because at that time Palestine had not been recognised by the UN as a state.

It was recognised by the UN in November 2012, when the UN General Assembly passed resolution 67/19 (by 138 votes to 9) granting Palestine observer rights at the UN as a "non-member state" and specifying its territory to be "the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967", that is, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza.

Because of this, the Prosecutor was able to accept Palestine's offer of jurisdiction on 1st January 2015 and to open a preliminary examination into the "situation in Palestine" on 16th January 2015 (see ICC press release, 16 January 2015 [5]).

According to the ICC Prosecutor's Office, the goal of such a preliminary examination is "to collect all relevant information necessary to reach a fully informed determination of whether there is a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation". Over three years later, this preliminary examination is still going on. In other words, the Prosecutor has yet to make a decision as to whether to proceed to a full investigation, which might eventually lead to the prosecution of individuals. The Prosecutor's 2017 annual report, published in December 2017, gave no indication about when this decision will be made.

(A state normally grants jurisdiction to the ICC by becoming a state party to the *Rome Statute*. On 2nd January 2015, the Palestinian authorities deposited the relevant documents for that purpose with the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, who announced on 6th January 2015 that the Rome Statute "will enter into force for the State of Palestine on April 1, 2015" [6]. So, if the Palestine authorities had chosen this route to granting the ICC jurisdiction, the Court would not have been able to prosecute crimes committed before 1st April 2015. That was why the Palestinian authorities chose the "declaration" route, which means that crimes committed on or after 13th June 2014, including during *Operation Protective Edge*, can be prosecuted.)

## "REFERRAL" BY PALESTINE AS A STATE PARTY

Understandably, Palestinian leaders are frustrated that more than three years have elapsed without any obvious progress being made in bringing Israel to book for alleged offences committed in the occupied Palestinian territories over many years. These offences have continued unabated since January 2015 when the Prosecutor began her preliminary examination, the killing of over a hundred civilians by the Israeli military on the Gaza border since 30th March being the most conspicuous.

The Palestinian leaders have been providing the Prosecutor with regular monthly reports detailing what they claim are ongoing offences by Israel. And, in an effort to expedite matters, on 15th May 2018 Palestine made a formal "referral" [7] as a state party about the "situation in Palestine" to the ICC under Articles 13(a) and 14 of the Rome Statute:

"The State of Palestine, pursuant to Articles 13(a) and 14 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, refers the situation in Palestine for investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor and specifically requests the Prosecutor to investigate, in accordance with the temporal jurisdiction of the Court, past, ongoing and future crimes within the court's jurisdiction, committed in all parts of the territory of the State of Palestine."

It's unclear why this wasn't done once Palestine became a state party to the Statute in April 2015. It's also unclear whether a "referral" now will expedite progress towards an investigation—in her response to the "referral", the Prosecutor implied that the preliminary examination would proceed as before [8].

## WHAT ACTIONS CONSTITUTE A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY/WAR CRIME?

If the Prosecutor does proceed to open an investigation into the "situation in Palestine", then charges may eventually be brought against individuals for committing war crimes and/or crimes against humanity. These individuals are likely to have been acting for the Israeli state at the time of their offence, but it's possible that members of Hamas and other Palestinian paramilitary groups will also be indicted.

Article 7 of the Rome Statute lists the actions that constitute a crime against humanity. A key feature of such a crime is that it is an act "committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population". Such acts include:

- murder

- extermination
- deportation or forcible transfer of population
- torture
- the crime of apartheid

Article 8 of the Rome Statute lists the actions that constitute a "war crime". They include:

- wilful killing
- torture or inhuman treatment
- extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity
- unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement
- taking of hostages
- intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities
- intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects, that is, objects which are not military objectives

and many more.

## TRANSFER OF CIVILIAN POPULATION INTO OCCUPIED TERRITORY

One of the latter, in Article 8.2(b)(viii), is—

"the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies".

Obviously, this war crime is of particular relevance because Israel has transferred around 600,000 of its own citizens into the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, territory it has occupied since 1967. So, there is very little doubt that war crimes, as defined by the *Rome Statute*, have been committed—and will continue to be committed for the foreseeable future, since it is inconceivable that any future Israeli Government will cease this colonisation project voluntarily or that sufficient international pressure will be applied to make it cease.

In the light of this, there is a *prima facie* case that the Israeli individuals responsible for this colonisation project, including the present Prime Minister, are guilty of war crimes. And it may be that Americans and others who provide funds for the project could be prosecuted for aiding and abetting their war crimes. Both the US Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, and the US President's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, have provided funds for settlement building.

## THE MAVI MARMARA REFERRAL

Israel already had a brush with the ICC when in May 2013 the Union of the Comoros, which is a state party to the Rome Statute, referred the Israeli military assault on the *Mavi Marmara* ship on 31st May 2010 to the Prosecutor. This assault took place in international waters, when it was part of a humanitarian aid convoy to Gaza, and resulted in the deaths of 9 civilian passengers. The *Mavi Marmara* was registered in the Comoros Islands and under Article 12.2(a) of the Rome Statute, the ICC has jurisdiction in respect of crimes committed, not only in the territory of a state party, but also on ships or aircraft registered in a state party.

However, in November 2014, Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda refused to open an investigation, despite concluding that—

"there is a reasonable basis to believe that war crimes under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court... were committed on one of the vessels, the *Mavi Marmara*, when Israeli Defense Forces intercepted the 'Gaza Freedom Flotilla' on 31 May 2010". [9]

Nevertheless, she decided that "the potential case(s) likely arising from an investigation into this incident would not be of 'sufficient gravity' to justify further action by the ICC". It is true that Article 17.1(d) of the *Rome Statute* requires a case to be "of sufficient gravity to justify further action by the Court".

But, when the Union of the Comoros applied to the ICC for a review of the Prosecutor's decision, the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber upheld the application and requested the Prosecutor to reconsider her decision not to initiate an investigation. In their conclusion, the judges asserted that the Prosecutor made a series of errors in assessing the gravity of potential cases if an investigation were carried out and urged her to reconsider her decision not to launch an investigation as soon as possible.

Despite these critical words from the judges, the Prosecutor mounted an appeal against this request to "reconsider", but her appeal was rejected by the ICC Appeals Chamber on November 2015. She was therefore obliged to "reconsider" her November 2014 decision not to mount an investigation. In November 2017, she announced that, after appropriate "reconsideration", she was sticking to her original decision in November 2014.

## CONCLUSION

Will the Prosecutor's preliminary investigation into the "situation in Palestine" suffer the same fate? It seems unlikely. On its own, the use of live fire by

the Israeli military against civilians near the border with Gaza was much more serious than Israel's military assault on the *Mavi Marmara*. And there are many other relevant instances in which arguably war crimes have been committed by Israeli individuals, for example, by organising the transfer of Israeli citizens to occupied territories. So, the likelihood is that the Prosecutor will eventually find that war crimes have been committed, but it is a considerable step from that to identify the individuals responsible and build cases against them so that they can be indicted and warrants issued by the ICC for their arrest.

However, even if individuals are indicted, it's unlikely that they will ever face trial in The Hague, since the ICC cannot try people in *absentia*—and, since Israel is not a party to the ICC, it has no obligation to hand people over to the ICC for trial. However, like Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, whom the ICC charged with Genocide in 2008, indicted individuals would have to avoid travelling to states that are party to the ICC lest they be arrested and handed over.

## END NOTE

On 13th July, a Pre-Trial Chamber of the ICC issued a "Decision on Information and Outreach for the Victims of the Situation in Palestine" [10]. In it, the Chamber ordered the ICC administration—

"to establish, as soon as practicable, a system of public information and outreach activities for the benefit of the victims and affected communities in the situation in Palestine"

and to

"create an informative page on the Court's website, especially directed to the victims of the situation of Palestine".

In issuing the order, the Chamber recalled the important role played by victims in the Court proceedings, and referred to the obligation on the Court to permit the views and concerns of the victims to be presented as appropriate, including during the current preliminary examination stage. The order promised that "when and if the Prosecutor takes the decision to open an investigation, the Chamber will, in a second step, give further instructions".

This unusual step by the Pre-Trial Chamber, which implies that victims of war crimes exist in Palestine, was taken independently of the ICC Prosecutor. Could this be a gentle nudge to her to initiate a formal investigation?

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David Morrison

19 July 2018

## The Greek Crisis

continued

Varoufakis (2017), *Welcome to the Poison Chalice* by James K Galbraith (2016), and *The Inside Story of Syriza's Story to Save Greece* by Paul Mason (2015); second, websites and academic studies providing information for investors, like *The Greek Debt Restructuring: an Autopsy* by Zettelmeyer, Trebesh and Gulati (2013); and third, economic studies of the sovereign debt crisis like *The Euro Crisis and its Aftermath* by Jean Pisani-Ferry (2014).

Conspicuously missing is an authoritative political history from an EU perspective. It is as though the EU takes little interest in the political struggles that have gone into its making. This is probably a consequence of the triumph of economic liberalism, which downplays the primacy of politics and statecraft. In any case, Greece is an unavoidable topic for understanding the present state of the EU.

This article starts with an account of the present state of the Greek economy and then provides a straight narrative summary of the crisis from 2009 to the defeat of the first Syriza Government. The next article in the series will examine questions raised in the narrative about the EU, about the relevance of the revolutionary predisposition of socialist groupings like Syriza, and about Greece itself.

THE CURRENT STATE OF GREECE

At time of writing (July 2018) Greece is set to leave its bailout Programme, which will formally end on August 20. All the economic indicators testify to the gargantuan failure of that Programme: the debt of the State is 180% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP); this 320 billion public debt burden stands as a long-term block to economic recovery; the economy has itself declined in size by 26% over the eight years; wages have fallen by nearly 20%, with pensions and welfare payments cut by 70%; the size of the public sector has reduced by 26%; unemployment has dropped slightly as a result of emigration and stands at 20%, with a youth unemployment rate of 43% (statistics from, "*Greece 'turning a page' as eurozone agrees deal to end financial crisis*", Guardian, 26 June 2018).

The ending of the bailout is being spun by Brussels and Athens as a recovery milestone but this distorts the underlying picture. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) refused to participate in Greece's third bailout in 2015 because it viewed the debt burden as unsustainable, and that remains its position. Greece is being given a 22 billion buffer to tide it over the transition to financial independence but a spokesman for the Opposition party, *New Democracy*, is quoted saying that the buffer "*reflected the lack of faith international creditors had in Athens ability to successfully return to capital markets*" (*Guardian*, same article). Given that a total of 275 billion was received in the bailout, and because this debt has been constantly subjected to re-financing and extended maturity deadlines, the Greek State, apparently, now has no choice but to abide by austerity measures and deadlines for at least the next forty years.

#### EARLY YEARS OF THE CRISIS

Leaving aside its historical causes, national and international, the story of how Greece played a central role in Europe's sovereign debt crisis began on 9th October 2009. On that day the newly elected Prime Minister, George Papandreou, of the social democratic Pasok party, announced that the statistics regarding the State's Budgetary deficit and public debt had been significantly understated over many years. He blamed the outgoing *New Democracy* administration of Kostas Karamanlis. The Budget deficit for 2009 needed to be corrected from 7% of GDP to 12.9%, and later to 15.6%.

It took a number of months before the extent of distortion of the public finances became known, but the Papandreou reve-

lation was enough to alert international market analysts to the reality that they had been mistaken in treating the Eurozone as a unit. The cost of Greek Bonds rose quickly against the cost of German Bonds and this had a knock-on effect on other Eurozone sovereigns, especially Ireland. The problems emanating from a small European economy quickly became a major international problem as institutional investors focussed on the incompleteness of the Economic and Monetary Union underpinning the Euro.

An immediate problem was that the Euro system had no mechanism for handling a sovereign default. More ominously, there was deep division among Europe's leaders on what to do about Greece. While German and other Northern European politicians advocated involving the IMF and admitting that Greece was bankrupt, ECB and French representatives argued that Europe needed to solve its own problems and that a sovereign default of a Eurozone State could not be countenanced.

In the event, a compromise was eventually agreed on 2nd May 2010 in which 80 billion in bilateral loans, arranged proportionately from the other Euro States, and 30 billion from the IMF was to be issued to Greece over three years. These loans were to be charged at a punitive rate of interest (5-6%) and came on condition that Greece's public finances were brought into balance as soon as possible. Liberal economic reforms aimed, purportedly, at making the economy more competitive were also to be implemented under the supervision of a Troika of officials from the IMF, the European Commission and the ECB. This first Troika Programme was based on a belief that the Hellenic Republic was solvent; restructuring (writing down) Greek debt was off the agenda.

According to a study by financial academics that is available online ("*The Greek Debt Restructuring: An Autopsy*", Zettelmeyer, Trebesh and Gulati, July 2013) Greece's Programme achieved a significant fiscal consolidation during 2010 amounting to 5% of GDP. This was the result of salary reductions in the public service and other public expenditure cuts, but the process "*became stuck*" in the first half of 2011. Presumably reflecting the known weakness of the State machine in Greece, the promised structural reforms lost momentum; as Zettelmeyer, Trebesh and Gulati describe it, "*reform implementation was weak*" (p. 5).

**THE QUESTION OF DEBT RELIEF**  
Before describing the 2011 develop-

ments, it is necessary to note how a meeting between Angela Merkel and Nicholas Sarkozy in Deauville, Normandy on 19th October 2010 affected market sentiment. At the meeting agreement was reached that a distinction needed to be made between Member States unable to pay their debts and those needing temporary assistance. This understanding was subsequently endorsed by the other Euro-area countries. The markets interpreted Deauville as a change in the rules of the game that would facilitate the writing off of sovereign debt held by banks, and the cost of Greek, Irish and Portuguese Bonds increased accordingly. As Jean Pisani Ferry states, "*It took much precious time to correct the mistake*" (*The Euro Crisis and its Aftermath*, p. 94).

As the crisis continued to deteriorate in the first half of 2011, the need for a review of the bailout strategy became unavoidable. At an extraordinary summit of the European Council on 21st July, 109 billion from the EU and IMF was promised for Greece. Since only 65 billion of the original 110 billion had been disbursed by then, this amounted to an additional 64 billion. These loans were provided at lower interest rates, with longer maturities than the loans offered under the first Programme. The process of negotiating the second bailout continued over many months; the size of the new loan was increased from 109 billion to 130 billion. The deal was only finalized on 20th March 2012 when it was ratified by the Hellenic Parliament.

On 6th June 2011, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble wrote a letter to the IMF and ECB proposing a Bond swap, involving the private holders of Greek Bonds prolonging the maturity date of their Bonds by seven years. Over following weeks the affected financial institutions became more open to the view that Greek debt was unsustainable and that some form of restructuring was necessary. At the July 21st summit, at which representatives of BNP Paribas (the leading French bank) and Deutsche Bank (the leading German bank) were present, it was agreed that discussions with private creditors on debt relief was to be initiated. But the scale of restructuring proposed was too generous to the banks and not enough to make Greek debt sustainable. The initiative had to be abandoned. The issue was revisited at that year's October summit of the European Council, which Pisani Ferry summarises as follows:

"On October 27, 2011, European leaders agreed to call for a much larger

Greek debt restructuring, to the tune of 50% of the present value of outstanding claims. This, the IMF had assessed, was the bare minimum necessary to consider the country still solvent, which was a precondition for the Fund to continue lending to it. Following negotiations between creditor banks and the Greek government, an agreement was finalized in February 2012—more than two years after George Papandreou had called in the IMF" (p. 94).

The February 2012 agreement—the largest debt restructuring in history, amounting to €100 billion of losses for private holders of Greek Bonds—was provided at too late a stage in the crisis to be effective. By that time the depression of the Greek economy had already reached a point where even such a large relief measure was insufficient to set it on a sustainable course.

### GREEK POLITICS

As the crisis unfolded, various developments occurred in Greek politics. In November 2011 Papandreou was forced by the EU leadership to withdraw a proposal to hold a referendum on the terms of the second bailout. This led to a narrowly-defeated vote of confidence in the Greek Parliament, which eventually resulted in Papandreou's resignation. A caretaker technocratic Government under Lucas Papademos was appointed. Drawing Ministers from *Pasok* and *New Democracy*, the Papademos Government ratified the second bailout and concluded the debt restructuring negotiations in advance of a General Election scheduled for February 19th 2012, but not held until May 6th. Following an inconclusive result and failed efforts to form a Government, a further General Election was called for 17th June. The result of this prolonged period when Greece lacked a properly constituted Government was that the programme of reforms which had already been the subject of delays stalled completely. A coalition headed by Antonis Samaras of *New Democracy* took up Office in June and ruled until late 2014. Much like its predecessor, the Samaras Government endeavoured to comply with the requirements of the Troika while posturing against the deeply unpopular expenditure cuts and tax increases that were the conditions of the first and second bailouts.

The processes at work beneath the surface of Greek politics in 2012 are well described by Varoufakis. He recounts how in the May 2016 Election the political centre, represented by *Pasok* and *New Democracy*, parties that together had

previously commanded up to 80% of the popular vote, "*were deserted by more than half of their voters*" (p. 63). In an unprecedented development, a coalition of parties of the hard Left, Syriza, emerged as the main opposition facing Samaras's Government from June 2012 until the Parliament was dissolved at the end of 2014. In the run-up to Elections for the European Parliament in May 2014, the Samaras Government engaged in a sham sale of Greek Bonds on the open market in which the ECB was complicit. Neither investors nor electors were fooled; Greek incomes were continuing to fall and debts to rise. Syriza candidates topped the poll in the subsequent European Elections and, from that point on, the Samaras Government began to drag its heels in implementing Troika directives. A coalition Government in which Syriza was the major force was duly elected and came into Office on 26th January 2015.

### SYRIZA AND THE GREEK SPRING

The six months of the first Syriza Government, sometimes referred to as the *Greek Spring*, saw the confrontation between Greece and the EU reach its high-point. In that time, what had been the political equivalent of a war of attrition built up to being the equivalent of a pitched battle. A good account of it, especially in the way it describes the inner workings of the EU, is given in Varoufakis's book. Varoufakis has the handicap of approaching a very political subject from the vantage point of a Professor of Economics but he is honest enough to admit to being a political novice. An article published at the end of 2015 in the Left leaning US magazine, *The Nation*, with the title, *The Inside Story of Syriza's Struggle to Save Greece* by Paul Mason, provides a snappy summary of the main events. Mason is a *Guardian* columnist and author, who writes about politics from a hard Left perspective. The following section draws exclusively from his article, including his use of the present tense as a descriptive method.

One of the first acts of the new Government is the expulsion of Troika officials from the Ministries. Finance Minister Varoufakis then sets off on a tour of European capitals to "*drum up support for his primary objective: a controlled write off of around a third of Greece's debt*". In response, on February 4th, the ECB withdraws its regular credit facility to the Greek banks, forcing them to use Emergency Lending Assistance (ELA) which Mason describes as "*a form of life support*". From that time on, the survival of the

banks depends on Greece remaining in a bailout programme. This provokes the withdrawal of €8 billion from Greek banks. In the two months prior to the Election, fearing a Syriza victory, Greeks withdrew €16 billion from the banks, a tenth of the country's total savings.

On February 20th, Varoufakis signs an interim agreement that allows an extension of the old bailout. Syriza agrees to submit a list of measures aimed at alleviating the pain of austerity and in return the party gets four months to negotiate a lasting deal. The cadre of officials working for Syriza are almost all party activists or sympathisers, not career civil servants. In that sense, Government control of the State is tenuous. In March the Government passes a "*humanitarian law*" giving free food and fuel assistance to 300,000 of the poorest people. The European Commission interprets this as a breach of the rules of the interim agreement and a €2 billion payment due under the old bailout is withheld.

A second clash occurs on April 24th at a summit in Riga where information is leaked that Varoufakis has little support inside the Eurogroup, the committee of Eurozone Finance Ministers. Though the banks have stabilized by late April, the State becomes the problem area as Government funds dry up. The Government is forced to raid the reserves of local authorities and pension funds. A division is now beginning to emerge within Syriza. Tsipras plans to compromise on austerity but insists on debt relief. Varoufakis considers this a mistake. Euclid Tsakolatos replaces Varoufakis as the lead negotiator with Brussels but the negotiations fail.

On June 4th, Syriza decides to stop paying the IMF, although Greece won't be in technical default until the end of the month. The party's more militant element finally has what it wants: a fight. Two effects of the rupture in negotiations are that the bank-run picks up pace and the streets come alive with protests. On one side are the forces that backed Syriza: Unions, pensioners, far Left and youth. On the other, a new phenomenon, the enraged middle classes take to the streets, demanding that Greece accepts austerity and remains with the Euro. Showing his leftist credentials Mason says in criticism of Syriza:

"Its spiritual father, Nicos Poulantzas, taught that the European left need two things: independent, mass social

movements, and a modernized, electoral focussed party. The formula worked for Syriza in opposition. But the party did very little in the months between March and June to mobilize an active movement."

As the crisis heightens and queues form at bank machines, the ECB orders Greece to close the banks and limit ATM withdrawals by capping them at €60 a day. At this stage, less than €3 billion remains available to bank depositors, the State is struggling to pay wages and the banks will only open if a deal is done with the ECB. In these circumstances fourteen days of political tension begins.

The credit squeeze takes effect but there is less panic than expected. Many people had squirreled away cash in the preceding months and the €60 daily cap was seen as manageable. On 26th June Tsipras announces that a referendum on the creditors' terms is to be held in a week's time. The private TV channels and newspapers immediately press for a Yes vote and pro-Yes demonstrations get bigger as polling day draws near. On midnight, 30th June, the old bailout expires; Greece is on a knife edge. Mason describes a surprising last-minute development:

"But on the eve of the referendum, the IMF drops a bombshell. Its economists admit that the Greek debt is unpayable. The country needs a 30-year payment holiday and massive write offs before any more austerity can logically be tried."

The result of the referendum is that 61% of the electorate vote No. Government supporters are jubilant. Varoufakis then resigns, ostensibly as a sop to the creditors and EU authorities. However, contrary to an expectation in Athens that new negotiations would be called, the EU leadership is silent. The ECB tightens the screw on the Greek banks and a collapse is predicted for July 13th. On July 12th German representatives demand that Greece exit the Eurozone temporarily, in order to write off debts that cannot be cancelled inside the Single Currency. This temporary Grexit is generally interpreted as permanent exit. Tsipras travels to Brussels for urgent talks. Mason describes the outcome in a terse paragraph:

"Tsipras emerges into the Brussels dawn on July 13 to announce the deal. He promised there would be no third bailout. He has just signed a third bailout. He promised an end to austerity. There will be three more years of it. He banked on getting debt relief. He got nothing."

A group of leftist MPs known as Left

Platform quit the coalition, thereby triggering an August General Election. This results in Syriza holding its previous support (35% of the vote) while Left Platform calling itself "*Popular Unity*" fails to achieve the 3% support necessary to attain Parliamentary seats. (This factual nugget is provided by Wikipedia, not Mason nor Varoufakis despite his book running to 548 pages).

A November 2015 interview with Tsipras and Tsakalotis by Mason is included towards the end of the article. Questioned on why he capitulated on July 13th, Tsipras argues that he had no alternative at that point. "*He insists the alternative would have been the collapse of the banks first and then the collapse of the economy*". The following is extracted from the same interview.

"He [Tsipras] says he underestimated what Germany's intention was, underestimated how much his opponents were trying to make an example of Greece, to stop a domino effect of debt restructuring across Europe, rather than calculating purely on the economic pros and cons of a Greek deal".

"So what went wrong? First, miscalculation. Obama, Renzi, and Hollande assured the Greeks that they could bargain from a position where membership of the eurozone was inviolable. But Germany chipped away at all their allies using strong, quiet diplomacy. German diplomatic pressure wielded greater impact than American or French goodwill.

Second, everybody underestimated the amount of moral capital Germany was prepared to lose to smash Syriza. Tsipras says that if he knew then what he knows now, he would have staged the rupture with the lenders earlier: when the Greek state had money enough to ride out the closure of the banks for a few weeks."

"If you ask me [Tsakalotis] what was the number-one fault of the first Syriza government, it was that we did not do enough on anti-corruption and tax evasion, to show the world we were serious."

At one point Mason speculates on the Syriza defeat in the context of socialist theory. In a thought-provoking statement he concludes:

"But Syriza, in the end, was a Gramscian party in a non-Gramscian world. It was conceived in the era of hierarchies, not networks, and in the era of national economies, not globalization."

**Dave Alvey**

## Poland and the Law

### Over To You, Judge Donnelly

The EU Commission is in serious conflict with the Polish state over its alleged deficiency in the "*core values*" of the EU.

High Court Judge Aileen Donnelly, who is in charge of Extradition and European Arrest Warrant matters, has spearheaded a campaign to exacerbate the conflict by refusing to extradite an alleged drug trafficker, Artur Celmar, to Poland. Instead of doing so, she referred the case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The implication is that the rule of law has so deteriorated in Poland that the defendant could not be guaranteed a fair trial there. We must accept of course that Mr. Celmar is as concerned as Ms Donnelly about the "*core values*" of the EU, as applied to his homeland.

However, it seems that the European Court of Justice is not as sure as Ms. Donnelly that judicial matters are so bad in Poland as to deprive Mr. Celmar of a fair trial. It is reported that:

"In his formal opinion on the Irish

referral to the Luxembourg court, advocate general Evgeni Tanchev argued an extradition request by Poland should be delayed if the High Court in Dublin finds not only there is a real risk of flagrant denial of justice on account of deficiencies in the system of justice in Poland but also the person who is the subject of the warrant is exposed to such a risk. The formal opinion of the court's advocate general is usually followed by the full court. If the full Court of Justice agrees, the case will then return to the High Court in Dublin for it to consider" (IT, 29/6/18).

So Ms Donnelly and the Irish High Court will have to get down to some specifics and not rely on the mantras of *core values*, *separation of powers* etc., etc. to delay Mr. Celmar's case.

Ms Donnelly has won high praise for her actions. This was reminiscent of another plucky little Irish person taking on the EU Commission some years ago—Pat Cox and his EU Liberals. With the most spurious charges of 'corruption' against it, the Commission rolled over and

the rest is history. The Commission was never the same animal again.

But it seems the ECJ will not roll over as the Commission did. It has asked for actual evidence of the charges being made by the Irish authorities. In the case of the Commission, the only charge that stuck was that against Madame Cresson who looked after her hairdresser, politically, while she was a Commissioner. This crime of crimes changed the course of the EU.

Mr. Celmar may not, and hopefully will not, change the course of EU history again. The EU's, and Ms Donnelly's, charges against Poland rest on alleged political interference with the judicial system in Poland. This complaint is based on an assumption that Governments should not involve themselves in judicial appointments. This is, and will always be, a fantasy.

The Polish Government has pointed out that the Irish Constitution lays down that the President appoints the judges chosen by the Government (and the Minister for Justice, in particular). The Poles could also point to the beacon of democracy, the USA, where the President directly appoints Supreme Court Judges and ensuring that the Court directly reflects political opinion.

Law is a reflection of the values of a society at any particular time. As such it should be under the control of the democracy. The Governments which appoint Judges are answerable to the electorate. But Judges are appointed for life. That is acceptable as a safeguard of judicial independence. But to go on to suggest that only Judges are fit to appoint Judges defies the democratic values on which modern society is based.

It is often assumed that the adoption of Minister Shane Ross's Bill will make Ireland a beacon of change across the world. In fact, without Constitutional change, the judiciary cannot become a self-perpetuating elite—which is what they and the liberal elite seem to desire. It must be asked, if the Judiciary became independent—what would they independent of?

In the meantime, Judge Donnelly and the High Court have a job to do which should be easy for legal eagles—present a credible case based on the facts of the case. The ball is back in their court, literally and metaphorically. Watch this space.

**Jack Lane**

## Eamon C. Kerney (1926-2018)—An Obituary

Eamon Conall Kerney was the youngest son of Leopold H. Kerney, the Irish Republic's Consul in France 1919-26 and the Irish Minister to Spain 1935-46, and Raymonde Kerney. He was born in Paris in 1926 at a difficult time for his father, who had become seriously ill and was soon to find himself out of work. Eamon was called after his godfather Eamon de Valera, who sent a silver bowl, representing the Ardagh Chalice, as a christening present. As de Valera could not be present at the ceremony, Sean Mac Bride acted as sponsor.

From France, Eamon went to Spain in 1935 with his parents when his father was appointed Irish Minister in Madrid. During the Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939 he was at a boarding school in Ireland, but remained in Spain when the World War started in 1939, and was there until 1945 when he started his engineering studies at University College, Dublin.

Most of Eamon's engineering life was spent on the design and construction of power stations for the ESB. In 1955 he married Maud O'Brien, daughter of Martin O'Brien, Inspector of Taxes, and niece of Professor Michael O'Brien of the Institute of Advanced Studies and of Tommy O'Brien, broadcaster with RTE.

He retired in 1986 and passed away on 1st July 2018.

A noble son of a noble father, the labour of love in constructing a wonderful website in 2007 in honour of his father will remain a lasting legacy from Eamon. And yet Michael Kennedy could find no place for it as a source, when penning his snide entry for Leopold Harding Kerney in the "*Dictionary of Biography*", which describes itself thus:

"The Dictionary of Irish Biography, a collaborative project between Cambridge University Press and the Royal Irish Academy, is the most comprehensive and authoritative biographical dictionary yet published for Ireland."

See [www.leopoldhkerney.com](http://www.leopoldhkerney.com) and <http://irelandscw.com/docs-Kerney-Review.htm> for Eamon's website, and my review in "History Ireland", March-April 2007. See, in particular, [www.leopoldhkerney.com/p/6-libel-action.html](http://www.leopoldhkerney.com/p/6-libel-action.html) for the vindication of the libel action taken by his

father against T. Desmond Williams, wherein Eamon related:

"In 1953 a series of articles on Irish neutrality were published by T. Desmond Williams first in the '*Leader*' and shortly after in the '*Irish Press*' which printed them as a sensational item. Williams had worked for British intelligence during the Second World War and subsequently for the British Foreign Office from September 1947 to September 1949. He was appointed Professor of History at U.C.D. in 1949.

Part of his task, working for the British, was to examine captured German documents and in this connection he seems to have come across a number of reports relating to Clissmann's and Veesenmayer's visits to Spain and apparently almost exclusively on the basis of these he wrote the relevant portions of these articles. It was striking that in no case did he quote any references to his sources, perhaps being prevented by the British authorities from doing so. There is not a single verbatim quotation from any of these...

There was nothing to prevent him checking his sources with the former Irish Minister to Spain who was then living in retirement in Dublin... On the basis of this completely one-sided view Williams produced a heavily biased account of the events of 1941 and 1942 which was riddled with inaccuracies and, with only the slightest of reservations, made scathing comments attacking Kerney's integrity. It is amazing that on the basis of documents, details of which have apparently never been revealed, Williams should have proceeded to indulge in character assassination of this kind."

"Needless to say, this called for a response. In the first instance Kerney asked the Dept. of External Affairs to release his report on the 1942 discussion which would have gone some way to contradicting Williams, but, not wishing to be involved, this was eventually refused, pleading the national interest which at that time was of course a bogus reason. The attitude of the Department was apparently not to lift a finger in support of their former employee, notwithstanding that he had recently been severely ill with a heart condition. He remarked at the time that it would be to his opponents' advantage if he were to succumb to his illness. There was thus no option but to take a legal action against Williams, the '*Irish Press*' and the '*Leader*', in spite of being severely hampered by the Official Secrets Act.

This dragged on until the 4th November 1954 when the defendants decided to settle the matter out of court.

Kerney was not a vindictive man. It had been put to him that the '*Leader*' was a minor newspaper which could easily be bankrupted and that heavy damages against Williams could ruin his career. He consequently requested only nominal damages from them but not so from the '*Irish Press*', by which he felt he had been stabbed in the back. He had been one of the original shareholders and had always supported it; it was the newspaper read by most of his friends. As far as he was concerned the most important point was that his good name should be cleared and what he wanted most of all was a full apology and retraction of the damaging allegations made. This was obtained and a statement read in court which was published as follows:

'Mr. James McMahon S.C. ... who represented the '*Leader*' and Professor Williams, said he was instructed to state that Professor Williams wished to withdraw unreservedly the imputations on Mr. Kerney and to state that any such imputations were based on statements now proved to be wrong. Professor Williams accepted Mr. Kerney's account and regretted the imputations and apologised for them.'

This would appear to have settled the matter once and for all, but—incredibly—historians since that time have repeatedly glossed over or ignored this libel action and its outcome and have uncritically accepted Williams' unreferenced, unquoted sources, not even at face value but at the value which he assigned to them without any justification. They have relied almost entirely on Williams' account although this should have been discredited by his own admission that his conclusions were erroneous. Perhaps the only excuse that could be made for Williams was his relative youthfulness and inexperience at that time. Far from endangering Ireland's neutrality by his one conversation with Veessenmayer, Kerney made it clear that any initiative by Germany would not be welcome in Ireland and if necessary would be resisted by force."

See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=4a5Hhek54P4> for the wonderful portrayal by Niall Cusack of Leopold Kerney—in "*The Enigma of Frank Ryan*", and see also [www.pana.ie/download/IFA-5-3.pdf](http://www.pana.ie/download/IFA-5-3.pdf) for my review of that film. Indeed, Eamon's website remains an essential resource in respect of his father's visits to Frank Ryan in Burgos Prison and their subsequent wartime correspondence. It was therefore particularly appropriate that I should first meet with Eamon in my capacity as Ireland Secretary of the International Brigade

Memorial Trust, when I invited him to attend our Frank Ryan commemoration in Glasnevin cemetery in October 2005. (See <http://irelandscw.com/org-RyanComm.htm> for report.)

Furthermore, our last communication was in February 2016, when Eamon sent me his regrets for being unable to attend the ceremonial rededication of Frank Ryan's tombstone, organised by Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland. In the intervening years of correspondence, it is Eamon's second last communication that remains topically pertinent and of contemporary significance. On 25th March 2014, under the heading of "*Crimea*", he e-mailed me:

"Hi Manus, Hope you are keeping well. I'm still around as you can see, although I'll be hitting 88 in a few days' time! A few days ago I e-mailed a letter to the '*Irish Times*', as forwarded herewith, which, needless to say, they have not published. I don't know if you see things the same way as I do, but I feel that the present crowd in government, either through incompetence or ignorance, or perhaps deliberately, seem to be abandoning our policy of neutrality and no one seems to be raising an eyebrow on this matter. I must say I'm uneasy at the way the EU is evolving. We originally joined an Economic Community but we now find ourselves part of a political entity. Have we swapped one imperialist group for another? I'd be interested to hear your views on the matter. With best wishes, Eamon C. Kerney."

The following is the text of the letter which Eamon submitted to the '*Irish Times*', on 20th March 2014, but to which that self-styled "*paper of record*" refused publication:

"Sir, When Ireland's entry into the EU was negotiated great stress was put on the maintenance of our traditional policy of neutrality and on ensuring that it would be accepted and respected, and this was embodied in the various treaties that were subsequently signed. The present stance of our government seems to be at variance with this policy and this is a very worrying trend.

"The situation in Ukraine is a very complex one and should be approached very carefully. That country was part of the Soviet Union until that entity disintegrated in the days of Boris Yeltsin. Crimea had never been part of the Ukraine until 1954 when Nikita Khrushchev, who was a Ukrainian himself, unilaterally and without consulting its people, annexed it to the Ukraine. In recent times popular unrest resulted in ousting a previously elected government in Ukraine and promoting a policy of closer ties with the EU, no doubt to counter Russian influence

and play one against the other. This is a matter of relations between one former Soviet state and another and it is difficult to see why the EU should become involved without risking the accusation of interfering in another country's affairs. The worrying thought could be that the EU is seeking to make Ukraine its next member, which is dangerously close to the expansionist policies of many imperialist powers.

"In view of the above, I think it would be dangerous for us to abandon our policy of neutrality and to align ourselves with one side or the other. I think it is of the greatest importance to maintain our hard won position of neutrality in the European Union, otherwise the sacrifices of 1916 and 1919 will have been in vain. Yours, Eamon C. Kerney, '*Alhambra*', Dublin 18."

Truly, a noble son of a noble father!  
*Ave atque Vale!* Hail and Farewell!

**Manus O'Riordan**

## FIST ON THE SEND-BUTTON

Twitter is a cage from which the bird flies. Once flown can it be enticed to come back with the truth or was it shot down with flak and in its death throes part of the world dies. This bird was bred with the worse intentions and can't be the Phoenix from the ashes for from its perch it picks nations to lash. First it speaks of economic sanctions then when it has killed the most vulnerable it pecks with its beak at the nation's heart its trajectory indecipherable .

One moment it hops and the next it darts with wings weighed down with imponderables rank fetid claws on keys as an upstart.

15 April, 2018

## EATING CROW

Philby, MacLean, Burgess and Callaghan could add up in a funny sort of way.

Three saw a society in decay,

One chickened out and didn't give a damn.

Three fled to Moscow and avoided prison,

One to bright lights in London and quids in.

Three lost brilliant careers, families binned,

One lacked respect for the Northern Risen.

Three had funerals beside Kremlin Walls,

One a ghost in St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Three to the British State still bitter as gall,

One a smorgasbord of revision yield.

Three gentlemen missed England boasts

Whitehall,

One scarecrow promoted crow on appeal.

2 April, 2018

**Wilson John Haire**

## Casement And The 'Sleepwalking' Myth

This is the second volume of Roger Casement's *Selected Writings* published by Athol Books. The first volume, comprising *The Crime against Europe*, with *The Crime against Ireland*, has not, so far as I know, been much commented on by professional, i.e. paid, academics, columnists or cultural guides, although they are authenticated writings of the man. I would hope they would now read both volumes and comment on them, if only for the pleasure it would give me to challenge the commentators. Recent comments on Casement by some of them suggest ulterior, even *Posterior*, motives.

Scholars today will tell you that Britain *sleepwalked* into war in 1914. No doubt the Providence of God guided her steps. Steps such as building the largest and most powerful fleet of warships ever seen, to complement a seemingly infinite Merchant Navy. A Merchant navy which included—in those days of rigid, doctrinaire *Laissez Faire*—an Admiralty-subsidised Ocean Liner, *The Lusitania*, with special features. By happy coincidence, French and British military leaders had already coordinated plans for joint action in a war on Germany.

(It was not Divine Providence or an Act of God, that later exposed Franco/Russian/British *Collusion* for war on the Central Powers and the Ottoman Empire. It was Godless Bolsheviks who captured and unsportingly published the secret Treaties and the enticements given as well as the rewards promised to the warmongers.)

Thus, at the outbreak of war, Britain's Royal Navy effortlessly swept German merchant shipping from the world's oceans and cut German access to transatlantic cables. News and comment uncomplimentary to Britain's motives, policy and conduct were suppressed. Neutral ships, including American ones, carrying such comment, were seized, searched and robbed of them by the Royal Navy.

Britain's "paper wall around Ireland"—the destruction of which was a primary aim of Arthur Griffith when he founded Sinn Fein—proved to be a template for a paper wall around the world. British Naval Intelligence, secure telegraphic communication, and the prompt interception and

deciphering of foreign communications saved the 'sleepwalkers' putting too many feet wrong. *Moladh go deo le Dia!* [Praise for ever be to God!] Besides, the Official Secrets Act was already in place, and the Defence of the Realm Act, was passed by Parliament in a single day (8 August 1914) only four days after the Declaration of War. Perhaps sleepwalking Civil Servants had drafted it a long time earlier?

"DORA" was a Draconian Act designed to scare critics. It allowed the suppression of Newspapers and the internment of critics. *To encourage the others* the Government made an example of Bertrand Russell, a renowned scholar, grandson of Prime Minister Lord John Russell—who had presided over Ireland's Great Hunger, whose family had been *Ennobled* for the savage repression of The Prayerbook Rebellion in Cornwall and enriched by the spoils of the suppressed monasteries in the time of Henry VIII. Bertrand Russell was interned without trial.

Many Liberal MPs had long opposed Grey's preparations for war and John Dillon, the Irish Party's spokesman on foreign affairs had condemned it for years but, when Party Chairman John Redmond without consulting Party colleagues or seeking a popular mandate pledged Irish support for the war, Dillon was silenced. Consequently, Liberal MPs who would have opposed entering the European War, and C.P. Scott's *Manchester Guardian*, as well as the Daily News,—heretofore opponents of the war policy—fell into step with the warmongers.

The opposition of advanced Nationalists of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Sinn Fein, and Connolly's Irish Labour Party, apparently did not worry the warmongers. But Roger Casement had an internationally-earned reputation as a brave and honest humanitarian who had explored the Belgian Congo and exposed the genocidal cruelties of that supposed benefactor of Africans, King Leopold II of the Belgians—a King who had enslaved the Africans and murdered upwards of ten millions of them and made himself immensely rich from the the rubber extracted there. Casement had walked through

the vast jungles and later did similar hard work in the Amazon Basin, exposing similar villainy.

Casement worked for the British Consular Service, was personally well acquainted with Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey and Lord Curzon—"*that contemptible Cad*"—and "*had met Lloyd George and all the rest of them.*"

Casement was not only a critic of John Redmond's folly and treachery to Ireland. His opposition to Britain's role in the war arose from concerns wider than his Irish patriotism. He had published letters in Ireland and in the United States and made his way to neutral Norway when his former employers sentenced him to death, without a trial, in October 1914. Casement had travelled in dangerous parts where he had made enemies and had taken the precaution of employing a Norwegian ex-seaman, Adler Christensen, to help him with his business. The day they landed in Norway, 29th October 1914, Christensen was seized and bundled into a car by a couple of hoods who frogmarched him through the back door of the British Legation in Christiania (Oslo) to be interviewed by a staff member, who questioned him on his employer's identity and movements. Christensen gave him no help.

The next day, another British goon assailed Christensen and invited him to visit the Legation "*where he would hear something good*". Christensen, who kept Casement informed, accepted the invitation and was interviewed by the Minister, a Mr. Findlay, who informed him that, if Casement were to disappear, it would be a very good thing for whoever brought it about. Further interviews followed and, on 3rd January 1915, the Minister, in writing on Legation paper promised on behalf of his Government £5,000, immunity from prosecution, and free passage to America to Christensen upon the capture of Casement.

Casement had committed no crime under British or Norwegian Law, yet the Minister spoke of Casement's being "*knocked on the head*". Findlay in fact 'had form' in Egypt, where he had organised outrages mentioned by Shaw in the Preface to "*John Bull's Other Island*". In addition to the promise of a reward, and expenses paid, to Christensen, the Minister gave him a backdoor key to the Legation.

Amongst the many pieces in the Collection is Casement's letter to Sir Edward Grey, returning the Legation Key and the expenses paid by Mr Findlay to Christensen, along with a copy of the promise of



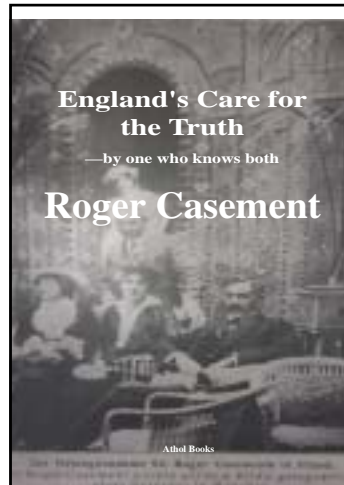
£5,000. Casement also returned decorations given to him by the British authorities, renounced his Knighthood and explained his activities.

Casement ensured that copies of his letter appeared in the Continental Times and John Devoy's *Gaelic American* in New York.

When the British finally murdered Casement in August 1916 in Pentonville they were simply carrying out a sentence passed by the Foreign Office two years earlier.

They were annoyed with the delay and got their revenge by blackening his name, with documents whose provenance has never been explained and which have not been subjected to objective examination.

Casement's authenticated writings are of universal interest, because Sir Edward



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Grey and his friends in 1914 launched a war whose repercussions have killed hundreds of millions of people in the past 104 years and may yet see the extinction of all human, animal and plant life on earth,

If indeed we're all doomed to simultan-

eous extinction, I would hope that the prime movers for that cataclysm, its clear-eyed, heartless prime movers, Sir Edward Grey and colleagues, will have been first exposed to universal execration—and the 'sleepwalking' myth will have joined them in the hottest pit in Hell.

**Donal Kennedy**

**Part 2 (Part 1 appeared in May *Irish Political Review*)**

## Roger Casement and the Origin of the Handwriting in the Disputed Diaries

Below are two examples of daily entries from the disputed 1910 Casement diary.

20 JUL 1910

"Return to Sasana beastly Hole. At F.O. [Foreign Office]"

19 SEP 1910

"Lovely morning. Passing a new palm the Punchana pilot calls "Pona" a lovely thing indeed. Fox raving about it & well he may. Besides the assai it shoots up its graceful stem with from 6-12 magnificent fronds like those of a hart's tongue fern on top, & then a green bulging head to its long stem. Five lovely and quite differing palms growing here close together & in enormous numbers. The young pilot calls the ground an "island", probably "achawa". 8.30 a.m., a deer swimming down mid-stream at tremendous rate. Lowered canoe & after long chase, deer often turning upstream & beating canoe, one man jumping over, but being beaten hollow by the deer, the poor little chap was caught by the hind leg after many failures & dragged into canoe, tied by legs & hoisted on board. I should like to save him and take him home to Ireland. He richly deserves his life. I do not want to eat him! Captain Carmino, decent man, won't kill him, but has put him in a fine cage to keep & tame him. The Quichua name is "Juíchu". On thro' desolation of desolations at 9.30

passed "Pupima" river, misnamed so as they are not pupima palms at all, but Pona."

The two entries provide quite a contrast and not just because one is very brief and the other goes on at some length. In the first the diarist returns to *Sasana* (England), which he finds to be "beastly" and a "Hole". The outlook revealed is mean and stunted in spirit as if written by a pantomime villain. In the original handwritten entry the word "Hole" appears at the beginning of the next line underneath and has a capital "H". It is as if the writer was confused as to what he was supposed to write. Could the Gaelic script of the word "Sasana" have derailed his concentration?

The second entry reveals an altogether different personality; one open to the magnificence and beauty of the world. He shows an interest in the different species of palm tree and in Quichua words for aspects of the natural world. The main incident recounted involves a deer which has been swimming downstream. It was followed and eventually caught by men in a canoe launched from the river ferry. The diarist was sympathetic to the plight of the deer and was happy that the captain would

put him in a cage to keep and tame him. This is the Casement we have come to know from his many extant letters to friends and his fully acknowledged writings; a man positively and sympathetically engaged with the world.

The contrast between the two suggests that the diary was, in the main Casement's diary but that it has undergone certain additions and adjustments. As a result, a different voice from time to time appears, a voice which we would not normally associate with Casement. This leads naturally to the notion of forgery by interpolation which is usually how the Diaries are understood by those who do not subscribe to the view they are fully valid documents.

### ALL FORGED ?

If one were to suggest the Diaries were forged in their entirety, one could explain the way so much of the material resonates with the character and activities of Casement as he was known to his contemporaries in terms of original diaries being used as models from which direct transcriptions were made. After being so used, these diaries would have been destroyed. So, originals would have been copied from and, in among this original material, new material would be added while material inconvenient to the desired impression to be created would be ignored.

If one were to suggest the Diaries were forged in their entirety one could explain

the way different handwriting styles alternate from one to another within and between entries in terms of different penmen operating in shifts in order to get the entire work finished.

However, if one is to argue the Diaries have been forged, then the evidence favours partial forgery; that is where deletions and interpolations have been made into original diaries. There are a number of reasons to suggest that partial forgery remains by far the more compelling hypothesis.

#### GENERAL EVIDENCE

"The cause of the clamour is not hard to see: on first inspection one's immediate impression gives support to the theory that a forger inserted the erotic passages in whatever gaps he could find between innocent entries... Three distinct handwriting styles are discernible and all are unlike the handwriting of Casement's contemporary Foreign Office despatches. One style even resembles that of Basil Thomson, who was an inveterate diary writer and was, incidentally, convicted for committing an act in violation of public decency in 1925. Every so often one comes upon the tell-tale smudge which eventually appears after an eradicator has been used. Some of the best examples of conflicting handwriting styles are to be found in the 1911 diary, which has not yet been published. There one can conveniently compare and contrast the three styles which, reasonably enough, correspond with the use of three media: a fine-nibbed scratchy pen, a broad-nibbed pen and a pencil. The scratchy style has survived the years better than the broad nib and is much darker and clearer" (Roger Sawyer, *Casement The Flawed Hero*, Routledge & Kegan Paul (1984), Pg 137)

Sawyer, above, gives reasons for the "clamour", that is, the widespread demand that there be an effort made to forensically investigate the authenticity of the Diaries. Despite what he wrote in the passage above, Sawyer was and remains a believer in authenticity. Nonetheless, what he wrote should give cause for reflection.

The Diaries show frequent changes in writing style and writing material used, often within the one daily entry. There is evidence of erasure of inked writing. The sexual material tends to appear at the end or beginning of daily entries. One can argue that this was because sexual activity occurred nocturnally and so was recorded at the end of a daily record of events. However, how does one then explain sexual activity being recorded at the beginning of a daily entry or on a margin or diagonally across a page?

One can conceive of the very frequent

changes in writing material, especially from pen to pencil and back again, as being there for the purpose of disguise; the change of writing material disguises the change in the hand behind the writing.

#### SPECIFIC EVIDENCE

There are a few specific instances of physical evidence uncovered by researchers which point to interpolation onto an existing personal diary. These do not amount to open and shut, one hundred per cent, proof. But they are intriguing nonetheless.

In an entry for January 1911, part of a letter simply has disappeared from the page. On the corresponding opposite side of the leaf is writing which suspiciously looks like it has been overwritten onto a section which has been previously deleted with erasing fluid. The fluid apparently seeped onto the opposite page erasing a portion of a letter.

Beverages and culinary specialities on occasion appear by name in the Diaries, as names for the sexual partners of the diarist. For example in the Cash Book for early 1911 'Welsh' (note single quotation marks) makes an appearance and reappears twice afterwards, in the guise of *Welsh rarebit* (quotation marks omitted). The single quotation marks, on the first instance of the name, give the reader a textual nudge indicating a sexual partner. As the nudge has been given already, the later instances appear without quotes, at least, so it seems. The addition of quotation marks is a simple way of changing the name of an object in an existing narrative into a human character without expending much time or effort. If there were a continuous narrative forged from start to finish, you would expect characters could be fleshed out more and would not require to be created by a crude improvisation using quotation marks.

#### VIEWPOINT OF INTELLIGENCE CHIEFS

If we put ourselves in the shoes of Reginald Hall of Naval Intelligence and Basil Thomson of Special Branch in the period 1915-16, it can be seen that, if forgery is to be carried out as a discrediting tactic against Casement, then the forged material has to be improvised swiftly. There are inhibiting time constraints.

If the decision to launch a forgery operation was made only after it had been learned Casement was to travel to Ireland from Germany by submarine in the Spring of 1916, then the time constraints are obvious. The work needed to be done roughly within a two month timeframe.

However, if the decision to launch such

an operation occurred in 1915, say early 1915, there are still time constraints as when Casement might become vulnerable to the possibility of capture is an unknown. This is because it was not known when he might decide to leave Germany and travel elsewhere. So, it is still necessary to get the material prepared and ready as quickly as possible so it can be put to use when needed.

The quickest way to prepare discrediting material would have been to take existing diaries and modify them as needed. This would have required a fraction of the time needed to accomplish a complete forgery resulting in a final product of the same scale.

The 1911 diary is the only one that looks to have been in greater part produced by forgery. Here too speedy improvisation can be conjectured in the way there have been different writing media used as mentioned in the quotation above. This would suggest different penmen working in shifts to get the final product finished within a short time frame.

#### CAPTAIN HALL

A forgery project based upon deletion and interpolation would require a great deal less work. As such, it would require less supervision and management. Less work to do means there is less chance penmen will lose concentration, bringing a loss of precision and quality to their work. The less extensive the project the less scope there is to make mistakes.

Captain Reginald Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence, was a specialist in the feeding of false information to the enemy. On one occasion he had a fake issue of the *Daily Mail* printed, with a headline about troop concentrations in the south of England which was deposited where it could be found by the Germans. The idea was to present corroborative data which could convince somebody who held doubts about what he desired them to believe.

What more convincing piece of corroborative data could one imagine than a diary written in the actual hand of the subject of a project of disinformation?

A partial forgery fits in well with Reginald Hall's standard *modus operandi*.

#### GILES REPORT 2002

Video Spectral Analysis is a technique which can detect variations in ink types on the page. It was used as part of the Giles examination of the Diaries in 2001-2. The data uncovered was never made public, however. There was a relevant mention in the ensuing report to the effect that the

Video Spectral Analysis (VSA) indicated there were frequent changes in writing material used on the pages which had been examined.

Raman Spectroscopy is a powerful technique which can be deployed to uncover erasure and interpolation in documents. The Giles Report, rather than reporting on the results arising from the deployment of this methodology, provided a lame excuse as to why it had not been used.

From the above we can draw some conclusions. For a start, the reported VSA findings are in line with what one would expect if the type of partial forgery envisaged had occurred. Secondly, the general evasiveness regarding these two techniques, which are known to detect interpolation, is itself worthy of note.

As a forensic exercise, the Giles examination did not measure up. However, it provided intriguing pointers to what the underlying reality of the Diaries might be.

#### OBSERVATIONS OF RESEARCHERS

Dr. Herbert O. Mackey, was a dermatologist who took a keen interest in the Diaries and wrote a number of books and pamphlets on the matter prior to his death in 1966. He maintained that, on close physical examination, evidence of erasure and interpolation was discernible. The documents were examined by him a number of times and viewed under magnification. He claimed part of this evidence was in the form of the indentations left on the paper on some diary pages by original writing where the ink had been erased.

The researcher Kevin Mannerings who has also closely viewed the documents a number of times has been happy to confirm Mackey's observations.

#### NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT KEW, LONDON

In the past few years, the National Archives at Kew, London have not been making the physical Diaries available to members of the public. Instead a negative microfilm has been made available. If the original is not being made available, then why not provide a high definition PDF file?

Could it be people are being deliberately prevented from scrutinising the documents closely? If so, one has to ask; why?

#### AN INTRIGUING PINK OVERLAY

On some pages of the 1910 and 1911 diaries there is a pink overlay. This was applied round about the late 1960s. A paste was crudely painted on to a number of pages. This has provoked some curiosity down the years. A question put to the

National Archives by researcher Kevin Mannerings, about a decade ago, brought back the answer that the substance was Polyvinyl Acetate. Further research revealed that such a substance could block the action of technical equipment which scanned a paper document to uncover evidence of erasure/interpolation—such as changes in the chemical composition of inks or the presence of erasing fluid. Is this more than an intriguing coincidence? It is hard to escape a feeling of profound suspicion.

The paste could possibly have been applied to undermine any attempts to detect deletion/interpolation using testing equipment based on Ultra Violet and Infra Red light, equipment which was standard in the 1960s-70s.

If the Diaries had been wholly and entirely forged, measures which obstruct the search for evidence of interpolation/deletion would not be relevant. How else can the painting of a chemical substance on to some pages make sense except as a screening measure? But with a scenario of total forgery such screening measures are irrelevant.

#### IN SUMMARY

Partial forgery by interpolation/deletion best explains the emergence of the Casement diaries that we have today and which we have come to know and dispute over. This notion has by far the greater explanatory force. It is the hypothesis that grapples

with all the facts available and provides plausible answers.

As discussed in the first part of this article computer vocabulary analysis does not validly find the disputed diaries to be, in their totality, the product of forgery. This is because they were not written in prose and had a different purpose and nature from Casement's known writings, such as his personal letters and published articles. Thus the two bodies of writings are not properly comparable.

There is evidence for partial forgery from the general appearance of the diary writings, from some unique specific instances within them, from the operational context and time constraints the Intelligence chiefs found themselves under in 1915-16, from an understanding of how Captain, later Admiral, Hall operated, from the odd omissions of the Giles examination/report, from the observations of some dedicated researchers, from the current evasiveness at the National Archives, Kew, and last, but by no means least, from the presence of a chemical coating on some pages of the 1910 and 1911 diaries.

When we evaluate and consolidate all this evidence in its totality we can see the case for a partial forgery of the disputed Casement diaries is vastly better than the case for a complete forgery.

**Tim O'Sullivan**

**Concluded**

## Two Westminster Events

### Panel Update & Discussion from The Finucane Family

On the very hot evening of Tuesday 26th June, 2018 we queued to enter Portcullis house through the airport-security type barriers. Outside it was the rush-hour. We were in the Thatcher Room, Portcullis House. The security staff were again changed. No familiar faces for those of us who attend Portcullis House on a regular basis. The armed police nearby you don't look at too long. You could get a fixed look back. But no one's arguing about the building being secured for all our benefits.

The large room may not have been filled but it was quality not quantity that occupied the evening. There sat Mrs. Geraldine Finucane, daughter of middle-

class Protestant parents and widow of murdered Human Rights solicitor Patrick Finucane, with her two solicitor sons Michael and John. All dignified in their ongoing grief, the sons still angry at what had happened to their father.

As the flyer said:

"Human Rights Activist Pat Finucane, 1949 – 1989, Targeted by British Establishment, executed by Unionist Death Squads."

There was a quotation from Rosemary Nelson (a Human Rights lawyer also murdered in Northern Ireland with State collusion, 15th March, 1999, aged 40):

"... If you don't defend human rights lawyers who will defend human rights?"

A year before her death, Pat Finucane had been gunned down on the 12th of

February 1989, when loyalist gunmen smashed in the front door with sledgehammers and shot him 14 times while he was at dinner with his wife and three children on that Sunday evening.

Francie Molloy, Sinn Fein MP for Mid-Ulster, chaired the meeting. Also there as MPs were Paul Maskey, SF, for West Belfast, Michelle Gildernew, SF, for Fermanagh and Tyrone, and, Stephen Pound, UK Labour for Ealing North and former Shadow Minister for Northern Ireland. He regularly attends Sinn Fein meetings in London.

Tony Lloyd, MP for Rochdale is the present Shadow Minister for Northern Ireland. He popped in for a few minutes and was unnoticed until Stephen Pound announced who he was as he departed again quickly.

Geraldine Finucane spoke at length about her almost 30 year campaign for the truth to come out and for a Public Inquiry that would bring all the protagonists, dead or alive, involved in her husband's murder, to the table. She and her sons were in London to pursue this idea as a necessity. She had been in Washington during the Obama period and had spoken to senior senators and had been given sympathy.

Next it was the turn of the her sons, Michael and John, to enlighten us on their campaigns in the legal field to bring about a Public Inquiry. They sounded optimistic there would be this outcome in the near future, though this had been promised over the years and there had been a letdown from Tony Blair.

The discussion was then thrown open to the meeting with many points debated by what I presumed to be a lawyer in the audience. I myself brought up the deliberate British-made dysfunctional territory known as Northern Ireland and its dysfunctional justice. My question was: *'What if a human rights lawyer had been gunned down in England in such a heartless manner as Pat Finucane?'*

This inspired the former Shadow Minister for Northern Ireland, Stephen Pound, to say that no one cared about the Irish and Ireland, that a Public Inquiry would be like a ball of wool unravelling. (I take it he meant revealing all its hidden secrets in the Finucane murder)

Francie Molly mentioned the fact that the meeting had probably been allocated to the Thatcher Room in order to annoy. Everyone directed their eyes to the painting

of Margaret Thatcher who seemed to be gazing upwards to either Heaven or else disapproving of this Sinn Fein-organised meeting. The very serious atmosphere of the meeting erupted into laughter. No one felt annoyed. SF is too much a mature political party now to be bothered by such trivialities. Anyway, there is no room in Portcullis House with a name that would satisfy the people of Ireland.

All-in-all, this sombre meeting reflected on the evil that lies at the heart of Westminster. It was the chill of death and the death to come.

It's the most intense meeting I have been at in Portcullis House. So eager were people to participate we overran the time allotted.

30th June, 2018

### **Sinn Fein MPs' Annual Summer Reception**

It was a stifling hot Tube ride to Westminster with security airport-style at Portcullis House even more strict this time with a number of UK Labour MPs and Sinn Fein MPs due to attend in the Attlee Suite of Portcullis house.

This meeting was by invitation only. The keynote speaker was Michelle O'Neill, who concentrated on Human Rights in the Six Counties. She said that Sinn Fein was continuing not to participate in government there. It is a fact that the DUP are not giving Sinn Fein, now a major all-Ireland party, proper recognition through its arrogance and its in-built sectarian approach. Minor efforts are being made by them like an attendance at a GAA match, but it's like giving a beggar a pound coin.

Ms O'Neill also explained how Brexit for Ireland was not a good thing for the country, though she did recognise the majority vote for it in the UK.

Most of the togetherness occurred in the corridor outside the Attlee Suite between Michelle O'Neill and the Labour MPs, most of whom didn't enter the Attlee Suite.

Quite a grand name but the large space, with its stained carpet, which has obviously seen many celebrations, is a barren area with high round tables for those drinkers preferring to stand. There was a short speech by Michelle O'Neill and then she and a few of other Sinn Fein MPs disappeared. The only MP who remained to

circulate was Elisha McCallon, who represents the Foyle constituency of Derry City. She is also a former mayor of that city. A brave woman amidst the noise of chatter that made the Irish traditional music band seem to just make silent movements as they played banjo, accordion, tin whistle and bodhran in a losing battle against the chatter of a large crowd. What songs they played I had no idea.

A screen high up on the wall was soundless but kept any MP there informed of the parliamentary debate going on in the chamber. This time it was about Brexit and the continuity of cooperation of the health services in Europe, after the UK left the EU.

The bar was busy handing out free red and white wine plus coca-cola and water: 98% of those attending were male and well over retiring age. I wondered where the new blood was coming from. Elisha McCallon and my niece, who also comes from Derry, were the youngest there.

Speaking to a few of the oldsters, as an oldster myself, I wasn't surprised to hear some of them were refugees from the now defunct CPGB and the also the mainly defunct Connolly Association plus some left-of-the-Labour Party, and too far left to appreciate Corbyn's efforts for a fairer society in the UK.

The strict security in place irritated a couple of them and they weren't too pleased to be reminded that the Westminster area is a dangerous place to be in now since the ISIS-supporter's attacks. There are also some of the more extreme Ulster loyalists to be considered. In as strange way it seemed as if the wheel had turned full circle. Back in the 1950s/early 1960s, when the Connolly Association was riding high, there was such receptions in various venues in London attended by Labour MPs who usually surrounded Desmond Greaves in the manner they now surround Michelle O'Neill. There was a large Irish community then and the Irish vote was vital to Labour. This time that community is severely diminished, with its bookshops down to nil, along with its dance halls. But this time around Sinn Fein looks like it is a government-in-waiting for the entire Island of Ireland.

Eventually the crowd moved away from the main body of the Attlee Suite to the bar area with the drone of voices growing louder. Not being a drinker anymore, I decided to leave early, that was 19.30 instead of 20.30.

**W.J.Haire**

## The Russian Revolution

France made a declaration of Democracy to the world in the early 1790s. England rejected it.

Within the Whig Party—the party of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688—there was a tendency that supported French principles as being consistent with the principles of the 'Glorious Revolution'. Against this there developed an authoritarian tendency which insisted that continuity of government was the essential thing in political affairs.

The politician of the authoritarian resistance to Democracy was William Pitt the Younger. Its ideologue was Edmund Burke. The authoritarian Whiggery of Pitt and Burke became the Toryism of the early 19th century. And Burke's powerful defence of authority, the *Letters On A Regicide Peace*, set the parameters of English political thought.

Burke denied that the 'Glorious Revolution' was a revolution at all—that was its virtue. Revolutions were not to be wilfully undertaken. The basic human right was a right to be governed.

England maintained regularity of government against a process of great economic and social change all through the 19th century. It was constitutionally undemocratic under a ruling class of aristocrats and gentry, while France fluctuated between democracy and dictatorship—democracy without effective State authority and dictatorship with popular approval—until the bourgeois Third Republic was founded on the slaughter of the Paris Commune in 1871, in the aftermath of the failed invasion of Germany.

England became a nominal democracy in 1918 as a by-product of the military conscription introduced in 1917 for the Imperial War. The populace had allowed itself to be compelled to serve in the war to break Germany and seize its trade and its colonies, and to conquer the Ottoman Empire. There was no conflict in political practice between democracy and Empire, and, therefore, there was no conflict in principle either.

Church and State had been merged in the English Constitution and so there was no possibility of conflict between its practices and its principles.

(It used to be the case, before England almost lost itself in the European Union,

that the Westminster Parliament legislated retrospectively to legitimise extraordinary actions undertaken in crises which it had been too busy to legitimise in advance.)

A couple of years after the nominal political democratisation of 1918, the matter of social revolution was put to the test.

It had been assumed that an enfranchised populace would not for long tolerate the social institutions and economic arrangements made by the superior classes when they monopolised political power. But in 1921, when three powerful Trade Unions made a set of demands on the state which would have upset the system, the Prime Minister said he could do nothing for them but, on the other hand, he had no power that could resist their power if they exercised it. So the situation was that they must either take over the country, or else withdraw and let him govern it as best he could. They went home. The democracy was bourgeois as well as Imperialist.

Democracy came to Russia as a thief in the night. There were revolutionaries in plenty in Russia. Oscar Wilde's Russian play, *Vera*, even placed the son of the Tsar in a revolutionary group, and it was not much of an exaggeration. But the revolutionaries did not make the revolution. It was in that respect the converse of the 'Glorious Revolution'—it was a revolution, and nobody made it. It took the revolutionaries a few days to realise that it had happened.

Sukharnov (who was simultaneously an 'expert' serving the Tsarist State and a subversive being sought by its police) describes that situation:

"*Tuesday, February 21st*, I was sitting in my office in the Turkistan section. Behind a partition two typists were gossiping about food difficulties, rows in shopping queues, unrest among the women, an attempt to smash into some warehouse. 'D'you know', suddenly declared one of these young ladies, 'if you ask me, it's the beginning of the revolution!'

"These girls didn't understand what a revolution was. I believed them for a second. But in those days, sitting over my irrigation systems and aqueducts, over my articles and pamphlets... I kept thinking and brooding about the inevitable revolution that was whirling down on us at full speed...

"In this period of agony of Tsarism, the attention of Russians, or at any rate of Petersburg 'society'... revolved primarily around the State Duma convened on February 14th. By some people—the more conservative Left (socialist) elements—the workers' street demonstrations under the slogans of 'Bread!' and 'Down with the Autocracy!' were linked to this date. Elements further to the Left, including myself, spoke out at various party meetings *against* tying up the workers' movement with the Duma. For bourgeois Duma circles had given proof enough, not only of their inability to join the proletariat even against Rasputin, but also of their mortal fear even of utilizing the strength of the proletariat in the struggle for a constitutional regime or for 'carrying on the war to total victory'.

"This fear was completely justified. It was possible, of course, to summon up a spirit, but to force it into one's own service—never...

"*Not one party was preparing for the great upheaval.* Everyone was dreaming, ruminating, full of foreboding, feeling his way...

"These philistine girls, whose tongues and typewriters were rattling away behind the partition, didn't know what a revolution was. I believed neither them, nor the inflexible facts, nor my own judgment. Revolution—highly improbable! Revolution!—everyone knew this was only a dream—a dream of generations and of long laborious decades. Without believing the girls, I repeated after them mechanically: 'Yes, the beginning of the revolution'.

"On Wednesday and Thursday—February 22nd and 23rd—the movement in the streets became clearly defined, going beyond the limits of the usual factory meetings. At the same time the feebleness of the authorities was exposed... But these were 'disorders'—there was still no revolution. A favourable outcome was not only not discernible as yet, but not one of the parties was even steering towards it; they merely strove to exploit the movement for agitational purposes.

"On Friday the 24th the movement swept over Petersburg like a great flood... General Khabalov got out a proclamation, which essentially only served to reveal the impotence of the authorities...

"The movement was plainly out of hand... On Friday I began categorically maintaining that we were dealing with a revolution, as an accomplished fact. However, I was waved aside as an optimist...

"Who was to be the successor of the Tsarist autocracy? This was the point on which my attention was focussed that day...

"My starting-point was the complete disintegration of democratic Russia under the autocracy. At the time the democratic

movement had control of no strong organizations, whether political, trade-union, or municipal. And in its state of disintegration the proletariat, isolated as it was from other classes, could create only fighting organizations which, while representing a real force in the class struggle, were not a genuine element of State power..." (*The Russian Revolution*, pp3-7).

For these reasons, and because of difficulties connected with the War, Sukhanov concluded: "*Power must go to the bourgeoisie. But was there any chance that they would take it?*" (p9).

This was also the position of the Bolshevik Party, more or less, until Lenin returned from exile in April, persuaded the Party leaders to adopt a revolutionary policy against the Provisional Government, and to develop the Soviets into organs of State power. (The Soviets were the mass institutions of society. They were not hostile to the Parliamentary Government, and did not see themselves as alternatives to it, but the Parliament did not see how it could fit them into its notion of constitutional government, and it had no roots in society through mass institutions of its own.)

The Bolsheviks attempted to seize power in July, but failed. That put the Provisional Government in the ascendant over them. It failed utterly to consolidate its victory because Kerensky could not establish a workable relationship with General Kornilov, whom he had appointed Army commander. His ideas were perhaps too abstract and Kornilov's were too concrete. Anyhow, he declared that certain measures adopted by Kornilov amounted to treason, and prosecuted him. The Bolsheviks then recovered quickly from the reverse they suffered in the July Days and they slipped into power in October.

It was not the case that they seized the institutions of power of the Democratic State and used them to their own advantage. There was no Democratic state. There was not even an oligarchic bourgeois State. There was, in effect, a Parliamentary body called the Government, which had not inherited institutions of State power from the Tsarist regime in February, and which had not constructed institutions of State power of its own by October.

And the Government had remade itself in May by bringing the bulk of the Menshevik Party over to it. The Mensheviks did not bring an addition of power to the Government. (They saw themselves as educators of the workers, rather than representatives of the workers in politics.) But they added to its confusion.

The Bolsheviks did not, in the literal sense, seize power. What they did essentially was to assert the power which they had built up during the eight months of anarchy as the State power in the situation. And it was then that the anarchy brought about by the February Revolution, that happened entirely of its own accord, resulted in the establishment of a Russian State. And that State saw off all-comers in the course of the next three years.

Sukhanov claimed that in October the Bolsheviks had no governing policy for the State they had constructed, and had no theory of how what they undertook to do might be done:

"...the Bolsheviks should have had clear ideas and precise plans as to what they should do with the State they had won... I maintain the Bolsheviks had no such plans. And personally, both in speeches and in articles, I directed attention precisely to this aspect of the matter.

"I maintained the Bolsheviks had no other ideas than the immediate handing over of the land for seizure by the peasants, readiness to propose peace at once, the most confused ideas about 'workers' control and the most fantastic notions of methods of extracting bread, with the help of the 'sailor' and the 'working girl'... Lenin had more 'ideas', borrowed whole from the experience of the Paris Commune and Marx's pamphlet on it, and also—from Kropotkin. These of course included the destruction of the system of credit and the seizure of the banks; the thoroughgoing revision of the government apparatus and its replacement by administrators from among the working class (this in peasant, limitless and half-savage Tsarist Russia!); the liability to election of all officials; compulsory parity between specialist's wages and the average worker's. And there were some other fantasies, which all vanished at the first contact with reality.

"Lenin's pamphlet, *State and Revolution*, was very soon to become gospel. But first of all this gospel, as always, served as something to swear by—God forbid that anything should be done in accordance with its visionary words!—and secondly it had not yet been published...

"The Bolsheviks didn't know what they were going to do with their victory and the State they would win. They were acting *against* Marx, *against* common scientific Socialism, *against* common sense, *against* the working class, when by way of insurrection, under the slogan of 'Power to the Soviets, they attempted to hand over to their own Central Committee the totality of state power in Russia. The power of a single isolated proletarian vanguard, though it was based on the confidence of millions of the masses, obliged the new Government

and the Bolsheviks themselves to perform tasks they knew to be beyond their strength. This was the core of the problem. The Bolshevik Party was utopian in undertaking to perform these tasks. It made a fateful error when it started an insurrection without thinking about them" (p571).

Sukhanov's book was published in 1922. From the time I came across it in the 1960s I have taken it to be the book of the Russian Revolution, even more than Burke's *Reflections* is the book of the French Revolution. Sukhanov was a participant in what he wrote about. What he said in 1922 he had said in 1917. He was a Left Menshevik in 1917, as close to Bolshevism as it was possible to be within Marxism. And he was one of the very few whose criticism was noticed by Lenin.

It seems that, when he was finishing his book (whose Russian title is *Notes On the Revolution*), he took the State, which had won all its wars, internal and external, as being still an act of insurrection. And so, in a sense, it was. The wars had served as a diversion from the problem of governing in accordance with the objects which the Bolsheviks set themselves.

Much could be done as necessary measures for the defensive War that was in accordance with the full Communist aims of the Bolshevik Party, but those measures could not be continued after military victory as the form of the peacetime economy. In that sense, the problem of implementing the Bolshevik programme began in 1921.

Sukhanov's assertion that in October 1917 the Bolsheviks had no "*clear ideas and precise plans as to what they should do with the State they had won*" is not seriously disputable. It is also indisputable that the actual economic revolution accomplished by the Bolshevik *coup d'etat* was a bourgeois revolution. The new form of property relations it established was private property in land by farmer owners, in place of the landlord system—as was done in Ireland in 1903.

Rosa Luxemburg, the Jewish/German/Polish Marxist, who was closest to Lenin in the German Socialist Democracy, published a pamphlet against Leninism on this ground—that he was set on enacting a socialist revolution in a way that would greatly increase the weight of bourgeois property against the socialisation of property.

Rosa Luxemburg was a revolutionary. She was very much a revolutionary. But she gave priority to the correct method of cooking the salmon over the practical

problem of catching it. So she never had the problem of implementing a problematic programme after gaining power with it, because she never gained power—never came close to it. Indeed, it could be said that she did not really want to gain State power because of the many conditions she imposed on the way it must be done.

But she continued to engage in revolutionary agitation in support of an impossible revolution in a Germany that was under conquest and that the conquerors were intent on breaking up. She added to the chaos of defeat—in which the pressing need was for national defence—by means of an agitation that was essentially defeatist. And she did this without ever having attempted to construct a political force that could act as a State in place of the brittle Social Democratic Government that she was agitating against.

She had criticised Lenin for his preoccupation with political power and he had criticised her—in response to her *Junius* pamphlet during the War—for her lack of concern with it. She played with revolution in the highly unstable conditions brought about by defeat and conquest—which are not the same thing but were combined in the Anglo-French treatment of Germany in 1918-19, and she came to grief.

Sukhanov characterised the Bolshevik Revolution as Utopian because it was not conducted on a governing programme ready to be put into effect when they won. He was a revolutionary of long standing. He had brooded on revolution and dreamt of it. He was a Marxist—an orderly scientific socialist. And yet he thought of revolution as a kind of election.

Lenin responded with what seems to have been the last article he published: *Our Revolution A propos Of N. Sukhanov's Notes*, 16 January 1923. There are two further items in the *Collected Works*, but they are proposals to the Party.

This is the gist of his response:

"It does not occur to any of them to ask: but what about a people that found itself in a revolutionary situation such as that created during the first imperialist war? Might it not, influenced by the hopelessness of its situation, fling itself into a struggle that would offer it at least some chance of securing conditions for the further development of civilisation that were somewhat unusual...

"If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite 'level of culture' is, for it differs in every West-European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid

of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?...

"You say that civilisation is necessary for the building of socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites of civilisation in our country as the expulsion of the landowners and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards socialism? Where, in what books, have you read that such variations of the customary historical sequence of events are impermissible or impossible?

"Napoleon, I think, wrote, '*Ons'engage et puis... on voit...* First engage in a serious battle and then see what happens;... Our European philistines never even dream that subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions will undoubtedly display even greater distinctions than the Russian revolution..." (Vol. 33, pp378-380).

A very great part of the world, perhaps the greater part, was, until Britain's Great War of 1914, living in pre-capitalist forms of society, in a condition that was summed up by Britain's superb Imperialist poet, Rudyard Kipling, as "*the dark Egyptian night*". After 1918 they could no longer live like that. It wasn't allowed. The world was organised into a League of Nations, run by the British and French Empires that had made war on their German rival and destroyed it, and it was parcelled out into concocted nation-states in a capitalist world market—states, often, without prior national development, and without internally-generated capitalist markets, and therefore in practice subordinate to the European Empires.

Ireland was, by comparison with many of these states, a developed nation with a market economy. It asserted itself as a nation-state in the 1918 Election and declared itself independent of Britain in January 1919. The newly-democratised British Government disregarded the Irish Election and Declaration of Independence and governed it by Black and Tan methods. A Trinity historian, Joast Augustejn, has argued that the Irish Declaration of Independence was not legitimate because it was not recognised by any other states. What other states were there in 1919? The world was being run by Britain and France through the Versailles Conference, and the League which was being established as an adjunct of the Versailles Conference. For the purpose of recognising the democratically-mandated Irish independence, Britain was the world. And it put in the Black and Tans.

The handful of states that ran the League asserted authority over the world—minus

the USA and Russia—and, as the first act of its authority, it mandated a Jewish colonisation of Arab Palestine. And the world was impelled into a line of *progress* that served the capitalist Imperialism of the 1918 victors: Britain, France, Italy and Japan. And in its resistance to Imperialism, it took its inspiration from the side of Bolshevik development that West European Marxism rejected.

As Lenin was writing his response to Sukhanov, the conflict within Bolshevism about the possibility of Socialist development in Russia while capitalism continued in Western Europe, began.

Trotsky had predicted many years before the event that, when Tsarism fell, there would be Socialist revolution because a bourgeois regime could not sustain itself. And so it happened. But he also predicted that Socialist revolution in Russia would be bound up with Socialist revolution in Western Europe, and that Europe would compensate for Russian backwardness. And he held that, if a Socialist revolution in Russia was not supported by European Socialist revolution, it would necessarily fail, because the pressure on it of the International Division of Labour in the capitalist world market would be irresistible.

Lenin died in 1924, his last political intervention having been in March 1923. There was no overthrow of Capitalism in Europe. It had been defended in Italy by Fascism. So what was Russia to do?

Trotsky repeated his position that an attempt at Socialist development in an isolated Russia must fail. If that was the case, would not the thing to do be to find a bourgeoisie from somewhere and try to hand over the instruments of Soviet State Power to it, with its Bolshevik Party undertaking the role of an Opposition?

The bourgeoisie had failed to establish their own State Power in 1917. But now in 1924 there actually was a structure of State. The structure of a proletarian State it is true—but Lenin had said repeatedly that there was no longer an industrial proletariat. It had disappeared as a class in the course of the Civil War.

Trotsky did not propose that the project should be abandoned, but neither did he withdraw his contention that it could not succeed.

Let us concede, almost a century later, that things worked out in the long run, in accordance with Trotsky's prediction. The Soviet system collapsed about 70 years later, under pressures exerted by proxy

wars with the world capitalist system, a.k.a. the United States. There was a general world market. Russia was unable to seal itself off from it. And the world market got the better of it in the end.

Capitalism failed to industrialise Russia. It was generally agreed that Russia must be industrialised. Lenin proposed the variation of the European mode, of establishing something of the culture that in orthodox Marxism was seen as being the product of capitalist industrialisation and making it the means of Socialist industrialisation. And that was done. But the doing of it was described by Trotsky as *The Revolution Betrayed*. And this was

profoundly inconsistent with his own basic assumption. On that assumption, the alternative to *The Revolution Betrayed* was the Revolution Abandoned As Impossible.

If the industrialisation of Russia was done effectively within an all-pervasive capitalist world-market, even though by a Socialist Government, then it is time the inappropriate idealistic criticism of it was given a rest and a realistic comparison of Soviet and orthodox capitalist industrialisations was undertaken.

**Brendan Clifford**

**TO BE CONTINUED**

mutually beneficial deal', Caulfield wrote" (Irish Times, 14 July).

It's possible that Caulfield's feeling of resentment at the manner in which the EU and Ireland have used the backstop issue is widely felt across British society. Reports in the British media confirm that opposition to the White Paper is coming from both wings of the Conservative Party. A report in the *Guardian* reported a senior MP saying that "*the local associations are in complete turmoil*". The Tory revolt seems to have arisen from a conviction that a soft Brexit will lead to the worst possible outcome: being partially tied to the EU without having any power to influence it.

An important initiative from the *European Research Group*, a pro-Brexit grouping chaired by Jacob Rees Mogg, was the tabling of four Amendments to a *Customs Bill*, which was debated in Parliament on Monday July 16th. The Amendments related to four issues: ruling out a Customs Union with the EU without primary legislation; saying Britain can't collect tariffs for the EU unless the EU does the same for Britain; demanding that Britain must have a separate VAT policy to that of the EU; and ruling out different customs arrangements for Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

These Amendments challenged the strategy mapped out at the Chequers meeting and subsequent *White Paper*. In what can be described as a *volte face*, Theresa May decided to accept them while claiming they were consistent with her Chequers strategy; all four were passed. This caused Anna Soubry, a leading Tory Remainer, to assert in Parliament that the Government is being run by Jacob Rees Mogg.

It is impossible to know what lay behind May's change of course. The gathering revolt against a soft Brexit and fear of losing a crucial Commons vote are obvious causes but another factor was beginning to make itself felt during the weekend prior to the vote: a growing clamour for a second referendum led by Lord Peter Mandelson.

The significance of Mandelson's intervention was that, as a prominent supporter of EU membership, he was arguing that a hard Brexit was preferable to a half-way house. If there is one objective that Theresa May is committed to, it is the effective delivery of Brexit. Manipulating events so that the voters are forced to vote again is clearly anathema to her. The possibility that her difficulties with the Rees Mogg grouping might be exploited by Mandel-

## July Brexit Summary

There have been important developments during July and all of them have been in British politics. Following the Brussels summit of 28/29 June, at which the European Council simply recognised the continuing slow progress in the negotiations, the focus of attention moved to a much-hyped meeting of the British Cabinet scheduled for Friday July 6th at the Prime Minister's Chequers country retreat.

Initially it seemed that May would succeed in building a consensus around a fudge that all strands of the Conservative Party could agree on. The key proposals in the Chequers blueprint were a Free Trade Agreement for goods and agri-food products, a joint institutional framework to oversee UK-EU agreements, and a '*Facilitated Customs Arrangement*'. Leading Brexiteers—like Michael Gove, Andrea Leadsom and Liam Fox—all endorsed it in media interviews. But, by the end of the weekend, Brexit Secretary David Davis and Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson had both resigned.

As political events, these resignations lacked the force to derail May's strategy—Davis had been frozen out of the chain of command in the negotiating team since the team's top civil servant, Ollie Robbins, began directly reporting to Theresa May, probably in January, and Davis took the sting out of Johnson's resignation by publicly describing it as unnecessary—yet, as the days passed, it became clear that unhappiness with the fudge went deeper than the two Ministers.

The White Paper promised at Chequers was duly published on July 12th. Its main points were summarised by Cliff Taylor as follows:

"In general it underlines the move to a softer version of Brexit signalled after the recent meeting of the UK cabinet at Chequers. It envisages a close trading and economic relationship between the UK and the EU in the years ahead, particularly for goods and ongoing close co-operation in other areas. The UK is seeking an 'association agreement' with the EU, covering trade, security, foreign policy and membership of EU agencies covering areas such as aviation and pharma. It proposes a 'free-trade area' with the EU, meaning no customs duties or tariffs on goods. And the plan confirms that the UK wants to continue to follow EU rules, regulations and product standards for goods and agricultural products. However it wants the UK parliament to decide if it will adopt any new EU rules. And the UK would set its own regulations for services and the digital economy" (Irish Times, 12 July).

The Brexiteers employed a tactic of staggered resignations in opposition to the White Paper. The list of Junior Ministers and Ministerial aides who stood down includes: Steve Baker, Chris Green, Conor Burns, Scott Mann, Whitney Robert Courts. Referring to the resignations of two Conservative Vice Chairs, Maria Caulfield and Bed Bradley, Denis Staunton wrote:

"In their letters of resignation both cited May's commitment last December to agree a backstop to prevent a hard Border as a key factor in pushing her towards a soft Brexit. 'For me the backstop agreement for Northern Ireland was neither necessary or constructive for the future prosperity of the UK. Having strong links to the Republic of Ireland, I feel the backstop position is not appropriate and should have been rejected. It has been used by the EU as a way of blocking a



son, Tony Blair and the rest of the Remain lobby may have played a role in her change of tack.

The response of the *Irish Times* to all this has been interesting. A column by Stephen Collins was well summarised by its title: "*The time for Irish grandstanding on Brexit is over*" (12 July). The gist of it was that the Government and Opposition should be open to accepting a watered down 'backstop'. Another article headed, "*Brexit: The dream is over. The nightmare continues*", from Denis Staunton, reported on the resignations and the state of play at Westminster, and concluded by speculating that there may no longer be a Commons majority for the types of Brexit now on offer. Because of this, Staunton believed that an extension to the Article 50 negotiation period may be on the cards, "*a delay that could last for years or lead to a second referendum that could stop Brexit altogether*" (14 July).

I suppose we should not be surprised that Anglophile journalists are reporting the Brexit story in a manner in which the ultimate goal is always a close Anglo Irish relationship.

The coverage of Collins and Staunton was tame, however, compared to statement from another of their colleagues. A feature in the *Irish Times* edition that carried Staunton's article was headed: "*Fintan O'Toole: There is nothing undemocratic about voting again on Brexit*". It culminates in the following punchline:

"There is only the horribly complicated, utterly compromised and ultimately humiliating Brexit offered in this week's White Paper. Would the British people ever have voted for that? There is only one way to find out—ask them."

What stands out about this article is that it makes no pretence at catering for an Irish audience; it is targeted directly at the liberal wing of the British political class, fully confident of having influence in the British debate; and it may indeed have had such influence. In Fintan O'Toole's world, Ireland and Britain have somehow become a single entity. This may be par for the course in the Irish Anglophile discourse, but it is unlikely to sit well in the heartlands of English Conservatism.

It would be supremely ironic if it turns out that, by using the White Paper to make a case for a second referendum, Fintan O'Toole, like Peter Mandelson, actually helped push Theresa May into a revived marriage of convenience with the much underrated Jacob Rees Mogg.

**Dave Alvey**

## Garda Chief Drew Harrison

In an article on the appointment of Drew Harris as Garda Commissioner (Analysis: Garda commissioner appointment 'like Man City signing the Man Utd manager', Irish Examiner, 30 June) your Security Correspondent, Cormac O'Keefe, reported on misgivings expressed by Irish security sources concerning the appointment.

He reported that in 2012 Mr Harris put late evidence into the Smithwick Tribunal, set up to examine claims of collusion by a garda in the IRA murders of two RUC officers in 1989. Irish security sources, reportedly, told the Irish Examiner that this late intervention "aggravated and annoyed" Garda security services who said that no evidence was produced to back up the claim.

Regardless of the rights and wrongs of that particular case the fact remains that the officer who has just been appointed Garda Commissioner, and therefore head of the Irish security services, was in active dispute with our security service on behalf of the UK State a few short years ago. That there is a degree of cooperation between the security services of Ireland and the UK does not mean that their differing allegiances have disappeared.

The problem is compounded by a prevailing view in governing circles that the national tradition should no longer be celebrated. It is most unlikely that this anti-national viewpoint will amount to more than a passing fad. Like all nation states worthy of the name the Irish State needs to honour its origins and in no area is that more important than in the conservative area of national security. Personnel of the defence and security forces, necessarily, must pledge allegiance to the State.

Mr Harris is not responsible for the anti-national view that unfortunately continues to have influence in our Republic but its existence makes his appointment more problematic. The Irish public needs to know that the security services are run by officers loyal to the national tradition of the State.

**Dave Alvey**

Irish Political Review Group  
*Irish Examiner* 5.7.18

### Unpublished letter to *Irish Times*

## Gay patriots?

In her article "*Does it matter if some of our patriots were gay?*" (June 30th) Dr Elaine Sisson, in discussing Patrick Pearse, Dr Kathleen Lynn and Roger Casement, displayed a capacity for speculative musing while concrete evidence was sparse.

Regarding Casement she claimed "...his sexual encounters recorded in the *Black Diaries* were initially denounced as fake" with the implication there now was universal acceptance of the diaries as valid and authentic. This is misleading.

From 1916 down to today there has been a school of opinion that extensive forgery took place. This was not grounded on prejudice towards any group but on an awareness of many anomalies in their content, physical appearance and history and the strangely restricted nature of both their public presentation as well as the discourse surrounding them. **Tim O'Sullivan** (18.7.18)

A Comment on the Sisson article which appeared on the *Irish Times* website:

### **Maythe4thbwithu**

"Revisionism at it's horrible best, you can't prove anything but instead publish seeds of doubt so they can be used as facts and antidotes for people who wish to propagate a certain political agenda"

# Does It Up

## Stack ?

### IRISH WATER

We in Ireland have had six weeks without rain this Summer. One weather expert has stated that seventeen consecutive days without rain constitutes a drought in Ireland and so we've had a severe drought. This will have consequences over the Winter because the yield on many crops is very low and Winter fodder for cattle, particularly for dairy cows, is likely to be very scarce in the early months of next year. There was talk and discussion in the media last year of drawing a huge supply of water from the River Shannon to supply the Dublin area but that talk is muted now because the River Shannon is very low, due to the drought. Recently a new higher figure for water-leak wastage has emerged at 60%. It is estimated that 60% of all the treated potable water in Dublin is wasted through leakage and public water main bursts.

This is a great national scandal. It is a scandal because the Government has known of the wastage problem for twenty years or more and nothing was done about it when the Government had the money, and when construction costs were lower. Nothing constructive was done about the leakage but the politicians established Irish Water, which is apparently a legal entity to which all the County Councils and City Councils transferred the ownership of all the publicly-owned waterworks, all the piping, all the water supply network, and the staff.

At one point in time, it seemed to emerge that Irish Water was owned by a limited company registered in the UK but that story was quickly submerged again. The citizenry was kept diverted by a long controversy about paying for water and not only for water, but then waste-water and sewerage was brought briefly into the public debate and it was proposed to charge everybody for fresh water supply and waste-water disposal. The introduction of the charges was done in such a cack-handed way that the public rebelled. Politicians made a political issue of Water Charges and so, incredibly—the Charges were dropped. Many people had dutifully paid their Water Charges—to their amaze-

ment, they were just as dutifully repaid back by the Government or by Irish Water! The tax-payer paid in any event, no doubt.

So what is Irish Water doing? It is being funded by the taxpayer but no one knows exactly on what basis. And no one, except possibly the Government, knows who owns Irish Water. As the saying goes in Gaelic there is "*uisce fé thalamh*" here. The translation of which means that "*something hidden is going on*".

It is not as if bursting water mains are a peculiarly Irish problem. The ancient Cretan people had water pipes 5,000 or 6,000 years ago in the Palace at Knossos and 500 hundred years ago the Palace at Hampton Court near London, England was supplied with water through a water-main made of lead (not good for the health but maybe they did not know that). However, in Ireland and throughout Europe and the USA most of the mains were made of cast iron and were laid in the 19th century and early 20th century. In the past twenty or thirty years the cast iron pipes have come to the end of their useful lives, having been corroded and oxidised by various elements in the soils in which they were laid and by the water running through them. Such pipes are being slowly—too slowly—replaced by polyvinylchloride (PVC) pipes which are said to be corrosive resistant.

The 60% water wastage in Dublin—and similarly throughout Ireland no doubt—is one part of the expense which could be saved if the pipes were replaced faster. Another saving will come from the savings in costs of pumping water through new pipes rather than through the old furred up pipes.

We see Government spending money on cultural and entertainment venues and events centres (which in Cork have never appeared) and on extravagant refurbishment of offices when the resources should be devoted to the provision of safe water for the future.

### THE IRISH CRASH 2008

After I had read the excellent review by Dave Alvey of *'The Fall of the Celtic Tiger—Ireland and the Euro Debt Crisis'* in *Irish Political Review*, March 2018, I got hold of the book and it is indeed one of the best books written about the Irish Crash. I can remember exactly where I was in September 2008 when I heard on the radio, news of the vast transfers of money between Anglo-Irish Bank and the Building Society for window dressing their Balance Sheets and for covering up the Director's borrowings. I knew it was

catastrophic. Listening to that news was a similar experience to listening to the news of John F. Kennedy's assassination. The world was literally rocking on its foundations.

The move by the Irish Government to guarantee the deposits in the Banks up to 100,000 Euros per person was a very sensible move to calm the anxieties of ordinary depositors—most of whom had nothing like 100,000 Euros on deposit but who were very frightened of losing the little they had. What was questionable though was the Government Guarantee of the Banks' liabilities to other banks, because it was those liabilities which had led to the Crash. When Anglo-Irish Bank was lending out huge loans to Irish businessmen, it was enabled to do so by borrowing from German, French, UK and Swiss Banks at a very low rate of interest. Interest is the price of money and when the price is low it means there is low demand for it. German, French, UK and Swiss Banks had plenty of money and they had to lend it out, even at a low rate, in order to earn their profits. Anglo-Irish Bank had tapped into this source of money and borrowed heavily and made big profits on paper because the Bank and its auditors had not made sufficient provision for bad debts.

At the Annual General Meetings of Bank of Ireland and Allied Irish Banks (AIB), the shareholders hotly questioned why Bank of Ireland and AIB were not making big profits like Anglo-Irish Bank. The whips were out and the Directors of Bank of Ireland and AIB caved in: they too started to borrow from abroad at a low rate and so their profits also increased because the Banks and their respective Auditors did not provide properly for bad debts. This is the basic cause of the Crash.

The experts who actually saw and knew what was going on were the Bank's Directors, the Bank's Auditors, the Regulators, the Stockbroker's Analysts and the Chief Executives of all of these entities. They all saw and knew what was going on and they kept silent. They all dined in the same top-class restaurants and most met each other in the top society golf clubs. They knew and they were profiting.

They mostly would also be familiar with Senior Public Servants and with Government Ministers, with whom most of them dined from time to time—but it does seem that the Public Servants and Ministers did not really know what was going on. Surely, you might say, the Minister for Finance had on his Ministerial Staff an Analyst to keep an eye on the

Balance Sheets of Public Companies, such as the Banks, but apparently he did not have such expertise available to him. This aspect of the Irish Crash is not adequately covered in *'The Fall of the Celtic Tiger'*.

With regard to the *"international belief that financial markets could be left to self-regulate"*: this belief is of course fostered by financiers who do not want regulation—and most of them don't as they find it anathema to their practices. It is quite true, from an economist's point of view, that financial markets will inevitably self-regulate in that the losers will go to the wall and so the winners will get stronger. Economically speaking. In the case of the Irish Crash, the initial losers were the Banks and those foreign Banks which lent to the Irish Banks. But economics was not allowed into the equation. The foreign banks, through their Governments and through the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), were able to put Ireland on the torture rack because Ireland as a State owed so much and would in future need to borrow more, and all this would be denied to Ireland unless it accepted responsibility for the Irish Banks' borrowings, which it then did. Ireland has been a good pupil and so Ireland can keep its lollipops, i.e. its ability to borrow—and the Irish taxpayers will be paying for it for generations.

#### UNMANNED ELECTRIC CARS

At Dublin's Circuit Civil Court, Mr. John Leahy on behalf of his son Seán (aged 5) sued Ms Fiona Bonke because, after she got out of her electric car by the passenger door, the car drove off by itself across a car park and knocked down young Seán, breaking his leg. And then the car ploughed on until it crashed into a parked car. This was not only a terrifying experience for the young boy and his mother but poor Ms Bonke's testimony in court showed how traumatised she was by the whole incident. One just doesn't expect to exit one's car and then see it flying off on its own to cause mayhem and chaos. It was pure luck that no one else was injured or killed.

When will electric/unmanned cars be legally banned by our Government? Surely somewhere along the line, the Elon Musks of this world have to be faced down. Or will nothing happen until a lot more mayhem eventually causes people to say enough is enough? Multinational Corporations cannot always win, especially if the public starts to turn by not buying their computerised products!

Michael Stack ©

## Some Pandy For Prince Charles?

It was the stuff of dreams. Like when you'd just awakened from a long slumber. Nature had overdone it. It was with trepidation that the British Prince, Charles, recently visited Ireland. His itinerary included Cork and Kerry. If he could get away with it there, he'd make it anywhere. It was a bit like New York. It would be the icing on the cake. The cherries in the mix. The currants that adorned. (In Cork they say there are currants for ating and raisins for everything. In Kerry they just say *"a fruit cake"*.)

Afterwards he said he saw it all at last. The Kingdom. Little does he know. He'd not seen the *"yalla bundas"* (yellow buns) in the little windows along Blackpool. *"A shilling each. Two for a half-crown."* But he had seen *Siamsa Tíre* in Kerry. All that culture.

The people behaved with dignity. No tipping of the cap. No fawning like that which blemished the Rebel County. Especially when herself called in, that time. Yes, the English Market. How sad! But those young wans, such cheek.

Prince was on the go all the while. But he never saw Strand Road, with the boys strutting to the Mall on Saturday nights. Hair-dos plastered in oil and grease. Trouser creases, like blades. Cocks-o-the-walk. Making shapes. Flexing it. Jingling coins in pockets. Glaring at boys from the Rock and Boherbee who dared venture into the interior. Dangerous stuff.

The whirr of the electric hare in the greyhound track. The traps springing open. The So-Ho. The ivories tinkling in the piano in the Grand. Farmers exiting pubs along Castle Street. Counting shekels. Reeling. Seeking balance. Making for the next pub.

Young ones teetering on high-heels. All mascara. Making for the Ashe or the C.G. The blare of the band. Elvis drawing all. Hollywood re-incarnated. A thousand Marilyn and Lisas. Smothered in lipstick and eye-shadow. Trying to be Dietrich. Seeking Clarke, Gregory or Brad. Settling for Johnny, or Mick. Or a prince! On a white horse. There was one in town. Too late. Too late.

Charlie had gone to Cork too. More restraint this time. A gush of young ones. More disciplined. Here, Prince. Here,

boy, here. And the sad English Market. Inevitably. Less fawning. Why does he keep touching his coat pocket? And the way he keeps adjusting his tie! Like he's about to choke.

In Kerry it was more of the same. But less. People were not over-bothered. Now if the Gooch had appeared!

Charlie went to Derrynane. Had to. The home of Big Dan [O'Connell]. It was all like a dream alright.

Oh, the blinding beauty of it all. Those beaches, inlets, rocks and cliffs. Sand like powder. Staggering. Big Dan was a must. A smuggler from a long line of smugglers. A tax avoider visiting a tax evader. Dan's lot were King's men, all the way. Dan had gone looking for Robert Emmet. How dare he undo The Crown! That young fellow, Emmet. Maurice 'Hunting Cap' O'Connell had been a Brit Look-Out. He warned of the French approach. An informer. Oh, the *sean-bhean bocht* [poor old woman]. The French are on the sea.

Charlie was now trying to talk through closed teeth. Beautiful place. Kerry.

When the Famine Queen had visited, she said *"Scotland was the most beautiful part of my Empire. Until I saw Kerry."* This set off an explosion of holiday-makers. All keen on seeing the denizens. In their habitat. The Killarney jarvies were on the make. Giddy-up. And there it lies. The capital. Tralee. The sheltered strand. *Trágh-lé*.

Then there's Puck Fair, the Festival of Kerry, The Rose, Ballybunion, Ballyheigue, Dingle, Listowel—if he was into books—Listowel. Then Fenit, Blennerville, The Spa, Dingle, Brandon, The Reeks, Kenmare, Caherciveen. On and on it goes. Never ending. Don't forget The Conor Pass. Or The Healy Pass. Mind the vertigo.

Don't forget 'The Wild colonial Boy', Jack Duggan. Castlemaine, Sneem, Lixnaw, Ardfart, Castlecove, Iveragh, Ladies view, the Lakes, the Black Valley. Puck. Did he visit Puck? Did he down copious pints there? Nearly, Caragh Lake. Mysterious. Hidden. A haven. Beautiful Glenbeigh. Those purple beaches, after rain. But then, it's always after rain. Or just before rain. All fresh and green.

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## TAX continued

### ALL PROMISE: NO DELIVERY

A great opportunity was lost when the Fine Gael/Labour Government did not carry through the introduction of a Site Value Tax (SVT), which was on the 2011 Programme for Government, because they could not agree a way of assessing land values. Instead they introduced a Property Tax, which discourages the maximum development of land and property, because it taxes improvements, while SVT encourages them.

The current Government decision to refund €173 million, paid by 990,000 house-holders, four weeks prior to Christmas 2017 was surely one of the most cynical and opportunist political strokes since Lynch abolished the Domestic Rates following the 1977 General Election.

Their implementation of Property Tax is another example! Our Property Tax already looks fairly insignificant to many Europeans who pay a lot more for local services.

It will only raise about half the amount the Troika originally demanded. For now, the tax is expected to raise around €500m a year, which is roughly 0.25pc of the State's debt pile.

The Property Tax and the introduction of Water Charges was a non-negotiable condition of the Troika's bailout and now they are talking about tax cuts!

### HENRY GEORGE

"In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, George's proposed reform was widely advocated, as by Winston Churchill in Britain and Sun Yat Sen in China. It used to be a plank in the platform of the Australian Labor Party and, when it was removed, Clyde Cameron, a veteran 'Old Labour' man, complained that Labor had lost its way" (John Young, *Newsweekly*, Melbourne, 21.4.2018).

"George's works are still relevant today, not just for his land philosophy but for his more general social principles. He had a natural moral law approach, maintaining that basic economic principles are moral principles. His most famous work, *Progress and Poverty*, has four chapters refuting the claim of Thomas Malthus that the world was becoming over-populated.

"A misunderstanding that has made some people suspicious of George is that he was a land socialist, advocating that all land should belong to the government.

In fact, he advocated no such thing. He maintained that land should remain in private hands, but that the gains arising from the unimproved value belongs by right to the people as a whole, and should be taken by the government instead of taxing what we earn.

"George wrote: 'We propose leaving land in the private possession of individuals, with full liberty on their part to give, sell, or bequeath it, simply to levy on it for public purposes a tax'..." (quotation from Henry George, *The Condition of Labor*, p8—John Young, *Newsweekly*, Melbourne, 21.4.2018).

### MICHAEL DAVITT AND HENRY GEORGE

"After reading *Progress and Poverty* by Henry George in Portland Prison, Michael Davitt become convinced that

land nationalisation was the solution to the Irish land problem. Land was no man's creation, a community resource to be owned by the state. Under state ownership, Davitt saw each tenant enjoying full security in his farm subject to the payment of an annual tax equal to the valuation of the land. Such a development, it was suggested, would end speculation and encourage the optimum use of land. He eventually accepted tenant proprietorship, but land nationalisation remained his first choice from 1882 until his death" (*Michael Davitt Remembered* by Bernard O'Hara, 1984, The Michael Davitt National Memorial Association, Straide, Co. Mayo).

We'll return to the Davitt/George connection at another time!

\*\*\*\*\*

## Charles

continued

Don't forget Muckcross, The Upper Lake, the Lower Lake, Beaufort, the Black Valley. And far off, The Skelligs. Where the monks knelt. And sea-birds hovered and fishermen cast a line and lifted oysters from warm waters. And hawks circled overhead, measure the 'if' or the 'when' of the dive and the sea-birds made white bands around the great rocks. Their squawks like cries for help. The reverberating winds orchestrated their own music, rising and falling, but never achieving a crescendo, as a mysterious conductor, unseen, brandished his baton.

No, he didn't see Puck. Gathering Day, Hosting Day, Scattering Day. He didn't see the breakers pounding off Ballyunion. The donkey-rides. The Castle Hotel. "*The Pale Moon was Rising*. So haunting in the night air. The dance-hall throb. He'd really seen so little.

They gave him a Kerry jersey. The Green and Gold. Next he'll be in Croker.

In Derrynane Chas and Camilla entered the Dining Room. A flunkey came in pushing a trolley bearing a pig's head. Everyone stood up. The royal pair sat down. "*Any chance of some Pandey?*" asked Chas, holding up his knife and fork, his elbows on the table.

A pianist was tinkling away. "*Will he no come back again?*"

John Morgan (Lt. Col., ret'd.)

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## TAX continued

2007. Shrewsbury Road was the sixth most expensive street in the world" (*ibid.*).

Most of this is down to speculation, the investment by taxpayers in local transport and amenities, the general community development in Ballsbridge, and the agglomeration effects of firms and populations to Dublin, which makes the central location of Ballsbridge highly sought after. Hence, everyone should benefit from this value capture and not just the owners. This is the principle of Land Value Tax.

A block of land bought 50 years ago in any major Irish city will typically be worth today many times its original value, even after allowing for Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases. But that is not because the building has become more valuable: it is due to a rise in the unimproved value of the land.

### AGRICULTURAL LAND

A Land Value Tax (LVT) effectively applies to the 'site' value of land, regardless of what use the land is put to, or whether the land is occupied by buildings, or is vacant.

The value upon which the tax is applied is based principally on the location of the land, and the potential development opportunities within the planning framework for such land.

In such a system, agricultural land in rural Ireland would have an relatively low value for LVT purposes but a city centre plot, or zoned land adjacent to a town or city, would obviously have a considerably higher value for land tax purposes.

For land zoned for development, there would be a major impetus to either develop such land oneself, or sell on such land to a developer, as holding on to such land would carry a hefty annual tax.

The theory goes that by taxing the site value of the property, the owners of under-utilised land will be forced to put the land to better use.

And, as it forces building developments to go up, rather than out, urban sprawl is reduced.

The Land Value Taxation results in a more vibrant land market, rather than developers hoarding land for decades.

The introduction of LVT and its application to all activities on land would

shift the underlying incentives of the system and help solve many of our present problems. Each site would be taxed on a proportion of the current annual rental value of the land. Obviously, this would be low for agriculture and higher for businesses and residents. With an effective rate, less tax would need to be collected on the productive improvements made upon sites in terms of labour, VAT, Corporation Tax, and so on. This shifts resources from unproductive to productive activities.

### ASSESSMENT

The existing Local Authority staff, currently assessing rateable valuations, could easily assess site values, as whole blocks of land would have the same value, whereas individual buildings with multi-occupation are very difficult to assess.

When the commercial tax is in place, the same team can assess residential site values. Subsequently site values can be reassessed in alternate years, as is done in Denmark, where the system has been in place for decades. The cost of administering the system there is about 1 1/2 per cent of annual revenue for the tax.

Record €5.8m for 101-acre farm in Cork auction (*Irish Examiner, Farming, 21.6.2018*) It is an exceptional property in terms of quality, size, rarity and proximity to the southern capital.

"After a very sluggish start and a single bid of €2m (€19,800/acre), the bidding took off quickly from that point. The process then developed into a protracted battle between two solicitors, who made 30 bids between them. There were probably other interested parties there, but they didn't get a look-in once that process kicked in, and the bids started coming in €100,000 increments. We adjourned once it reached €5m, and it was then put on the market."

The final price of about €57,400 per acre dwarfs anything else achieved in Munster so far this year or, indeed, for a very long time (*Irish Examiner, Farming, 21.6.2018*)

### PROPERTY TAX IN IRELAND

In Ireland, we already have two forms of property tax, these being the local Property Tax, and the relatively new Vacant Sites Levy which, with effect from 1st January 2019, will yield a vacant site levy of 3% of the market value of a site, rising to 7% in 2020.

A Land Value Tax would go much

further than the Vacant Site Levy, by extending to all properties in the country.

There's an elephant in the room, however: ownership of land by farmers has been decreasing since the 1990s, with retired farmers, investors, hobby farmers, speculators, and alternative usages, all diluting the ownership of actively-farmed land by active farmers.

Ironically, imposition of a LVT, like the one currently being considered in Scotland, might make land more affordable for farmers, because such a tax would strip away the incentive to use land simply as a store of wealth.

With this system in full operation, as land prices increased, so would the amount of revenue taken by the Government. As a result, the selling price would remain low. Land speculation would become a thing of the past, because the owner would have no way of gaining a financial benefit by holding on to his land in the hope of future gains.

The boom-and-bust conditions that periodically disrupt the economy are due in large part to the rise in land prices, fuelled by speculation. Prices keep rising until land becomes unaffordable and the price crashes. But, with the land revenue system fully operative, this source of instability would be eliminated.

### VESTED INTERESTS

Of course, vested interests oppose any such reform, just as they oppose relaxation of the containment policies which are doing such harm. But the more powerful the opposition, the more strongly we should advocate sound solutions.

There are many well-endowed property investors in the political and judicial Establishment. Could it be that there's a powerful lobby for keeping the land banks and the derelict sites and the ghost estates empty, in the hope that we might have another boom and they could be sold at exorbitant prices? A percentage of which might then go back to the Government by way of a Property Tax.

One in five TDs and Ministers are landlords, or owners of investment properties, according to the new Dáil register of declared interests (*Irish Independent, 14.2.2018*), which might be a fair reason for their reluctance to abolish negative gearing. Negative gearing is a form of financial leverage whereby an investor borrows money to acquire an income-producing investment.



A **land/location value tax** (L.V.T), also called a **site valuation tax**, split rate **tax**, or **site,value** rating, is an *ad valorem*\* levy on the unimproved **value** of **land**. Unlike **property taxes**, it disregards the **value** of buildings, personal property and other improvements to real estate.

## A Land Value Tax?

**Henry George** (1839,97) was an American who made his name as a land reformer and economist with his first book *Our Land Policy* (1871), which, as *Progress and Poverty*, 1879, advocated imposition of 100% tax on land values.

In various forms and titles, his principle of a Land Tax has been adopted and implemented in countries all over the world. Of late, his proposal has resulted in the Scottish Land Commission (SLC) issuing a notice on *Public Contracts Scotland* asking for contractors to submit tenders to carry out research in to the range of ways Land Value Taxes have been used.

"S.L.C. Chair Andrew Thin said: "Land value taxation has been an important element of the land reform debate in Scotland for several years and the Scottish Government has asked the Commission to look at the potential for land value based taxes" (*The Scottish Farmer*, 7.1.2018).

IBEC, the Employers Organisation has—

"called for the introduction of government interventions to drive down the cost of development land, and a new site value tax to replace commercial rates and the vacant sites levy by 'overhauling property,related incentives and taxes'..." (*Irish Examiner*, 19.6.2018).

Even *The Economist*, London, wrote: "*Land,value tax—Why Henry George had a point.—Ideal in theory, elusive in*

*practice: the case making landowners pay for the benefits which location gives them"* (2.4.2015).

"You would think that a country which had made international headlines for its speculation on property would be gagging to show the world it can introduce a Site Value tax, which has been used to some degree in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark and elsewhere. The tax would give local government a steady stream of income, instead of boom/bust,prone development levies" (Victoria White, *Irish Examiner*, 27.9.2012)

### URBAN CONTAINMENT POLICY

Economist Colm McCarthy states that urban containment policy played a major role in the formation of the housing bubble in Ireland, especially in Dublin:

"Ireland passed its first major piece of land-use planning legislation in 1963, modelled on the UK's Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The intentions were laudable, to restrict the construction of

unwelcome developments and to empower local authorities to take a more active role in shaping the built environment. There was no desire to screw up the residential house market, but is eventually what happened" (*New Geography*, Wendell Cox, 11.9.2013).

### UNIMPROVED VALUE OF LAND

McCarthy concentrates particularly on the way that urban containment policy has contributed to this by limiting development around urban areas, thus forcing up prices by restricting the amount of land available.

But it is worth examining another issue closely related to this one, namely, the question of who should receive the return from the unimproved value of land.

Henry George maintained that the Government should take the revenue from the unimproved capital value of land instead of taxing what people earn.

"The benefits from rising land values are currently being captured by land monopolists that arise primarily from the community development around them. For instance, there are stark differences between location costs for individuals and firms in Dublin, Waterford, and Kerry. The most expensive house last year sold for €8.4 million on Shrewsbury Road in Dublin 4. Purchased in 1987, it was reported that this eight bedroom property with an outdoor swimming pool required a lot of investment to bring it up to the standards of other properties in the area" (Frank Crowley, UCC, *Irish Examiner*, 18.10.2017).

"The bricks and mortar of that house would not have changed considerably in that period. It does not cost millions to maintain a house like this over a thirty year period so most of the cost to the new owners is the land value of its location (in

\* An *ad valorem* tax (Latin for "according to value") is a tax whose amount is based on the value of a transaction or of property. It is typically imposed at the time of a transaction, as in the case of a Sales Tax or Value-Added Tax (VAT).

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