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The Taoiseach Apologises For— What?

The Taoiseach has made an apology on behalf of the State to all those who were unjustly punished under the draconian Penal Laws brought in by the State against homosexuality. Unfortunately he did not name any of those victims, and we cannot bring any of them to mind.

It now seems to be common ground amongst all parties—or between their leaders at least—that the Irish state that was formed by ballot and bullet, in conflict with Britain, almost a century ago, was a thoroughly reactionary and oppressive institution. It had neither homosexual marriage nor abortion on demand. Those oppressions have now been lifted and Ireland is free—except for the Six Counties. And the new Sinn Fein leader has issued the slogan: "*The North is Next!*". And Fine Gael and Fianna Fail agree.

We cannot recall any of the trials that criminalised homosexuals. The only ones we can recall happened in Britain. And we do not recall the British apologising for prosecuting homosexuals under the anti-homosexual laws which it chose to introduce—except in the case of code-breaker Alan Turing, who kept Britain afloat in its second War on Germany by reading the German naval codes.

Turing was castrated chemically. He agreed to be castrated as an alternative to being imprisoned. He committed suicide soon after.

How were homosexuals punished under Irish law? Did none of the convicted homosexuals write a Memoir describing how they were punished. Many of the English did. Peter Wildeblood's *Against The Law* was a best-seller in the 1950s.

And when exactly did the Dail bring in the law to punish homosexual conduct? We have come across no reference to it. Could it be that there was no Irish law, only the British law which was continued in Ireland under the terms of the 'Treaty', according to which the Free State was a Successor State of the British, preserving British laws and assuming responsibility for the British political violence directed against the Irish Government elected in 1918.

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Ireland, Brexit and the future of the EU. Part 5

The Austerity Debate

This article is an examination of and response to Sinn Fein's discussion document, *The Future of the Eurozone* by Emma Clancy on the question of austerity.

Clancy's case against EU austerity is set out in a Chapter entitled, "Eurozone's permanent austerity based on failed ideology". She opens by stating that US President Herbert Hoover's austerity policy following the 1929 stock market collapse

is universally acknowledged to have turned a market collapse into the Great Depression of the 1930s. Borrowing a phrase from US economist Paul Krugman, she attributes Hoover's policy to a mistaken belief that market *confidence* can only be restored by cutting public spending and increasing taxes; austerity as an economic policy is thus based on what Krugman calls the *confidence theory*. Clancy gives the

Schrödinger's Border Solution Found: *Dead Cat Bounces*

On 31st May the *Sun* newspaper carried an exclusive story headlined "*Ulster Fry Up—David Davis devises 10 mile wide trade buffer zone along Northern Ireland border to break deadlock in Brexit talks*".

A sub-heading stated: "*Brexit Secretary's radical scheme to give Northern Ireland joint EU and UK status could anger the DUP, whose 10 MPs are propping up Theresa May's minority government*" and the story went on to say that "*Under the radical blueprint, the province would operate a double-hatted regime of European and British regulations at the same time, so it can trade freely with both.*"

This is the first proposal from the British side that has come anywhere near addressing conceptually the practical issues raised for Northern Ireland by Britain's decision to leave the EU. It has a 'back of an envelope' feel to it and no details were given on how it would work in practice,

standard Keynesian retort to Hoover's faulty logic:

"The effect of implementing austerity in a period of economic downturn was to cause a contraction in the economy, thus weakening the economy further, causing tax revenues and national income to fall, and the deficit to increase" (p. 8).

These points are indisputable in relation to the US economy in the 1930s. Clancy then describes how austerity policies pursued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Africa, Asia and Latin America in the decades before the global

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

A Bribe and Irish Labour!

(Thomas Johnson, Irish Labour leader 1917-1927)

(back page)

EDITORIAL NOTE

Part 8 of the Russian Revolution series will appear in the July *Irish Political Review*

The elected Republic of 1919-21 set about creating its own system of laws. And one of its guiding principles was that it might borrow from any foreign system of law, but not from the British Common Law. We have not heard that it was contemplating a law to penalise homosexuality. Anyhow, it was swept away by the 'Treaty' and the Successor State of the Empire established under it. And, when the Anti-Treaty Party won the 1932 Election, it was not practical to begin again from scratch, *a la* January 1919. The great body of British law carried over by the Successor State of the Empire had to be left in place, and we suspect that that is the law that was repealed, after Britain itself had repealed it at home.

The Taoiseach's party is the party that, under the British mandate of the 'Treaty', preserved in Ireland the British law, to whose victims he now apologises. Should he not have made it clear that he was apologising for British law?

As to the victims of this law: there was a very famous homosexual couple at the centre of social and artistic life in Dublin during a long era from the 1940s onwards: Micheal Mac Liammoir and Hilton Edwards. They were notoriously a homosexual couple, running the Gate Theatre. And they were *camp*. At least MacLiammoir was. We never heard that the law interfered with them. But in London Sir John Gielgud was prosecuted.

The Taoiseach also said that there were homosexuals amongst the founders of the state. But, again, he did not name any.

However, Ronan McGreavy, who celebrates British influence in Ireland for the *Irish Times* and has been described as a "*protected species*", tells us that Roger Casement was a homosexual, as was demonstrated by his Diary which was "*circulated*" both before and after his trial for treason in 1916.

In fact his Diary was not circulated at all. What was done was that typescripts,

that were said to be of extracts from his Diary, were *shown* to a number of influential public figures in order to deter them from supporting a Petition against executing him. These documents were shown to selected individuals, not *given* to them, by agents of the State, and were immediately taken back again. A little over forty years later a manuscript book, purporting to be Casement's sex Diary, from which the typed extracts shown in 1916 had been copied, was placed in the British Public Record Office. There is no evidence that this manuscript existed in 1916. And there is no evidence that the typescripts shown around in 1916 were in accord with that manuscript.

Those 1916 typescripts are State Papers. It has been said that they exist somewhere. But *where*? Are they open to the public to be examined? It is news to us if they are, and we have been trying to follow the affair.

It is said that they were reproduced in a book, published in France in the mid-1920s, that was compiled with the assistance of Basil Thompson, a British functionary implicated in the affair. But an alleged reproduction of an unavailable original is no proof at all. And if the manuscript Diary put on show in 1959 was forged, then Basil Thompson of Scotland Yard was intimately involved in the business in 1916. (By the mid-twenties he was no longer with Scotland Yard, having been prosecuted for indecent exposure.)

An investigation of the provenance of the 1959 document should have been the starting point of a review of it. And such an investigation must begin with the documents shown in 1916. Is there a comprehensive list of those to whom typescripts were sown in order to facilitate a hanging; have their papers been searched for reference to it; have the responsible agencies of government been probed in the matter? It seems not.

Alfred Noyes, the poet, was working in Washington at the time. He was shown something by a member of the British Embassy and took it on trust. He let the traitor be hanged as a queer without protest. He assumed that what he had been shown would be substantiated by publication of the source from which he was told it had come. But that did not happen. Instead the Government, in reply to questions, denied that it had in its possession any such Casement Diary. Noyes concluded from this that he had been manipulated by means of a fake. It was a reasonable conclusion.

The purpose of the 1916 showings was to touch on the Homophobia in English upper class culture in order to deter protest against the execution of Casement by people who, until August 1914, would have seen him as one of themselves. It had nothing at all to do with Irish nationalist homophobia—supposing that it existed. (As far as we know there was no showing to leaders of the Rebellion in Jail.)

There was great concern about homosexuality in the English upper classes because there was a significant homosexual presence in English upper class life—apparently generated in upper class schools. There were laws to punish it because it was there. It seems to have been generated, along with militarism, on the playing fields of Eton. Although the two went together, it was felt that the homosexuality could not be given its head, as it was in Greece. It was restricted by law while being tolerated as long as a decent veneer of normality was maintained—and some of the best English literature was produced out of those circumstances. Oscar Wilde was sentenced to hard labour, not because he was Irish, but because he made a cult of being Greek, and he forced the issue.

About two generations after the Wilde trial, England de-criminalised homosexual conduct. It did not apologise for having criminalised it. England lives by the laws which it enacts. It has never, in its own affairs, subscribed to the notion that there is a universal law lying beyond positive law, which negates positive law.

If the Taoiseach, on behalf of the Treaty Party, had apologised for the failure of the Free State Government to delete the British law on homosexuality when becoming a Successor State, that would make some sense. But he assumes it to have been Irish law and apologises for it having been law. In effect he denies the authority of the state to make particular laws in matters which are subject to universal law.

But what is universal law in this context? It requires little investigation to see that it is changeable, and that it is the fashion of the moment in the centres of advanced capitalism.

A timeless state of mind, without memory, is what the Taoiseach's apology encourages. That is incompatible with historical existence. But Irish history was given over to Oxbridge about thirty years ago and little of it now survives the Murder Machine—which operates much more thoroughly now than it did in Pearse's time.

Notes On Tax Policy

Ireland has pursued a reputable industrial policy involving targeting multinationals in specific industries: pharmaceuticals and IT (industries with low transport costs as a proportion to value of the product). As a result clusters of skills have developed in Ireland around these industries. In the initial period (1958 to, say, 1987), the selling point for Ireland was low wages, low taxes, and a stable political and economic system.

Nobody gave a damn what Ireland was doing when it was an economic backwater. Unfortunately, we became too successful. The IDA had a policy of "*moving Ireland up the value chain*". We began to attract high-skill jobs in R&D and manufacturing services. Tax has become less important. We have not followed other countries in implementing lower Corporation Taxes. Michael Noonan described our 12.5% as a "*brand*". Changing it either upwards or downwards would send a negative message that industrial policy had changed.

The industrial policy was reputable in the sense that it was not designed to create a tax haven. By tax haven, I mean a policy to facilitate the avoidance of taxes by financial transactions with no economic substance. In Ireland's case the 12.5% taxes had brought jobs (about 150,000) into the country.

However, what has happened is that companies such as Apple, because of their presence here, have implemented aggressive tax policies and have implicated Ireland in these practices. The policy that has grabbed most of the headlines is nothing to do with the 12.5% rate. It is to do with the question of residency. The US considers residency to be where the company is registered, whereas most other countries are where the managerial control is exercised. Accordingly, we had an Apple-owned Irish registered company with no economic substance in Ireland which, according to Irish law, was American, while, according to American law, the company was Irish. In other words, we had a company that ended up not having any residency and therefore no liability to tax. This 'American loophole' has now been closed by Ireland.

The revelation of Apple's tax policies (i.e. companies with no residency) is a red herring in explaining Ireland's economic recovery, but the Left (in particular Varoufakis) have had to come up with some explanation for the Irish economic recovery because the policies pursued by Ireland were diametrically opposed to his prescriptions.

John Martin

Schrödinger

continued

but such details, which might eventually lead to an agreement, could only be negotiated and worked out in cooperation with Michel Barnier's EU Commission Brexit task force. The point is that, after two years of dithering and blithering from Downing Street, the British Minister with responsibility for actually negotiating and producing such an agreement has come up with a possible basis for one.

The ten-mile border buffer zone has a slightly bizarre look to it. According to the Sun:

"The Brexit Secretary is also drawing up a 10 mile-wide buffer zone the length of Northern Ireland's 310 mile border with Ireland.

Dubbed a 'special economic zone', it will be for local traders such as dairy farmers—who make up 90 per cent of the

cross border traffic—and share the same trade rules as south of the border."

It is not clear whether within this zone the inhabitants will be expected to police themselves, or simply please themselves as at present, as to which rules and regulations they follow. The area is to some extent outside the writ of UK law for many practical purposes and Davis' proposal appears to recognise that.

Again, according to the Sun—

"The new plan is a major revision of the 'Maximum Facilitation' option, one of two solutions for a post-Brexit customs agreement. Mr Davis ordered it after he was persuaded to abandon a technology based solution to keep the Irish border open.

Senior Ulster cops warned him that any border infrastructure, even if it's just camera towers or swipe points, would be targeted by IRA bombers, and it would also fall foul of the Good Friday peace agreement.

The tracking of goods, which was another part of the original Max Fac solution to keep goods flowing freely over the border, has also been abandoned because of the Northern Irish's deep rooted concerns about civil liberties."

Since the publication of the UK Government's Brexit position paper on Northern Ireland last August, its preferred and repeatedly proffered solution to the Border conundrum has been a 'technological solution', despite the fact that Theresa May has repeatedly said that there would be 'no new border infrastructure'. This 'Schrödinger's Border' supposition (after the quantum physics thought experiment devised by Erwin Schrödinger in the 1930s, in which it is demonstrated that a cat may be simultaneously alive and dead) has now been accepted by the Department for Exiting the EU (DExEu) as delusional in the real world, on the advice it seems of the PSNI who have to operate within it.

The *Sun* repeatedly pointed out in its article that the proposal would "*anger*" the DUP upon whose support Theresa May depends, and Downing Street was quick to trash the idea. The *Guardian* on 1st June headlined its article on the subject, '*Brexit: No 10 denies idea of joint EU and UK status for Northern Ireland*' and followed with—

"Downing Street has dismissed a mooted idea for a post-Brexit customs deal where Northern Ireland would have EU and UK status and a 'buffer zone' along its border with Ireland, saying it could not accept plans that treated the region differently from the rest of the UK"

—to which one's reaction must be, 'well they would say that wouldn't they'.

David Davis has the responsibility of devising a solution that enables Brexit. Theresa May has the responsibility of keeping her Government in Office for as long as possible in order to deliver Brexit and that, due to her unfortunate decision to call an unnecessary General Election last year, depends on the DUP. There is no real contradiction between these two positions. The latter represents the reality of the current position, the former is a future possibility which is under negotiation.

Reaction to the proposal from the DUP came from Sammy Wilson in a statement on 1st June, who said it "*was at best contradictory*", and specifically queried the precedence of EU and UK regulations:

"The status of the latest leaked proposals about how the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic would be dealt with when we leave the EU

is unclear."

"To suggest that Northern Ireland be tied to both EU and UK regulations, when one of the objectives of leaving the Single Market is to allow the UK to set its own regulations, raises the question: 'Which regulations apply to Northern Ireland if and when the UK and the EU regulations diverge?...'"

This sounds slightly desperate. There can really be no question whose regulations would apply in such a situation. The European Court of Justice already has precedence over the UK's Supreme Court in all matters relating to EU law including civil liberties and human rights issues. Post-Brexit the UK Supreme Court will have full jurisdiction over that part of the UK where EU law no longer applies. If Davis' proposal or something like it were to be adopted, then the UK Supreme Court will be out of the legal food chain regarding Northern Ireland and, one presumes, cases requiring higher decision in matters governed by EU law would be referred by the Northern Ireland appeal courts directly to the ECJ.

Sinn Fein's reaction was somewhat negative, but not entirely so. MEP Martina Anderson worried that the proposal was an attempt to "*hide a hard border in a buffer zone*". This is a well-founded concern. If the idea is that placing technology such as cameras etc. 10 miles or more from the Border would make them physically more defensible, then that is probably true enough, but it would constitute every bit as much of an economic border as placing them on the actual Border. As such, this is unlikely to be any more acceptable to the Irish Government or the EU than to Sinn Fein. However, the BBC also quoted Sinn Fein as saying "*It appears that the British government is finally accepting that a unique solution is required for the north of Ireland*" and that does seem to be the case.

For all that Davis' proposal has been described as '*fantastical*', '*bonkers*', '*Alice in Wonderland*' etc, it represents a significant statement of a shift in Government thinking. Something like it, and Government sources within DExEu have said that they are "*refining their ideas*", is likely to represent the final deal, if there is one.

Theresa May's options regarding this are binary. She can exit the EU, DUP in tow, on March 29th next year with no deal and bring about a crash, not only in the UK economy, but in the EU and global economies in turn. Or, at the last possible moment, she throws the DUP under a big red Brexit bus, secures a workable Brexit deal with the EU granting the UK an absolutely essential two-year transition period (the 'no deal' Brexit idea is being demonstrably undermined on a daily

basis now, with Airbus threatening to disinvest at the time of writing), and lets the domestic political chips fall where they will.

Schrödinger's eponymous cat, which could be alive and dead at the same time, was only ever a thought experiment in theoretical physics, not a programme for practical politics.

*

The DUP has protested that any attempt to keep Northern Ireland within the Customs Union and Single Market (and thereby impose a 'border' in the Irish Sea) would be unconstitutional. In doing so they appear to be relying on the *Good Friday Agreement* in which the principle of consent is enshrined. They certainly cannot be relying on British constitutional law under which Parliament is sovereign and may do what it likes.

As the Good Friday Agreement has the status of an international Treaty, it is subject to the polite fictions of international law. It could of course be amended with the agreement of the other party to it, Ireland, thereby meeting the requirements of international law and bypassing the need for consent altogether, but this would undermine the intricate structure of interwoven pieties from which it was built in the first place.

It would seem that the only way to keep any change in Northern Ireland's constitutional position *vis à vis* the UK 'constitutional' (i.e. in line with the GFA) would be to seek consent for it by means of a referendum in the Six Counties. It might be noted in passing that keeping NI in the Customs Union and Single Market means that in fact that there is no objective change in its position in the universe, as it is the UK, i.e. Britain in this case, which seeks to leave the EU. Relatively speaking, there is of course a change and a referendum would be a means of conferring legitimacy on that change.

The pro-EU camp in NI, which is everyone bar the DUP and Jim Allister's TUV, would seem to have the necessary voting weight to carry such a referendum. Opinion polls, such as the survey carried out by Queen's University Belfast and published back in May, tend to show broad and even increasing support for NI remaining in the EU. That poll found that 56.1% would vote to Remain, 25.6% to Leave, 10.3% said they would not vote and 8.0% said they did not know. By excluding the non-voters and don't knows the pollsters concluded that overall 68.6% would vote to Remain and 31.4% to Leave. The newspaper headlines duly reported a marked increase in the Remain vote from the 56% vote in June 2016.

It is necessary to be circumspect about these figures of course. The numbers who

Casement: *Manufactured Evidence*

Paul Hyde's *Manufactured Evidence* (*Irish Political Review* June 2018) brought back to mind my own wrestling with the mysteries behind "*Cyril Corbally and his motor bike for Millar*"—as the Black Diary Cash Book for June 3rd, 1911 puts it. A few years back a number of months were taken up with the researching and writing. Hyde is on the right track, I believe, in seeing this as manufactured supporting evidence for the supposed affair between Casement and Joseph Millar Gordon as narrated in the 'Diaries'.

Yet, I cannot agree with him on all points; "*At a date soon after 10th July (1911), Millar received the motorcycle in Belfast and only then wrote his own full name and address into the logbook and posted it to Essex for registration as required by law*" writes Hyde. Registration books for motor vehicles only came in with the Roads Act of 1920.

Cyril Corbally at the time of the alleged transfer of the vehicle was Secretary of the elite Bishop Stortford Golf Club. He was a developer of golf courses and a very famous croquet player who came from a privileged Catholic background in north County Dublin. A motor cycle was a luxury item then. Corbally had the resources and lifestyle appropriate to a motorcycle owner of that era. However,

it would have been unusual for a young bank clerk, such as Gordon, in the Belfast of 1911, to have owned a motorcycle.

The hand written motorcycle register held at the County Archives Chelmsford, Essex, tends to confirm the view that Corbally in fact, at that time, possessed a motorcycle. The vehicle was re-registered in the name of Joseph Millar Gordon, but only after an initial registration attempt had been crossed out. The initial attempt at a name spelled out "Joliu U" which looks like the exclamation "Jolly you" being mistaken for a name. It appears the clerk was ill at ease and nervous.

There is a yet more bizarre apparent date anomaly in addition to the one mentioned in *Manufactured evidence*. An additional address is given for Corbally dated September 1st, 1911 at "Baileys Hotel, SW" (Kensington, London). The writing is faint yet legible. It was written in pigmented pencil in the same hand as the rest of the register page. The faintness evidences an attempt at erasure.

Why would a change of address be registered in relation to Corbally for September 1911 if he had given up possession of the bike the previous June?

An answer lies in the June transaction being a hoax. Then the crossing out, the attempt at erasure and the odd late registration date are explicable in terms of expediency or mental confusion.

The administration of motoring was then still developing. It was easier to fake

official records as procedures and practices were less elaborate. Could a high ranking member of the forces have visited the County Council offices in Chelmsford during 1916 and suavely pressed that an entry be made for a young man in Belfast who had thoughtlessly 'overlooked' having his motor bike registered a few years before? What lowly public official would defy a senior officer of the state in wartime, especially with conscription coming into force? It was introduced for single men in January 1916 and for married men in May.

Corbally is the most interesting character in this whole scenario. He was the most famous croquet player of his time, when the game had a higher profile than now. Corbally was the brother-in-law of Commodore Tyrwhitt of the Harwich Striking Force, a specialised unit of cruisers, destroyers and submarines that operated in the North Sea during WWI. Tyrwhitt naturally knew Reginald Hall head of the Department of Naval Intelligence via their work as senior naval officers. In 1934 Tyrwhitt became Admiral of the Fleet. He retired before WWII.

Corbally moved back to County Dublin around the beginning of the Great War. He married in 1915. That year he took up a commission as Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. He made recruitment speeches in north County Dublin and Dublin city. He also received a decoration in 1917. It is his service record which is most interesting. Part of his duties involved "*coast watching*". For this he got special expense payments. In short, he worked in Intelligence gathering and so was under the command of Reginald Hall; head of the Naval Intelligence Department. Thus, naval intelligence could control the presentation of the motorbike matter from the beginning.

A pencil written account of personal expenses, held in Casement's papers in the National Library of Ireland, records the £25 purported cost of the motorbike. There are suspicious aspects. The list deals with large sums, yet tots up incorrectly. What appear to be evidence of erasure and the misalignment of one item promote doubt.

The further we look into the matter of the motorcycle the more dubious it looks.

Tim O'Sullivan

Schrödinger continued

do not vote are always much greater than the combined 18.3% of non-voters and Don't Knows in this poll. In the actual Brexit referendum only 49% of voters turned out in West Belfast, and in Foyle only 57%—though both voted heavily for Remain. Interestingly the highest turnout was in unionist North Down at 68%, which voted Remain by a fairly narrow majority. Unionism appears divided on the subject of Brexit and a referendum on continued customs union and single market membership would certainly expose this division. The question is whether they are prepared to vote for a further degree of detachment from the UK in order to preserve the benefits of *de facto* EU membership.

One group whose views have not been consulted on the issue is the large number

of EU citizens who have migrated to work in Northern Ireland. They number up to 30,000, or possibly more, and would be eligible to vote in a local referendum. Though some work has been done by Sinn Fein regarding their representation, they remain politically invisible. They are largely ignored by the Trade Union movement despite the fact that they often work in the toughest, lowest paid sectors of the local economy, doing the jobs, needless to say, that locals by and large will not do. Their votes in a referendum such as described above would be important if not necessarily decisive. The Trade Unions in Northern Ireland are in a position to launch a non-party political voter registration campaign among them and should do so as a matter of urgency.

Seán Owens

Austerity Debate

continued

financial crisis had equally disastrous effects. Neo-liberal austerity implemented through IMF structural adjustment programmes from the 1970s to the 1990s caused "*lost decades*" in the developing economies where they were applied. Again for anyone un-blinded by the ideology of market fundamentalism, these points are widely accepted and beyond dispute.

Moving to the Eurozone, Clancy rightly reminds us that neo-liberal ideology was in the ascendant when the Euro was being conceived in the eighties and early nineties, and neo-liberal thinking heavily influenced the way that the new currency was designed. However, when she argues that the existence of the Eurozone was the primary cause of Europe's recent lost decade because "*Europeans somehow managed to cling to the confidence theory*" (p. 9), the logic of her case ceases to be straightforward, as I attempt to show below. A stronger point in Clancy's overall argument is the weakness and fragility of the Eurozone recovery. She says:

"While the Eurozone stagnated for a full decade following 2007, countries within the EU but outside the Eurozone had a GDP 8.1 per cent higher than in 2007 by 2015. The United States had a GDP almost 10 per cent higher in 2015 than in 2007. Over the same period, the Eurozone's GDP grew by just 0.6 per cent" (p. 10).

Regarding the recovery in the Irish economy she shows that it is exaggerated because of dubious accountancy tricks being played by multi-national corporations, a known issue. Following Joseph Stiglitz she also considers the Irish recovery to have been the result of extraordinary good luck rather than the austerity insisted on by the EU. That conclusion is also widely shared by economists. She says:

"There has been growth in employment over the past three years in the Irish indigenous sector [her discussion document was published in 2017, DA]. For example, job growth took place in the agriculture and food sectors, and in accommodation and tourism. This growth was based on two related factors. The first was the depreciation of the euro against the dollar and sterling as a result of the crisis, and the second was the relatively higher economic growth in Britain and the US, the Irish state's two largest trading partners. The (temporary) lower value of the euro was critical to the recovery experienced in the Irish indigenous sector. The relative growth in the

US and Britain was also influenced by the fact that these two states are not constrained by the Fiscal Compact rules—borrowing in the US and Britain did not fall below 3 per cent since 2008" (p. 14).

The development of the argument in the latter part of the chapter rests on three sub-headings: "*A fiscal straightjacket*", which describes how the Stability and Growth Pact that underpinned the creation of the Eurozone was a blanket one-size-fits-all set of fiscal rules reflecting German preoccupations; "*The Fiscal Compact*"; and "*Return fiscal powers to member states*". A key point is expressed in the following paragraph:

"Governments facing an economic downturn have three main ways they can aim to restore the economy to full employment: to stimulate exports by devaluing their currency; to stimulate private investment and consumption by lowering interest rates; or to use tax-and-spending policies—increase spending or lower taxes. Membership of the Eurozone automatically rules out using the first two mechanisms, and the fiscal rules largely remove the third option from governments" (p. 16)

Clancy explains the Fiscal Compact as an Inter-Governmental Treaty agreed in 2012 having been proposed by Germany in 2010, in which the rigid structure of the Stability and Growth Pact was made stricter and more rigid. While acknowledging that some proposals to reform the Compact deserved consideration she recommends its complete abolition.

"There have been several important proposals to reform the Fiscal Compact—for example, to focus only on the structural deficit; or to exclude capital investment from the rules. But while these proposals may loosen the straightjacket a little, it would be better to just take it off" (p. 20).

The Chapter ends with an extract from a 2016 paper by US economists Barry Eichengreen and Charles Wyplosz which reads:

"The fiction that fiscal policy can be centralised should be abandoned, and the Eurozone should acknowledge that, having forsaken national monetary policies, national control of fiscal policy is all the more important for stabilisation" (p. 21).

The first thing that needs to be said about this presentation of the anti-austerity case by Sinn Fein is that it cannot be dismissed as a populist rant. The point that EU Member States that are outside the Eurozone experienced higher growth rates and recovered more quickly from the financial crisis than the Eurozone econo-

mies is a damning indictment. The point that the Irish recovery owes little to our membership of the Eurozone is equally telling. Emma Clancy's paper raises serious questions about the extent to which the Euro was and remains inextricably bound up with neo-liberal objectives.

Nonetheless *The Future of the Eurozone* has flaws in the way that the economic topics are approached and, although Sinn Fein has distanced itself from its traditional opposition to Irish membership of the EU, elements of the traditional bias remain. In truth it is impossible to conduct the present discussion without bias: Emma Clancy writes from a Sinn Fein perspective which has tended to be anti-EU and I write from the perspective of *Irish Political Review* which since the 1980s has held a position which some would describe as pro-EU. Nor can the full economic ramifications of austerity as a policy approach be given the detailed treatment that they deserve in either the chapter in Sinn Fein's document or this article. We can only estimate the strategic priorities for a hard Left position.

As a member of the *Irish Political Review Group*, I take a different view of the austerity policies implemented in response to the sovereign debt crisis to that of Sinn Fein, and I will try to explain it in the remainder of this article. I firstly question the 'confidence' theory and the three ways Emma Clancy claims are available to Governments to counter an economic downturn. I then suggest an alternative, more reliable, approach to the approach to economic policy favoured by Clancy and economists like Joseph Stiglitz, Paul Krugman and Barry Eichengreen—one that takes in knowledge of economic history, or historical knowledge of a country's political economy—with particular reference to Ireland's economic crisis of the 1980s.

THE CONFIDENCE THEORY AND TEXTBOOK ECONOMICS

Paul Krugman attributes the use of austerity policies to a theory of economics which he calls the *confidence theory*. Presumably, in rejecting that theory, he does not discount the importance of confidence to different types of economic activity. International investor confidence in the Eurozone, judged by their willingness to buy the sovereign bonds of its Member States, was particularly important in the years after 2008. Because the institutional investors that constitute the international bond market viewed statements about the banks of the Eurozone countries as lacking credibility, and because of the disarray that characterised the political leadership

of the Eurozone between 2008 and 2012, the pattern of interest rates charged on Eurozone sovereign debt increased to a point where first Greece, then Ireland, then Portugal were cut off from access to the international money markets. Confidence was thus a critical factor in the crisis. Rather than criticise the EU for paying too much attention to confidence, I would say that the problem lay in the opposite direction. Germany, France and the other affected countries were remiss in failing to come clean about the indebtedness of their banks: by working to buy time and to conceal the extent of the debt problem, they undermined the Eurozone's reputation and the confidence of international investors.

On the specific question of the relationship between sovereign bond investors and the public finances of a given State, Paul Krugman, Joseph Stiglitz (and political observers who trust them), place too much faith in textbook economics. It is well known that in the real world investors don't spend time analysing the health of small economies like that of Ireland. Rather they examine a set of statistical indicators, chief of which is the size of the fiscal deficit and the ratio of State debt to the overall size of the economy. If these indicators are bad or moving in the wrong direction, investors look elsewhere or raise the rate of interest they would charge on such bonds. In that sense there is a clear connection between fiscal matters and investor confidence. In the crisis that began in 2008 such matters were well understood by the relevant Irish authority, the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA). Indeed it was a lesson of the 1980s for a large section of the Irish political class.

When Emma Clancy lists off currency devaluation, lowering interest rates, and increasing public spending as the three main methods available to national Governments to promote economic growth, she is drawing from textbook economics rather than the real world. Taking the experience of the Irish economy in recent years, four consistent public interventions aimed at promoting growth spring to mind, and all four are unrelated to the methods mentioned by Clancy. The first is the boosting of inward foreign direct investment (FDI) through the activities of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). Attracting FDI to Ireland is associated with low Corporation Tax rather than interest rates but it is also influenced by factors like the level of education of the workforce, the speaking of English, industrial clustering, supply chain avail-

ability and access to the EU. Mainstream economics has latterly begun to acknowledge the importance of institutions to economic development but this has come as a reluctant acknowledgement.

When in the late 1980s the Intel Corporation announced that it planned to direct a sizeable investment to Scotland rather than Ireland because Ireland lacked a sufficient supply of experienced computer engineers, IDA officials conducted a trawl of Irish emigrants with the necessary skills who would return to Ireland if Intel located here. The results of that survey persuaded the company's top management to choose Ireland. When the significance of the establishment of Intel to subsequent industrial development is understood, the importance of an institution like the IDA to Irish economic development can be appreciated.

A second important method of stimulating economic growth in Ireland, also dependent on institutions, is the use of the Embassy network, of Enterprise Ireland (a State agency dedicated to export promotion), and of Government Trade Missions to gain new foreign markets for Irish companies. That Ireland is the first European country to be granted access to the Chinese market for beef is only the most recent indication of how important that activity is for economic growth.

A third relevant Government policy is the strategy of aligning more closely the education and skills training systems with economic needs. The expansion of the apprenticeship system and a relatively high take-up rate by employers for that system, along with other developments in Further Education and Training, testify to progress in that area which may pay dividends for economic growth in the future. However, with all three of these strategic activities there is no guarantee that they will deliver economic growth.

The fourth State intervention is public investment in infrastructure—the creation of a better transport network, for example, will generally cause increased economic activity and growth. On the question of whether the rules of the Fiscal Compact inhibit the Irish Government from promoting growth through this method, it should be noted that the National Development Plan announced in February 2018 commits to 115 billion euro of public expenditure for the period 2018-2027 for the specific purpose of upgrading State infrastructure. The stated Government intention is that this Capital Programme will be executed while maintaining a balanced or nearly balanced Budget in accordance with the fiscal rules of the Eurozone.

GARRET FITZGERALD AND IMF/EU INTERVENTION

When the full extent of the damage inflicted on the economy by the financial crisis slowly became public knowledge in 2009-10, the State faced a nightmare. But the political system did not buckle. When Finance Minister Brian Lenihan realised that the September 2008 Guarantee underpinning the financial system, and the various corrective measures adopted in the following months and years up to the middle of 2010 were insufficient, he, with his officials, set about drafting a four-year plan to get the public finances back on an orderly track. Lenihan's strategy focussed on restoring competitiveness to exports by reducing unit labour costs and restructuring the banks in addition to reducing the 20 billion euro fiscal deficit.

The scale of fiscal adjustment entailed in the plan, an adjustment process that was duly implemented, deserves to be described as a policy of deliberate austerity. In the circumstances, however, there was no available alternative. The prescriptions of Stiglitz and Krugman—borrow to inject a major fiscal stimulus—would have worsened an already desperate situation. Being small and open, the Irish economy is an inappropriate site for such Keynesian policies. A large proportion of a public expenditure stimulus would leak abroad as consumers purchased imported goods, and whether the remaining proportion spent on domestic goods and services would translate into employment growth would always be a '*hit and miss*' gamble.

To place the Irish debate about austerity in context, it is instructive to examine the stance taken by former Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald regarding Lenihan's four year plan. As I believe that Fitzgerald deserves credit for a series of newspaper articles he wrote in the weeks leading up to and following the arrival in Dublin of officials from the Troika in the third week of November 2010, I will not dwell on the many criticisms levelled at him over the years in the *Irish Political Review*; suffice to say we distrust his qualities as a political leader.

In an *Irish Times* column with a self-explaining title, "*Lenihan clearly determined to put country before party*", Fitzgerald welcomed the four year plan. This was somewhat out of the ordinary in the sense that he had been leader of Fine Gael, then the leading Opposition Party, and a General Election was looming. On the fiscal question he stated:

"In this connection the very striking front-loading of our fiscal adjustment could prove helpful because, while it will

have a short term negative impact on growth in 2011, it has made it possible to reduce the subsequent adjustment burden progressively—from 3 to 4 billion euro in 2012 to 2 to 2.5 billion euro in 2014" (Irish Times, 6 November 2010).

The size of the adjustment for the 2011 Budget was 6 billion euro, a massive reduction in public expenditure. In his columns Fitzgerald walked a difficult line between supporting his own party and supporting the difficult decisions that the Fianna Fail Government was making, but he was adamant that the Lenihan plan was the right course to follow and that the Troika should base their Programme on it. In a column published on the Saturday following the announcement that the Government was applying for assistance he stated:

"While it is possible that the IMF will look for something extra, there is a good chance that in this aspect of the problem we may not be required to do much more than implement the measures to which we have already wisely committed—although it is perhaps possible that the 15 billion euro target of adjustment over the next four years might have to be somewhat increased" (Irish Times, 20 Nov. 2010).

In the event the Troika did not substantially alter the Lenihan plan and in later years, whenever the Irish recovery was discussed at EU level, a recurring theme was that the Programme succeeded because the Irish "took ownership" of it; it was their plan.

On December 18th 2010 Fitzgerald's column was headed, "*Some encouraging signs in our economic situation*". The encouraging signs were that the economy was outperforming targets set by the Department of Finance regarding tax revenue and the fall in public expenditure. He argued that being an open economy meant that when output fell in the large developed economies with which we traded, like the US, the UK and those in Europe, it fell twice as fast in Ireland. But the corollary of that was that when these economies picked up, as they were already starting to do, the corresponding Irish growth would also be twice as fast. Fitzgerald also pointed to the increasing level of Irish exports: a 15 per cent growth in pharmaceutical exports from the multi-national sector over the previous two years, but also to positive news in the indigenous sector where output had been increasing since the previous April.

The real value of Fitzgerald's columns was that they were providing grounds for optimism based on solid knowledge of the Irish economy at a historic moment of national self-doubt. His commentary was

a steady influence and he did not refrain from confronting the purveyors of negativity. The opening paragraph of the same column stated:

"Some of our newspapers have served us well during this economic crisis—notably the *Irish Times* and *Sunday Business Post*, and also Brendan Keenan in the *Irish Independent*. But others, as well as some elements in our electronic media, have provided an unrelenting battery of misleading negativity that has had a very damaging impact abroad as well as at home" (Irish Times, 18 December 2010).

An article from the former Taoiseach summarising his general position was published in the *Financial Times* on 22nd November 2010 and quoted in the *Guardian* on the same date. He was thus countering the negative publicity through factual economic commentary and a bipartisan political approach, abroad as well as in the domestic debate.

THE LESSON OF THE 1980s

But why should the economic advice of an octogenarian former Taoiseach be given priority over that of two winners of the Nobel Prize for economics, Stiglitz and Krugman? The answer is that in recent decades mainstream economics has attached insufficient weight to the value of economic history, a defect that is rapidly being put right in university courses. Insufficient attention has also been paid to the political context in which economic activity takes place; once known as *political economy*, economics has suffered by being studied in isolation from politics. Garret Fitzgerald was able to play a useful role in November 2010 because he understood the Irish economy politically and historically.

The political-economic history of Ireland in the 1980s shows that, once the public finances became over-burdened with debt, the only remedy was a process of fiscal adjustment that reduced the deficit close to the point of balance. During Fitzgerald's second tenure as Taoiseach (1982-87), the extent of public debt, more specifically the high cost of interest repayments on foreign borrowings incurred by the State (famously the entire revenue from PAYE was used up in interest repayments during the mid-eighties), acted as a significant drag on the economy. The Labour Party, the junior partner to Fitzgerald's party, Fine Gael, no doubt for genuine reasons, adopted a position of opposition to the reduction in public expenditure that was needed. The level of public expenditure increased and the overall picture worsened.

Following a General Election in 1987 the new Fianna Fail Government under Charles Haughey set about implementing a programme for Government entitled, *The Way Forward*. The strategy relied on Social Partnership as one of its elements and required a drastic reduction in public expenditure. Haughey tackled the problem by appointing Ray MacSharry as his Finance Minister and promising to nominate him as a European Commissioner once his term in Finance was completed: having executed the dreaded cuts MacSharry was to be spared the ordeal of standing for election.

Haughey also marshalled his party to defend the cuts. I was a Labour Party Branch Secretary and Constituency Treasurer in the Dublin working class suburb of Tallaght at the time and I recall hearing of a large public meeting at which the local Fianna Fail TD, Chris Flood, stood his ground against what was described as a howling mob. That stance by a Fianna Fail TD, which was presumably repeated in different parts of the country, instanced a political party not acting in a populist manner.

After a few years the public finances were restored to order and foreign direct investment began to pour into the economy heralding the arrival of the Celtic Tiger. While the lesson of those years is unlikely to have been lost on Garret Fitzgerald, it was never effectively incorporated into public memory. A narrative of the time shared by most of the Irish media—which portrayed Charles Haughey as a malign influence on the body politic—required that his achievements could not be countenanced or acknowledged. The public interest was poorly served by the media in that instance.

In this response to *The Future of the Eurozone* regarding austerity, I have answered some points and I have viewed the subject from an Irish rather than the European perspective used by Emma Clancy. Nonetheless I have shown that the Stiglitz/Krugman position on which she relies, by leaning heavily on theoretical economics rather than economic history in its political context, is questionable.

The challenge for the Left is to support the creation of regulatory structures that will prevent events like the banking collapse and the sovereign debt crisis from occurring. There may yet be adverse circumstances in which austerity measures like pay reductions and cuts in public expenditure become temporarily necessary. In such circumstances the priority

The 'Crime Against Casement

A reprint of Roger Casement's *Crime Against Europe*, with an Introduction by Angus Mitchell, which was published by the *Roger Casement Summer School*, was launched at a Protestant Church Hall in Belfast on June 7th. It was an interesting site for such a launch and it aroused great expectations. Casement was an eminent Ulster Protestant gentleman by social origin. It might be that he was secretly baptised a Catholic by his nurse when he was an infant and that he declared himself a Catholic before he was hanged, but in social visibility he was through all his active life within the British sphere of things; he was a Protestant gentleman. Certain attributes were indispensable to his being what he was in British public life, and Protestantism and gentility were two of them.

The British State that he served until August 1914 was still very much a Protestant State. It still is a Protestant State, for all the dissimulation on the fringes that has been scattered around in recent times, but until 1914 it was still honestly Protestant with no dissimulation at all.

And it was still a State whose affairs were masterminded by a ruling class. It is true that the ruling class had fallen into conflict within itself in 1912 on the issue of Irish Home Rule, and that a few years later, when it sought escape from its Home Rule crisis by launching a World War, it was obliged to turn for strong leadership to a Welsh Nonconformist upstart without a trace of gentility in his make-up, but when Casement was making a career within the structure of the State, it was still apparently secure in its world dominance and gentlemanly in its mindset and manners.

If Casement had not been a gentleman, he could not have been an informal acquaintance of the aristocratic Foreign

Secretary [Lord Grey]. A talented and strong-willed plebeian might have climbed up through the Consular Service, but success achieved through mere talent would not have established him in a relationship of equality at the top with those who were born at the top. The best they could aspire to was a relationship of modestly dissimulated deference. And nobody with the slightest trace of deference in his social being could have done what Casement did in August 1914.

He belonged to a class that had made itself dominant in the world, and that had convinced itself that it was acting on the world for the good of the world. And, when he saw that his colleagues who commanded the State were intent on acting destructively on the world, he asserted himself against them by joining their intended victim.

There were others in Britain who dissented from the war on Germany. Not many, but there were a few. And some of them were well-known, in a modest middle class kind of way. But none of the few who dissented at the point of war joined the intended victim—or even declared support for him.

There were many middle class journalists, in that era when many British journalists were intellectuals, who in the weeks before the declaration of war saw what Casement saw. They had editorial control of the newspapers of the Liberal Party—the Government newspapers—and they said clearly that what the Government intended to do would be wrong. The sense of what they said could be summed up in the title of Casement's book—the war that was being contemplated by the Government would be a *crime against Europe*. But when the Government went and did it, those intellectuals fell into line with it and became the fiercest of the warmongers.

They were clever people, never at a loss for a reason for doing something. But the reason they acted as they did—the cause of it—was that the gravity of the ruling class exercised an irresistible pull on the element of deference in their make-up. That is the value to the State of the kind of ruling class that made Britain the dominant world Empire. It relieves the weaker classes of the anguish of thinking their way through existential

dilemmas, and commits them to a course of action that is authoritatively decided for them.

But Casement could not be like that. He was a piece of the ruling class. As far as he was concerned, the buck stopped with him. He acted out of his own judgment.

The difference between him and the Liberal newspaper intelligentsia was not a difference of intelligence. In late July and early August 1914 they read the signs as well as he did. And John Dillon of the Home Rule Party also read them.

The difference was entirely a difference in character. And it seems that for all who operated within the British scheme of things—as all Liberalism did and as the Irish Party through intimate association with Liberalism had begun to do—the requisite character was only formed within the ruling class.

(The only other character of the period who saw the world as Casement saw it, and who acted unhesitatingly on what he saw, was James Connolly. And Ireland has been as shy of Connolly ever since as it has been of Casement. Casement spoke of *The Crime Against Europe*. Connolly spoke of *The War Upon The German Nation*. The fact that Casement went to Germany and tried to raise an Irish Brigade for use against Britain is notorious, but the fact that Connolly allied himself with Germany was quickly concealed after the event. It was concealed most of all during the past generation by Ruth Dudley Edwards who got to write the Connolly entry in the reference books. (Edwards married into the residue of the British ruling class but she remains a timid middle class soul who seeks comfort in the shadow of the big battalions. I suppose the ruling class residue has no trace of steel left in it anymore.)

Connolly came from another world forged by his own fusion of Marxism and nationalism. He is acceptable in the caricature of him as a rather simple-minded class warrior, but he is anathema as somebody who, through assimilation of nation with class, could see the world as it was and make realistic judgments within it.)

*

The speakers at the Belfast launch of *The Crime Against Europe* were Jeffrey Dudgeon MBE, a member of the Ulster Unionist Party and elected Unionist councillor; and Margaret O'Callaghan, a lecturer at the Queen's University and sister of RTE broadcaster Miriam and of

Austerity

concluded

should be to negotiate political agreements between the State and the social partners so that permanent scarring of the social fabric is minimised. That needs to be done at both the national and the EU levels and on that large subject more debate on the Irish and European Left is badly needed.

Dave Alvey

The next article in this series will deal with the crisis in Greece.

Jim, a Fianna Fail TD for whom a big political future is predicted; and Christopher Hudson, an *avant-garde* Protestant clergyman in Dublin.

It would have been interesting to hear any one of these established figures address *The Crime Against Europe* and explain why they thought it was right or why they thought it was wrong. But none of them did address it.

Mr. Dudgeon MBE at least said that he did not intend to address it and would talk about the Diary instead. I cannot recall that the others mentioned it at all.

Dudgeon did say, with reference to *The Crime*, that it went way, way back into Irish history; that for Casement Irish history had no beginning, and for that reason Casement became a romantic Irishman. For him Ireland began as a nation oppressed by the Normans. Before that there was for Casement only a Golden Age in Ireland—and we know what to think of Golden Ages, don't we!

Dudgeon said that it is said that people's politics are governed by resentment, and that that might be true. I gathered from this that he was suggesting that Casement's view of the War was determined by his resentment of England for its 800 years of oppression of the Irish.

Now, as to Golden Ages: such things undoubtedly exist. They are not societies in which everybody is a billionaire. They are societies in which all wants that are generated are catered for and in which people live contentedly, century after century, without existential anguish.

Such societies are a scandal to Christian theology, to the Athenian philosophy from which it sprang, and to the Capitalism that sprang from it. Socrates laid it down that "*the unexamined life is not worth living*", and he dedicated himself to pulling life apart into its workings and putting it together again with nobs on.

I don't know much about Gaelic Ireland as it was before Norman England invaded it for the purpose of imposing Roman Church discipline on its home-grown Christianity. Maybe it did live contentedly with itself. Dudgeon did not show that it didn't. I can feel my way no farther back than the Confederation of Kilkenny. If Casement says that the English came and destroyed a Golden Age in Ireland, I assume he had given the matter some thought.

All I know is that the Norman invasion did not lead to a long era of integrated development in Ireland, as it did in England, because Norman/Saxon England

would not let it. Norman England would not let the Normans in Ireland blend in with the Irish and become an element in an independent Kingdom of Ireland. Norman/Gaelic Ireland was subordinate to Norman/Saxon England, and England periodically punished the Gaelicising Normans in Ireland.

It is true that the Normans did not take over Ireland as successfully as they took over England. There seems to have been two substantial reasons for that. Irish culture, unlike Saxon, tended to absorb them into it, and the Norman England from which they sprang would not let go of them.

Dudgeon says Casement had a distorted vision of England because he saw it through the prism of Anglophobe Ireland. He was mentally deranged. *Aphobia* is a disease, is it not?

There is certainly a strain of Irish political life that cannot see England straight—and a very much greater strain of English political life that cannot see Ireland straight. But these distortions have opposite causes. The Irish distortion is the result of being severely damaged by England. The English distortion is the result of having inflicted severe damage on Ireland.

I grew up in a region of Ireland in which the big literary figure was Canon Sheehan, who was neither Anglophobic or Anglophilic. He was simply un-English. I think it can be said of him in this matter as was said about a Fenian in another matter: "*Chonaic sé anní mar tá*". He saw England as it was, both in what it did in Ireland and in what it was in itself. And, because of his novel *Luke Delmege*, I had a pretty good idea of what England was before I went there.

When I proposed, in Belfast, almost fifty years ago, that the Six Counties should be democratised into the life of the English Constitution, it was not because I thought the English state was marvellous. It was because the English state was what existed in the North but the North was excluded from participation in its party-politics, which was its political life.

I was denounced at the time as a dupe of the British and the Orangemen by Eoghan Harris, who at that time might be fairly described as an Anglophobe. He has now flipped over into Anglophilic and denounces me as a bigotted Irish nationalist, though he does not find it expedient to name me. Harris is a weathervane.

The Six Counties, by the will of the English State, is an undemocratically governed region of that state. Could anything more defamatory of the English State be said? I have said it repeatedly. About thirty years ago I said it in a series of pamphlets that circulated in thousands. The fact that the State arranged for its Six counties to be governed outside the democracy of the state was undeniable, but it was also a fact that could not be admitted.

The attractive power of British democracy on those who are involved in it is very great. If it was admitted that the Six Counties were excluded from an essential democratic institution of the state, then it could hardly be denied that that fact had some relevance to the remarkable Republican war effort.

I took it that, if Partition had been cleanly enacted by Westminster and the Six Counties had then been governed within the party-politics of the state, the War that was declared in 1970 would not have come about. This is not counterfactual. It takes account of the character of British democracy within its sphere of operation and of the fact that the Six counties were abnormally and because Westminster/Whitehall willed that it should be so.

And, insofar as any political analysis can be proved right by events, this was proved right when the War came to a negotiated end in 1998, not with the ending of Partition, but with the abolition of the 1921 system of communal sub-government under which the Protestant community policed the Catholic community, and restricted its territorial expansion by means of local planning laws and practices, and generally humiliated it, in a political vacuum.

The 1998 Agreement (made operative in 2006) did not bring the Six Counties into the democracy of the state (as we had been urging since the early 1970s). What it did was alter the terms of the undemocratic government in favour of the Catholic community and to the disadvantage of the Protestant community. That is the foundation of the peace that has now lasted for twenty years.

The fact that the Six Counties were excluded from the democracy of the state by the will of the democracy of the state, and that the Catholic community in the North did not refuse to participate in the democratic politics of the state after 1921 but was excluded from the democracy of the state—which I asserted in more

pamphlets and articles than I care to remember—was never disputed by any political journalist or academic 'Political Scientist', but neither was it acknowledged to be a fact. A mindset was brought about by the influence of the State which caused Northern Ireland to be thought about in a way that did not involve reason operating on fact.

I was very little aware of Casement until, after twenty years of effort, I gave up on the democratisation of Northern Ireland in about 1991 and concerned myself with other things. When I did take an interest in him, in the course of the 1990s, his description of the functional mindset of English democracy, which caused him to be condemned as a fantasist by many, was to me nothing but a straight account of what I had grappled with in the North for twenty years.

In 2003 I wrote an Introduction for an Athol Books reprint of *The Crime Against Europe* (the first edition since 1958), in which I recorded the dismissive views of biographers of the Post-nationalist era. ("Post-nationalism", which became a popular slogan, might be said to have begun in the Summer of 1970 when Jack Lynch, Fianna Fail Taoiseach, repudiated the Northern policy which he had adopted in August 1969, and prosecuted subordinate Ministers, along with an Army officer and a Northern nationalist contact, for putting his policy into effect. At the same time the Government announced that the "*Trouble*" in the North was caused by the history that was taught in the Republic—rather than by the way the British State arranged for its Six county region to be governed—and that a new line in history must be devised.

Adrian Weale, in *Patriot Traitors*, said that Casement's "single-minded obsession with Irish Affairs" had—

"blinded him to what was happening in Europe. His loathing of England had long led him to the conclusion that the malign influence of English foreign policy had formed a conspiracy of the corrupt European Imperial powers to deprive Germany of its true role".

And "his hatred of England... had become almost pathological". He was not invited to join the IRB because of his extremism (!). And he was so "self-important" that his Defence Counsel "believed him to be a megalomaniac". (His Defence Counsel was a supporter of the British war on Germany that Casement saw as a crime. A barrister who in 1916 agreed with Casement's views on the War

would not have been allowed to practise his craft.)

Other biographers were Roger Sawyer (*Flawed Hero*), B.L. Reid (*The Lives Of Roger Casement*), Brian Inglis (*Roger Casement*), Rene McColl (*A New Judgment*), Geoffrey de C. Parminter (*Roger Casement*), and Jeffrey Dudgeon (*Roger Casement: The Black Diaries*). Some of these do not even mention *The Crime Against Europe*. Those who mention it do not present the case which it makes and make a case against it.

Dudgeon, as far as I could see when reviewing his book (whose title says it is "A Study Of His Background, Sexuality And Irish Political Life") did not even mention *The Crime*, even though he did comment on Casement's views on Germany. What interested him was the sex diary and his involvement with "a collection of upper class Irish Protestant women, and Anglo-Irish and English men" in the adventure of importing rifles for the Irish Volunteers in support of the Home Rule Bill.

A colleague of Casement in the Home Rule gun-running of 1914 was Erskine Childers. Both were eminent figures in the service of the British Empire. Childers recruited volunteers in the City of London for the war of conquest of the Boer Republics, and then he wrote the history of the Boer War, including, as far as I recall, a defence of the Concentration Camps which broke the will of the Boers. He then set about military reform in preparation for the next war.

The British Army had fared badly against the Boers in the opening phase of the War. Childers' contribution to its reform was a book on the *Arme Blanche*—the sword arm. The moment of ecstasy for British cavalry was the charge of broken infantry that was fleeing in disorder and there was a great chopping off of heads. Childers did not think there was much future for that kind of thing in the era of the repeating rifle and the machine-gun. In *War And the Arme Blanche* he proposed that the Cavalry should become a kind of mounted infantry.

His next project was Irish Home Rule. When the Ulster Unionists, supported by the general Unionist Party, raised an Army to prevent the imposition of a Home Rule Act in Ulster, Childers helped with the arming of the Home Rule Volunteers.

(Casement was of the opinion that Irish Home Rule had become necessary to the Empire. William O'Brien, whose All For

Ireland League routed Redmond's Party in County Cork in 1910, agreed with him in the sense that he rejected Redmond's Liberalist confrontations with the Unionists (the Party created by the merger of the Tories and the Chamberlain Liberals) and urged that Home Rule should be sought by other means.)

Nothing like Britain's 1914 World War had ever before happened in recorded history. I call it Britain's World War because it was a local European War in July and only became a World War when Britain joined it in August and extended it to Turkey in November. Britain emerged on the winning side thanks to the United States but, because of the changes that the War had wrought in its substance, it was unable to consolidate its victory, as it had done after previous World Wars.

It had ward off defeat and kept the War going for the better part of four years, until the USA found it expedient to join in and give the victory to Britain. But it had raised an Army of millions in order to keep the War going and, in the moment of victory, it had to let that Army melt away. It was therefore not in a position to give orderly government after the War to the conquests it had made in the course of the War, but neither was it willing to give up those conquests.

It therefore adopted short cuts to dominate its conquests and to draw something from them, piously applying methods that it had attributed to Germany during the War and called "*Prussianism*". It bombed villages from the air as a means of tax gathering, and even used mustard gas.

There had been an idealism of Empire before the War. Maybe it was just cynical posturing but, if so, some care was taken with it in order that it should not appear to be what it was. This approach withered quickly in the course of the War, and its absence after the War was personified in the dominance of Lloyd George. The Empire emerged from the War grubby and bankrupt. Childers saved something from the wreck of honour by becoming an honourable, intransigent, and immensely useful Irish Republican—acting as Casement had done in 1914.

I don't think it was psychopathic Irish nationalist hatred of England that caused Casement to support Germany in the War. The causation was the other way about. As a Liberal activist in the diplomatic service of the Empire, he saw what the rulers of the Empire had it in mind to do with Europe, and he did not wait for it to be done before he set himself against it.

If what he thought he saw had proved not to be the case, his article predicting it would have been just another seed that fell by the wayside. But England went and did what he knew it was preparing to do and he joined the victim and tried to persuade it to commit a substantial force to the Irish national cause with a view to disabling England's world power in the interest of Germany itself and of Europe. He tried to persuade Germany to do what Spain had failed to do at the outset of the English Empire and France had failed to do when it succeeded Spain as the European Power.

It is a tribute to the effectiveness of England propaganda that it operated balance-of-power politics against Europe for a few centuries and prevented Europe from seeing what was being done to it and retaliating in kind against the British Isles by helping to make Ireland an independent state lying between Britain and the oceans of the world.

It was a principle of Britain's European's European policy that the outlets of the Rhine—what William Pitt called "*the navigation of the Scheldt*"—should never be allowed to come under the control of any European Power. Around 1830 it conjured Belgium in that region. Two peoples, who did not constitute a nationality, were set up as a nation-state. They did not fuse into a nationality after they were put together as a state, and there were moments when they seemed to hate each other more than outsiders. And the state that contained them was not independent. It was a kind of Protectorate. It was not allowed to have a foreign policy. The Treaty governing Belgium was not between itself and others, but was between others about it. Its purpose was to provide Britain with an excuse for making war in Europe when necessary.

Belgium acquired a very large and profitable piece of Central Africa where millions of tribal peoples were worked to death. There seems to be no conventionally-agreed number for the Belgian Genocide in the Congo, like the six million for the Nazi Genocide of Jews, but I have seen estimates exceeding six million.

Casement's Report of his investigation on behalf of the British Government was a nine-days' wonder. His later colleague, Captain Monteith, suggested somewhere that the Belgian Genocide was effectively buried by the British Government in return for a Belgian undertaking to offer military resistance to a German wartime march-through, as if it was a sovereign state. I am not saying that was the case. I don't know.

But the course of events suggests that it probably was. It is something that might be investigated by Casement Societies.

Belgium came out of the Great War with increased territory. The Genocide was forgotten. Forty years later it was obliged to withdraw from the Congo—and left it in a shambles.

Belgium was a British balance-of-power lever against Europe. Casement speculated on how Germany might break up the British Isles by making a principle of Irish independence. Ireland would then be an obstacle between Britain and the seas which it ruled, instead of a take-off point.

Casement says many things that might be quibbled with, but they are beside the point. He writes disparagingly about the quality of the Royal Navy, which was the most impressive instrument of world-conquest ever seen. And it was not an instrument of hired mercenaries but a tool operated by the ruling class itself, which disciplined itself into expertise in military seamanship and the hardships of naval life. The disparaging remarks are just propaganda encouragement to opponents of the Empire.

The essential thing is the account of how Britain established itself in world supremacy by means of sea-power, how it controlled passage through the seas, how it disabled rivals that emerged in Europe, and how it had been preparing for ten years to deal with the latest rival.

The speakers at the book launch did not dispute these contentions, nor did they agree with them. They just ignored the book they were launching.

The British story of the Great War is that Germany embarked on a campaign of world conquest and that Britain stopped it, in the interest of preserving the structure of international law that Germany was endangering, suffering great injury to itself in the process.

Now Germany certainly did not embark on a campaign of world conquest. It built a Navy to protect its own international trade, which the Royal Navy had interfered with during the Boer War. If it had set itself the aim of world conquest, as England did in the 17th century, it would probably have fared much better.

German foreign policy in the generation before 1914 was conservative. Its major act of foreign policy was the conservation of the great Muslim State spanning Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, which Britain and Russia were intent on destroy-

ing and displacing. Well-informed American commentators during the years of American neutrality (1914-16) were of the opinion that it was German support of the Ottoman Empire that led Britain to make war on it. Other factors were the growth of the German economy and the founding of a Navy to protect German trade on the high seas.

Casement failed, of course. If, in a matter like this, to fail is to be wrong, then he was wrong. His well-informed advocacy failed to persuade the German Government to respond in kind to the British balance-of-power game. Britain won at the eleventh hour, thanks to American intervention—and then within a few years, at the Washington Naval Conference, the US obliged Britain to surrender its position of world naval supremacy, which in the course of a generation was taken up by Washington; and to end its alliance with Japan—on which its Asian Empire had come to depend.

(Germany never had a policy of conquering the world, but the British conquest of the world brought about a situation in which defence against the world conqueror carried the implication of world conquest. Voltaire's satirical joke became a plain statement of how things were: "*This animal is dangerous: if attacked, it defends itself*".)

British balance-of-power strategy had another innings in European affairs after 1919. Britain supported the Germany which had been disarmed and humiliated by the Versailles settlement in order to prevent French hegemony of Europe, and in the 1930s it collaborated with Hitler in breaking the Versailles restrictions and making Germany a major European Power again, before suddenly, and erratically, deciding to make war on it again in 1939.

But today, in the context of Brexit, there are signs that the Commission has learned the lesson that Casement tried to teach, and that it has the will to make Ireland an independent European state to the West of Britain.

PS:

Notes On The Meeting

JEFFREY DUDGEON MBE

He had serious doubts about many aspects of Casement. Hero worship was dangerous. He wouldn't call Casement a hero. People change, and Casement was not the exception. He became a romantic Irishman. It is said people's politics are

governed by resentment and that may be true. *The Crime Against Europe* goes way back into Irish history. Casement did not go to University.

There was no beginning to Irish politics. 800 years of oppression. Laurence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin in the 12th century. Vikings. History is about the Normans taking over. This was not done as successfully as in England.

Casement saw things in the light of Anglophobia. He didn't see the long complexity of things over many years. Only English oppression. And before that a Golden Age that the Normans ended.

He became a German Imperialist. Not anti-colonial or anti-Imperialist, but only anti-English. Control of the seas. Basically he wanted Germany to have more colonies.

He (Dudgeon) would not go into the causes of World War 1, but they were many and varied. He would go into the gay side. *"I was at that time involved with the British and Irish Communist Organisation"* and found its free discussions of the matter refreshing.

Casement had a tenuous connection with some of the gay reformers, like Edward Carpenter.

"If the Diaries are authentic" . . . Many thought they couldn't be because they thought homosexuals must be perverted and Casement wasn't. The Diaries recorded what he did and what he would have liked to do. But was he a paedophile? that was a new issue. He did go over the edge in some respects. But you couldn't prove anything in this world. *"I can't prove that Churchill existed."*

If you insisted the Diaries were forged, you diminished Casement. It was not good to get ever more inventive with reasons why they were forged.

Dudgeon read a passage from Casement —*The Crime Against Europe*, I think—but it didn't register with me. He said he would read other passages which expressed frightening ideas.

CHRIS HUDSON MBE

He (Hudson) was bred a Republican. His father, an anti-Treatyite, told him the Black and Tans were gentlemen compared with the Free State Army. He had an uncle who was technically murdered by the Free State Army. For them to accept at the time that Casement was a homosexual was impossible, so they had to see the Diary as an evil that was foisted by the British.

The Casement Summer School [in August this year] was going to be about Human Rights largely. Northern Ireland was the only part of the UK without Equal Marriage and women's reproductive rights.

MARGARET O'CALLAGHAN

Casement was a delightful person. She did not know about him from her education.

The Consular Service in which he served was lower than the Foreign Office.

How did he get conflicting allegiances and end up executed?

He wrote poetry as a teenager. Presbyterians of Antrim. The Boer War: at that time he accommodated Home Rule with the Empire though this seems impossible now.

Dudgeon had said that Casement regularly wrote 3,000 words a day. O'Callaghan said that most of those were written as part of his job as a civil servant. And, though he had not been to University, he was highly educated.

Casement liked Tom Moore and the songs he wrote to the tunes noted down by Edward Bunting at the Irish Harpers' Festival in Belfast in the 1790s. Why did young ladies join the Gaelic League?

His campaign against Leopold (the Congo).

In 1906 he was not for Home Rule unless there was a majority for it in England.

So what about World War 1? He didn't dissolve his personal relationships with his diplomatic colleagues over it.

Things had changed since Casement's time. (This with reference to homosexual, I think.)

For her views on Casement and the World War she referred her listeners to her article in a magazine whose title I did not catch. [Breac. Ed.]

Chris Hudson closed the proceedings. He said he grew up among Republican ballads. He asked when were the anti-colonial Irish going to feel a moral dilemma about the way America was brought about.

COMMENTS

These are things I jotted down during the meeting. I would have liked to get clarification on some of them but there was no opportunity for doing so, there being neither questions nor discussion.

Dudgeon's statement that he had been in the B&ICO, and encountered free discussions of homosexuality there for the first time, was surprising. It is not long since he issued a statement about BICO being the centre of homophobia in Belfast. He was on the fringes for some years but was never a member. He was a member of the Campaign for Labour Representation, which was established by the B&ICO but included a much wider membership. It

was a unique combination of Catholics and Protestants. Its purpose was to exert pressure on the British Labour Party which would oblige it to extend its membership and political activity to Northern Ireland and help to establish the connection between the Northern electorate and the business of governing the state which is essential to democracy.

Activity in support of the CLR case, guided by David Morrison, was becoming too influential for the Labour Party to ignore. But Kate Hoey, a Northern Protestant who was a London Labour MP, joined the CLR, expressing full agreement with it, and was appointed its President. She then, with Dudgeon's assistance, made personal approaches to Protestant members of the CLR to join her in a new group called *Democracy Now*, which would be backed by a daily London newspaper, would be Unionist in style, and would be more effective than the CLR.

Hoey and Dudgeon effectively sectarianised the issue. The CLR dissolved, leaving the conflict of communities to work itself out as it would. Hoey's *Democracy Now* went through the motions of existing for a year or two, but its work was done and it soon disappeared. It was a sectarian spoiling tactic—a thing very easy to engineer in Northern Ireland. Its purpose was to relieve the Labour Party from the embarrassment of being continually confronted with the fact that it excluded Northern Ireland from its sphere of operations though governing it when elected in England, Scotland and Wales.

Kate Hoey got a junior Ministry. Dudgeon got an MBE. I will not guess whether it was for his activity in homosexual reform or for his sectarian action against the CLR.

Brendan Clifford

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Food And The 'Famine'

The volume for the 19th century, Volume III, deals with the 'Famine'. Could there be a more accurate term?

The following quotations from the London *'Times'* do NOT appear in the Cambridge 'History', nor in any book that I know of. That paper editorialised on Friday, 30th October 1846, that:

"...whole fleets of provisions were continually arriving from the land of starvation to the ports of wealth and the cities of abundance. Scarce a day passes without every great port of this country seeing this visible contradiction, or rather this painful anomaly. We are emphatically reminded that it is not to Ireland herself, but to her social state, that the famine is attributable. This is no exaggeration, no paradox. What, also, will the future historian feel when in the very columns which he is searching for the distracting and harrowing notices of Irish destitution, he lights on such a paragraph as that which appeared in our yesterday's impression, and which, in fact, is only one out of the many we could quote from the last few weeks :-

'No less than 16 ships arrived in the river Thames on Monday from the Irish ports, laden almost exclusively with food and provisions of various kinds, the produce of that country, having collectively 14,960 packages of butter, 224 packages of pork, 1,047 hampers and bales of bacon, several of hams, 140 sacks, barrels, and 7,788 quarters of oats, 434 packages of lard, 75 of general provisions, 40 of oatmeal, 44 of porter, 259 boxes of eggs, and a variety of other articles of lesser importance, which it would be quite needless further to particularise. Of these almost unprecedentedly numerous arrivals in one day from the sister island, 5 were from Limerick, 1 from Belfast, 2 from Waterford, 1 from Galway, 1 from Kilrush, 2 from Dublin, 1 from Youghal, and 3 from Cork....'

This continued unabated. At the risk of boring you, dear reader, *The Times* reported on 5th November 1846:

"Irish Produce—The importation of provisions from the Irish ports into the port of Liverpool during the week from the 16th to the 22nd ultimo inclusively, comprised the following list of articles,—viz., 14,106 firkins, 285 half-

firkins, 1,512 baskets and casks, and 258 boxes of butter; 8,665 barrels, 571 sacks, and 225 quarters of wheat; 1,960 sacks of flour, 61 tons weight and 700 quarters of oats, 922 sacks and 735 other packages of oatmeal, 262 bags of meal, 80 sacks and 209 quarters of barley, 275 barrels of bacon, 25 casks of hams, 61 bales and other packages, and 465 boxes and tierces of linens and cottons, 56 casks of whiskey, 10 firkins and 5 kegs of tongues, 258 packages of lard, 245 barrels and 33 kegs of pork, 79 casks of general provisions; 19 barrels, 6 kegs, and 10 tierces of beef, with other articles. The arrivals at the port of Bristol, in the same period, comprised 629 barrels of wheat, 252 sacks and 2,976 barrels of oats, 1,528 firkins of butter, 320 sacks and 1,629 barrels of barley, 7 casks and 15 puncheons of whiskey, several packages of linens and of malt, 82 kegs of lard, 74 barrels of bacon, some packages of pork, and other articles which do not require particular mention. We have recently noticed the arrivals from the Irish ports which took place at the port of London in one day at the commencement of the past week; and although it was at the time, and is still, very readily admitted that the list of arrivals on that day was of an unusually extensive nature, the supplies during the week from Ireland to the British metropolis were by no means confined thereto, as will be seen from the following compendium of the importations here during the period from the 22nd to the 30th ultimo inclusively, viz.— 18,763 quarters, 140 sacks, and 5,205 barrels of oats; 3,701 hampers and bales of bacon; 83,710 firkins, boxes, and other packages of butter; 755 packages of lard, 905 barrels of pork; 35 packages of linens; 63 bales of hams; 618 casks and other packages of general provisions; 143 bales of paper, several of whiskey and of oatmeal; 769 boxes and other packages of eggs; 234 casks of porter; 218 pigs (alive); 30 head of horned cattle; 4 boxes of fowls; 12 packages of salmon and a variety of other articles both of food of lesser importance and of general merchandise, which do not require to be more specifically mentioned. In giving this list of arrivals during the past week at

the port of London from Ireland, the produce of the sister country, we unhesitatingly pronounce them to be of a very extensive character, and the supply of butter, in particular, almost, if not entirely, unprecedented. Subsequent arrivals at the port of Bristol have included, among other articles, 110 cwt. and 14 sacks of oatmeal, 4,271 barrels and 300 sacks of oats, 175 bales of bacon, 1,624 firkins of butter, 24 sacks of pollard, 137 packages of lard, 64 casks and 72 other packages of barley, and 66 barrels of pork. To complete this extensive list up to the latest possible period, we subjoin the importation of provision from Ireland into the port of Liverpool during the past week also, being from the 23rd to the 29th ult. Inclusively, viz.—3,915 firkins, 241 half-firkins, 1,977 baskets, casks, &c, and 79 boxes of butter; 832 sacks and 1,255 barrels of wheat, 2,133 sacks of flour, 177 sacks and 3,702 barrels of oats, 120 sacks and 292 other packages of oatmeal, 46 sacks of malt, 601 boxes and tierces and 43 other packages of linens and cottons; 56 bags of feathers, 20 barrels of barley, 12 casks and 342 bales of bacon and hams, 93 casks of whiskey, 13 tierces of beef, 17 firkins of tongues, 71 barrels and casks of general provisions; 147 sacks of farina flour; 302 packages of lard; 101 sacks, 91 hogsheads, and 81 barrels of seeds, 40 bags of meal, and 19 kegs, 11 tierces, 97 half-tierces, and 263 barrels of pork; the whole the produce of Ireland."

And on Saturday, 24th July 1847, during the depths of "Black '47", it reported:

"Importations from Ireland—The arrivals of grain and provisions from Ireland have been of an extensive character. The following is a compen-

History?

"History is a clock that tells a people their historical time of the day. History is the compass that wise people use to locate themselves on the map of the world. A peoples' history tells them who they are. What they have been, where they have been, where they are now, but most importantly, where they still must go".

John Henrik Clarke, 1915-1998,
American historian, professor, and a
pioneer in the creation of Pan-African
and Africana studies.

(Contributed by Jack Lane)

dious statement of those which took place at the port of Liverpool from the Irish ports during the week comprising from 25th ult. to the 8th inst. inclusive:—13,380 firkins, 550 half-firkins, 312 boxes, and 2,610 other packages of butter, 345 tons weight, 631 sacks, and 325 barrels of wheat; 2,381 sacks 2,004 barrels, and 20 other packages of flour; 148 tons weight, 108 quarters, and 46 bags of oats; 43 tons weight, 1,154 bags, and 298 other packages of oatmeal; 876 bags of barley, 394 sacks of malt, 54 tons weight and 30 bags of peas, 1,632 packages of linens and cotton, 22 casks and 178 bales of hams and bacon, 73 casks of whiskey, 41 kegs and 147 casks of lard, 5 tierces, 40 barrels, and 5 kegs of beef; 165 barrels of pork, 45 bales, 72 sacks, 65 hogsheads, and 219 other packages of seed, 494 bags of meal, 61 bags and 6 packages of feathers, several of farina flour, 10 tons weight of beans, and 782 barrels of Indian corn meal. Of these the large arrivals of butter and of wheat are particularly conspicuous. Those at the port of Bristol on the 5th and 8th inst. included 939 casks of butter, some packages of lard, whiskey, and feathers, 127 sacks of barley, 830 sacks of beans, 41 sacks of pea-meal, 230 sacks, and 862 barrels of flour, 155 bales of bacon, 16 sacks of Indian corn, 8 of meal, and 56 tons weight of wheat. The latest returns of the arrivals at the port of Liverpool from the same quarter—viz., from the 9th to the 15th inst. inclusive—comprised the following:—4,961 firkins, 293 half-firkins, 182 boxes, and 979 other packages of butter; 197 sacks, 320 tons weight, and 476 quarters of wheat; 559 sacks, 20 tons weight, and 1,942 barrels of flour; 100 tons weight and 210 quarters of oats, 31 tons weight, 259 bags, and 18 other packages of oatmeal; 103 tons weight and 180 bags of meal, 23 tons weight, and 50 bags of other kind of meal, 23 tons weight and 50 bags of barley, 61 casks of whiskey, 761 packages of linens, 14 tierces, 10 barrels, and 140 kegs of lard, 62 hogsheads of seed, 30 sacks and 16 cwt. of beans, 11 casks, 169 bales, 14 cwt., and 383 boxes of hams and bacon; 29 sacks of farina flour, 118 sacks of malt, and some packages of pork, beef, and other articles. The arrivals at Bristol on the 12th and 15th included 570 firkins of butter, 66 sacks and 508 barrels of oats, 13 casks of whiskey, 90 barrels and 5 sacks of flour, 11 packages of beans, 77 bales of bacon, 38 sacks of malt, some

of hams, lard, linens, &c. The subjoined is a compendious list of the arrivals from the sister island at this port during the past ten days, including up to the 19th inst. viz.—321 bales and hampers of ham, 1,435 packages of bacon, 12 of seeds, 27 of linens, 701 casks of porter, 11,921 packages of butter, 842 of malt, 626 of paper, 25 of whiskey, 159 of feathers, 1,477 boxes and other packages of eggs, 505 casks of pork, 258 barrels of lard, 19 of beef, 7 of tongues, 40 of waste, 241 barrels, 100 sacks, and 187 bags of flour, 2,118 quarters and 350 barrels of wheat, 400 quarters of barley, 750 quarters of beans, 800 quarters of oats, 251 oxen, 152 calves, 40 tierces of general provisions, 17 packages of hops, 357 packages of salmon, and 16 of Indian corn."

And so it went on—apologies if you feel nauseous from this surfeit of food.

Could there be a famine in such a country because a single crop failed? *The Times* did not think so and realised that the '*social state*' was the issue but did not elaborate.

One very pertinent fact the *Times* must have been aware of that would explain this food traffic from Ireland to England was the activity of the 69 regiments—out of a total of 137 regiments of the British Army—stationed in Ireland at the time under the command of Sir Edward Blakeney.

And what were they doing here? The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Earl of Clarendon, was in a position to know and he explained in a letter to Prime Minister Lord John Russell from the Viceregal Lodge in Dublin: "*Sir Edward Blakeney says the Country is tranquil and if it were not for the harassing duty of escorting provisions the troops would have little to do*" (5 July 1847). The soldiers were ensuring that the "*fleets of provision*" were leaving Ireland, as described by the *Times*. Facts like these are not mentioned in the Cambridge history.

If there is a part of the richest and most powerful state in the world that has plenty of food but suffers a loss of one crop and millions starve and the man in charge believes it is serving a Divine purpose to sacrifice those people, then it is deserving of another and more accurate name and that is *holocaust* in the true religious sense. All other modern holocausts are strictly secular affairs—whether for race, class, military or other reasons.

But this Cambridge history will not hear of such a thing. Indeed it will not accept even a lesser charge:

"While not guilty of intentional genocide (for which there is no evidence in the archive), the reasons for this failure include adherence to misplaced ideological dogmas and political calculations that placed the interest of Great Britain and its taxpaying class before those of the destitute masses in Ireland" (p.658).

Charges of genocide will certainly not appear in the archive as the word did not then exist. But reality precedes words. The Cambridge argument assumes that the people who promoted and acted on '*ideological dogmas*' were helpless to overcome them, even though it was the very same people who created these dogmas. They were victims of their own creations, the poor things! But then these people also say that they *absentmindedly* created the greatest Empire the world had ever known. Believe all that and you would believe anything.

There is another chapter relevant to this *holocaust*, which is that on population. To provide a figure for the number of deaths, two facts need to be known—the population in 1845 and how the dead were counted. The former is not known and the latter was not done, yet this history gives a figure that "*between 1 million and 1.1 million perished*" (p.664) without acknowledging the former or the latter. So this is guesswork as all such estimates are.

The accepted basis for estimating the population is the 1841 census and as usual this is accepted as gospel by this 'History'. However the Census Commissioners in their report for that year had to admit that their figures did not make sense. The Commissioners doubted their own figures when they realised that they meant that

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the rate of population growth had declined substantially during the decade since the previous census in 1831. Apparently, the population had grown by 14.2 per cent between 1821 and 1831 but by only by 5.2 per cent between 1831 and 1841. This dramatic decline defied all common sense as there was no obvious reason for it. The dogs in the street, as well as the Census Commissioners, knew this—but our academics are oblivious to it.

The Commissioners tried hard to justify this decline—disease, emigration, suggestions that the 1831 census was too high etc. They looked into all these factors but none were convincing and instead they added a quite arbitrary figure to increase the final figure to make it appear more realistic. To explain a declining rate of population growth in the 1830s, there would need to have been a real famine, a pandemic, a huge natural disaster, a war or some such occurrence. None occurred. The only natural disaster recorded was the '*big wind*' of the night of 6th-7th January 1839 that killed hundreds and damaged a quarter of the houses in Dublin. This is embedded in folklore and any other disasters would be if such occurred.

It is therefore only a joker who would take the 1841 census as reliable and the reason is simple—it was carried out by the paramilitary constabulary (who were never accepted as a police force by other police forces) and who were the last people in the world that would be trusted by the population with highly personal information for the most obvious of reasons. And trust is the first essential for census taking. But all this is a non-issue in this 'History', as in countless others.

The fact is that there is no reason to assume the population did not continue increasing at a constant rate for the first half of the 19th century up to the holocaust and that means **the population can be estimated to have been in the region of 12 million by 1846**. That puts the death toll in a totally different perspective.

But the main question to be answered about this holocaust is: why had a situation arisen where there was a rapidly expanding population relying more and more on a single food crop which was a disaster waiting to happen? This was a society, a civilisation, that had developed and sustained itself for about two millennia (without ever knowing of potatoes) and, like all societies that lasted that long, it had coped with its food supply and population expansion in sustainable ways

by developing structures and behaviour to deal with such issues. It is not rocket science to do so.

But those factors had been systematically and very deliberately destroyed by the colonialisation since Tudor times. The society had been degraded and as a result almost lost its sense of purpose. It had developed an element of disorientation and recklessness about itself in regard to population and the consequent dependence on a single crop. But that explanation will not appear in this Cambridge 'History'.

It will not appear because, in another chapter on the post-holocaust situation, we are told that "*Though the nationalist frame of reference has long since been abandoned by academic historians, its lingering influence is reflected in the modest scholarly interest in Irish politics after the Famine—with the telling exception of Fenianism which continues to command significant attention and to generate sometimes heated debate*" (p.714). The argument is that it was 'sectional interests' that dominated from now on and "*the Home Rule party provided a vehicle to pursue sectional interests by nationalist means*" (p.715).

However, it would be too absurd to ever suggest that the Fenians were sectional. They were nothing if not national. It is no doubt a perfect summing up of modern academic history that "*the nationalist frame of reference has long since been abandoned*". And that explains in a nutshell why that 'history' has become so irrelevant. What terms of reference has replaced it in academia? Academia is probably under the illusion that history can be written without one and that history itself has none either.

Irish politics and society was at its lowest ebb after the holocaust and, despite the best efforts of Young Ireland, it was indeed like "*the corpse on the dissecting table*" as graphically described by Gavan

Duffy, who was to leave the country in despair. But the corpse shortly became alive again, as reflected in Fenianism and Home Rule. They were very different movements but they cannot be explained or understood except in a nationalist frame of reference. They can by no stretch of the imagination be described as '*exceptional*' or '*sectional*'.

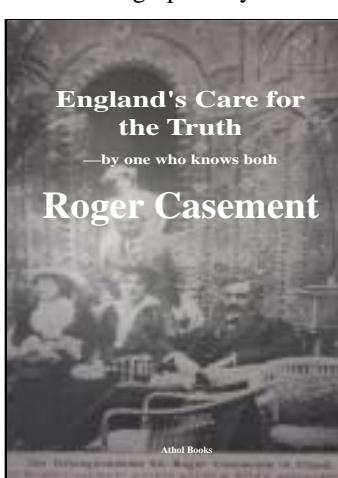
But more interesting and more to the point than either, insofar as a '*nationalist frame of reference*' is concerned, was the creation of the Home Rule movement by Isaac Butt. Butt was the leading and staunchest Irish Unionist before the holocaust but the behaviour of the Government during it convinced him that there was no *Union* in reality, and that Ireland was a separate nation—and treated as such—and that this had been proved beyond all doubt.

He came to accept a "*nationalist frame of reference*" because it became blindingly obvious to him that that was the reality of things. Our academics cannot explain his behaviour with their dismissal of a '*nationalist terms of reference*' and neither can they explain all that followed—leading to national independence. How in the world can all that be explained while abandoning a nationalist frame of reference—as that was the essence of all that subsequently happened. So what use is their 'History'? It is these academics who are reduced to '*sectional interests*', as they cannot see the wood for the trees from their vantage point. Their 'history' becomes a rag bag of events.

If they avert their eyes to that reality in viewing world history since that very period, would they also dispense with the most blindingly obvious fact that nationalist frames of reference are the central fact—and the most consistent fact—of that history and remains so with increasing force with every passing day?

But there are none as blind as those who will not see.

Jack Lane



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Mise Le Meas*, Seán Lemass!

Seán Lemass succeeded Éamon de Valera as leader of Fianna Fáil in 1959 and held that position until 1966, serving as the Republic's Taoiseach over that same period. Following his retirement, Lemass gave a series of interviews to FF Executive member Dermot Ryan in 1967, the tapes of which were deposited by the Lemass family in UCD Archives. This June 2nd, the *Irish Times* published transcripts of a selection of these tapes, edited by Ronan McGreevy. Notwithstanding some pejorative commentary from McGreevy and some misleading headlines, much of the real Lemass breaks through, including self-contradictory comments from Lemass himself which dent some of the mythology surrounding him. McGreevy writes:

"The relationship between Éamon de Valera and Seán Lemass is arguably the most important relationship between two Irish politicians in the history of the State. Between them, they were taoisigh (though the office was not known as that until 1937) for all but six years between 1932 to 1966. They were contrasting men. The stereotype of de Valera as the romantic dreamer and Lemass as the bustling pragmatist are not that far removed from Lemass's own observations as to how their relationship worked."

But the tapes, in fact, undermine McGreevy's stereotype. I have long been inclined to view the Dev/Lemass working relationship and leadership as having been not that dissimilar to that of the Mao/Chou partnership in China. McGreevy maintains: "*For Lemass, there were two de Valeras, the charismatic politician which (sic) led the Republican movement to government, and then 16 years of unbroken rule from 1932 to 1948.*" But, as is clear from elsewhere in McGreevy's quotes from the tapes, the second Dev whom Lemass held in far less esteem did not materialise in his eyes before 1948. As McGreevy more accurately relates:

"Lemass is unstinting in his admiration of de Valera's early years as Fianna Fáil leader and taoiseach. Nobody but Dev, he believed, could have brought the defeated anti-Treaty side from pariah status after the Civil War to government within 10 years. Lemass

recognised his own limitations in inspiring people as de Valera had done. De Valera had a 'fervent honesty' which chimed with people. De Valera had a capacity 'to be able to stand up in the rain and talk for an hour on the simplest terms to them, which I could never do. Paying no attention to the rain or anything else, spelling everything out in the simplest terms to them, going back over it again and again if he thought they hadn't understood it. Now that extraordinary loyalty and enthusiasm that he engendered was partially down to this—simplicity, I suppose is the word for it. Lack of sophistication anyway.' He praises the younger de Valera for having been clear-sighted in the big political issues of the day. This allowed de Valera to demolish the Treaty within three to four years, ending with the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in 1938. 'This was real political genius of the highest order which nobody else would have been capable of—anyone else would have put a foot wrong, or would have been tough, when it was unwise to be tough, or weak, when it was unwise to be weak. He was able to walk the middle course all the time to take advantage of every opportunity that emerged and eventually created a situation where five years after he became head of the government again the Treaty was dead and without any ill effects even in the matter of the relationship with Great Britain'."

McGreevy's narrative also shows how Dev gave Lemass his head in confronting the Bishop of Galway:

"Lemass may have lived during a time when the Catholic Church was dominant in Irish society, but, nevertheless, he always believed there was a strong sense of anti-clericalism in the Irish people ... (and) recounted a major row he had with the bishop of Galway, Dr Michael Browne, who was never slow in delivering instructions to the political classes. It followed on foot of the publication of a 1944 report led by Browne into the now rather arcane concept of vocationalism, which generated a great deal of interest in Ireland during the period. First

articulated by Pope Pius XI in his 1931 papal encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, vocationalism presented a road map for how Catholics could order their society and avoid the extremes of fascism and communism. Eight years after the papal encyclical, Éamon De Valera commissioned his own inquiry into vocationalism in the months before the start of the second World War. However, the 1944 report from the combative bishop of Galway, which was critical of the government and the civil service, arrived as a bombshell in government departments. It warned of the State's 'despotic control of production and labour'. Lemass took this criticism personally, as his own department had taken draconian emergency measures during the war to control the economy. Fiercely denouncing the report publicly as a 'slovenly document', Lemass said the work was 'querulous, nagging and propagandist'—extraordinary language for a politician at the time. Browne responded indignantly and the two exchanged insults in a series of letters in the *Irish Press*. However, Lemass believed his stand against the bishop was very popular throughout the country. 'I think there is a political advantage in having a certain anti-clerical tinge', Lemass remembered. 'The only time in my life that I ever got an enormous vote, the highest vote ever accorded to any candidate in a general election was when I was having a full-scale row with the bishop of Galway and this was dominating the political scene and I found this on other occasions too—that having a good row with the bishop is quite a political asset and you do not suffer politically for it because there is an anti-clericalism in the Irish people'."

As McGreevy acknowledges, Lemass "praises the younger de Valera for having been clear-sighted in the big political issues of the day". But perhaps McGreevy feels that this should not apply to Dev's policy of Neutrality in respect of Britain's War. For what are we to make of the heading to another of McGreevy's excerpts from the tapes? "*Decision to return Treaty ports to Free State in 1938 proved completely wrong.*" Wrong from whose point of view—Britain's or Ireland's? The ambiguity (or ambivalence?) in the main heading is only partly offset by the subheading—"Lemass on the Treaty ports: Britain handed back ports under mistaken belief radar alone could detect German submarines". The actual narrative undermines the misleading impression given by

* Yours Sincerely

the heading. McGreevy relates how Thomas Inskip, Britain's Minister for the Coordination of Defence 1936-39, and "a key figure in the United Kingdom's then preparations for a looming war with Germany, believed London had developed a new sonar device which could locate submarines under the water". But, as Lemass actually related: "Of course, this proved to be completely wrong in the end: radar was certainly a useful device, but the German submarine still became the greatest menace they had during the war."

There is more than a hint of sympathy in McGreevy's description of Churchill's stance: "The 1938 decision to hand back the Treaty ports was widely accepted in Britain and Ireland, but bitterly opposed by future British prime minister Winston Churchill". But for Lemass, and for Ireland's own interests, the decision was, indeed, "completely right":

"The Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement ended the crippling economic war between Britain and the Free State which arose out of the decision by the Fianna Fáil government in 1933 to stop paying land annuities to the British government arising out of the pre-independence land acts. It was settled with a once-off payment of £10 million by the Irish government. Lemass said the money was of 'no importance'. The return of the Treaty ports, though, was vital as it turned out to preserve Irish neutrality during the second World War."

But Britain was to resume economic warfare against Ireland, as McGreevy's further relates under the heading of "*Seán Lemass on rationing: Britain 'double-crossed us completely' on tea rations*":

"The trouble for Lemass was that the British controlled the supply of tea for most of the war. Dublin and London had come to an agreement at the start of the war that both countries would receive the same per-capita ration of tea. However, Lemass complained that the British 'double-crossed us completely' in 1940 by announcing that the Irish would only be entitled to a quarter-ounce of tea per person while the British would retain their ounce per person. The British would not give the Irish a navy certificate to collect tea from the warehouses in Calcutta, so Lemass sought to get around the effective British embargo by hiring an American ship. The tea was taken via the Panama Canal to New York and then sent by train to St John's, Newfoundland. It was transported across the Atlantic by one of the

Irish merchant navy ships, the *Irish Poplar*. Having made a perilous journey across the Atlantic dodging German U-boats... 'We were able to keep the one ounce of tea ration by and large during the whole war and people regarded this as quite an achievement (which it was) because they assumed there would be no tea', Lemass remembered. The war provided an acute dilemma for Ireland, which was critically dependent on Britain for its shipping and Lemass sensed the British were trying to exercise some control over the Irish government by restricting the supply of shipping. Lemass and his principal secretary John Leydon realised in 1940 that they could not depend upon the British to charter shipping on their behalf so they set about putting together an Irish fleet in the middle of the war. They scoured Europe for vessels and bought a Greek ship that was in such an advanced state of decrepitude that its crew could not even sink her for insurance purposes. It became the *Irish Poplar*."

So, Lemass and Dev had worked very much in tandem in safeguarding Irish sovereignty and neutrality during World War Two. Lemass's critique of Dev relates to the post-War years, although the pejorative term "*great totem*" was not voiced by Lemass, but is an example of McGreevy wearing his own prejudices on his sleeve:

"Things changed after Fianna Fáil was voted out of office in 1948 by an inter-party coalition led by Fine Gael. This was a shock to Fianna Fáil, which had been in government for 16 consecutive years. Lemass noted that after 1948, de Valera became unfocused and lost a lot of his old drive. In 1948, he was 66, but remained on as Fianna Fáil leader until 1959. Lemass was 17 years younger than de Valera and his natural successor. There was 'never any question in anybody's mind that when Dev went I was going to step into his place' yet he felt unable to remove the great totem from office. 'In the 1950s, I began to realise that Dev was losing his grip, that he was no longer the man he had been', Lemass recalled... 'But, insofar as I had any desire, on my part, to become taoiseach, it was just a conviction that, where the organisation and administration of the government was concerned, I could do a better job than he was doing at the time.' De Valera had two spells as taoiseach in the 1950s—the first time between 1951

and 1954, the second from 1957 until his retirement from the office in 1959. Lemass is withering in his criticism of de Valera's last term as taoiseach. 'In practice, Dev had long ceased to be a leader in the full sense of the term', he told his interviewer Dermot Ryan. 'Up to that time he was the driving force in solving all our political problems. He was always pressing for action in the fields in which he considered it was needed. After a time, this changed and he became, as I suppose people of his age-bracket always tend to become, a man to whom you brought ideas—he became the judge of other people's ideas rather than the initiator of them himself.' Lemass's frustration with de Valera turned to cold fury in 1959 when de Valera announced his candidacy for the presidency. Lemass expected de Valera to step down immediately as taoiseach, but he didn't. De Valera remained as taoiseach even while he campaigned for the presidency."

"Lemass's economic expansion policy saved Ireland: 1958 plan to reverse protectionism and open Ireland up to foreign investment had a galvanising effect on the economy", read the headings for further excerpts, where McGreevy speculates:

"The 1950s was the darkest decade, marked by emigration of nearly 50,000 people a year. One of the great what-ifs of Irish history is what would have happened if Seán Lemass had become taoiseach earlier. Would much of the stagnation of the 1950s have been avoided if the economic plan published by Lemass a year after he took over from Éamon de Valera had been introduced earlier? Lemass himself was unsure when he was questioned a decade later by Dermot Ryan if he could have brought forward such a plan had he been taoiseach five or 10 years previously. 'It might be true', Lemass responded in recordings later transcribed by Ryan, 'but it is very hard to be sure about this because my own thoughts were only developing at that time. Generally, I think that this could have happened earlier, but we could not really get down to the work of preparing an official programme for economic expansion until we were in government as a majority.' He criticised the inertia of de Valera in the 1950s whose 'capacity to devise change had diminished and any proposals I brought forward were always subjected to

debate rather than decision'. So Lemass decided to publish his own plans while Fianna Fáil was still in opposition. They appeared as supplements in the Fianna Fáil-supporting *Irish Press* in 1955 and 1956. 'This conception of programming began during the period when we were in opposition and I suppose it was largely my conception. I induced the party [Fianna Fáil] to accept my ideas', he said. The idea of a National Development Plan was Fianna Fáil policy in the 1957 general election. The civil servant TK Whitaker was given the task of preparing it. Lemass was involved in it too but admitted it was not always easy. 'I was one of the people who was regarded as a party authority on economic policy, but this did not necessarily involve my deciding priorities. There were many contentious arguments between myself and the minister for agriculture and also on the financial side.' He adopted the Veroni plan, an economic plan that was produced in Italy in the 1950s to stimulate its post-war economy. 'I worked out a plan of my own. This was very crude and amateurish in many respects, but it did involve our commitment to the idea of programming for the future.' He believed the plan, which was contained in the Fianna Fáil manifesto of 1957, was one of the reasons the party won a thumping majority of nine in that year's general election. Lemass said its publication in 1958 had a galvanising effect as Irish industry responded to it with relief. Economic planning for Ireland had been a 'revolutionary concept' but was accepted immediately by the trade unions, farmers and industrialists. Lemass maintained the despair surrounding the country disappeared between 1960 and 1961.'

There is much that is self-contradictory in Lemass's own account here. Dev may have ceased to give decisive leadership himself, but he did give Lemass his head in devising the manifesto which would win the 1957 General Election. Moreover, Lemass's argument—that Dev should have facilitated him becoming Taoiseach earlier—is contradicted by other excerpts from his taped interviews, presented by McGreevy under the headings of "*Lemass did not want to be taoiseach for purely selfish reasons*". Still regarded as Ireland's greatest taoiseach, Lemass missed the pleasures of cards and golf and going to race meetings":

"Seán Lemass, who became taoiseach on June 23rd, 1959, at the age of 59,

after Éamon de Valera was elected president of Ireland, never wanted the job, he said in now-revealed tapes... Lemass, as tanáiste and minister for industry and commerce in the Fianna Fáil government which took office again in 1957, was effectively Taoiseach anyway... He had urged de Valera not to stand for the presidency, suggesting that he should carry on as an 'adjudicator' taoiseach, leaving Lemass to do the work: 'I would have preferred if time stood still.' With typical candour, he told Ryan: 'I could see no way of avoiding it except by keep Dev as Taoiseach until he died in the expectation that he would not interfere with what I was doing, as he was not interfering anyway.' In the end, he said, he took the job out of a sense of duty when de Valera finally vacated the office at the age of 75. His reluctance, he told Ryan, was motivated, he admitted, by entirely selfish reasons. Lemass was a creature of habit. He valued his free time. He liked to play cards and golf. He attended race meetings and was often irritated when political pressures meant he could not... 'I would have said it was for purely selfish reasons that I did not want to aspire to the office of taoiseach. Life was enjoyable. I had all the work I wanted to do and all the power I wanted to exercise. At the same time, I could have relaxation that was more or less normal and which I assumed would cease to be available as taoiseach.' ... Later on, Lemass had no regrets about departing from the office of taoiseach: 'On the contrary, the only sense I experienced when I was out was relief—free at last of all the responsibilities. I had succeeded in having a fairly long and active political life and that was the end of it; the feeling that I had enhanced rather than damaged [my] reputation in that period'."

Yet McGreevy does allow Lemass to sum up the overall achievements of Fianna Fáil by the time of his departure in 1966:

"Lemass was scathing of the Cumann na nGaedheal government which vacated power in 1932. He said their only policy was fear and they suffered from a lack of leadership. 'Their only argument for being allowed to continue carrying on their own government was that they had won the Civil War, restored peace and order and that if they disappeared disorder would start up again. They had no economic or social policy. There was nothing that

they could rally people to except the idea that their removal would mean another deluge of disorder and fighting. The fact was that in all this period they were just merely content to govern, doing the minimum that was necessary to carry on government, bringing in only the legislation which would have evolved in the ordinary way.' Lemass believed Fianna Fáil's victory in the 1932 election was not its anti-Treaty stance, but the state of the economy—'the appalling economic conditions, the acute depression, the sense of impending doom and the complete instability of the government to produce any sort of policy to cope with it'."

"He (Lemass) did give an interview to the *Kerryman* newspaper in which he suggested that the progress that Ireland had made in the intervening 50 years would have been 'inconceivable' but for Independence. There would have been some progress anyway, because the whole world was going ahead, but we could never have achieved anything like what was done: the intensification of the industrial effort, the creation of employment opportunities, the rise in the standard of living and social conditions if there had not been an Irish government. By the time Lemass had said this in January 1969, the Irish state had recovered from the slump of the 1950s, but such sentiments on an economic level at least would have been questionable if stated 10 years previously. Lemass expanded on his beliefs that Ireland was better off economically as an independent country. He said young Irish people in the 1960s had no idea what the country was like under British rule, 'with foreign troops and most appalling social conditions, particularly so far as housing was concerned. After the conclusion of the 1914 war, literally no employment opportunities at all when the war-time industrial boom ended. Indeed, I suppose most people looking objectively at the situation, certainly if they looked with the economic knowledge that people have nowadays, would have been convinced that it would be almost impossible for the country to develop an industrial existence building on that basis'."

As for the *Irish Times* itself, and the book by its columnist John Healy on the impact of emigration on his native County Mayo town of Charlestown—*No One Shouted Stop: The Death of an Irish Town*—Lemass opined:

"There has been a lot of nonsense talked about this by urban theorists. Our friend in *The Irish Times* talks a lot of bilge. I am told they resented his articles intensely in Charlestown. They did not think of themselves as a dying community. They do not want to see themselves or anybody else in this light. He does not go back to Charlestown, I gather, having painted this picture [In

the transcripts, Lemass crosses this last sentence out]."

I, too, have been content to let Lemass speak for himself in this article. But beyond highlighting some of the contradictions present in his own self-assessment, there are other caveats that need to be explored in a further article.

Manus O'Riordan

backstop somersault is fraught with danger" (19 May), Europe Editor Tony Connolly described how the UK side pulled back from the Agreement reached at the December summit of the European Council. The backstop, as stated in paragraph 49 of that Agreement is understood by the Irish as "*a guarantee of no hard border in which Northern Ireland would remain aligned with the rules of the customs union and single market if no other solution can be found.*"

Catching Up On Europe

MAY BREXIT SUMMARY

The Brexit negotiations went badly during May: relations between Brexiteers and pragmatists in Westminster were deadlocked; as were the dealings between the UK negotiating team and Michel Barnier's Task Force in Brussels. The Irish Government has been described as being "*in something of a bind*" over the Border backstop, a difficulty compounded by the Government's lack of a solid orientation in its relationships with the UK and Europe. And on the Continent a long awaited leap forward in reforming the Eurozone is being thwarted in different ways by the three largest Member States, France, Germany and Italy.

A valuable source of information on the negotiations is Open Europe's blog, the *Daily Shakeup*. Going purely by main headlines from that blog it is possible to capture a good sense of the mayhem that the strife in the Tory Party is causing. Here is a selection:

(April 30) "David Davis puts pressure on Theresa May to sideline her chief Brexit advisor (Oliver Robbins). (May 2) 30-page memorandum from Jacob Rees Mogg urges the Prime Minister to rule out the "customs partnership". (May 3) Brexit Cabinet rejects customs partnership. (May 4) Brexit transition period extension could be necessary to implement customs union arrangements. (8 May) Theresa May to push ahead with customs partnership. (9 May) Theresa May could ask support of full Cabinet for "customs partnership" option. (May 11) Theresa May splits cabinet to develop customs solutions. (May 18) May denies 'climbing down' over Customs Union. (May 21) Tory MPs are preparing for autumn elections (this was a threat issued by a colleague of Rees Mogg). (22 May) Boris Johnson dismisses reports of autumn elections. (25 May) UK will not propose second Brexit transition beyond 2020. (May 26) Theresa May to propose

a second transition period until 2023".

Despite all the flip-flopping over the customs partnership, Barnier repeatedly stated that it was unacceptable to the EU. In any event, resolving it would provide only part of a solution to preventing a hard Border on the island of Ireland. The customs idea favoured by Rees Mogg and the Brexiteers, highly streamlined maximum facilitation (*max fac*) requires technology that has not yet been invented and is expected to impose a £20 billion annual cost on UK businesses. The *max fac* option has also been rejected by the EU side and is opposed by the Irish Government because it would entail the erection of infrastructure on the Border.

Turning to the UK/EU negotiations, antagonism was increased by a row over UK access to the EU's Galileo Satellite which has a security function. The UK accused the EU of failing to meet financial settlement commitments in its stance on Galileo. The UK was also reported to be launching, by way of a threat to the EU, its first tenders for its own satellite navigation systems by the end of the year. The standing of the UK as the EU's "*largest security partner*" was clearly perceived by the British as one of their strong cards and there was genuine concern that the Barnier Task Force are failing to fall into line on the issue. For their part Barnier and his team, while paying diplomatic lip service to the value of security ties with the UK, insisted that, after Brexit, the UK would have "*third country*" status in all policy areas. Referring to the overall state of play in the negotiations, a UK official stated that, as things stood, the EU was "*putting conditions on our unconditional offers and trying to insult us*" (Daily Shakeup 25, May).

In a blog on the RTE website headed, "*The Irish Protocol: How Theresa May's*

Because of the DUP revolt against that paragraph, paragraph 50 was drafted to assure the Unionists that, if the backstop were to be used, there would be no trade barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. Yet the implication of the fudge was that the backstop would entail the UK as a whole remaining aligned to both the Customs Union and the Single Market. When it came to expressing the December Agreement in a legal Protocol, the drafters were forced to ignore paragraph 50, with deadlock between the UK and the EU and the Irish Government as to what a legal definition of the backstop should be.

The full complexity of the negotiations over the backstop cannot be discussed here. Suffice to say that the British Government is in '*something of a bind*' over differences between what the EU wants and what the Irish want; Irish concerns lie at the heart of a historically important confrontation between Europe and Britain. In these circumstances the solidity of the Irish Government's general orientation in its relationships with the UK and the EU is crucial. That is exactly the point on which *Irish Political Review* is critical of Ireland's position—successive Governments have sought to abandon the historical orientation of the Irish State and in that way have rendered problematical the pursuit of our national interest. Two short excerpts from an editorial ("*Northern Ireland: Decision Time Approaching!*") in the May *Irish Political Review* get to the heart of the matter:

"Now, with Brexit, the country finds itself under compulsion to be independent in the only way that really matters in Ireland—*independent of Britain*."

...

"The EU is much more a grouping of nations now than it was in the 1970s when Ireland tried to escape from itself into it, under Britain's wing. In order to be functionally European on its own, Ireland will have to become a nation once again."

Continental roadblocks

The *Daily Shakeup* of May 3rd had a paragraph headed, "Plans for a European Intervention Initiative moves ahead", in which dispels any remaining illusions regarding Emanuel Macron's intentions. The Initiative, to operate outside of EU structures, is a military venture to be led by France which is understood to include the UK as well as Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Denmark and Estonia. The purpose of the initiative is explained in a quotation from "*French officials*" that ends the paragraph. It reads:

"It is really important to have the British on board, not just because they have the most capable, rapidly deployable armed forces along with our own, but also because we share the same strategic culture and history of projecting force outside Europe."

One might speculate that what Macron is about is the assertion of French power against the dominant position in the EU that Germany enjoys, a dominance that is likely to increase after Brexit. Indeed the *Daily Shakeup* piece reports that Germany "*is sceptical about the project, fearing it would undermine the EU's Permanent Structural Cooperation (PESCO) framework*". Macron wishes to reassert French influence in Europe by launching an initiative in the one area where Germany is weak: military affairs. It clearly matters little to him that he is weakening EU solidarity in the process. One has heard of Macron's debt to a French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, who is said to seek unity in irreconcilable standpoints. But the student has learned his lessons badly. Simultaneously supporting and undermining EU solidarity is a nonsense, especially at a time when it is badly needed.

It sometimes appears that Germany under Merkel is a mainstay of the EU, a Member State that can be relied on to do the needful to shoulder the burden of European leadership. But here too there are indications of lukewarm commitment. Judgements of the Federal Constitutional Court in recent times have ruled that, because the EU has a democratic deficit, EU decisions need to be confirmed by the *Bundestag* (German national parliament). In the same way that France has been resentful of German predominance, Germany has been suspicious of French plans for the EU (these tensions are described in a chapter called, "*Only One Bed for Two Dreams*" in "*The Euro Crisis and its Aftermath*" by Jean Pisani-Ferry).

It seems that an important factor leading to the foundation of the European Project—the need to overcome hostility between France and Germany—is now being ignored and becoming a factor obstructing needed moves to further EU integration.

The case of the third country currently thwarting the development of the Eurozone is more straightforward. The two populist parties negotiating to form a Government in Italy produced a Programme promising to deliver a flat tax and a large deficit in the public finances. This spells trouble for Italy, given that it is already carrying a heavy burden of public debt and 'flat taxation' means that the poor pay a larger percentage of their income. It also threatens the stability of the Eurozone because operating a Single Currency in a Union of States requires a common fiscal discipline. It remains to be seen how this crisis will be addressed at both the national and the European levels but if the response is inadequate then the viability of the Eurozone will again come into question.

No doubt all three cases are providing a measure of succour to the beleaguered Eurosceptics in the Tory Party, a factor that may cheer them up, thus causing even greater gridlock at Westminster. But in challenging times it is well to end on a positive note. Notwithstanding an increasing atmosphere of stalemate in the various strands of the Brexit talks, and multiple roadblocks against much needed EU reform, we must believe that sense will eventually prevail, an amicable Brexit will be agreed, the EU elite will rediscover the value of politics, and all things in the firmament will be well.

JUNE BREXIT SUMMARY

The main Brexit development from an Irish perspective in recent weeks has been that "*sufficient progress*" on the Border backstop arrangement is now considered unlikely to happen at the June summit of the European Council. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has even suggested that it may not be resolved at the October meeting but may be deferred until November.

The other news is that the British Government on June 20th defeated a move by Remain supporters to pass an Amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill that would have allowed the British Parliament a "*meaningful*" vote on the final deal with Brussels.

On the Continent storm clouds have been gathering on the question of immig-

ration, causing a major division in the German Government. Surprisingly, given recent tensions in the Berlin-Paris relationship, agreement has been reached between Germany and France on closer Eurozone integration. Domestically, a story about an Irish employer group deserves notice.

Backstop impasse

The UK cannot agree to the EU's legal text on the backstop because it would entail separate treatment for Northern Ireland, and the EU cannot accept a UK proposal that the proposed customs arrangement for Northern Ireland should be extended to the whole of the UK because that would allow Britain to simultaneously leave Europe and retain key benefits of membership. It looks as though the matter will only be resolved when the future EU/UK trade relationship is settled, a key UK objective at the start of the negotiations.

At time of writing (21st June) the displeasure of the Irish and European Brexit teams regarding the backstop *impasse* is being communicated loudly through the media. Such posturing is par for the course, except that some spokespersons, notably Irish EU Commissioner Phil Hogan, are directing their criticisms at the pro-Brexit wing of the British Conservative Party. Surely the internal British debate is a matter for the citizens of the UK and their political representatives? The Brussels institutions and the Irish political class are only aggravating matters by taking sides in the UK debate.

The additional complication whereby Fine Gael and Fianna Fail together with elements in the media continue to cling to a close-to-Britain policy was in evidence this month when members of the British royal family visited Cork and Kerry. The strongest expression of the pro-British viewpoint came in an article by Fine Gael leaning columnist Stephen Collins. Collins concluded a column headed, "*Royals have important role to play in political relations*" by suggesting that the British-Irish Intergovernmental Council needs to be developed. The reason is:

"...to take account of the new relationship between the two countries but Prince Charles's visit has highlighted the potential role of the royal family in ensuring that the bridges built over the past two decades don't crumble under the strain of Brexit" (Irish Times, 21 June)

But these bridges were not based on mutual respect and recognition between two States. They were founded on the

imposition of an English view of Irish history and an abandonment of the de Valera legacy. When, at the outset of the decade of centenaries, the then British Ambassador to Ireland, Dominic Chilcott, was asked on RTE's *Morning Ireland* for his view of the centenaries, he replied that the more he read Irish history the more he admired one man, John Redmond. That statement was entirely in keeping with how both Governments advanced what they called a process of reconciliation. It was actually a process of historical distortion aimed at causing damage to republicanism. Some months ago Stephen Collins penned a column denouncing President Higgins for not attending a symposium to mark the centenary of Redmond's death. He has clearly committed to keeping the Redmondite bandwagon rolling despite Brexit, but the bandwagon has run out of road and Collins is highlighting a chink in the Irish/EU armour by persisting with it.

Drama at Westminster

In an important vote in the House of Commons on June 20th, Tory backbencher and former Attorney General Dominic Grieve argued and voted against an Amendment that he had a hand in drafting. Not surprisingly the Amendment was defeated. Grieve wants the full cohort of Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords to have a meaningful vote on the final Brexit deal and his Amendment was designed to give Parliament the right to issue instructions to Government if a *no deal* scenario unfolds. But really these Westminster votes are much ado about nothing.

Brexit is being negotiated by the Government of Theresa May and the European Council represented by a Task Force led by Michel Barnier. At the end of the process the Withdrawal Agreement along with other parts of the final deal will be passed to the Westminster and European Parliaments for ratification. No doubt these Parliaments exercise an important democratic function; no doubt the respective Parliamentary debates will include useful contributions; but in reality, to use an inexact metaphor, both Parliaments represent window dressing compared to the serious business of Executive Government. In the recent vote, a danger existed that the window dressing would get in the way of Government, and Grieve wisely decided to vote against his own Amendment, having been given a note stating that the Speaker will have power to allow a neutral Government motion to be

amended. If necessary, the Standing Orders of the Commons will be suspended in the still unlikely event of a collapse in the negotiations.

Remainers probably constitute a majority in the British Parliament, but the possibility that for important votes, Labour MPs will support the Government should not be discounted; a handful of Labour rebels already regularly vote with the Conservatives on Brexit business. At the end of the day a huge majority of the Commons voted to trigger Article 50. The Parliamentary melodrama of recent months is the result of a Court ruling in 2017 that Parliament needs to be consulted regarding Brexit, and also of the Government's precarious majority. Despite persistent media speculation that the tide in British politics is turning against Brexit, and despite the division in the Conservative Party, UK exit from Europe remains on course.

EU tensions

Angela Merkel currently faces a challenge from the leader of her Bavarian sister party, Horst Seehofer, on the immigration question. Seehofer is openly supporting the anti-immigration policies of Matteo Salvini of the Lega Party in Italy and Sebastian Kurz of the Austrian People's Party. Seehofer has been seeking to turn back asylum seekers at the German border if they have already been registered elsewhere in the EU. Merkel had resisted the proposal, arguing that such measures should only be taken in agreement with Germany's EU partners. Both leaders have agreed that the matter should be discussed at the approaching European Council summit in Brussels. Unless the controversy is resolved, the EU's immigration policy will be disrupted, adding a further headache to the woes currently besetting European leaders. How immigration is dealt with will have a major bearing on the post-Brexit EU.

On a more positive note Merkel and Macron seem to have made some progress in resolving their differences on the future of the EU. An agreement between them was reported as follows:

"Germany and France have agreed on closer euro zone integration, co-ordinated EU migration policy and defence co-operation—but left crucial details open ahead of next week's European Council meeting in Brussels.

Nine months after he flagged the idea of a euro zone budget, French president Emmanuel Macron insisted he had secured Angela Merkel's political

agreement for such a new euro zone budget to go live from 2021 in parallel with the next EU budget" (Irish Times, Derek Scally, 19 June).

The extent of the difference between the two Governments is underlined by Merkel's reported view that a Eurozone Budget would be kept to low double digits whereas Macron envisions it starting at 300 billion euro. Nonetheless this recent agreement holds out a possibility that EU development may yet be placed on a track that inspires confidence for the future.

A news item from early June about the Irish employer body, IBEC, deserves attention. It revealed that IBEC is one of the most active and high spending lobby groups in Brussels. The relevant article by Ciaran Hancock states:

"Ibec, which represents more than 7,500 companies in Ireland, spent €1.3 million on lobbying activities in the European Union last year. This made it the third highest spender among business representative groups across the 28 member states after two organisations in Germany" (Irish Times, 4 June).

Why is it that an Irish employer lobby group is spending nearly as much in Brussels as the Confederation of German Employers' Associations? It could be because of the preponderance of US multinationals in Ireland and it may also be related to lobbying activities on behalf of the Irish banks. It may even be that IBEC has been doing a good job protecting Irish interests.

However, it is also possible that this Irish organisation has been to the fore, much like the UK State since the Thatcher years, in pressing for market liberalisation at EU level. Given the damage that neo-liberal/ordoliberal ideology has caused to the European Union and its constituent Member States it would be valuable to learn about IBEC's role in Brussels. Viewed from an Irish perspective a concern would be that IBEC influences the manner in which EU regulations and law are communicated to Dublin. It is known that regulations have been implemented differently in different parts of the EU.

The answer, presumably, to a strong employer lobby is a corresponding lobby on the Trade Union side, or perhaps vigilance on the part of Irish MEPs. In any case one would hope that post-Brexit the Irish voice in the EU will be a lot less neo-liberal.

Dave Alvey

WW1 And Its Aftermath

Recently there has been a revelation about the feelings of Irish soldiers taking part in Britain's WW1 and their reaction to the news of the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin.

When you hear bad news from where you were born it has an effect on you that's hard to describe. My own personal feelings about an atrocity in another war was a combination of feeling one's self growing pale and frozen with a desire to lash out at someone.

I was in a London theatre during rehearsals and sitting beside me was a member of the cast, wearing an army jacket with the wings of the parachute regiment on the shoulders. It was the 30th of January 1972.

The director then suddenly interrupted proceedings in the manner of a headmaster:

"A dreadful thing has happened in a place called Londonderry. Some Paras have killed a lot of people walking in a demo" (it was Bloody Sunday)/

The young man wearing the Para wings wasn't wearing the emblem in support of that regiment, or any regiment of the British Army. With his long hair and sideboards, it looked like anti-Establishment behaviour that amounted to disrespect. That was a hangover from the 1960s, and the 1960s didn't just end in 1969. There had been the theatre/film version of *Oh What A Lovely War*, in which WW1 was seen as an unnecessary brutal war that had killed a million—mostly their own people with a high proportion of the middle-class who formed the officer corps.

This young man sat there in his Para jacket tutting at the news of what had happened in Derry.

When WW1 Protestant British Army veterans were still in their 50s and working in the Belfast shipyard you could overhear them converse about what they saw as injustices carried out in that war. Two young teenagers, who had maybe added a couple of years to their age in order to join the war, had been shot for cowardice.

It was an English firing squad because Irish soldiers North and South refused to be part of it. Normally officers had permission to shoot dead anymore on the spot who might refuse to go into battle. But now and again there would be a court-martial as a show of some kind of justice.

There then followed a plot which would see the court-martial officers picked off by their own men, using the heat of battle to cover their tracks. Besides German bullets a certain amount of men died from stray bullets from their own side and misdirected shelling anyway.

The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 had an effect on a number of the troops. Some came home to Belfast as communists. Such a person was Henry Cassidy Midgley (known as Harry Midgley), a distant relative of my paternal grandmother, who had looked after him as a boy when his mother couldn't cope for a few years. He had joined the Royal Engineers from out of his job as a fitter in the local linen mill.

His family lived in Seaview Street off York Road. My father's family lived in the same street a few doors away. It was two-up and two-down houses known as kitchen-houses for the mainly unskilled and those who worked in the nearby flax mills.

It wasn't the home conditions that turned Midgley communist. Seaview Street was solidly Unionist. There was plenty of work in the mills and even apprenticeships as millwrights and fitters were available. My father, his brothers and sisters, his mother and father were never out of work. Seaview Street houses had gas-lighting, running water, the famous Belfast sink and a flush toilet in the yard, where the coal was kept and clothes could be hung out to dry.

My paternal grandparents had come from rural Tyrone, with its oil lamps and candles and dry lavatory. My grandmother had walked from Sion Mills to Belfast as a young woman to get a job, around 84 miles, sleeping in a ditch for a few nights and living off the land—raw turnip, apples and blackberries, as I recall my father telling me.

Midgley joined the Belfast Labour Party in 1919. It was formed in 1892 at a Conference of Belfast Independent Labour activists and Trade Unionists and claimed to be the first socialist party in Ireland. The party affiliated itself to the British Labour Representation Committee in 1900, surviving until 1924. When partition came in 1921 it was accused of tiptoeing around the question. That would have meant it also tiptoed around the plight of the then Catholic minority.

Midgley was, in 1920, elected to the Belfast City Council. There followed in 1921 the first General Election ever held exclusively in the North, which saw James Craig the first ever Prime Minister at what

was to become Stormont. (it was built in 1932.) When Labour booked the Ulster Hall for a rally, the meeting was disrupted by loyalist shipyard workers. Craig told them they had captured the Hall from the Bolsheviks.

Midgley's Labour got 47% of the vote at one time. His vote dropped slightly in 1924 but he became an Alderman in 1929. In 1933 he was elected for Belfast Dock, as member of the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP). The Dock constituency was mostly Catholic. He became leader of the party and, despite the mostly Catholic Constituency, he joined the board of Linfield FC, a Protestant football team. But then he never hid his Protestantism, or make little of it for electoral reasons.

During the Spanish Civil War he supported the Republicans. This drew him into conflict with the *Irish News*: the paper supported Franco, and the protection of the Catholic Church. This was an awkward situation for an Ulster Protestant who was genuinely anti-Fascist. He published a pamphlet at his own expense in order to combat the charge of sectarianism. In the 1938 election it was to cost him dearly. The Nationalist Party stood a candidate against him, James Collins, who supported Franco's armed rebellion. Night after night there were violent clashes in the Dock constituency with shouts of: '*Up Franco! Remember Spain!*' and '*We want Franco!*'

Midgley was also opposed by a Unionist candidate, to whom he lost his seat. Whether it was a split vote or the Unionist candidate playing a crafty game by supporting Franco, isn't explained but the fact is the mainly Catholic Dock must have voted Unionist back in 1938 for tactical reasons. I have known them to do that back in the 1950s in the New Lodge area of the city in exchange for a flat. And at the next election voting the Unionist out again.

Midgley then won the Belfast Willowfield constituency in a 1941 by-election for the NILP. This was a strong loyalist seat and the event left James Craig, the Prime Minister, severely shaken.

Midgley then, protesting at Jack Beattie's leadership of the NILP, resigned from the party. He said he intended; *to work constructively with the Ulster Unionist Party*.

He then formed the Commonwealth Labour Party. When Basil Brooke became Prime Minister, he appointed Midgley Minister of Public Security. He also became a member of the Privy Council of Northern Ireland. The following year he

became Minister of Labour. In the General Election of 1945, as the Commonwealth Labour Party's only successful candidate, he won 30% of the vote in Belfast South against the Ulster Unionist opposition.

At Stormont he clashed with Jack Beattie and crossed over to punch him. The argument had something to do with the past in the NILP. The notorious Sir Norman Stronge, Speaker at Stormont, excluded him from the Chamber for the rest of the sitting. A mild slap on the wrist. Midgley apologised the next day.

In 1946, a year later, I met Midgley at my grandmother's funeral. He was wearing a homburg hat and dark overcoat, complete with Special Branch protection and the usually armed RUC.

In 1947 he disbanded the Commonwealth Labour Party and joined the Ulster Unionist Party. He became Minister of Labour and National Insurance in 1949 and then Minister of Education in 1950. He went on to join the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys, the more senior organisation to do with the 17th Century Siege of Derry by King James the Second.

He became more and more the Unionist; during a visit to Portadown in 1957 he said:

"All the minority are traitors and have always been traitors to the government of Northern Ireland."

He died the same year while still in Office. My father attended his funeral on Carnmoney Hill.

As a young communist I condemned his treachery and denied any family link whatsoever with him, no matter how tenuous. Through the mixed marriage of my parents I had a cousin as a sergeant in the RUC, with his brothers in the B'Specials, and an aunt married to another RUC sergeant who was to become a District Inspector in Special Branch. I have been in all their houses and all have been kind to me but, as a Catholic, I felt I had the mark on Cain on me that excluded me from society.

When I provoked my father about Midgley on one occasion he replied quietly:

"But there's no hope in this part of the world. Good men go to waste here. And he was a good man."

He continued to defend him to the end of his days as someone who had survived the trenches of WW1, saw the light but had that light extinguished by conditions in a dysfunctional landscape.

W.J.Haire
8 May, 2018

• Biteback • Biteback

Letter submitted to Irish Times on 22nd June

Casement 'Black Diary'

Ronan McGreevy writes that: "*The evidence for Casement's homosexuality is contained in the notorious "Black Diaries" which were circulated before and during his trial in 1916*" (Irish Times, 21/6/18). What was shown, not circulated, to a large number of VIPs were typescripts. There is no evidence that the 'Black Diary' volumes now available were shown to anybody, despite requests to do so. Why not?

Jack Lane

Unpublished Letter to Irish Times (14.6.18)

(Written after Fintan O'Toole belittled the National Anthem in his *Irish Times* column.)

Irish National Anthem

I'm surprised that none of the advocates of scrapping Peadar Kearney's "*A Soldier's Song*" have not considered replacing it with "*Whack Fol The Diddle*" by the same author.

It would perfectly reflect their sentiments. It would save payment to the author, long buried in Glasnevin.

Fanatical weaponisers of the Irish Language could translate it .

Donal Kennedy

Whack Fol The Diddle

I'll sing you a song of peace and love,
Whack fol the diddle all the di do day.
To the land that reigns all lands above.
Whack fol the diddle all the di do day.
May peace and plenty be her share
Who kept our homes from want and care,
God bless Mother England is our prayer.
Whack fol the diddle all the di do day.
Whack fol the diddle all the di do day.
So we say, Hip Hooray!
Come and listen while we pray.
Whack fol the diddle all the di do day.
When we were savage, fierce and wild
She came like a mother to her child.
She gently raised us from the slime
Kept our hands from hellish crime,
And sent us to Heaven in her own good time.
Now our fathers oft were very bad boys.
Guns and pikes are dangerous toys.
From Bearna Baol to Bunker Hill
They made poor England weep her fill,
But ould Britannia loves us still!
Now Irishmen, forget the past!
And think of the time that's coming fast.
When we shall all be civilized,
Neat and clean and well-advised.
And won't Mother England be surprised?

Does It Stack Up ?

PLANNING FOR WAR?

The economists are, mostly, staying very quiet this time around. They got it wrong in 2007 and 2008 when they were talking of the rise and rise of the European economy when in fact it was an empty shell of unsecured and excessive lending.

Now the lending is even worse because most of the bad loans are still not paid back and there are ten more years of borrowing added on. *Restructured Loans* were the buzzwords for a few years but *restructured* does not mean *repaid!*

Production in German industry is falling because of reductions in demand for products. The same is happening throughout industrial Europe. The situation is not helped by the attitude of Donald Trump's USA where a top executive, Rand Paul, said recently that the chief business of Washington is not politics, it is not power. It is **War** and has always been **War** because **War** makes money for the people who matter in Washington DC.

The Great Recession frightened all the wealthy class in USA as it did that class everywhere else in the world. But the USA wealthy class got to thinking seriously about recovering their money and they decided **War** is the answer to their problem. So what we are looking at now is the USA attempting to do what other dying Empires did, and that is to stimulate their economies by making war on others.

The Roman Empire plundered every nation around the Mediterranean, deep into Asia Minor, into Celtic Europe almost to the Ural Mountains, and to Northern Europe as far as Newcastle on Tyne (Hadrian's Wall) and Germany. The Spanish Empire got lucky with the discovery of the Caribbean Islands, Mexico and South America which yielded enormous riches in gold, silver and precious stones—they ran into trouble with the Portuguese and, when the then Pope mediated, he negotiated east of 60° West to the Portuguese and west of 60° West to the Spanish. But then came Napoleon of France and Wellington in England who between them put a stop to the Spanish Empire.

The British Empire started coming apart when it lost the first Boer War and effectively, in spite of the Wyndham Act of 1903, the British lost the (Irish) Land War. So, like the USA today, they decided in 1904 to plan a Great War. The British

knew they could not beat the Germans on their own, and so they started cultivating allies and creating situations to destabilise the world. They succeeded and eventually involved the USA.

But the British, even though they themselves did not win either of the two World Wars, are still very nationalistic, which renders them unable to co-operate peaceably in the European Union; and the British Foreign Office still sees itself as a manipulator on the world stage.

The USA is now the Empire which is on the cusp of falling and, like Britain before it, the USA is not going down without a fight. We are in a very dangerous situation now because war calculations are not simply a matter of sheer numbers as it was in Winston Churchill's time. The USA has nuclear power and, if it calculates that in the course of any future War it has to use nuclear weapons, then if the people in charge are mad enough they may use their nuclear power. This would inevitably cause retaliation by other nuclear-powered nations, leading to almost annihilation for populations throughout the world. for years after a nuclear war.

As Vladimir Putin of Russia has said: if there is to be World War Three, then World War Four would have to be fought with sticks. There would be nothing else left.

To cause a war does not stack up.

Michael Stack ©

which was soon abolished.

Belfast Childhood

My father started working the Belfast linen mills, as a spool boy, at the age of 12. He was a half-timer—half the week at work, half at school.

Starting time was 6 am to 6pm with a one hour break called the dinner hour. If they lived near the mill, and most did, they went home.

His job was to crawl under the machinery when the bobbins fell off the main frames that were shaking the odd one off. I never heard him complain about it. He was making some money, handed into the house of course, when there was very little money about. Just before Xmas a worker would be sent around to get the foot sizes of the employees. Then at Xmas the mill-owner gave his workers each a pair of leather boots, lace-ups for the men, buttoned-ups for the females. Those boots made him loved for the rest of the year.

My father never complained. He felt lucky that he started at 12 because his own father, doing the same job, started at 9 years old and got no boots and less schooling than he. But he stayed in that mill for the rest of his life and became a winding master, a well-paid supervisor for the period.

At 14 (1914) my father started his 7-year apprenticeship as a woodworker in Workman and Clark shipyard, long hours that included Saturday half day. He felt privileged at getting an apprenticeship.

At 14 I started work at Harland & Wolff shipyard aware of my grandfather and father's work experience and also felt privileged to get an apprenticeship and the 3 Rs at school without interruption. I didn't have to do 6 to 6 but 8 to 5.30, including half day Saturday,

What sustained us in our spare time was opera for my grandfather. (The working class at the beginning of the 20th Century in Belfast and Dublin had a great liking for it.) My father had his music—the violin (not the fiddle). I thought of theatre. These were our favourite thoughts at work if it became monotonous some days.

Life wasn't as bad back then as it is made out today if you had a job. Money was money even if it only amounted to farthings, halfpennies and pennies in your pocket sometimes. In Belfast you lived in a kitchen house (kitchen and pantry, two bedrooms) if unskilled but with a job. If skilled you lived in a parlour house—parlour, kitchen, two bedrooms and a box room. All especially built for industrial Belfast.

Not to have that 6-to-6 job meant abject poverty, rags, bread and dripping, living

To page 26, column 1

JOHNSTON continued

3. AUSTIN HARRISON: Austin Frederic Harrison (1873–1928) was a British journalist and editor, best known for his editorship of *The English Review* from 1909 until 1923.

4. E.A. ASTON, was described as a Nationalist by the London *Spectator* magazine and a member of the Local Government Board in Dublin.

5. Arthur Henderson was a Scottish iron moulder and Labour politician. He was the first Labour Cabinet Minister, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934 and, served three separate terms as Leader of the Labour Party in three different decades.

An Irish Constituent Convention. By E. A. Aston (extract)

Mr. Aston, an Irish Nationalist, proposes the election of an Irish Convention by proportional representation, and the submission of its draft Constitution to the League of Nations as arbitrator between Great Britain and Ulster on the one side and the Nationalists on the other. If we believe in the League, we have, he says, "everything to gain, and nothing worth retaining to lose, by proposing the first voluntary act of international confidence". He thinks that an elected Convention would propose something practical, because "the presumption is that Irishmen in the aggregate are not fools". British people, recalling the exceeding perversity of Irish Nationalists in backing the wrong horse

during the war, may very well hesitate to accept Mr. Aston's presumption. If Sinn Feiners, and Nationalists in a lesser degree, had not espoused the enemy's cause, they could have counted on the traditional generosity of Great Britain. As it is, they have no claim to special privileges" (*The Spectator*, London—21 June, 1919, Page 21).

The following appears in the 1936 title of the National Library *Bibliography of Irish History 1912-1921* by James Carty, M.A., Assistant Librarian. Published by the Department of Education by the Stationery Office. A unique publication reflecting a State that had begun to take itself seriously. Proof sheets were examined by P.S. O'Hegarty; Bulmer Hobson; Padraig O Caoimh and Frank Gallagher.

IRISH OPINION, 1916-1917: a weekly newspaper and review. June 17, 1916-April 28, 1917. Printed for the Irish Opinion Publishing Co. by the Wood Printing Works. (Moderate Sinn Fein)

IRISH OPINION, 1917-1918 (N.S.): a weekly journal of political and industrial democracy. N.S. 1917-1918. Dec. 1st 1917-April 13th, 1918 (Vol. 1. No. 20).

Extract from an advertisement, signed by Thomas Johnson, in *Nationality* (Dec. 7th, 1917):

Since Easter, 1916, the demand on the part of Irish Trade Unionists and friends of Labour for a Labour Newspaper has steadily grown... With a view to meeting this demand it is proposed to resume publication of the journal known as "*Irish Opinion*," with the addition of a sub-title of "*The Voice of Labour*"... The editorship will be undertaken by Mr. Andrew E. Malone... The general direction and

responsibility will be in the hands of the undersigned.

National Library of Ireland (2018):

Began as *Irish Opinion: a Voice of Labour* (1 Dec. 1917- 20 Sept. 1919)

Also known as *Irish Opinion* (June 1916 - 28 April 1917)

Continued as *Watchword of Labour* (27 Sept. 1919 - 17 July 1920)

Absorbed by *Watchword and Voice of Labour* (24 July 1920 - 4 Dec. 1920)

Continued as *Voice of Labour* (22 Oct. 1921 - 7 May 1927)

JOHNSON, THOMAS (1872-1963): Born in Liverpool, ironically a little over 400 yards from the birthplace of James Larkin. His early education was in a Non-Conformist school. An only child, he received a strict Victorian upbringing. A teetotaller and non-smoker, he had a life-long aversion to gambling and excessive drinking. Father and son, Thomas, attended a local Unitarian Chapel.

In 1893, he joined the Independent Labour Party in Blackpool, where he met James Larkin for the first time. He also joined a local branch of the Fabian Society.

In April, 1892, he secured employment with Hugh Flinn, a fish merchant in Kinsale, Co. Cork and Liverpool. In Ireland, he acted for the company as a buyer of fish.

He supported Labour Party abstention from the 1918 General Election and was joint author with William O'Brien, ITGWU, of the Democratic Programme of the first Free State Dail.

A Dail deputy from 1922-27. In 1927, he lost his Dail seat to James Larkin, Junior. Johnson was a member of the Labour Court 1946-1955.

Childhood continued

in an overcrowded kitchen house with relatives in the same situation. Or sometimes living in a Salvation Army hostel.

Looking back from our centrally-heated wifi flats and houses with some on Universal Credits but still running a car and renting a smart phone can give the wrong impression.

Mostly it's all about our problems having changed.

Wilson John Haire
April 2018

GOLIATH SMITES NAKBA

Around him flies the new F-35, in his bath he plays with his submarine, in the mirror Dimona smiles and preens, his soap is the flesh of the human hive, he bathes in the blood of the anaemic. Calls for his bathrobe of golden shekels, there is a problem he needs to tackle: those slingshots and stones is cataclysmic,

the burning tyres and the sooty figures, the incendiary kites must not reach the wire.

Through a rifle scope they look much bigger, who is Nakba who has them out for hire, their dead will one day cling to the digger, the world will growl a little so go sire.

W.J.Haire
15 May, 2018

JOHNSTON continued

paper in succession to Byrne. Johnson continued to use the paper to explain Labour's policy and programme and it retained partiality to Sinn Fein. (28) It was reported in the edition of 3 August 1918 that at the end of July an Irish Labour Press Co-operative Society, comprising Johnson and seven others, had been formed to run the paper.

In the middle of August, Lyon wrote to Johnson: "I cannot remember reading anything in your paper with which I found myself in agreement." In a letter, dated 25 August, 1918, and indicating an extraordinary bias against Irish nationalism and Catholicism, he ended his association with Johnson by demanding the return of a cheque of £300 which was the final instalment of the £1,000 he had guaranteed to help launch the paper. Johnson returned the cheque. By the end of the year, because of worsening financial difficulties and increasing subventions from the ITGWU, the paper became, in effect, the organ of that union (29) (*Thomas Johnson 1872-1963-First Leader of the Labour Party in Dail Eireann*, [Father] J. Anthony Gaughan, Kingdom Books-1980-pp.417).

Thomas Johnson attended the annual meeting of Congress in Waterford on 5-7 August 1918. At the meeting the title of the ITUC (Irish Trade Union Congress) and LP (Labour Party) was altered to the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, believed to be at the behest of Johnson who had advocated this change in order to emphasise the political side of the movement. Johnson was appointed Treasurer of the ILP and TUC, a position he held until 1920 when he became secretary of the organisation.

(26) Byrne used the *nom-de-plume* Andrew E. Malone and one is left in no doubt as to his support for Sinn Fein policies from his contributions to *New Ireland* in 1917 and 1918.

(27) O'Brien of the I.T.G.W.U. had wholeheartedly assisted Johnson to set up and run the newspaper (cf. N.L.I., Ms 15704 (i and ii), diary of William O'Brien under 3, 6, 22, 23 October, 2, 23, 28 November, 7, 8, 10 December 1917; 3, 10, 25 March 1918). He was also instrumental in having Cathal O' Shannon, an official of the union, succeed Byrne as editor.

(28) For instance, it even carried thinly-veiled advertisements for recruits to the Irish Volunteers. Cf. *Irish Opinion: The Voice of Labour* 1 June 1918.

(29) On 24 January 1919 at a conference attended by Johnson it was decided that the I.T.G.W.U. formally acquire the paper. In September 1919 the paper was suppressed for publishing an advertisement for the Dail Eireann National Loan.

For Johnson's own account in 1925 of the promotion of *Irish Opinion: The Voice of Labour* by J. Malcolm Lyon—
SEE BELOW.

Report Story

THOMAS JOHNSON'S ACCOUNT OF THE PROMOTION OF IRISH OPINION: THE VOICE OF LABOUR

BY J. MALCOLM LYON (1).

J. MALCOLM LYON (2) and Austin Harrison (3) of *English Review* were at Kilkenny By-election and in Dublin during Thomas Ashe funeral. [September, 1917]

Lyon had written an article in *English Review* foreshadowing a sort of League of Nations and advocating an international arbitration court to settle questions between nations. He instanced Ireland (in relation to England) and Japan (in relation of U.S.A.) as touchstones to test sincerity of demarcation professions of these—England and America.

E. A. Aston (4) introduced me to Lyon and Harrison. He saw or had communication with many people here, including Griffith, de Valera and John [Eoin] MacNeill on Sinn Fein side.

I gave approval in a letter to the main idea in Lyon's article which was printed along with communications from John [Eoin] MacNeill and Arthur Henderson (5) and others.

A hectic propaganda went on for some time. Lyon was rich and willing to spend his money to propagate his plan.

The allegation was subsequently made that he was acting for Lloyd George or Asquith. I believe that is most improbable.

He professed sympathy for Labour's practical work and attitude towards poverty problems but disapproved of Labour Party's policy and methods. He offered through Aston (at Aston's suggestion, I believe) to finance a Labour paper to the extent of a £1,000. He also offered and paid £1,000 for a house to found a club for working women. Mrs. Margaret Buckley, now of the Women Workers' Union and an active Republican, was one of the two recipients and [she is] the sole acting trustee now in Ireland.

After some correspondence explaining my attitude I accepted first £500 and afterwards £250, total £750, to finance a paper. It was first suggested that James MacNeill [Eoin (John) MacNeill's brother] should act jointly with me on the paper but I declined and insisted that I should be solely responsible. My correspondence made it clear that I was accepting the money to run a paper as I wished and was not responsible to anyone for policy or anything, the one condition being that it was to be a Labour paper—not the exponent of any political party but Labour.

Lyon sent the final £250 to make up the total originally promised but accompanying the draft [was] a letter criticising the line taken by the paper in respect to the Russian revolution. I therefore returned the draft.

The paper was never influenced by Lyon or Aston or anyone outside the Labour movement. It cost money every week as production costs were at the peak, and finally, the Transport Union took over responsibility for it.

All the facts relating to *The Voice of Labour* were disclosed at the Waterford Congress [Irish Trade Union Congress] in 1919 and my action was endorsed by the Congress.

(*Thomas Johnson 1872-1963-First Leader of the Labour Party in Dail Eireann*-[Father] J. Anthony Gaughan, Kingdom Books-1980-pp.417).

1. This is an excerpt from eleven pages of notes which were prepared by Johnson for his appearance in court in April 1925 in connection with his libel action against Jim Larkin. It is to be found in N.L.I., Ms 17149 (i). [Thomas Johnson was awarded £500 damages against Jim Larkin and £500 against the *Gaelic Press*. He refused to pay and was declared a bankrupt.]

2. J. MALCOLM LYON: Two letters from J. Malcolm Lyon of Dodington Park, Chipping Sodbury, Glos., urging that the question of an Irish settlement, be submitted to the League of Nations. This record is held by Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. Dodington Park is a country house and estate in Dodington, Gloucestershire, England. Various buildings on the estate are Grade II listed buildings. The Codrington family acquired the estate in the late 16th century. In the 18th century the family became wealthy from sugar plantations in the West Indies.

**LABOUR**

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Labour History

A Bribe and Irish Labour!

Thomas Johnson, Irish Labour leader 1917-1927 (extract)

For some years Johnson had been advocating that the Irish labour movement should have a newspaper of its own. In October 1917, an Englishman, named J. Malcolm Lyon, who was described in a private note by Johnson as 'a rich Jew', through a Dublin-based friend, Edward A. Aston, indicated that he was eager to sponsor an Irish labour newspaper. To this end, he offered Johnson £500 immediately with a promise of another £500 after some months, if the venture developed along satisfactory lines. Johnson was assured that no attempt would be made to influence the policy of the paper, the only condition being that it should promote "a definite Irish labour policy of a constructive character". He accepted the £500 from Lyon and in November 1917, on behalf of the ITUC, [Irish Trade Union Congress] took over the right to publish *Irish Opinion*. The terms of the agreement were as follows:

13 Fleet Street,
Dublin,
13 November, 1917.

Received from Thomas Johnson, 13 Ranfurly Drive, Strandtown, Belfast, the sum of £100 (one hundred pounds) for the exclusive rights to the registered title '*Irish Opinion*' for the weekly newspaper and review published by me and suspended temporarily at the end of April 1917; this sum to be returned in the event of the re-issue of the paper being prohibited under the Defence of the Realm Regulations.

Shan O Cuiv. (7)

The first issue of the new newspaper, re-named *Irish Opinion: a weekly journal of industrial and political democracy*, appeared on 1st December, 1917.

Aston and Lyon closely monitored the contents of the paper. Aston applauded Johnson when the paper took issue with

Sinn Fein on matters affecting workers and the trade-union movement. Both expressed their disappointment when articles or comments favourable to Sinn Fein were published. Eventually, in letters dated 2 February and 25 March 1918, Lyon and Aston respectively informed Johnson plainly that the "Irish labour policy of a constructive character", which he was expected to promote, had nothing in common with favouring an "independent republic", advocating "co-operation with the Bolshevik movement" or allying himself and the labour movement with "Sinn Fein extremists". Aston, in his letter, in effect said that if the paper did not alter its policy of being in any way partial to Sinn Fein the other £500 promised by Lyon would not be forthcoming.

In the meantime, in mid-December 1917, Francis (Frank) Gallagher, [*Cork Free Press* and *Irish Press*] who had begun to work on the paper, on receiving confirmation that it was financed by English money, resigned. Laurence P.

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Byrne, a well-known and respected journalist whom Johnson has employed as editor, became disturbed at the English connection but remained at his post. However, he was forced out in mid-March 1918, ostensibly because of the financial losses of the paper but really because of his and the paper's pro-Sinn Fein tendencies. (26). Johnson at this stage realised how myopic he had been with regard to the motivation of Aston and Lyon. He was seriously hurt at the criticism and even abuse hurled at him by Sinn Fein supporters and others for his unwitting involvement in this British attempt to influence the Irish labour movement. This hurt him all the more in the context of the labour movement's lack of practical support for and even indifferent attitude to the paper. He considered becoming less prominent in the movement. However, Laurence P. Byrne, in a letter dated March 21, urged him not to despair or to disparage himself. He wrote: "You are the only one who has no axe to grind" and continued: "Go in and take the leadership from incompetent hands... Upon you depends what the Irish Labour Party is to become and you had better recognise that at once." William O'Brien (27) also wrote to him on June 16 urging him to stay on: "...I must confess in my plans for the future you enter largely into them and I would be keenly disappointed if we are to lose you and more especially at this very critical stage." Johnson was reassured. (pp82)

With the continuing assistance of Aston and Lyon, Johnson struggled to keep *Irish Opinion: The Voice of Labour* (it was first so-named in the issue of 19 January, 1918) going. He also received assistance from the I.T.G.W.U. and at the end of March Cathal O'Shannon became editor of the

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