

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Brexit And Northern Ireland

The strange British device called Northern Ireland was based on an antagonism of two stable populations with fixed ideas, which we described fifty years ago as *two nations*. One of those populations ruled the other in local Six County affairs then, while the basic services of state were laid on by the Westminster Government, in which neither of them was ever represented.

That arrangement led to a war, and it had to be scrapped as a means of ending the War. It was replaced by a local system of government in which there was no central body of the kind that is usually meant by the word *Government*. Departments of government were shared out between the two populations to be conducted independently. They were not Departments of a general Government conducted by a Prime Minister. Each population had its own Prime Minister, called a First Minister. There were two First Ministers—formally a First Minister and a Deputy First Minister, but the Deputy was in fact a Second First Minister, and was in no way subordinate to the First First Minister.

That 1998 Agreement abolished the pretence that there was a general Six County body politic on which a general Six County Government could be based.

We supported it in 1998 as a means by which the antagonism of the two stable populations could be transferred from war to peace. What we supported was the *letter* of the Agreement. There were others who supported it for what they said was its *spirit*, which was a spirit of reconciliation.

Twenty years later it is being said that the Agreement failed because it clearly has not reconciled. If there was anything in the letter of the Agreement that could be reasonably understood as having the purpose of reconciling, it might be said that it has failed. But there isn't.

The Agreement worked because its actual arrangements were based on acceptance of the fact of irreconcilable antagonism. Devolution got a second innings on that basis. It failed when a couple of parties to it became discontented with its successful operation in accordance with its letter and opposed it on the ground that it was not achieving what was not achievable.

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## One Off Houses— *the more the merrier!*

What is wrong with a countryside full of houses? All official planning for decades is built on the assumption that it would be some sort of catastrophe. It is abundantly clear that many people want to live in the Irish countryside and, if democracy means anything, it should mean facilitating these people's needs. But these people do not know what's good for them! That is the logic of modern planners. We have many urban planners but no rural planners as far as I am aware. It is non-existent subject.

The latest onslaught on this was by an old campaigner against '*Bungalow Blitz*', Frank McDonald in the *Irish Times* (13 February 2018). His article was headed "*Rural villages will die unless 'Bungalow Blitz' is stopped*".

But where is the logic in this? If the countryside is well populated, villages will thrive as they have always done on the basis of serving the people of the countryside. If they can't serve the people's needs, they won't survive but that is a very different problem. Whether or not people

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## Ireland, Brexit and the future of the EU Part 1

### Lessons of the Irish Crash

Last year Sinn Fein issued a discussion document entitled, *The Future of the Eurozone*, which had the aim of challenging "*the European elite's prescription for permanent austerity*". The author of the document, Emma Clancy, dismissed the 2017 reform proposals emanating from the European Commission and proposed a number of solutions to what she identified

as pressing problems confronting the Eurozone. This commendable initiative, commissioned by Sinn Fein MEP Matt Carthy, will hopefully turn out to be the beginning of a useful debate about the future of the EU from an Irish perspective.

The plan for this series of articles is that Part 1 will investigate the causes of the

Irish crash that are relevant to the EU debate. Subsequent articles will deal with the EU response to the sovereign debt crisis in Ireland and generally, neo-liberal influence inside the Brussels institutions, the case of Greece, the implications of the British exit for EU politics and the wider question of post-Brexit EU reform and other issues raised by Emma Clancy.

#### ARCHITECTURAL FLAWS IN EUROZONE

In my view the best account of the 2008 Irish crash is to be found in "*The Fall of the Celtic Tiger—Ireland and the Euro*

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*Labour Comment*, edited by Pat Maloney:

We Will Not Have Conscription

Open Letter to the English Labour Party. *Colkitto*, April 1918

The devolved system has now been out of operation for a year. The BBC story is that Sinn Fein brought it down. In fact it was the SDLP that brought it down.

The DUP leader, Arlene Foster, had mismanaged her Department very badly in an administrative matter, some years earlier.

The Second First Minister, Martin Mc Guinness, did not want to make a great issue of this. He wanted to fudge a way through it—which could be said to be in the spirit of the Agreement. It was the SDLP that made a great issue of it. The SDLP had lost out to Sinn Fein in the Nationalist sector of the electorate because John Hume's successor, Seamus Mallon, did not seem to know just what the Agreement was that John Hume had played a large part in negotiating. He lost his way in a private republican fantasy of his own. Sinn Fein, whose military wing was the main force that compelled changes to be made, then displaced the SDLP as the major Nationalist Party and it made a working arrangement in accordance with the letter of the Agreement with Paisley's DUP.

The SDLP, relegated to secondary status in the Nationalist electorate under the Agreement, rejected the letter of the Agreement by forming itself into an Opposition within the Agreement system. The Ulster Unionist Party, which had similarly lost out to the DUP, did likewise. The two losing parties then combined against the Agreement system as an Opposition and refused to take up the Departments under it which their vote entitled them to and which the spirit of the Agreement required them to do. And the tiny Alliance party followed suit.

The implication of the SDLP stance was that the Agreement should be scrapped and replaced with a voluntary Coalition under a general system of Government. It therefore made a great constitutional issue of Arlene Foster's mishandling of the wood-burning affair, making it inadvisable to Sinn Fein to fudge a way through the crisis.

The SDLP knew fine well that, if the Foster/McGuinness co-operation was brought down, setting up a replacement

after an election would be problematical. So it was. And so it is. And the SDLP itself has not profited at all from what it did.

An Irish Language Act is now the issue. The London and Dublin Governments thought that, by coming to Belfast, they could overawe the locals and hustle them into agreement. They had not learned from half a century of experience that hustling just doesn't work in the Six Counties.

It seem to have just clicked with Unionists that the Irish language issue is not a piece of nonsense on a par with Ulster Scots.

Forty years ago we were conducting a vigorous campaign to bring the Six Counties within the democracy of the state of which they are a part. What that meant in practice was getting the parties that govern the state to organise and contest elections in the Six County region of the state. One meeting at which this was discussed was attended by Ken Maginnis, the personification of bluff Fermanagh Unionism. He said that if he agreed to this project he just could not return to Fermanagh and face his Catholic constituents after he blighted their hopes.

He was not the only one who took it that, if the democratic politics of the state came to the Six County region of it, that would kill off Nationalism. We couldn't see that at all. But it was enlightening to hear from a solid Ulster Unionist that he was concerned that the Catholic population in the North should continue in the rut established for it in 1921.

Dublin Governments were intended to provide back-ups for the Nationalist community under the Agreement, while the Government of the Union state reassured the Unionist community.

But Dublin refused to play its part. The basic reason for this that it refused to admit to a special relationship with the Nationalist community and insisted that its concern was with the entire population of the North. This was its official stance, even though everyone knew that the Unionist community refused any association with Dublin.

Until 1998 the Southern Constitution asserted that there was a single national community in the whole of Ireland, and it could be said that Dublin Governments were therefore prohibited from being guarantors of one of the national communities in the North against the other. But in

1998 that provision of the Constitution was repealed. Its repeal was a condition of the Agreement. That left Dublin free to take up what was in fact its natural alignment in the internal affairs of the North.

Its failure to do so was connected with the rise of Sinn Fein as an effective political party in the South as well as the North, and Sinn Fein was a painful reminder to both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail of where they had come from. In 1998 they had both been working on a denial of their origins for about a quarter of a century. That was their way of coping with the War in the North. They were in denial about social realities in the North. And they could not admit that what led to the War in the North was the communal structure of subordinate government outside the democracy of the state, that the British Parliament imposed in 1921.

Shrinking minds could not bear the weight of the thought that Britain itself, the Mother of Parliaments, was responsible for the War in its Irish region. Britain had to be excused, except perhaps of some secondary negligence. So what was the cause? History was the cause. And history was the movement for national independence. History had to be re-written, and the North kept out of mind as far as possible.

The concern about the North that has sprouted up during the past year is spurious. It is only displacement activity connected with Brexit.

**NB:** The brief Haughey period is an exception to what is said above.

## The Royal Irish Constabulary:

### *A Tale Of Two Cities, Of Two Eras, And Of Informed Versus 'Enlightened' Opinion*

The first informed, authoritative opinion was given in London's House of Commons by His Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Ireland on 6th March 1919 –

"It was decided by the Government that members of the Royal Irish Constabulary could not be permitted to join the National Union of Police and Prison Officers in as much as the Royal Irish Constabulary is a semi-military force directly under control of the Crown, and subject in many respects to the same conditions of the army and navy forces."

In Dublin some few weeks later, on 10th April 1918, Professor Eoin MacNeill TD, (in Dail Eireann (where I believe he was Ceann Comhairle (Speaker) gave his carefully considered judgement of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

He called their members "*spies, traitors and perjurers*". He, and other TDs including Arthur Griffith, gave detailed accounts of the activities of the RUC to justify that force's ostracisation by the Irish people, and, invoking the authority bestowed by the people on Dail Eireann, it was unanimously decreed that the RIC be ostracised.

Ninety-nine years on, we have Enlightened Directors of Opinion, in Academia and the Media who would have us believe that the "*semi-military*" Royal Irish Constabulary, over a year before their augmentation by the ex-squaddie Black and Tans, and Gentleman-Cadet Auxiliaries was a popular force of *Bona-Fide* Bobbies, Kosher Coppers, and Pukka Patrolmen.

These latter-day Directors of Opinion, are *Enlightened only in the sense that they have not burdened themselves with onerous facts and thus feel free to force their flights of fancy on the public.*

Prominent among these fantasists is Stephen Collins, a political correspondent of the *Irish Times*, and a confidant of the Jesuit Periodical "*Studies*". He gave the keynote speech at last year's commemoration of Michael Collins at Beal na Blath. However, Michael Collins was instrumental in the killing of RIC men, defended their killing in print, and, in some cases exulted in the destruction of the most vicious of its members.

**Donal Kennedy**

## Brexit—

### *Shoeing the Unicorn, VAT and the Border*

Acres of newsprint and terabytes of bandwidth have been expended debating and attempting to describe the nature of the '*transition*' or '*implementation*' period associated with Brexit. But Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which governs the matter, is admirably clear and concise and does not mention transitions, implementations or anything of the sort. You are either in the EU, and subject to the Treaties which govern it, or you are out, in which case the Treaties no longer apply.

The UK Government, having caused everyone else to bend over backwards in December to enable them to move talks on to the subject of Trade, has been pressed to outline now what kind of trading

relationship it wants with the EU after the Treaties no longer apply. It has made it a policy to put forward a myriad of chimerical and contradictory proposals all of which are incompatible with the very limited possibilities allowed by the Treaties—which its Parliament approved—and longstanding EU policies, which it helped to formulate.

This strategy has successfully inhibited the other EU states and the hundreds of thousands of economic actors involved from coming up with coherent plans of their own, as it is very difficult to make concrete decisions or justify spending real money now in order to deal with a future

situation which is still only hypothetical.

A telling piece in the *Guardian* in December (*Outnumbered, defeated ... where next for the diehard Brexiters?* 16.12.17) quoted a Brexiter strategist comparing the achievement of Brexit to Irish independence:

"There is a ratchet effect to having your own state", said one influential Brexiter. 'One by one, the things that weren't acceptable to the sovereignty of the Irish free state got cut away, stage by stage. That's what we need to do. The moment we are out of the EU, everything will be in our own hands. People try to say that our hands will be bound. In the end, they won't be'."

At the time of writing Michael Collins' spiritual successors in the Irish Government are engaged with the Commission and the British in trying to render the much lauded "*constructive ambiguity*" on the Border of December's EU/UK Joint Report into a legally binding text for inclusion in the final Withdrawal Treaty. This ambiguity was conceded by the EU and Irish sides to the UK/DUP in order to allow the withdrawal process to move forward to Trade Talks. Almost immediately after it had been agreed, British Ministers went on record saying that in fact nothing had really been agreed and reiterated their view that nothing can be agreed without sufficient clarity on the future trade and political arrangements which they have so far refused to give a settled opinion on.

The crux of the matter would appear to be in paragraph 49 of the report:

"In the absence of agreed solutions, the United Kingdom will maintain full alignment with those rules of the Internal Market and the Customs Union which, now or in the future, support North-South cooperation, the all-island economy and the protection of the 1998 Agreement."

Does this mean that the United Kingdom as a whole will stay in "*alignment*", or that the United Kingdom acting as a sovereign power will compel Northern Ireland to stay in full alignment if no "*agreed solution*" is arrived at?

Neither the Tory Brexiters nor Corbyn's Labour are likely to be able to stomach the former and the latter would be, according to the DUP, unconstitutional insofar as it breaches the principle of consent enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement, an agreement which they say is in other respects no longer fit for purpose.

There is of course a comparatively simple means of settling this matter conclusively and that is to hold a referendum in Northern Ireland exclusively on whether the region should, post-Brexit, remain part of the Single Market and Customs Union or not.

Opinion Polls in December seemed to show that a majority in NI would vote by a fairly comfortable majority to remain in the Single Market/Customs Union. If the electorate were to include all those entitled to vote in NI Assembly, Elections as it should, rather than just UK parliamentary elections, then the votes of tens of thousands of EU workers resident in NI (on whose relatively low-paid efforts what is left of commercial industrial enterprise in the six counties depends) would put the

matter beyond any doubt.

While Sinn Fein and the EU seem to be quite amenable to the idea of a further referendum, the DUP is opposed, saying that local considerations do not matter in the face of the overall UK vote for Brexit. The SDLP is also opposed, its position being that the local pro-remain result in NI during the Brexit vote trumps the overall UK result. Neither position is realistic now, nearly two years later, but realism is in very short supply these days. Who would bet against a unicorn winning the Grand National this year?

\*

Time and tide, they say, wait for no man and the Dublin Port Company, grown tired of the UK's melancholy withdrawing roar, which has lasted so long, has set plans in motion to apply for planning permission to carry out construction of the facilities needed to process future post-Brexit goods traffic from the UK. According to Dublin Port CEO Eamonn O'Reilly (Irish Times 14.02.18):

"We're talking booths the trucks will drive by, canopies, inspection areas, sheds where goods can be taken out and inspected. It's the sort of stuff that would have been here in the early 90s before the Single Market came in.

The extra bits that are needed in terms of border controls are all down to systems and processes and those already exist in Dublin Port."

The cost, he says, is estimated to be "*in the single millions*" and naturally extra Customs Inspectors will be required as the number of freight units (containers) coming from outside the EU each year will rise from 200 000 to over 1 million.

"It will increase the amount of overheads within the system. That's the nature of border controls. It's the opposite side to the benefits of when the single European market was set up."

Quite.

The setting up of the single market abolished the need for customs controls for EU goods traffic, but crucially it also abolished the need for the payment of VAT on entry for consignments from within the EU. This matter received some attention in the *Financial Times* on February 11th when David Davis got upset about what he said were "*unilateral statements*" (of the bleedin' obvious, *S.O.*) from the EU that were damaging to British interests. As the FT put it:

"The European Commission has warned companies across Europe to prepare for significant border friction

and costs after the UK leaves the EU's value added tax area. In a notice to firms earlier this month, the commission cautioned UK exporters that in the event of a 'hard' Brexit, VAT would be payable upfront at the border and British importers would no longer be able to claim refunds for foreign tax using electronic systems. The commission also said UK companies operating in the EU may be required to employ a representative (*a customs clearing agent, S.O.*) to handle VAT payments in the bloc, and UK suppliers of digital services to the EU would have to register with the tax authorities in each country."

Davis' umbrage is even less warranted than usual given that his colleague, Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond, has included the re-imposition of cross-border VAT post-Brexit in the *Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Bill 2017-19* which has received its Second Reading and is now at Committee Stage in the House of Commons.

What this means is that, whereas companies currently account (and pay or claim refunds where applicable) on a quarterly basis for VAT on goods imported from the rest of the EU in the same way as for goods they have purchased locally, in the future they will have to pay any VAT due on the goods up front at the point of importation, before they have had a chance to sell any of the goods on. This is a major cash flow headache for importers whose stock may sit for months before being sold on and the VAT recouped from the purchaser.

Not only that, but customs checks will have to be instituted on all goods entering the UK from the EU (and vice versa) to ensure that the requisite VAT has been paid—as there are now on goods entering from outside the EU—**and this will be the case even if the UK and EU get around to agreeing a free trade deal without additional customs tariffs.**

Ireland will naturally also be obliged to impose customs checks for VAT purposes on goods imported from the UK, just as it did prior to the advent of the Single Market in 1993. Not all goods are liable for VAT of course, with most food being exempt for example, but all consignments passing through customs must be physically 'presented' for inspection as part of the process whether their goods are liable or not.

Many readers may remember the portacabin shanty town that used to exist on the side of the Dublin Road in Newry

(with a counterpart in Dundalk) prior to 1993. Goods vehicle drivers going south would pull in here to submit their cargo manifests to a Customs Clearing Agent before crossing the Border. The Clearing Agent would fax the manifest through to its correspondent at the Irish Customs Office in Dundalk who would arrange for payment of the VAT due on the consignment to Customs whose officials would stamp a copy of the manifest accordingly. The driver would have to stop in Dundalk to pick up this stamped manifest and submit or 'present' the consignment for inspection by Irish Customs before going on his way. Regardless of whether an inspection took place or not (it usually didn't), a great deal of everyone's time was wasted.

This applied to all shipments of all goods no matter how small and even if they were being moved for temporary working, exhibition or marketing purposes. Drivers of northern-registered vehicles, even private cars, were routinely pulled over for inspection by Customs in the Republic, and woe betide them if there were goods on board without the requisite paperwork; both goods and vehicle were liable in such a case to summary confiscation. (The inspection process in the opposite direction was much less rigorous. The physical customs post on the northern side at Killeen disappeared in a puff of smoke early in the War and was never rebuilt, while NI customs officials tended not to venture out much from their fortified compound in Newry. Even today the payment of customs and excise duties in northern Border Counties is to some extent a matter of personal inclination.)

The re-imposition of customs checks at the ports is, as noted above regarding Dublin, a fairly straight-forward matter and not even that expensive. Doing so at the border is hugely problematic, at least on the southern side. (It is not so much problematic on the northern side, as it is just not going to happen for security reasons. The Chief Constable of the PSNI, George Hamilton, diplomatically but effectively marked Westminster's card on this matter in February.)

In evidence in May before the Dail Finance Committee the current Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, Niall Cody stated:

"It is clear that managing the volume of trade will be one of the biggest challenges post Brexit. Approximately 1 million roll-on roll-off units arrive at our ports each year, over 90% of them from the UK. Traffic with Northern Ireland is also significant, with about 1 million HGVs

and 1.3 million LGVs moving in each direction annually. We are looking at the latest technology to provide us with a system that can clear goods in seconds and facilitate their free flow."

These figures are markedly higher than the figures given in a report published by the Revenue a year earlier and they show not just the extent of the trading relationship between the UK and Ireland, but also how much of that trade passes through Northern Ireland en route. This dwarfs the amount of purely north-south trade in financial terms. In its July 2017 report, *'Ireland and the UK – Tax and Customs links'*, the Revenue gives figures based on the Central Statistics Office estimates for 2016. These show exports from Ireland to GB of  $\text{€}13.361\text{bn}$  and to NI of  $\text{€}1.649\text{bn}$  while imports from GB were  $\text{€}15.743$  and from NI  $\text{€}1.067\text{bn}$ .

There is clearly a significant difference in methodology between the way the CSO collects its statistics and that of the Northern Ireland equivalent body, NISRA, which does not give a figure for 'goods', but from their sector analysis we see they attribute exports or 'sales' to Ireland from NI for manufacturing alone of  $\text{€}1.355\text{bn}$ , a major discrepancy. There is a further category of 'Wholesale and retail trade' sales (plus vehicle repairs) amounting to a further  $\text{€}1.114\text{bn}$ , which again should be swallowed with a large dose of salt, as should figures for British exports to Ireland in general. Vast quantities of British 'exports' to Ireland are not goods produced in the UK at all, they are re-exports of goods imported to the UK and re-distributed onwards from there via large UK-based wholesale and retail chains.

The Unionists' economic argument against membership of the Single Market/ Customs Union has been couched in terms of it cutting off NI from its biggest market, the rest of the UK. This argument would carry more weight if they had not themselves produced a proposal in collaboration with the UK Government last Summer outlining just how easy and effortless it would be to avoid customs infrastructure on the NI border post-Brexit by means of technology, trusted trader exemptions for small businesses etc. Such means possibly could work quite effectively in places like the NI and UK ports which are part of the same legal and tax jurisdiction (and if they think otherwise it would be interesting and instructive to hear why). Where they could not be expected to work is at the border of another sovereign state however.

From a purely trade and customs point

of view the inevitable procedures in relation to goods entering the Republic through NI would be most conveniently carried out post-Brexit at the NI and GB ports through which the bulk of it passes. This would also seem to be the only practicable solution from the point of view of the PSNI, which values its genuine cross-community support and has no wish to be a tool of political enforcement as in the past.

Regarding traffic within the island, the comparatively small volume in terms of the official figures cited above masks the informal but nevertheless very significant volumes of cross-border shopping trade amounting to hundreds of millions per year, mainly north-to-south, which would inevitably come under scrutiny from Revenue in the event of a hard border. It also does not take into account, and no real figures even seem to be available, of the very large numbers of temporary movements of goods, e.g. tools and equipment, animals etc, that have allowed economic life on both sides of the border to integrate to their mutual benefit. This is a tangible benefit of the Single Market which underpins the GFA and NI remaining in the Single Market/ Customs Union is the only realistic way of preserving it.

The portacabin shanty towns in Newry and Dundalk are now a distant memory and although they were not beautiful, they were at least handy and beside the main road. The sites they used to occupy have long since been redeveloped and there is also now a spanking new motorway bypassing them, along which Mr. Eddie Stobart's trucks thunder unimpeded from the northern ports to their destinations in Dublin and beyond. Diverting them off this motorway either at Newry or Dundalk or both for inspection and acquiring the land to build the facilities on both sides to do it at a dozen different locations along the border, when it can be done much more easily at their respective embarkation /disembarkation ports, would be both an act of monumental stupidity and an outright provocation. The very first losers in such a situation will be the Northern Ireland ports themselves and the UK exporters who use them.

The brute reality behind Theresa May's plaintive entreaties to 'avoid a hard border' and 'border infrastructure' in NI is that she knows that her Government's writ does not really run over large parts of it, or does so only on sufferance.

Seán Owens

# The O'Connor Column

## DISMAL "LARKINISM"

One of the most disabling features of Irish Trade Unionism is the cult of "Larkinism". It is extolled as the Great Tradition, and many books have been produced honouring individuals as noble "Larkinites" without ever defining what this means beyond an allegedly heroic use of power ennobled by the act of failing or resigning (e.g. the case of Frank Cluskey).

About two years ago, the historian Emmet O'Connor produced a fine book, *James Larkin: Hero or Wrecker?* which he launched to a packed theatre in Liberty Hall. His two main theses were firstly that Larkin's great organising feats in 1909-13 were followed by a trail of destruction in splitting the Labour movement in the 1920s-30s to no strategic or other worthwhile purpose, and secondly that his driving motivations were, to a much greater degree than with Connolly, as much Catholic and Irish Nationalist as English socialist. All of this caused considerable disquiet among the assembled "Larkinites" in the Hall.

The modern Larkin cult has a few cardinal beliefs, of which two are immediately relevant. One is that he founded a secular, Labour-oriented movement that was as hostile to native Irish capitalism as to the British, which with good leadership could have produced a "non-nationalist" Irish Labour development. This potential, the belief goes, was squandered by William O'Brien, the 'grey bureaucrat' who took over the ITGWU when Larkin went to America, and steered the Union first into a close alliance with Sinn Féin and then, in the new state, with Fianna Fáil. While countless books and pamphlets—overwhelmingly lavish in their positivity—have appeared on Larkin, mostly by authors close to the labour movement, it was not until 2005 that even a first biography of O'Brien appeared, and that by an outsider, a Jesuit priest, Thomas Morrissey.

The second belief of the Larkinite school is that his son, "Young Jim", having been a Communist in the 1930s, refined his father's core beliefs into a "modern", fit-for-purpose labourism that also had the potential to produce a 'non-

nationalist' Irish Labour development. Needless to say, to this way of thinking, O'Brien represented the "reactionary" force in Irish trade unionism that prevented such a development.

Various former Labour Party luminaries, from Barry Desmond and Brendan Halligan, to Ruairi Quinn and Fergus Finlay, have all indulged in this fake "Larkinite" hero worship, extolling in particular something of a pathetic ("bread and roses") cardboard cut-out version of "Young" Larkin. But, even by their own definitions, these politicians make for unlikely "Larkinites", as each of them, when they actually exercised a bit of Government power, came into bitter conflict with the actually existing Trade Union movement and—apart from Quinn—were to be implacably hostile to the Social Partnership established by Haughey and the Union leadership in 1987.

The irony is that Social Partnership, while rooted in the ITGWU Connolly tradition developed by William O'Brien, had been given its strategic teeth by Young Jim Larkin when he abandoned Dáil politics to pursue cooperation with Lemass's industrial revolution in defiance of the Labour Party, which vociferously denounced such cooperation as corrupt treachery. The fact is that in the 1960s the Union leaders chose power over protest, and achieved many successes as a result. O'Brien's and "Young" Larkin's politics, for all their superficial differences, shared a common trajectory that was to culminate in the Social Partnership that emerged in the late 1980s, again, as in Lemass's time, against the bitter opposition of the Labour Party, including of the above self-styled "Larkinites".

In a globalised world with outsourced manufacturing, Trade Unionism today is everywhere going through difficult times, and inexorably shrinking back to a stronghold in public services where it can still command a monopoly market. In some industrial countries where a manufacturing base has been retained, especially in northern Europe, Trade Unionism has also weakened, but retains an all-economy role through collective bargaining and industrial democracy, which implicates it in the actual successful functioning of industry. The Irish movement briefly sought to emulate such a course in the early years of the Celtic Tiger

in the 1990s, but lost out for a number of reasons.

Today the ICTU is attempting to revive a Union presence in the private sector by following the 'fusion' model of agitation and organisation among low-paid 'precarious' workers on the one hand and localist social justice campaigns on the other. While such campaigns are worthy and important, the movement abandons its role in the main areas of production at its peril. The 'fusion' model, which is adopted from the American Trade Union left, itself hardly the model of success, would seem to the present writer to excessively locate the movement at an even further remove from the heart of the actual economy, and to involve an opting for protest over power. It is, as William O'Brien or 'Young' Larkin might have warned, difficult to see the future in that.

## MI5 ASSASSINATIONS IN IRELAND

In the last 'Column' we reported on the UVF letter to Haughey warning him in 1987, just after he became Taoiseach, that MI5 had urged them to assassinate him, and furnishing him with various intelligence materials MI5 had provided them with to assist them do so. This material lent considerable credence to their claim. While the State at the time took the threat seriously enough to organise substantial counter-security measures, the media reporting the story following its revelation in the State Papers released at the end of December 2017 laughed it off as a joke. The British would never do such a thing!

It was of course just three years since the Dublin-Monaghan Bombings which killed more people than any other operation in the North's long war and which was indisputably the work of Loyalist paramilitaries acting under the direction of British military handlers. The only puzzle to this writer's mind is why in 1987 the UVF no longer wanted to do Britain's "dirty work" for it (as they put it in the letter to Haughey). Among the same State Papers was a further letter from the UVF from 1987 stating that MI5 had supplied it a dozen years previously with detonators set to explode prematurely, precisely the type used in the 1975 Miami Showband massacre. Survivor Stephen Travers, thanking the Minister for Justice for releasing the letter, says the Irish Government

should now be "getting answers" from the British Government about this (*Irish Times*, 31.12.17).

Maybe the Government could add a "PS" for ditto in relation to the Haughey letter.

#### MORAL CRUSADES

##### AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM

The Co. Kerry-born builder, John Murphy snr., built a vast fortune in construction in the UK during and after the war years. Murphy's became one of the biggest players in British construction, and once faced charges over the tax avoidance aspect of the system of lump labour common on English building sites at the time. He left an estate worth hundreds of millions of pounds. Recent revelations from the "Paradise Papers" show that one of the companies advising the Murphy estate in dealing with banks and financial authorities in Britain, Ireland and the Cayman Islands so as to avoid as much tax as possible was the Dublin outfit FGS (formerly "Farrell, Grant, Sparks", see 'How to lower your tax bill—the multi-millionaire way', *Irish Times*, 20.01.18).

The Sparks in question is Greg Sparks, still a partner in the firm. He was a special advisor to Dick Spring during the 1990s when Labour existed for the sole purpose of unmasking Charles Haughey as a corrupt creature of big business and a tax cheat. By destroying him, it was hoped, Fianna Fáil itself could be destroyed. After Labour's rout in the 1987 Election, an internal battle over the direction of the party had ensued, during which the left-wing economic-policy based challenge by Emmet Stagg, supported by Labour's affiliated Unions, nearly succeeded, but was finally seen off by the Spring faction who focused the party instead on rebuilding an electoral base on the basis of a 'moral' crusade against "Haugheyism". As Spring-apparatchik extraordinaire, Fergus Finlay, makes clear in his memoir, *Snakes and Ladders*, the campaign was assisted by civil servants profusely leaking material to them on the preferential treatment being accorded the beef firm, Goodman International, and that this material was welcomed as manna from heaven, providing the leadership with its ammunition for its strategy and a *raison d'être* for the party for the following years.

For the Haughey Government, backing Goodman was simply implementing the IDA/NESC strategy of "picking" a few "winners" among the otherwise non-performing Irish indigenous industrial sector and 'scaling them up' to world competitive standard. It was a strategy

also supported by the Trade Union leadership in Social Partnership, and was a key component of the successful take-off of the Celtic Tiger prosperity.

The "Paradise Papers" revelations regarding the role of FGS in the tax avoidance strategies of the Murphy estate illustrate the hollowness of the Finlay-Spring moral campaign of the 1990s. What shameless hypocrites these chancers were! At least the Murphy's built things.

#### THE INEXORABLE LOGIC OF BREXIT

There is a widespread belief in liberal-globalist circles that Brexit will be an "economic disaster" for Britain. The current writer does not share this view. The exceptionalist history of Britain is strewn with examples of that primary of all states taking unbelievable gambles with its destiny and emerging successful, or at least in one piece, from apparent resulting calamities. A few examples among many include its invention of Finance Capitalism and the concept of the *limitless National Debt* to prosecute the seemingly impossible War of the Spanish Succession—its first Great War against Europe—around 1700, and emerging as America's junior partner after its reckless gamble on another Great War in 1914 went awry. Brexit might be reversed, of course, with Fintan O'Toole advising Britain's well-wishers to approach it as one might approach a cat trapped in a tree and offering it face-saving ways to climb down. But this is really wishful thinking.

In reality the rump Remainers seem ever more isolated. Their high point came with their near-toppling of Corbyn as Labour leader a year or so ago, to be replaced by a neo-Blairite to lead a march back into the EU, a project which seems now a truly spent wicket. David Davis has set out the latest British Government position of seeking a bespoke post-Customs Union trade deal with the EU, and Corbyn has outlined a very similar position as that of the Labour opposition (see Open Europe's "Daily Shakeup" of 21 February for both).

Remainers had pegged their hopes on economic fears causing a resurgence at least in favour of remaining within the Customs Union. They banked on the EU conceding some mechanism giving Britain a continued role in Customs Union rule-making. But Brussels has ruled this out. This means that now remaining in the Customs Union would reduce Britain to the existence of a so-called "rule taker", i.e. at the mercy of rules made by others in which it would have no say, having left the EU. A bespoke post-Customs Union

trade and customs deal, on the other hand, as now being advocated by both May/Davis and Corbyn, offers the hope of an arrangement that includes joint rule making. This should be encouraged.

Needless to say, everyone's position now also effectively includes a post-Brexit "special status" for Northern Ireland, maintaining regulatory alignment, which can have no other meaning than a customs border moved to the Irish Sea. The now near total alignment of Tory and Labour Brexit strategy presents the DUP with a major challenge. But the paralysis in the Dublin FG/FF coalition due to its components' overriding common aim of preventing any Sinn Féin negotiation success in Belfast presents the DUP also with a major opportunity. The clear-headedness of the Dublin position of just two months ago seems to have given way to a chaos of their own making.

## One off houses

continued

live in towns or in the countryside they will need the services of villages. The solution is to have plenty people living in the countryside, urban and rural.

In his tirade McDonald actually ends up advocating the impoverishing of people by justifying the denial of broadband as being too costly:

"The persistent delay in rolling out broadband is surely related to the inherently uneconomic cost of catering for widely dispersed rural housing, much of it owned and occupied by people who have nothing to do with farming, except that they bought sites from farmers. That's why the latest effort to provide high-speed broadband to some half a million potential customers will require a public subsidy of £500 million" (ibid.).

Again, where is the logic? Broadband is the basis of the Gig economy. That's the future—we are assured. In that economy, companies and businesses can be run from bedrooms, bedsits, sheds, the middle of bogs or the tops of mountains. It is nonsensical and a totally false economy to limit broadband to anybody, anywhere. Spreading broadband everywhere is the most sensible investment possible. It has untold and unquantifiable benefits. But McDonald wants to turn back the tide.

He also sees more elementary services to people in the countryside as a cost rather than a benefit and therefore questions whether they should be provided at

all to houses in the countryside: "A report by An Foras Forbartha in 1976 highlighted the fact that the cost of providing public services—electricity, water, telecoms, postal deliveries, waste management and road maintenance—for dispersed rural housing was significantly higher than for homes in urban areas."

This is suggesting social engineering, using the threat of deprivation of these services. Maybe rural electrification should be reversed! What is called 'The Famine/Holocaust' of the 1840s must have been a blessing in disguise in helping to clear away all those costly people living all over the place! The lifeless Highlands of Scotland would seem the perfect model for our planners. A nice graveyard without headstones.

And of course the dreaded 'septic tank' has to be introduced. Human waste has to be managed, no matter where the humans live. Today it's a choice of having bigger or smaller septic tanks and having them well managed. But a picture is built up as if individual tanks are some sort of culprit and more liable to create problems than large urban ones.

As everyone knows, Ireland was historically a rural-based society. What is not so well appreciated is that this created a unique rural social formation because of the *townland* structure. These were and are unique arrangements whereby a very private life and a very sociable life are blended harmoniously in a way that runs so deep that it is difficult to define—but all the more real for that. You can have as much privacy or sociability as you wish. Some people almost live in other people's houses and some won't talk to each other for generations. This form of society is one area where Ireland has been, is, and hopefully will be forever united! It pre-dates nationhood and may outlive it.

Irish urban life finds it particularly difficult to understand this aspect of the countryside. It is this ignorance that is at the basis of all the ranting and raving about 'Bungalow blitz' and the other disparaging attitudes to traditional rural housing arrangements.

This social harmony can be sadly missing in urban life and nobody knows this better than Mr. McDonald himself, as he explained in a series of *cri de coeur* in the *Irish Times* a few years ago under the heading "Nightmare in a city that never sleeps". He got so frustrated with the unsocial behaviour in Temple Bar where he lived that he lost control of himself with the manageress of a night club there who was only doing what people do in

Temple Bar:

"...through tiredness and frustration, as well as her unsympathetic attitude and the whole history of noise problems associated with the River House Hotel over the years, I reacted irrationally by putting my hands on either side of her and shook her briefly. I regretted this immediately and apologised. The DJ played on until 3 am" (Irish Times, 10.9.2008).

Oh dear! oh dear! He should have reacted rationally and made plans to buy a nice little cottage in the countryside and visit Temple Bar at hours more appropriate to his temperament.

The first indigenous Irish labour movement was the *Land and Labour League* that laid the basis for the later widespread Labour Party throughout the country. It developed "an Irish solution to an Irish problem" as regards rural housing over a century ago, with an original programme for its constituency of farm labourers. It

got a British Act of Parliament passed to facilitate compulsory purchasing of land for the building of labourers' cottages supplemented with an acre of land. They were immensely popular and catered for about a quarter of a million people at their height, spread mainly throughout the South west. These provided independence and security for rural labourers that enhanced their bargaining power with farmers.

Our modern planners should come up with something as original today. Horace must have had something like these cottages in mind two thousand years ago when he described his perfect habitat: "A piece of land, not so very large, which would contain a garden, and near the house a spring of ever-flowing water, and beyond these a bit of wood."

I can verify that this is an exact description of them. Temple Bar anyone?

**Jack Lane**

See also, *BiteBack*, Ed.

## Collins, DeValera and the Burning of the Custom House, May 1921

Anyone who has seen Neil Jordan's *Michael Collins* movie may remember the dramatised exchange between Collins and DeValera after the latter's return from America. Collins the pragmatist arrives late into the Dail Cabinet meeting, delayed by dealing with practical matters relating to waging of the war. DeValera the aloof idealist, sniffs indignantly at the lack of decorum in time-keeping.

DeValera opens the meeting by complaining that 'our tactics' are sullyng the name of the fight for freedom, making the Irish look like 'assassins', rather than the 'proper' army of a proper Dail. Of course the *audience* all know that those 'tactics' are the brainchild of Collins, because the movie narrative tells them so. The audience also know that *DeValera* knows, making his complaint a personal one, directed at the man he doesn't like, his main competition in popularity stakes—Michael Collins.

When DeValera is quizzed by Collins on what 'we need to act like a legitimate army' means, he is informed 'I mean large scale engagements'. Collins makes a comparison to the 'blood sacrifice' of 1916 which, despite taking personal part in, he now regards as pointless slaughter. He ends his angry outburst with his usual on-screen pragmatism 'why don't we save

*them all the bother and blow our own brains out?'*

DeValera winds up the meeting by 'proposing' (and the audience knows that when DeValera 'proposes' something, he expects to be obeyed) 'an assault on the centre of British administrative justice in Ireland.... The Custom House'.

The Custom House assault is significant in this movie because it is used to underscore the supposed gulf between the characters of the two men: Collins the pragmatist who, having tried conventional war in 1916, was obliged to develop a—literally—revolutionary new form of warfare from 1919 on, the guerilla war at which the Irish could excel, not having the resources or manpower of their Imperial opponent.

DeValera (who also survived 1916) by contrast remains the aloof idealist, wedded to the symbolism of 1916, having no real idea of the demands of war, and even impeding the cause of Irish liberty with his inflexibility. This point is further emphasised by the timing of the meeting—after DeValera's long sojourn in the USA. Collins even remarks on this. DeValera is out of touch with the realities on the ground: both geographically and intellectually.



The Custom House is thus presented as a set-piece battle dreamed up by an armchair general in order to prove a point, rather than for any practical military or strategic gain. And, predictably, being one of DeValera's more hare-brained schemes, it ends in disaster; with the killing or capture of many of Dublin's finest Volunteers, as well as depleting their slender supply of arms and ammunition.

It's an image of DeValera that could (and perhaps did) come straight out of Tim Pat Coogan's biography of him.

But is it fair?

We get an altogether different picture from Charles Dalton in his 1929 book *"With the Dublin Brigade"*.

Dalton was closely involved with the struggle for Independence in all aspects and a dedicated Republican, willing to undertake some of the most daunting tasks carried out by the IRA in Dublin. His range of operations leaves us in little doubt as to his knowledge of, and commitment to, the Cause. As well as more mundane Intelligence-gathering, he took hands-on part in several operations in which he had to fire a gun in anger, including the elimination of the infamous Cairo Gang.

While he met Collins only on a very few occasions, and admits to being somewhat in awe of him, he was closely involved in all aspects of Collins' work and that of his associates.

In fact, Dalton is all the more interesting in relation to Jordan's movie because he records in his book that he made contact with a young chambermaid called Rosie who passed bits of information on to him about British officers staying at the accommodation where she worked. She was one of a network of such casual 'agents' who acted as the eyes and ears of the IRA. When she complained of having to empty out the officers' wastepaper baskets so often, Dalton was inspired to ask her to bring the contents to him instead. This proved crucial in tracing and eliminating the Cairo Gang. Perhaps Neil Jordan had come across this account, but in his movie, Collins gets the credit.

All of which makes Dalton's comments on the burning of the Custom House all the more significant:

"On the 21st May 1921 the Custom House was burned by the Dublin Brigade. This was done as a necessary part of our campaign. It was one of the headquarters of what was left of the British civil administration in Ireland. Through their tax officials they were still able to continue to extract Irish money for the purpose of keeping the country in subjection, and it

was therefore decided to destroy their documents and records. At the Custom House were kept not only those referring to Customs and Excise, but also the other documents and records of the Local Government and other departments. All authority to deal with these matters of civil government had been transferred by the people to the National Parliament—Dail Eireann. To burn the contents of the Custom House in broad daylight, while holding up the large staff of hundreds of officials and clerks, was a big undertaking and about 120 Volunteers were told off for the job. It was in the hands mainly of the 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Brigade, but all men on active service duty were engaged for it..." (p.162).

Several important points come across from this reading of events –

1. There was a logical strategic reason to burn the Custom House, it wasn't a mere showpiece action for some kind of symbolic gain
2. As long as the Custom House and its documents and staff remained, the occupying British administration had a civil arm capable of extracting taxes from Irish people—money that was then being ploughed back into keeping the same people subject. While the British might go on occupying Ireland by force, the Irish at least shouldn't be expected to go on paying for it.
3. By taking this tax money, the British administration was also depriving Dail Eireann of monies that rightfully belonged to the Dail alone, and which the Dail needed to carry out its work.
4. As only the Dail had the right to collect such monies, the existence of the 'machinery' of the Custom House was a direct assault—by civil means—on the authority of the Dail, a state of affairs which could not be permitted to continue, anymore than Ireland could tolerate having say, the King's writ running in its territory (hence the establishment of Republican Courts).
5. Britain's civil apparatus in all its forms—RIC, law courts, ideological institutions, tax offices—were the 'eyes and ears' and tools of British occupation, the daily means by which it kept the population in subjugation. The Republican strategy had been to roll up *all* layers of British administration in Ireland and replace them with a parallel Irish system. It was one of the up-to-then unique aspects of the Irish struggle for Independence—previous efforts like 1798 had focused on a military victory—and one of the reasons why it was so successful in its aims.

6. Having a staff of hundreds and given the scale of the action to burn the Custom House, it required a large body of armed Volunteers to accomplish it. This was not any run-of-the-mill ambush of a patrol, but nor was it the symbolic set piece battle of some armchair general.

Had the attack on the Custom House not occurred in May 1921, and the Truce not intervened, it would probably have occurred later. Michael Collins, of all people, would have seen the strategic value in ridding the country of such a nerve centre of British administration and Intelligence gathering. Collins had cut his professional teeth in the Post Office system in Britain, and would have had greater awareness than DeValera perhaps, of the value of such an information-gathering system as that of Post Offices, Tax offices and the whole apparatus of bureaucracy. We shouldn't underestimate the importance of such mundane things as maps and taxation for keeping a country in subjection. The British certainly didn't, their experience of it stretches back to the Domesday Book after the Norman invasion, and as recently as the 1830s had commissioned the British army to produce accurate up-to-date maps of the whole country—which we still rely on—the Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Invasions may be started with bayonets, but they are followed by briefcases.

It was Collins' very 'accountant' mindset that gave him such a flair for running the war effort, rather than the more maverick portrayal we see in Jordan's movie, which is not to say he didn't also have a larger-than-life character on occasion. Tom Barry recalled in *"Guerilla Days in Ireland"* the apparent indignity of being challenged, and then wrestled, to the ground by a boyish Collins on the occasion he met him in Dublin, an act of impromptu horseplay. Barry records being a bit taken aback at the informality of it all, despite his own 'improvise and adapt' approach to warfare in west Cork.

On the whole, considering Dalton's account, his proximity to Collins' staff; and given Collins' awareness of the value of the civil service in carrying out the daily administrative tasks of the occupying forces, it may very well be that the attack on the Custom House was the brainchild of Collins, not DeValera. At the very least it casts the dramatised scene in *Michael Collins* in a rather different light.

**Nick Foley**  
(Feb. 2018)

# es ahora \*

"Mistrust all in whom the desire to punish is imperative."

Goethe.

"If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us! But passion and party blind our eyes, and light which experience gives us is a lantern on the stern, which shines only on the waves behind us!"

S.T. Coleridge, from T. Allsop, 'Recollections', 1831.

## FEMINISM AND THE POLITICS OF HYPOCRISY

When the 'New Yorker' magazine finally published—under enormous legal threat—the sexual accusations against the Hollywood movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, it was a story that few could know would snowball into a feeding frenzy that seems without parallel in modern times. Weinstein was the head of Miramax, *the* most powerful movie production company not only in the USA but right across the UK and what passes for the 'free west'. He was known as Mr. Oscar in that his company somehow always managed to get their movies up for Oscar nods and indeed get the Oscars for their chosen 'stars'. For almost two decades Weinstein was nearly always acknowledged in the infamous 'thank you's' as various movie stars held their Oscars in their triumphant hands after their wins. So much so that a couple of years ago, when Meryl Streep won her umpteenth Oscar, she thanked Harvey Weinstein and even referenced him as 'God' to enormous acclaim from the audience.

But *they knew* what Harvey Weinstein was up to and chose to ignore it for their own personal glory and gain. Because Weinstein didn't just put the Oscar in their hands, he also put enormous riches there too. Though nominally there was a voting system in place for the Oscars, if enough of the registered actors/actresses etc. were targeted with what became known as "*the goody bag system*" and a huge campaign not unlike that of the American political system was aimed at them—and nobody did this better than Weinstein—then the outcome was absolutely assured. Even the Press knew—as did the dogs in the street—and predicted the outcome long before the actual voting had even begun.

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## It Is Time

And, as this filtered out to the ordinary viewer, the so-called "*billions*" watching the Oscars started waning and gradually people stopped turning in to hear the announcements which were mostly now already known in advance.

Thus the huge Oscar juggernaut began to wane, and surprise surprise Harvey Weinstein started to lose his *financial* sheen and it was only a matter of time before the story of Harvey's proclivities became public knowledge. And finally his goose was cooked: he was tossed out by his own brother Bob from their company Miramax, who then tried to sell it (oh so quietly) and liquidate the assets as lawsuits hurled their way. But Bob now too also became embroiled in sexual scandal himself and lawyers are lawyering up the kazoo and it is now doubtful if the Miramax Company can be saved, though both brothers have still multi-millions in their own right. After all, Harvey just settled a divorce case (his third) with the dress designer Georgina Chapman for \$17 million with some three mansions now in her name.

Rose McGowan was the actress who finally brought down Harvey Weinstein. Her name was unknown to me and as I am a great *aficionado* of film/TV that says something. Apparently she was a big teen hit on some American TV series in the early 90s and went on to star in one '*Scream*', movie according to a blurb attached to her name in Wikipedia. When she was 23 she met Weinstein and he raped her in his hotel bedroom. There is no "*alleged*" here, as he has not denied this except to say she consented but he was scared enough of this unknown young actress that he paid her over \$120,000 in what is called "*hush money*" in the USA. But, after that incident, her career was effectively over.

Ronan Farrow, the investigative journalist for *The New Yorker*, spent three months going over McGowan's story and tried to publish his findings, only to be continually hindered by the higher ups. But the latter were wise to be scared because, as it turned out, Harvey Weinstein was a pretty scary *powerful* man.

In a documentary '*Citizen Rose*' by the E (Entertainment) Channel, that I recently caught, I watched and listened carefully to the story that Rose told. It was not for the faint-hearted. It was so deeply disturbing that I seriously thought of turning it off more than once because it made me feel so uncomfortable. There was no doubt that Rose herself was deeply disturbed and

traumatised. She was born in Italy and was brought up in a cult/sect that her father had founded. It was only when the elders began advocating child sex that her mother took her and her sister out of harm's way and went off to a new life in America where Rose admitted she ended up in another sect—called Hollywood. In situations like these, it is always useful to realise that one is looking at an actress or actor and assessing how much is for real and how much is for the camera. But there could be no doubt that the crying-girl Rose, the coyly attention-seeking Rose and the self-proclaimed "*warrior*" Rose were not acting characters. They were all the real deal broken-*persona* of Rose McGowan.

Rose McGowan spoke of being spied on and being bugged by persons on behalf of Harvey Weinstein and alleged there were Mossad connections. This was re-activated every time she thought of going public on what happened with the Miramax boss. She said she told many in the Hollywood show-business world, including well known names in the acting fraternity—there was no ignorance of her travails and those of other unfortunates. No less a person than Ronan Farrow backed up McGowan's claims and told the audience how, when he was writing the story and backgrounding it—he too was bugged and followed and he accepted that those doing this were former Mossad agents in all probability.

Farrow is not without his own knowledge of Hollywood as his mother is the actress Mia Farrow and his father—now totally estranged—is Woody Allen. That too is a story of family betrayal, sex abuse claims, and the now familiar shunning by the Hollywood elite not of the betrayer but the betrayed. This too is beginning to turn but only because Woody Allen is not the force he once was in the film industry.

Rose McGowan was derisive of the "*black dress*" movement at the Awards Season [that is, actresses wearing black to signal support for the #Me Too protest against sexual harrasment movement, ed.], which began at the Golden Globes and on the 18th February 2018 with the BAFTAS at the Royal Albert Hall. In attendance was the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge—the former is the Royal Patron of the organisation.

Rose is rightfully scornful of such stunts of *tout court* "*virtue signalling*" (an American phrase from a Fox News pundit), where each personage tries to outdo the other in *expressions of solidarity* without

causing their careers any harm—which is the only thing that matters to them in the end and how much money they can earn. And let us be clear there is a lot of money in Hollywood to be earned: one actress last year alone made \$17 million from films and this does not include endorsements from big companies like Dior, Chanel etc. for everything from frocks, make-up to perfumes and face creams while all the time nipping and tucking at their plastic surgeon—while selling ordinary women the idea that the particular face cream that they have endorsed is what is solely behind their youthful visage!

When Rose McGowan's story went viral, after her Ronan Farrow's interview, another almost unknown actress Alyssa Milano sent her a #Me Too tweet and the rest is history. Ashley Judd (of the Country and Western singing female family) signed up and these three brave women are the real trail-blazers in this tawdry tale. Their stories stack up unlike the heavy hitters who had and have real power who went on to make allegations. Gwyneth Paltrow, Oscar-winning daughter of a top Hollywood actress Blythe Danner and Gwyneth's father—now deceased—Bruce Paltrow who was a powerful TV Producer, and her boyfriend at the time was/is the icon Brad Pitt, said Weinstein fumbled his hand up her dress. She now wants to belong to the sisterhood of the victims even though at the time she told her boyfriend who told Weinstein to keep his hands to himself if he valued them. (He did!)

That appalling woman—an Oscar winner herself—Angelina Jolie whose own father is another Oscar winner Jon Voight, came out and alleged Weinstein sexually harassed her but is unable to furnish even the filmiest details and was met by an immediate denial by Weinstein himself. Jolie, who has badly tarnished her image (and "image" is everything in show-business) because of her ongoing divorce battle with Brad Pitt, whom she alleged slapped one of their six children on their private plane—and got the FBI and then Child Services to investigate him, which they did with gusto on account of the present climate and, having found Pitt to be blameless, stated publicly that they would testify on *his behalf* in the Pitt-Jolie custody battle.

So this UN Goodwill Ambassador Jolie has now anchored herself onto the suffering of Eer abused 'sisters' but even the most devoted celebrity magazines are not buying it. A top expert on PR has written

that, such has been her reputational damage, that with all her money she would be hard pressed to find someone now to represent her. But this being a Hollywood story—Jolie is turning up everywhere with her brood of six—and there are signs that this is having the desired effect. Brad Pitt is a decent man and will not weaponise his children in a PR game, unlike his soon to be-ex wife.

On the red-carpet we now are feted with #Me Too signs and *Times Up* and the ubiquitous black dresses but isn't there a fraudulent feel to all this? And what is worse by far is the idea that this is somehow '*Solidarity*' with fellow women who have been injured by the powerful in an industry which commodifies sex above all else. It was very interesting to listen to Annette Benning, another Oscar winner, stating at the entrance to the BAFTAS on 18th February 2018 that "*the accused men had to be given their voice too*" and, such was the shock of the woman reporter for the BBC or Sky News, that she asked her "*but aren't we here to listen to the women's voices?*" Benning immediately had to accept that this was true of course but "*could we not also acknowledge that the accused had to have due process*". (I am slightly paraphrasing here what Benning said but certainly this is the gist of it)

Well the woman from the News was not interested in that and Benning knew it. But she is not only a gifted actress but one of Hollywood's most intelligent voices whose integrity is unquestioned. However, there was a tentativeness involved in the interview that I found very unusual for Benning. And of course what occurred to me was that she is married to Warren Beatty—one of Hollywood's most noted Lotharios when that was seen as a great gift—the ultimate seducer—who, in his own modest account, stated he had slept with over 2,000 women. Joan Collins was once engaged to him and stated he was "*great in bed*" but that he never stopped making deals on the phone. (This was in the old days before mobiles—obviously.)

The greatest beauty of modern times—in my opinion—was Julia Christie (she of Dr. Zhivago fame) and she too was a flame of Beattys'. When these women spoke later about their love lives—it was with fondness and never with regret, shame or our oh so modern "*victimhood*". But then again they were all equals in the game of seduction.

Jack Nicholson was another great seducer though he lived with Anjelica Huston for 17 years—and she still has

fond memories of him. Her two-volumes of memoirs are full of beautifully written and evocative memories of her life: '*A Story Lately Told*' and '*Watch Me*'. Perhaps when Annette Benning was being interviewed, she was wary of how, with the new climate of Puritanism, her husband's legendary liaisons could become fodder for some accusations of the kind that now predominate our discourse.

In a recent women's march, those tiresome events that seem to be aimed at Trump's America—the women are coming our loud and proud. But one woman in particular really got me going. Natalie Portman, the Israeli/American actress and one of the most successful in Hollywood who, having garnered all sorts of awards including the Oscar, gave a speech that left me fuming. She spoke about how she has *suffered* at the hands of sexual rapacity in show-business and she didn't mince her words.

Her story was flabbergasting. She said what she suffered was "sexual terrorism" and then had the appalling cheek to say this was from receiving "*rape fantasy fan-mail*". Now let us examine that allegation. Portman was a child actor who was well-minded, even by her exacting standards. She was 13 when she starred in '*The Professional*' and she went on to say that "*there was this public countdown to 18 when she became the age of consent for sexual encounters*". Nowhere did she say where did this countdown happen. And somehow I cannot be the only one who would doubt hugely that someone of Portman's ilk read her own fan-mail. That is why one has agents and lawyers and all the flummery that goes with being a 'star'!

But I will name some two women at least who really experienced sexual terrorism and that is Rose McGowan who wasn't even acknowledged in Portman's speech or by any of the other self-serving marchers who burnish their credentials with this *new activism*. And there is another woman who was only barely out of her teens when she was witch-hunted in America and that was Monica Lewinski. I can remember as if it was yesterday when the young Monica became the most talked about woman on the planet. And the jokes—and how many there were of them? President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hilary were protected by the media and their friends in high places in Hollywood like Harvey Weinstein *et al.*

There is a vile interview in *The Observer*, 25th January 1998 in which the waspish Gore Vidal under a heading '*New*

*World Ordure'* continually refers to Ms Lewinski as "*Child Monica*". Only in 2017 in *Vanity Fair* magazine did Monica tell her story and from what I can remember "*shame*" was the most constant of her feelings. And who could blame her?

Any woman that had the misfortune of running into Bill Clinton and came in for his sexual predation lived to regret it. Who now remembers Jennifer Flowers, Paula Jones, Kathleen Wiley, Juanita Broderick—the latter was a campaign worker who alleged Clinton raped her? And there were many others! What had their fellow women to say? What had the wife of the US President to say? Well she called these terrible allegations "Bimbo Eruptions"! That is a fact. And who helped her in her campaign of vilification against these women? Well none other than the good old sister-hood. The feminists looked after their own and Hilary was one of them. So Gloria Steinem took to an op-ed in the *New York Times* and called out these most unfortunate women as tellers of untruths. The "*Bimbos*" were not going to get away with trying to tell the truth about *their President*.

In 2017 Gloria Steinem gave an interview to *The Guardian*, saying basically she would do so again because one had to be true to each decade and the 1990s were that kind of decade. Indeed! The only feminist who was disgusted with her fellow feminists for doing the dirty work for the Clintons was Camille Paglia and her name should be on any roll-call of the most honourable women in our culture. She too paid for her stance but her honour can never be impugned, unlike the others.

Julianne Herlihy ©

## Lessons of the Irish Crash

continued

*Debt Crisis*" by Donal Donovan and Antoin Murphy (Oxford University Press, 2013). This was published following four official investigations in Ireland into the causes of the crash—Regling and Watson (2010), Honohan (2010), Wright (2011), and Nyberg (2011)—but it surpasses all of them, not least by examining the role of politicians, economists and the media, by including the critical years 2009 and 2010 before the bailout, and by using plain language. In the book Donovan and Murphy, both mainstream economists, resist the temptation to defend their own profession and provide a refreshingly

honest explanation of how economics came to be subservient to the ideological agenda of neo-liberalism. Weaknesses in the work are an incomplete account of the political causes, the placement of too much blame on '*the people in general*' and on the State, and a failure to fully follow through on the political implications of the cause-effect relationship between free market ideology and the Great Recession.

Regarding the EU they firstly note that the official reports were all largely silent about the role of the European institutions in relation to the crisis. They then outline areas where the European Central Bank (ECB) was at fault, effectively identifying five flaws in the architecture of the Eurozone.

"There are several dimensions involved: the failure of the EU surveillance process under the Maastricht and the Stability and Growth Pact to prevent the emergence of large-scale underlying budget deficits such as those in Ireland; the implications for Ireland of the ECB's low interest rate accommodative monetary policy stance; the decision to delegate responsibility for financial regulation to the national level with adverse effects on the ability of the ECB to promote financial stability; the role of the ECB at the time of the controversial guarantee decision of September 2008; and the ECB's position with respect to the treatment of the banking sector debt incurred by the Irish taxpayer as a result of the guarantee" (*The Fall of the Celtic Tiger*, p. 6).

This short paragraph bears close examination. Firstly, the reference to '*underlying*' budget deficits alludes to the position of the Irish public finances where, before the crash, huge public revenues were generated from inflated house prices through Stamp Duty, VAT on house sales and other taxes on property. Since the property market was an inflated bubble, these revenue streams were unsustainable. The ECB should have had a supervisory mechanism for identifying such a threat to fiscal stability over and above the Stability and Growth Pact, which relied solely on the quantitative deficit to GDP ratio. It should be noted that if one member of a currency union persistently runs a large deficit in its public finances (large deficits are by their nature persistent), this constitutes a danger for the whole of the union.

Secondly, the ECB's low interest rates fuelled inflation in the Irish and Spanish property markets, yet the ECB failed to advise either Government to modify the regulation of bank credit or, for example, to reduce tax breaks for mortgage holders. In other words there was a lack of awareness within the monetary authority of the

Eurozone and among European Governments that the low interest rate which was appropriate for the largest economy, Germany, was inappropriate for other parts of the Zone and that countervailing measures were needed in those parts.

Thirdly, the designers of the Eurozone, or at least its political leaders, were remiss in allowing responsibility for financial stability to remain at the national level. In Ireland, for example, the total revenue of the banks was considerably larger than the total revenue of the Government. Individually the banks had become unusually powerful institutions; collectively they had become too powerful to be reined in either by regulatory bodies or by Government, even if those agencies had possessed the will to rein them in. Later in the book Donovan and Murphy make the interesting point that, even if there had been a more centralised European involvement in financial regulation, it is questionable whether this would have made a "*major difference*" (p. 277), but that is a separate issue. From a Eurozone perspective, certainly in the light of the lessons of the crisis, it makes sense that financial stability should be supervised by supranational institutions that are more powerful than the banks.

Fourthly, regarding the Irish Government's Guarantee in relation to all deposits and liabilities of the six main Irish banks made in September 2008, Donovan and Murphy, unlike many other commentators, consider that, given the reluctance of the ECB to consider a pan-European intervention at that time, "*there was no better alternative*" available to the Government (p. 218). They also describe how Enda Kenny's Government argued in the critical negotiations with the ECB in 2012 and 2013 that "*the guarantee decision helped to avoid a collapse of the Irish banking system that could have caused very damaging contagion effects throughout the eurozone*" (p. 264).

Those negotiations culminated in an agreement in February 2013 which allowed expensive Promissory Notes that had been issued by the Government in 2010 to be restructured as a series of long-term Government Bonds which meant a significant easing of pressure on the Irish public purse. They also allowed the emergency liquidity assistance provided by the ECB through the Irish Central Bank to Anglo Irish Bank, a significant sum, to be quietly written off. Yet the critical point regarding the Guarantee was that in 2008 it was made necessary by the lack of any strategy

for defending the financial stability of the Eurozone by the ECB: national Governments were left to their own devices.

Fifthly, we have the ECB's position regarding the treatment of the banking sector debt incurred by the Irish taxpayer as a result of the Guarantee. In the situation which developed in Ireland following 2008, the banks and the State became enmeshed in a mutual dependence which, when it emerged in other European States, became known as the "*Sovereign-Bank doom loop*". This is defined as the phenomenon whereby weak banks destabilise Governments that support them and over-indebted Governments can push banks holding their bonds over the precipice.

The solution to the *doom loop* that was implemented within the EU in October 2012 was the creation of a fund called the *European Stability Mechanism* (ESM). The fund was made up of 80 billion euro contributed proportionately by 17 EU Member States. That capital was used to generate a further 620 billion euro through the capital markets and these funds were then made available to sovereign Governments or banks needing to be bailed out. Two temporary funds, the *European Financial Stability Facility* and the *European Financial Stability Mechanism*, were created earlier with similar structures to provide bailout loans to Greece, Ireland and Portugal. The point here is that before the crisis the Eurozone had no funding mechanism for bailing out Governments.

Elsewhere in the book Donovan and Murphy identify three features as necessary to a successful currency union: a common monetary policy, a system of financial regulation, and a structure to prevent the pursuit of unsustainable fiscal policies by individual members (p. 81). Their conclusion is that the Eurozone was weak in two out of the three.

#### INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC FACTORS

The flawed defences of the Euro constituted a contributory factor to the sovereign debt crisis that ravaged the Irish and other European economies in the years after 2008, but the role of the Euro in the crisis needs to be seen in the wider context of global trends, ideological influences and domestic failings as Donovan and Murphy demonstrate.

*The Fall of the Celtic Tiger* is structured so that the conclusions from twelve chapters are summarised in a final chapter. In that chapter the authors distinguish between "*the relative roles of international*

*and domestic factors*". Dealing with international factors, they state that the prevailing international belief that financial markets could be left to self-regulate, exercised a "*subtle but pervasive influence on Irish policymaking*" (p. 276). However, they also view the Irish fixation with property, as captured in John B Keane's play, *The Field*, as a home-grown driver of the property bubble. Besides the international neo-liberal consensus, other international factors they identify are the flaws in the Eurozone which I have described above and the clean bill of health given to the Irish economy right up until 2008 by prestigious international organisations like the IMF and the OECD.

Regarding domestic factors Donovan and Murphy describe a long list of culprits beginning with "*the people generally*" (p. 277). They claim that a considerable majority of Irish people became beneficiaries of the boom while it lasted. Those directly involved in property, construction, or the financial sector, and the media whose advertising revenues soared, get special mention. They describe how many people purchased shares in financial institutions while others bought property as a form of investment. The paper wealth generated by the boom eventually collapsed but an "*unknown but sizeable*" (p. 278) number cashed in before that happened. The authors include in the list of beneficiaries public servants, who gained from the generous Benchmarking increases and Social Welfare recipients whose payments rose sharply in real terms between 1997 and 2008 "*albeit from relatively low levels*" (p. 140).

There is truth in what Donovan and Murphy claim about the collective mania associated with the boom extending to most sections of the population but they attach too much weight to it. The difference in degree between the gains made by information-rich actors like bank executives and property developers as against the bulk of public and private sector workers and social welfare recipients makes the blanket designation, *the people generally*, a highly inaccurate category. Donovan and Murphy cover themselves against this criticism by acknowledging that the general population relied on those with access to expertise—specified as politicians, the media and economists—to alert them to "*the inherent dangers of the boom*" (p. 278). Particular blame, therefore, needs to be apportioned to these three groups whom the authors describe as "*acquiescers*" of the consensus that sustained the bubble.

#### POLITICAL CAUSES

Unlike the populist bombast that crowded out public debate after 2008, the criticism levelled at politicians by Donovan and Murphy is to the point. They state:

"Mild criticism of government over-spending voiced by the main opposition party, Fine Gael in 2002 (when it suffered a crushing electoral defeat), had disappeared from the party's rhetoric five years later. The 2007 election campaign was essentially an auction of spending promises" (p. 279).

Political responsibility for the crash, therefore, lay with both Governing and Opposition parties. An explanation of a major mistake made by Fianna Fail, the party in office throughout the boom, is provided in an earlier chapter of the book, '*The Banks and the Property Market Bubble*'. The critical intervention occurred in 2001 at a time when Irish economic metrics were being affected by the events of 9/11. Following a six year boom, Irish property prices began to fall in 2000/2001. The bursting of the dot.com bubble in the US compounded by 9/11 threatened to accelerate the downturn. As house prices fell further in late 2001 pressure from the property lobby was brought to bear on Bertie Ahern's Government. Such lobbying was popular in the sense that large swathes of the electorate stood to gain from the maintenance of a rising property market. The Budget for 2002 introduced in December 2001 allowed interest paid on mortgages for the "*purchase, improvement, or repair of rented residential properties*" to be written off against all rental income for tax purposes (p. 64). The rate of Stamp Duty on the sale of houses was also lowered. These measures, in tandem with relaxed lending criteria introduced by the banks, had the effect of increasing the number of *buy to let* investors in the housing market and, in that way, of reversing the trend of house prices. From that point on the bubble that was the Irish property market expanded steadily.

The other key political mistake was the decision to increase public expenditure on the basis of "*the fruits of the bubble*", tax revenue that was being garnered through Stamp Duty, VAT on house sales, Capital Gains Tax on property and land, and direct taxes on the property sector. During the boom tax rates were lowered at all levels and tax exemptions proliferated (p. 141). Social Partnership agreements "*sent public sector salaries soaring to well beyond levels of both the Irish private sector and official counterparts abroad*" (p. 141). The problem with public expenditure is

that, once you increase it, it is difficult to reverse the process. When the crash eventually came, the public finances were rapidly pushed into a massive deficit. It is not always acknowledged on the Irish Left that in the years from 2009 to at least 2013 the economy would have been severely disrupted by a major fiscal crisis even without the Bank Bailout.

Donovan and Murphy limit their treatment of politicians to an analysis of the two election campaigns that occurred during the years of the bubble. This allows them to sidestep any need for commentary on the key political driver of Government policy through that period, especially before 2004: the relationship between the liberal Progressive Democrats (PDs) and Minister for Finance Charlie McCreevy. The PDs were the junior party in both the 2002 and 2007 Governments but because of McCreevy's close sympathy for their neo-liberal vision, that party enjoyed a disproportionate influence in Cabinet.

#### THE STATE, THE BANKS AND THE ECONOMISTS

Having outlined the failures of the politicians and the media (described earlier in a chapter headed, *The Climate of Public Opinion—Politicians, Economists and the Media*), Donovan and Murphy rightly state in the concluding chapter that both these groups took their cue from a third group: the economic experts. Pulling on this thread they focus in on the Central Bank, the Financial Regulator and the Department of Finance, concluding:

"Given their specific responsibilities, a large part of the overall failure rests on the shoulders of these three institutions" (p. 279).

Allowing that it is partially true, the problem with this line of argument, which was quickly adopted by neo-liberal ideologues after the crash, is that it lets the banks off the hook and puts the blame on the State. Sure enough Donovan and Murphy take the view that bankers can hardly be blamed, when opportunities arose, for ramping up lending and "*enjoying higher salaries and bonuses, profits and share prices*" (p. 279). However, earlier in the book, the authors show that a change of culture was introduced into the Irish banking system from 2003 onwards which turbo-charged the Property Developer bubble. More conservative older managers were encouraged to retire and a new managerial cadre, incentivised by sales-based bonuses, took their place. Expanding bank loan books became the overriding preoccupation. On the

governance side, the picture was similar; the invariable message from shareholders to the Boards of the Banks during this time was that lending needed to be increased so that increased earnings per share could be achieved (p. 70).

Banking is a profession, until relatively recently a profession noted for its conservatism. Refraining from causing the sort of mayhem that was witnessed when the Irish bubble finally burst must surely count as a professional responsibility for those engaged in the sector. Independent regulation by State and supranational authorities certainly needs to be provided, but such institutions face an impossible task if the banks are to be given *carte blanche* to pursue profit regardless of the social consequences.

Donovan and Murphy complete their summary of the causes of the Crash with paragraphs on the economics profession and on two related professions on whom society relies for protection against sharp commercial practices: auditors and accountants. The economists are of most interest in the present discussion. The authors state:

"Explanations for the failure [of economists] include a general shift in interest away from macroeconomics, itself a reflection of the rise of New Classical Economics ideology, reinforced by a disinterest in Irish macro/monetary issues following the adoption of the Euro" (page 81).

This statement is a summary of an earlier chapter which contains a description of the Irish economics profession, naming names and highlighting weaknesses. But a more interesting discussion is to be found in the second chapter, *Ideology and Financial Innovation*, reflecting Antoin Murphy's expertise in the history of economic thought.

#### THE IDEOLOGY OF ECONOMIC LIBERALISM

Murphy begins the Conclusions section of that chapter by arguing through a quotation from Keynes that the power of ideas is comparable to the power of vested interests. He introduces the point by saying:

"It might be thought that a discussion of the origins and implications of the resurgence of the new liberal market ideology is somewhat superfluous in a book analysing the Irish financial crisis" (p. 41).

He goes on to place the blame for the inadequate financial regulation that allowed "*financial weapons of mass destruction*"

to be unleashed on the world, on the ideology of New Classical Economics/Efficient Markets Hypothesis (NCE/EMH). Quoting Nyberg, he shows that prior to 2008 this ideology had a wide reach, including "*international institutions, foreign analysts, rating agencies, lenders, authorities and commentators*" (Nyberg 2011: 95, Donovan and Murphy, p. 43). However, again echoing Nyberg, he argues that knowledge of history should have alerted policy makers to the danger that "*too much financial innovation, excessive credit expansion and a weak regulatory environment could cause asset bubbles and financial crises*" (p. 43). In other words the predominance of neo-liberal ideology should be rejected as a defence of their actions by the individuals and institutions that dismantled the traditional prudential safeguards in the international financial system.

Murphy describes the basic tenet of liberal economics as minimal interference by Government in the economy, and traces its origins from *laissez faire* ideas in late seventeenth France through the writings of Adam Smith in the following century on to the work of French economist Leon Walras whose writings on market equilibrium were published in the 1870s. Describing John Maynard Keynes as a thinker influential among economists who were sceptical of the ability of markets to clear continuously, Murphy affirms that Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* provided the template for macroeconomic policy up to the 1970s. When Keynesian policies were blamed for causing inflation in the seventies, the intellectual reaction against Keynes was led by a Chicago based Professor of Economics, Milton Friedman, who argued that monetary and fiscal intervention could be inflationary and had little or no lasting real positive impact (p. 39).

Murphy clearly implies that the triumph of Friedmanism in the Economics Departments of the major North American Universities from the 1970s onwards laid the foundations for the financial catastrophe that unfolded nearly forty years later. As Friedman's ideas gained in support, his followers developed liberal economics in ever more extreme forms. Robert Lucas and Thomas Sargent (both Nobel laureates) inspired the creation of New Classical Economics (NCE) which postulated that macroeconomic policy was ineffective even in the short term, the so-called *macroeconomic policy impotence rule* (p. 38). Another extremist view

emanating from NCE contended that, since the money supply responds endogenously to economic needs, finance does not need to be supervised. This theory had the practical side effect that Economics Departments were kept separate from Finance Departments in the Universities. Students of finance learned sophisticated mathematical algorithms to minimise risk and maximise the returns on investments without being educated about the effects that financial activity has on the real economy. According to Murphy many of these students "ended up making a great deal of money working for financial institutions" (p. 39).

An important intellectual influence parallel to NCE is the *Efficient Markets Hypothesis* (EMH) in financial economics. This was developed by another Professor at the University of Chicago who received the Nobel Prize for economics as recently as 2013: Eugene Fama. Murphy states:

"Advocates of EMH conclude that markets are self-regulating and some of its more partisan followers argue that financial regulation is actually redundant" (p. 40).

The combination of NCE and EMH led to a key shift in macroeconomic policy formation, the main tenets of which he summarises in six points as follows:

1. Less focus on unemployment and growth objectives with greater attention paid to the pursuit of an inflation objective.
2. A shift from demand management policies to supply side [supply side means the private sector, DA] policies.
3. Enhanced de-regulation of markets so as to free up the supply side of the economy.
4. The creation of independent central banks run by technocrats rather than politicians
5. The establishment of fiscal rules involving ceilings on budget deficits and public sector debt.
6. An emphasis on light touch financial regulation" (p. 40).

For anyone familiar with EU matters over the last twenty years the listing of these guiding principles will bring to mind one particular EU institution: the European Central Bank. Murphy makes the connection succinctly:

"The thinking underlying the NCM/EMH hybrid, along with the deeply embedded German aversion to inflation, strongly influenced the basic architecture of the European Monetary Union as embodied in the Treaty of Maastricht of 1992. Consistent with NCM theorizing, the ECB was given the strongest degree of independence of any major central bank" (p. 41).

## THE CRASH WAS OF IRELAND'S OWN MAKING

One of the solutions put forward by Emma Clancy in the *The Future of the Eurozone* entails an expansion of the mandate of the ECB, to include Growth and Employment in addition to the control of Inflation. Antoin Murphy's account of the development of NCM/EMH economic ideology underlines the need for reform on that point. Clancy's criticism of the Eurozone's ideological basis, a criticism that has been standard across the European Left since 2008, is unanswerable—the next wave of EU reform will need to decontaminate the ECB from the ideology that informed its creation.

Donovan and Murphy have made a good fist of honestly investigating all aspects of the Irish Crash, and the fundamental lesson that, at the end of the book, they contend that needs to be learned—Irish policy-making needs to become more tolerant of dissident and contrarian opinion—is apposite. But on such a subject there are limits to the reach of mainstream academics; the investigation into putting right the institutions and ideas that caused the Crash can't be confined to the discipline of economics or to the academic world. To take one example of an area where *The Fall of the Celtic Tiger* is inadequate, the authors criticise various State institutions for failing to properly regulate the banks, yet they are oblivious to the way that the State machine has been made subservient to the private sector during recent decades.

The public sector now needs to be rebuilt as the prevailing authority in Irish democracy (not as difficult a task as it may seem); it needs to cultivate an ethos that is impervious to the values and blandishments of the business world without being anti-business. On such political questions Donovan and Murphy have nothing to tell us.

On the critical point of the extent of blame for the crash that should attach to Irish membership of the Eurozone, the authors are unequivocal: the bust of 2008, like the fiscal crisis of the eighties, was largely of Ireland's "own making" (p. 287). Elsewhere they point out that "*Many other countries in Europe, with access to the same pool of international liquidity, did not experience property bubbles*" (p. 276). Writing before the Brexit vote, Donovan and Murphy are firmly in favour of Irish membership of both the EU and EZ. They state:

"Once the immediate crisis fades, as it surely will, it is important for Ireland to

enhance its credibility as a 'committed European'. This means participating more actively in the debates and discussions on broader European-wide issues and going beyond the perspective of Ireland's immediate interests" (p. 271).

Although this is an opinion rather than a deduction from evidence, it shows that in providing a comprehensive study of the Celtic Tiger's fall (a study recognised in a short review in the US magazine, *Foreign Affairs*, as the definitive study), the authors have not become disenchanted with Europe.

## CONCLUSIONS

It makes sense that Irish contributions to the debate on the EU's future should arise from detailed knowledge of the Irish experience of EU membership. The matter of the 2008 crash is of particular importance in that context. One account which examines the crash in detail is *The Fall of the Celtic Tiger* but there are other accounts including five official inquiries.

Architectural flaws in the Eurozone contributed to the sequence of developments that led to the crash in Ireland. The absence of a fit-for-purpose mechanism for identifying unsustainable fiscal balances was one such flaw. A second was the lack of awareness that countervailing measures were needed in parts of the Eurozone adversely by the Euro interest rate. A third was the lack of a pan-European system for assisting Member States facing financial collapse. Other flaws reflected weak financial regulation structures at the supranational level.

The direct causes of the Irish crash—irresponsible banking practices, inadequate financial regulation at national level, political policies that helped to buoy up the property boom and implement public spending levels that were unsustainable—were mainly home grown. But underlying the domestic and Eurozone causes is a rarely acknowledged factor: the power of ideas and ideology.

The Irish crash was part of the international phenomenon called the *Great Recession* which was a direct result of policies based on economic liberalism. The same ideology that drove America's banking collapse also informed the creation of the ECB and policy making in Ireland. Pulling these factors together to form a coherent understanding of the environment currently facing nation states is a valuable exercise in advance of the EU debate that has been promised by the leading economic liberal in contemporary Europe: Emmanuel Macron.

**Dave Alvey**

## How RTE News Ended Up Clamping Its Markievicz Graveside Ambush

It was a pleasant, if rare, experience to find an event which I attended on February 4th last, accurately reported, for once, in the *Irish Times* of February 5th. Under the heading of *"Markievicz remembered on 150th anniversary of her birth: Graveside commemoration for feminist and Rising leader who was first Irish woman MP"*, Elaine Edwards reported:

"The Irish revolutionary Constance Markievicz was remembered on the 150th anniversary of her birth on Sunday for her contributions to feminism, nationalism, the labour movement and women's suffrage. At a commemoration ceremony by Markievicz's graveside at Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin, three female speakers paid tribute to the first woman member of parliament elected in Ireland and a leader of the 1916 Rising. President-elect of Sinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald said Markievicz had thrown off the old idea that a woman could only serve her nation through her work in the home and had challenged generations of women to dedicate themselves to the cause of freedom and equality. Not only had she been prepared to step forward herself, but *'she had a real sense of the duty and responsibility that women had, and have, to achieve their aims and to achieve their destiny'*. Ms McDonald said Constance had *'believed herself an honourable woman, who would sooner die than give a declaration of allegiance to King George or the British Empire'*. Republicans, then as now, had not refused the oath for 'parochial reasons', she added. *'On the contrary, it was rejected for what it stood for—empire, dominance, brutality and inequality'*. Markievicz's vista went *'far beyond Ireland'*, Ms McDonald said.

*'She was intuitively internationalist, and the inequalities and marginalisation of communities under British rule was, as we know, not unique in its expression in Ireland. Constance knew that and she railed against it.'* She was a nationalist, but she was above all a woman committed to the equality of people, to the equality of humanity, the Sinn Féin leader-elect added."

"Labour Party senator Ivana Bacik said the campaign for labour rights and suffrage had been *'inextricably linked'*. Constance and her sister Eva Gore-Booth in 1896 had set up a Sligo branch of the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association, earning them ridicule from a local farmer as seeking to set up a 'petticoat government'. *'She was an ardent campaigner for suffrage and, indeed, at the foundation of the Irish Women Workers' Union, she spoke to the women present saying that joining a union would not only*

*help them get better wages, but it would also help them get the vote'*, Ms Bacik said... Patricia King, general secretary of ICTU, said Markievicz was *'an outstanding figure in an outstanding generation'*. A wreath was laid at the graveside by Lucy Keaveney, a founder of the Countess Markievicz School, a forum on women in Ireland..."

That ceremony had been a thoroughly non-sectarian affair—with the contributions of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Labour Party and Sinn Féin speakers solidly complementing each other. None of them shied away from the principles to which Markievicz had adhered, and Edwards rightly accorded precedence to the significance of McDonald's Address. In stark contrast, the behaviour of RTE News was thoroughly shameless and outrageous in its pursuit of a politically sectarian agenda. Its report on the Markievicz commemoration did not appear until the 11th minute of both its 6 pm and 9 pm broadcasts on February 4th, but without a single word of what the Sinn Féin President-elect had to say about Markievicz.

### A BALLOT BOX IN ONE HAND, AND BOLT CUTTERS IN THE OTHER?

RTE News had wished to play a different game with McDonald on February 4th. By that Sunday morning, a video had already been posted of the Sinn Féin MLA Gerry Kelly removing a clamp from his car. On Monday morning, February 5th, it was stated on RTE Radio One that McDonald had been *"door stepped"* on the issue. But she had not. She had, instead, been *"grave stepped"* in Glasnevin Cemetery about Kelly. It was put to McDonald, as a fact, that Kelly had been carrying around bolt cutters in his car, and RTE News interrogated her as to why this would be so. She replied: *"I have absolutely no idea, I have absolutely no clue why Gerry has a bolt cutter in his car."*

This was carried in the 4th minute of the 6 pm bulletin, and was posted up on both the RTE News website and its Facebook page. So eager was RTE News to blow its own trumpet regarding that graveside ambush, that an editorial decision was taken to give the latter post the heading *"RTE News has added a video: Mary Lou McDonald clamp incident. Sinn Féin's Mary Lou McDonald at a loss for words when quizzed over Gerry Kelly clamp incident"*. Meanwhile, nothing was to be seen, on either its website or Facebook page, of its 11th minute Markievicz report, even though that report had not carried even a single word of McDonald's Address at the ceremony.

But the plot began to unravel for RTE News. Its ambush of McDonald was once again carried in the 4th minute of the 9 pm bulletin with, however, an add-on comment

from its Northern correspondent, Tommie Gorman, to the effect that it now transpired that Kelly did not, in fact, carry bolt cutters in his car, as Kelly himself would further clarify in a statement next day:

"I came out of the gym just after 8 am (on the Saturday) to head to Stormont for talks. I saw that my car had been clamped. I phoned the number on the notice and the only response I got was music. I then went in to the Mac (gym) and asked had they another number for the company. I immediately rang that number and this number was out of use. I was under pressure to get to the talks meetings. I remembered that the gym had a set of bolt cutters and I borrowed them. Let me add that staff at the gym were not aware what I was using the bolt cutters for. I then removed the clamp. I made an on-the-spot decision which I now regret. I have contacted the company and paid the fine. The issue has now been resolved."

But, by the time of Tommie Gorman's effective disclaimer on that Sunday's 9 pm bulletin, it was clear that RTE News now had a problem. A decision was taken to remove its sneeringly partisan *"McDonald at a loss for words"* post from both its website and Facebook page, and that graveside *'interview'* can no longer be accessed.

Even though, as already noted, the RTE News report on February 4th had not carried a single word of what McDonald had said about Markievicz, when this report finally appeared on its website at 10.27 pm that night—see [www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2018/0204/938306-constance-markievicz-ceremony/](http://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2018/0204/938306-constance-markievicz-ceremony/) for that post—it was now accompanied by a script which did indeed accord prominence to the message in McDonald's address:

"Sinn Féin president-elect Mary Lou McDonald said that Ms Markievicz *'is one of the very few women who looms large in the telling of the Irish revolutionary period. She's left a huge legacy, and she's left a huge challenge for us as well, because there's a lot to measure up to. We haven't completed Markievicz's journey until we have proper representation of women in politics and public life'*. Born on this day in 1868 in London, Ms Markievicz fought in the Easter Rising, and was sentenced to death by the British, later commuted to life in prison due to her gender. She was released from prison in 1917, and a year later became the first woman to be elected to the British parliament in London, representing the constituency of Dublin St Patrick's. **However, in line with Sinn Féin's abstentionist policy, she did not take her seat in the House of Commons, and instead sat in the first Dáil.** (My emphasis—MO'R). Ms Markievicz was later made Minister for Labour, becoming Ireland's first female government minister."

A case of RTE News hastily 'making amends', in order to cover its ass?

**Manus O'Riordan**



## Was The Easter Rising Intended To Merely Be A Blood Sacrifice?

Further considerations about the working of British Intelligence at the time of the Rising tell us much about the character of the Rising: it confirms that the IRB was planning for military success and was not merely engaged in a work of drama. The detailed exposure of the role of Admiral Hall and his staff at Room 40 of the Admiralty also raises question about the morality of their own actions. Jérôme aan de Wiell in his article, *Ireland's War and the Easter Rising in European Context*, expands on the work of British Intelligence in detail. In particular he provides information as to how Admiral Hall and Room 40 at the Admiralty Office had broken the German telegraph code from the start of the War and was aware of contacts between the IRB in Ireland with John Devoy, the head of Clan na Gael in America, and with various German authorities. They were even aware of an IRB message to Devoy, on 5th February 1916 stating that a Rising was planned for 23rd April.

Recent work by Geoffrey Sloan has increased our knowledge of these events. He noted that a Memorandum in Prime Minister Asquith's papers reveals that he was made aware of this IRB message on 23rd March by a directive from the Director of Military Intelligence. The same directive spoke of the landing of German arms in Ireland and noted that Admiral Bayly at Queenstown, Cork, had been made aware of these plans. Sloan also reveals that, on 17th April, General Stafford, also based in Queenstown, made the authorities in Dublin, both civilian and military, aware that arms were to be landed in Kerry and then moved to Limerick. In response to this information General Stafford visited Limerick and made an appraisal of the situation there. At the same time he advised the Dublin Metropolitan Police to keep a watch 'on the turbulent spirits in Dublin.'

While one may criticise the lack of response by the Dublin authorities, the reaction of Admiral Hall was more calculating and, indeed, raises the question of the morality of his actions. When Casement was a prisoner in London, he asked Admiral Hall, on 23rd April, for permission to make contact with Dublin and to persuade them to call off the Rising planned for the next day. Hall refused the request. Casement interpreted this action to mean that for Hall "it is better that a cankering sore like this should be cut out".

This opinion of Casement has been endorsed by Eunan O'Halpin, who conclud-

ed his fine study of *British Intelligence in Ireland 1915-1921* by stating that, "given Hall's outlook and general behaviour, it is quite possible that he intended the rebellion to take place, knowing that it would be crushed and that the government would be obliged to follow a policy of repression in its wake." It is in this context that questions arise over the morality of Hall's conduct: if the rebels are to be blamed for the loss of civilian lives, is it not reasonable to attach the same blame to Hall and his political superiors or, at least, to regard their actions as a moral issue?

Other information about plans by the IRB to conduct a rebellion also proves that the actions of Pearse were not merely part of a dramatic blood sacrifice. This information is extremely relevant to the portrayal of the Rising by McGarry and Wills. While working in the German archives, Colonel J.P. Duggan discovered the plans made in the Summer of 1915 by Joseph Plunkett and Roger Casement, during their time in Germany, for an armed uprising, which were made with the co-operation of German military officials. (*Sunday Press*, 31 March 1991). These plans provided for a landing of arms and men at Limerick, with the further aim of providing a line of resistance along the River Shannon up to Galway and Athlone; plus other links with Cork in the south and with Limerick Junction and Tipperary to the east. There was also provision for German assistance in regard to military action in Dublin.

It should be recognised that, since September 1914, German prisoners of war had been evacuated from France and detained in Templemore Barracks, which was near Limerick Junction. By December 1914 there were about 2,000 German prisoners in the barracks. Pierce McCann, Commandant of the mid-Tipperary Volunteers, made plans to free these prisoners and to use them in any uprising against English rule. These plans became known to the RIC Special Branch and it was probably as a result of this that all of the German prisoners were removed to Leigh in Lancashire, England, in early February 1915.

However, as Roger Casement had visited Irish prisoners of war in a camp at Limburg, Germany, in early December 1914, it is possible that his plans for them to participate in an attack on British rule in Ireland may have become known to Admiral Hall and his team.

The plans revealed by Colonel Duggan certainly changed previous interpretations

of the Easter Rising. On seeing the documents and the maps, F.X. Martin stated that they were "tremendously important" and that, "from the historian's point of view, they are nothing short of sensational". He concluded that "now, at last, we have evidence of the existence of a plan for an all-Ireland rising that was not hare brained", and he added that "I will have to eat some of my words in relation to Joseph Plunkett". Such a reappraisal was also accepted by Professor Donal McCartney of UCD who acknowledged that the documents "put a totally different complexion on the aims of the 1916 leaders". Although, as Diarmuid Lynch had narrated many years ago, these plans were modified by Pearse in January 1916 and Fenit, County Kerry, was selected as the location for the landing of German arms, the significance of the plans remains the same: there was no desire to engage simply in a blood sacrifice.

This message had also been spelt out in Seamus O Buachalla's edited version of Pearse's letters, which was published in 1980. From the Howth gun-running, 26th July 1914, Pearse wrote many letters to Joe McGarrity in Philadelphia giving a shrewd analysis of the political situation and precise details in regard to military planning. One letter, written on 12th August 1914, sheds a revealing light on Pearse's approach to war which should serve to dispel some of the malicious myths about him. He wrote "moreover the ammunition landed is useless. It consists of explosive bullets, which are against the rules of civilised war and which, therefore, we are not serving out to the men". On reading the letters, Professor Joe Lee concluded that Pearse "had spent two years trying to ensure that the Rising would not be a blood sacrifice, however willing he was to play the blood sacrifice role once events took their course".

Professor F.X. Lyons, who wrote the Foreword to the book, came to the same conclusion, writing that—

"future biographers will have to weigh this pragmatic correspondence against the flamboyance, sometimes the barely suppressed hysteria of Pearse's published writings from 1914 onwards. In doing so perhaps they will come at last to a balanced view about a man whose letters no less than his actions stamp him out as one of the most remarkable creators of the Irish revolution"

Unfortunately the articles by Wills and McGarry in the *Atlas* have failed to recognise either the importance of these letters by Pearse or the significance of the armed plans for a Rising made in 1915. Recognition of these realities makes it impossible to describe the Rising in terms of "blood sacrifice" and "staged theatre".

**Brian Murphy OSB**

## The Russian Revolution

If Trotsky was to succeed Lenin, he would have had to take Lenin's party in hand, operate through its structures, and direct its action in the social and political condition of things brought about by Lenin's Revolution and the isolation of that Revolution from Europe brought about by Pilsudski. He would have had to become a Party man handling the bureaucratic apparatus by which it was moved. The proletarian mass could not be brought to exercise its dictatorship in the conduct of the State by orations.

The mass cannot move in political administration as a mass. Furthermore the proletarian mass of the kind supposed by pre-Leninist Marxism—the proletarian mass of advanced capitalism—did not exist in Russia. The class conscious proletariat that was to exercise a purposeful government by its dictatorship, one that would oversee the fading away of the state, did not exist. It would have to be created. And, since nobody proposed that the Revolution should be aborted and the creation of an industrial proletariat should be handed over to Capitalism, the only way of getting it was for the State to create it.

This is what Lenin proposed to do. When thought about from a German vantage point, it was a shocking thing to propose. Kautsky, the perfect model of a Marxist, was duly shocked. And Trotsky, for all that he had defended State Terrorism against Kautsky, shared too many of Kautsky's assumptions to be comfortable with it. But the transition from Lenin to Stalin enabled him to misapply to Stalin the shocking thing that the Revolution was committed to.

Lenin had an acute insight into the nature of the proletariat. Long before 1917 he said that Socialism was an "alien intrusion" into the life of the working class. If that was so, then Socialism would not come about through the socialist party taking instruction from the working class and acting for it on the instructions it was given.

Karl Kautsky, who probed the way forward for the German Social Democracy, envisaged Socialism being born fairly effortlessly out of Capitalism as it existed in the Bismarckian German State. He published a book before the War about how things might go on the day after the revolution.

James Connolly took a somewhat similar view as Kautsky of the social character of Germany. But he was more definite than Kautsky, possibly because he was looking at the condition of the working class in Germany from the vantage point of the social conditions in Britain. When Britain declared war on Germany, he supported Germany on both anti-Imperialist and Socialist grounds. He published articles on working class arrangements in Germany in *The Workers' Republic* in 1915-16. (I collected some of them in a pamphlet: *Connolly And German Socialism*.) And he supported the German War Socialists—which Kautsky did not.

In August 1914 Connolly published an article in praise of Karl Liebknecht when it was rumoured that Liebknecht had been executed for opposition to the German war effort, but then he never mentioned him again. When the working class did not act internationally to make war impossible, but supported their own states in the War, Connolly accepted that as being the reality of things, aligned himself within it, and held that the cause of Socialism would be best served by German victory.

He never mentioned Liebknecht again. And he took no heed of the British propaganda which described the German State as a reactionary Autocracy. Liebknecht, however, adopted the British view of the German State, and sought to expose in the German Parliament the assistance being given by the Government to the Irish Republicans.

Then, in November 1918, when the German State fragmented under pressure of four and a quarter years of defensive warfare, the Kaiser, who had been declared outlaw by the *Entente*, abdicated and left the country and a Social Democratic Government was formed and the state was declared to be a Republic, Liebknecht launched his campaign to overthrow the State and carry out a Socialist Revolution.

Under the circumstances, such a campaign could do more than generate disorder. When the Bolsheviks had taken power in Russia a year earlier, it was in the circumstances of a social revolution that was already in progress: the peasants were seizing the land from the landlords. But there was no spontaneous social revolution in progress in Germany. There was no obvious revolution that could just

happen. Germany was far too socialist in composition for there to be a socialist revolution against the *status quo*. What was needed was defensive political action in support of the *status quo*. The revolutionary arena was very narrowly political. What was needed was the formation of a conservative national front against the predatory action of the Entente Power which was transforming the Armistice into an Unconditional Surrender.

Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg's rebellion prevented that development on the Left at the very start, and therefore, as it was a necessary development, it was brought about by the Right in the course of the next fourteen years.

An easy birth of Socialism out of Capitalism might have happened in Germany, where the Social Democracy constituted an immense region of German society that had been living a life of its own for a generation. It might be said that an accident prevented it. But history is full of accidents.

John Lloyd held a kind of Menshevik view for a while, because it was in the atmosphere. But Menshevism had in fact broken more radically with the Populist source of things than Bolshevism had. It lived in a systematically idealised enclave of Marxism, comprehensively disengaged from Russian social reality.

One of the more 'moderate' and less Marxist Menshevik leaders, Tseretilli, for whom Dzerzinsky issued an arrest warrant a few weeks after the October Revolution, wrote in exile in the 1930s:

"We can see the germs of the new society forming in the heart of capitalist society. The growing workers' organisations are no longer content merely to struggle against the misdeeds of the resent regime, they are changing the very foundations of this regime, socializing to an ever greater degree production and commerce, creating the new culture, a new social mentality which Marx's profound observation that the revolution is nothing more than the birth of a new society which has grown to maturity in the heart of the old is as vested in the case of the proletarian revolution as in any other..." (Quoted from Tseretilli: *A Democrat In The Russian Revolution* by W.H. Roobol, 1976).

If that was how things were, the Revolution would have happened in Germany.

But Lenin took it, from very early on, that the Socialist Party would, in the complexity of the actual world, have to act as a directing force on the working class,

rather than its representative. That was the ground of Trotsky's strong condemnation of him before 1917. And, after 1917, it was no great leap for Lenin to undertake that his Party should become the creator of the working class whose interests it would represent, and would itself determine what those interests were and communicate them to the emerging class.

Trotsky appeared to be entirely unaware in 1923-4 that he had been acting on those shocking assumptions for six years. It only struck him when Lenin died and he was faced with the prospect of taking over the leadership of the Party himself, or doing so jointly with Stalin. But in Stalin the essentials of Leninism stood out too starkly to be tolerable.

Stalin had not been a revolutionary in 1917. Much was made of that fact in 1924, and also in our little group in the early sixties. I saw it as being entirely to Stalin's credit that, when he was the senior Bolshevik in Petrograd in March 1917, he had directed the Party into a parliamentary opposition role. It meant that he had given the matter some realistic thought and was not moved by a mere revolutionist reflex. And it meant that, when Lenin returned and persuaded him to support his revolutionary scheme, he had a serious sense of what it involved.

Stalin was the working class in the Bolshevik leadership of aristocratic and bourgeois intellectuals. He was part of the class that it was the purpose of the Revolution to make into the ruling class, and he applied himself in a practical way to enabling that to be done.

He had little experience of Europe in terms of time spent there. Others had extensive experience. But his experience was different in kind. What one experiences depends on where one is placed. He was not placed in the intellectual/artistic stratosphere, looking down on the social bulk that would make the European revolution if there was to be a European revolution. And his expectation of a European revolution was considerably less than that of his intellectual colleagues in the Bolshevik leadership. He was assessing possibilities within his own medium of existence while they were hopefully looking down on a mass that existed for them chiefly as an ideal, and yearning for a miraculous escape from the Russian isolation into which they had been led—or had led themselves.

(Stalin, as far as I recall, had been particularly doubtful about the invasion of Poland.)

Russia was where the Revolution actually was, and either Russia could be organised to undertake industrialisation without a capitalist class, and with a working class that was being created in the course of industrialisation and was willingly acting in place of a capitalist class, or it was all empty idealism.

Why not reverse the historical order of economic base and political/cultural superstructure?, Lenin asked. And I don't know that anyone in the Bolshevik leadership told him that that was out of order.

The industrial proletariat was a product of capitalist development—of capitalist class exploitation. Through capitalist exploitation and regimentation a proletariat was created which became conscious of itself as a class. It was a necessary class in capitalist society. As the capitalist form of economy became universal, the proletariat became the major social class. Artisans were proletarianised. Skilled trades ceased to have independent standing. All was proletarianised. Increasingly the proletariat included all that was necessary for modern social existence and, at a certain point, it would shrug off the capitalist class as a redundant parasitic form.

I don't know that Marx himself ever tried to envisage just how the proletariat would become "*the gravedigger of capitalism*". There was a New Left variety of Marxism knocking around in the 1960s which preached a mystified dialectic that held that the proletariat, because it was nothing, would at some moment be transformed into everything, and that the nothingness should therefore be preserved to keep it ready for the moment of its transfiguration. That struck me as gibberish.

I could only see Capital being shrugged off through diversification of the proletariat such that, while still living on wages, it came to include all the skills that were necessary to the functioning of society. And that was closest to being the case in Germany then (because the "*superstructure*" set by Bismarck prevented the degradation of the proletariat, such as happened in Britain), and was farthest from being the case in Russia, whose economic form was substantially pre-capitalist.

The development on which Russia was set by Lenin was industrialisation by means of a class-conscious proletariat that was being created by the force and culture of the revolutionary State. That State was, in a sense, the product of the advanced

Capitalism of Europe, which it was intent on overthrowing, but the class-conscious proletariat in Russia was to spring fully-formed into being from its hands. It was not a class that had formed itself through experience as the exploited class of Capitalism, but was formed from the start as a class that had overthrown Capitalism. And yet its business was to do, in large part, what had been done elsewhere by Capitalism. And the first item of business was "*the primitive accumulation of capital*" to enable a rapid take-off into industrialisation.

The industrialisation of Russia was undertaken while Europe was suffering the economic, political and spiritual disruption of the Great War and was turning to Fascism in order to restore itself, and while Britain was warding off Fascism only by suspending the operation of party-politics by class-collaboration in a different form. Russia therefore loomed large in the consciousness of Europe. And it was either looked to admiringly as showing what Socialism could do, or was denounced for degrading the idea of Socialism by setting it to do what should have been left to Capitalism to do.

Culture was given priority in Russia. A good thing! But it was not the culture of Bohemian drop-outs. It was not Hampstead culture. It was not the delightful culture of the residue of the ruling class. ("*History shows that the final ambition of the leisure class is to be charming.*" ?) It was neither sceptical nor sexually libertine.

Russia had no use for Virginia Woolf or James Joyce. What it had a use for was Mary Barton. Nevertheless it should have had Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, because that was *Culture*. (Did we have James Joyce? *Ulysses* did not come to hand in Slieve Luacra in the mid=fifties, though I was able to find it in a dirty bookshop in London in the late fifties. And, when it was later thrust upon us, we found that we did not want it!)

Soviet authors were "*the engineers of human souls*", according to Stalin. Book culture produces cultured people. (Didn't Milton say much the same thing.) But the culture required for the realisation of Lenin's project in Russia was not the culture required by the wealthy middle class of late Capitalism that had taken power in Britain in the Great War in a Millenarian spirit, traumatised itself, and made a mess of Europe in the Versailles settlement.

Hampstead had no use for *How The*

*Steel Was Tempered*, except as a subject for ridicule. (What did Hampstead know about steel?) On the other hand, the purposeful ruling proletariat that was being shaped in Russia had no use for that delightful aristocratic/bourgeois idyll, *All Passion Spent*. (I don't recall if it was ridiculed by Zhdanov.)

Soviet industrialisation was not the work of Zombies, or terrorised individuals working at the point of a gun. It couldn't have been. It was the work of culturally engineered human souls acting within a cultural milieu that was appropriate to the task. The effectiveness of that Soviet culture as compared with the British culture of the inter-War generation was put to the test when Britain declared war on Germany for a second time, lost it for lack of a will to fight, succeeded in directing Germany eastwards, and was saved as a World Power by the Soviet destruction

of German power.

While the survival of Imperial Britain depended on Russia, Britain abased itself before the Soviet culture which it despised. State direction combined with a herd instinct of survival made Britain a carrier of Soviet culture for a few years (But after survival Britain found it was no longer viable as an independent Power. It found itself dependent both culturally and economically on the United States. Anyone who knows what the English mind, or soul, was in 1950 must know that it is something very different now, and that the difference did not grow out of itself but was engineered by the superior American culture, the culture of Hollywood. It is only for Anglophile circles in Ireland that England retains the Roman constancy boasted of by Gladstone and retains the status of "*an ever fixed star*".

**Brendan Clifford**

## Special Nature of Hiroshima-Nagasaki?

In the last *Irish Political Review* ("*Special Nature of Hiroshima-Nagasaki*", Feb 2018) Desmond Fennell says of the US in the post WWII world that "*There is definitive evidence that the last power centre of European civilisation realised that, with Hiroshima-Nagasaki, the game was up for the civilisation it had come to head. It lies in the fact that within a few years after the atomic bombings it was engaged in devising and promulgating a replacement. Excluding Christianity, which had been the core animator of the European system, Official America, with the help of mass media, set about creating a new, non-Euro-American culture which would secularise, feminise, sexualise, and multi-colourise the old one.*"

Desmond Fennell is right in saying that "*excluding Christianity*" is the central issue here. as that had indeed been the core of European civilisation. But when and where was Christianity undermined and begin to be '*excluded*' from Western civilisation? America did not begin it. It began about a century earlier with the emergence of Darwinism in England: it replaced Christianity by giving an alternative meaning and rationale to life. The new ideology meant perpetual competition and conflict at all levels of life. It was a distilling of the attitudes and behaviour that had created the British Empire and it sanctioned that development as being a result of some law of nature. *Survival of the fittest* was very old hat to British Imperialists.

In the Darwinian world conflict and competition had to be applied primarily against the nearest competitor who always had to be eliminated from the competition because the '*fittest*' had to prove that they could survive—that is why they existed. There was no greater purpose to life. Germany came into that frame automatically as it was becoming England's most powerful competitor, and so there had to be a day of reckoning with it by any and every means—and war was the ultimate test as to who would prove to be the fittest. That was the basis of WWI, when Britain orchestrated a conflict within Europe into a European civil war—the ultimate achievement of the Balance of Power strategy—and then escalated the conflict into a World War.

That war destroyed European civilisation, and the second round of that war in WWII ensured that destruction beyond repair. Culturally and morally WWI had created in Europe what T.S. Eliot described as *The Wasteland*—a perfect description for the state of European civilisation. The US had nothing to do with creating this situation and by the end of WWII Europe was a wasteland beyond repair. That is when, and why, the "*game was up for European civilisation.*"

Europe had to be taken in hand by the forces that had been dragged in to end its civil war—the US and Russia. Each did what came naturally to it in the spheres allocated to them and each replaced

European civilisation with its own image. Desmond says that "*The new system of values-and-rules-to-live-by was exported to America's European satellites*", and that "*Official America, borrowing inappropriately a term from the old civilisation, called this new values and rules system 'liberalism'...*". These new US values may have been culturally alien to mainland Europe but they were not so to Britain, which immediately established a '*special relationship*' with the US and its values—and it does not appear to have regarded these '*exports*' as inappropriate or a new civilisation at all, but merely as an extension of what it really was itself. England had not been European since the Reformation and it was after all the home of Liberalism as well as of Darwinism—which complemented each other.

The Cold War, it must be said to its credit, did not create a wasteland of the world, as the sheer power of Russia prevented that from happening. Russia's power was not based on dropping atomic bombs, wiping out its indigenous peoples, or the institution of slavery.

But, since the end of the Soviet Union, it is still an open question as to whether the US will make a *wasteland* of the world and continue the work of England's inheritance to the world.

And, if it does do so, one thing is certain, England will be its leading cheerleader to the very end. Mrs. May has made it very clear, more than once, that she is more than willing to push the necessary button(s) to help things along! And there are no plans whatever to cope with the consequences of '*pushing the button*'! Nihilism rules OK!

She shows not the slightest concern to repent for the horrors of Hiroshima-Nagasaki, no more than do the leaders of the US. Nor is there any worry about repeating them hundreds of times over.

It is simply not a factor in their considerations.

So what difference does it make to consider it a special event?

**Jack Lane**

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Brendan Clifford. 80pp.

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## "The Paper Of Record" On 'De Paper' And "The Mob"

This past December, the *Irish Times* carried what I might call two "*Santa Claus*" items in respect of a half-hearted competitor on the national scene, the Cork-based *Irish Examiner*, which never really succeeded in ceasing to be the *Cork Examiner*, and which had long been known colloquially on its native heath as "*De Paper*". On December 6th—feast day of St Nicholas, the original Santa—the more urbane and self-styled "*paper of record*" announced its good tidings for the Christmas Season, with its headline "*Irish Times set to acquire Irish Examiner and other media assets*". And, while there was no print edition this Christmas Eve—December 24 having been a Sunday in 2017—the *Irish Times* gave its online subscribers a little gift from Santa, a story with the headline "**A Christmas Eve ransacking at the Cork Examiner**". "**In 1920, a mob raided the newspaper's offices after the publication of a controversial pastoral letter**" was the subheading, and it was accompanied by a photograph of total destruction, with the caption "**The 'Burning of Cork', St Patrick's Street, Cork, 1920**". The following story was related (all emphases being mine):

"The offices of the *Irish Examiner*—then the *Cork Examiner*—were empty, save for a caretaker left in charge of the building and a handful of employees cleaning up. It was Christmas Eve, and with no paper due in the morning, staff had gone home for the evening. Just after 8 pm, as the doors were being shut for the night, **a gang of men** armed with revolvers, sledge hammers and explosives arrived at the gates and forced their way into the building in Cork city. **The mob**, about 30 in number, cut the telephone wires. Two stood guard over the caretaker, and the rest 'went quickly to the printing room and bombed the machine used in connection with the printing of the evening edition of the *Examiner*—the *Echo*', according to an *Irish Times* report three days later, on December 27th, 1920... 'In a few moments the machine was in flames, the inking cylinders burning fiercely, together with the electric motor', reads the report. With the machine destroyed, the raiders—dressed in civilian clothing, but 'slightly disguised' with scarves covering their faces—moved quickly, crossing a footbridge to the main machine room. They set upon two of the newspaper's rotary machines, taking sledge hammers to the mechanism: 'In

this way vital parts of the machinery were smashed to pieces, and great damage was done.' After indulging in what the paper described as a 'wanton orgy of destruction' for about half an hour, the attackers 'left as silently and as rapidly as they had entered'. 'Before taking their departure, however, they laid nearly half a dozen sticks of gelignite in the interior of one machine, but, fortunately, the means of exploding them was defective, and the gelignite was found unexploded: otherwise the damage would have been much greater.' The damage to the machines was 'not irreparable' and the fire was not as serious as intended by **the mob**, partly owing to the failure of the last dose of gelignite to ignite. The blaze was quickly put out by the fire brigade. The raiders had not long left when the police arrived from Union Quay barracks; a small shoot-out ensued and one man was 'slightly wounded'."

Dean Ruxton was the presenter of this blast from the past, and he is described on the *Irish Times* website as "*a digital production journalist at the Irish Times*" who "*holds a master's degree in journalism from Dublin City University*". That he does not approve of the fact that a year previously, in December 1919, the Irish electorate had democratically ratified the Republic proclaimed by the 1916 Rising, and that what he sneers at as "**a mob**", "**a gang**" and "**the mob**", was actually the Army of the Dáil Éireann that had been so voted into being by the people, was indicated by the manner in which he himself placed his next subheading in inverted commas, "*Orders of the Irish Republic*". His narrative continued:

"A motive was clear from the outset. An account from the Press Association's Cork correspondent, printed in the same edition of *The Irish Times*, said that on entering, one of the mob announced it was acting 'under the orders of the Irish Republic'. The paper's supposed crime against the Republic had been made just days before, when it published a pastoral letter by the Catholic Bishop Daniel Cohalan of Cork, who had condemned violence of all sides of the War of Independence and issued a threat of excommunication... In late 1920 and amid the War of Independence, murders, acts of violence and inevitable reprisal became common. In November 1920 Republican forces carried out an ambush at Kil-michael, which sparked further killings and violence on the part of the Crown. On the night of December 11th, 1920,

following the killing of a British soldier in another ambush at Dillons Cross, Crown forces intentionally burned the centre of Cork city, looting shops and setting fire to large sections of Patrick's Street. The City Hall and the Carnegie Library on Anglesea Street were completely destroyed. The damage was estimated to have cost about £2 million and led to the loss of some 2,000 jobs in the city. The next morning, during his Sunday homily at the Cathedral, Bishop Cohalan issued a decree of excommunication on any perpetrators of murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, ambush and arson... In a move that proved unpopular with the public and other Catholic priests, the pastoral letter issued and read a week later at all Masses in the Diocese did not distinguish the perpetrators by political alignment. The letter, published on December 20th in the *Cork Examiner*, said the chain of reprisal murders had 'become like a devils' competition in feats of murder and arson between members of the Volunteer Organisation and agents of the Crown'. The bishop sought to instil 'patience' among those resisting the British government... (Writing in *Irish Theological Quarterly* in 2002), Padraig Corkery's paper notes Bishop Cohalan was the only Irish bishop to issue a decree of excommunication on those involved in violence during that period. Violence in the diocese would continue; just days after the bishop's first pronouncement, a parish priest at Dunmanway, Canon Thomas Magner was shot dead, alongside a farmer's son, by British forces... Despite the attack, the *Cork Examiner* published on Tuesday, December 28th, reporting the story of the ransacking on page four of its morning edition."

Ruxton himself stated, by way of conclusion, that "*this story is part of the Lost Leads series, a revisiting of lesser known stories that have made the pages of The Irish Times since 1859*". But this was no mere "*revisiting*" on Ruxton's part. It also involved noteworthy rewording of, and critical omissions from, the original reporting by the *Irish Times* during December 1920 itself. Now, strange as it might appear to some readers, I actually welcome the fact that State financial assistance was provided to the *Irish Times* for the purpose of digitising its complete run and putting it online. In its openly and unashamedly Unionist heyday, loathsome and all as was its reactionary political outlook, its archives reveal, albeit with some critical exceptions, an impressive paper of record during that era.

Nothing can beat, for example, its reportage of the Republican By-Election victory in February 1917, when the *Irish Times* concluded that, no less than Southern Unionism itself, Redmondism was heading for a national wipeout outside

of Ulster, and the paper acknowledged with horror that it had already become the democratic will of the Nationalist electorate to endorse that Republic proclaimed by its Provisional Government only ten months previously through the 1916 Rising. And that is why the present day *Irish Times*, in pushing a neo-Redmondite (rather than an old-fashioned Unionist) view of Irish history—which is driven in the main by its correspondent Ronan Mc Greevy—could not afford to draw on the incisiveness of its own 1917 reportage, when it came to supposedly marking the centenary of that By-Election. Some "paper of record"! It is similarly worth checking out the online *Irish Times* archives for December 1920, to see how that paper first reported that raid on the Redmondite *Examiner*, and—without engaging in unnecessary repetition—to examine the extent to which Ruxton did or did not reflect that original reportage. It will then be seen that the *Irish Times* 'gift' to its online subscribers this Christmas Eve is riddled with journalistic sins of both commission and omission.

Under the heading of "*Daring Crime In Cork*", and with subheadings of "*News-paper office attacked; bombed and set on fire*", the *Irish Times* of Monday, 27th December 1920, related:

"The office of the *Cork Examiner* was raided on the night of Christmas Eve by thirty armed men, according to an official report issued from Dublin Castle, and wrecked... Our Cork correspondent, telegraphing last night, says: A very daring attempt was made to wreck the printing department of the *Cork Examiner* in Patrick Street, Cork, at half-past eight o'clock on Christmas Eve, and, although the **parties** concerned achieved only partial success, they caused serious damage to the plant... **A body of men** in civilian attire, variously estimated to number from twenty to thirty, suddenly appeared at the front entrance, carrying revolvers, bombs, gelignite, detonators and fuses, and entered the building. They were only slightly disguised, with handkerchiefs across the lower portions of their faces. Leaving two of **the party** to guard the caretaker, they went quickly to the printing room... After indulging in this wanton orgy of destruction for half an hour, the raiders left as silently and as rapidly as they had entered... Although the raiders entered and left through the type composing room, they did not interfere with the linotype equipment. The fire which broke out was not serious... The sympathy of all right-minded members of the community is extended to Messrs. Thomas Crosbie and Co., Ltd., in this attempt to prevent the publication of their journal. Various reasons have been assigned for the attack upon them,

and the one which obtains most credence is based on the fact that they published and supported the recent pastoral letter of the Most Rev. Dr. Cohalan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork, in which he formulated his decree of excommunication against all members of his flock who should be guilty of murder, kidnapping and arson."

That *Irish Times* report continued:

"ANOTHER ACCOUNT. The Press Association's Cork Correspondent states: The offices of the *Cork Examiner* were raided on Christmas Eve by **a party** of about twenty-five men, who intimated they were acting 'under the orders of the Irish Republic'... The injury to the machinery is not irreparable, and it is expected that publication will be continued as usual after Monday. It is believed that the cause of the attack on the *Examiner* was because of its attitude on the recent pastoral letter issued by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork."

However, on the following day, December 28th, the *Irish Times* was obliged to acknowledge that there had been a significant additional factor at issue:

"The official view with regard to the raid is that it was carried out by the Sinn Fein Party, because the *Examiner* had published the local Roman Catholic Bishop's denunciation of murder and other forms of crime, **and had refused to publish a protest against the Bishop's action drawn up by the Lord Mayor and others**".

(Donal O'Callaghan was Cork's third Lord Mayor in that momentous year of 1920, with Lord Mayor Tomás Mac Curtain having been murdered by the RIC in his home—and in front of his family—in March, while the incarcerated Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney had met his death—following a 74 days hunger strike—in October.) And yet, in contrast with its refusal to publish a statement from Cork's elected representatives, *Examiner Newspapers* had proved more than willing, only a few weeks previously, to provide space in its columns for the issuing of Loyalist death threats, as reported in the *Irish Times* that December 1:

"A notice appears in tonight's *Evening Echo*, addressed to 'All Cork Citizens' and headed 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society, Cork and District Circle: membership 2,000 and still growing'. It gives notice that 'any householder known to shelter any rebel, or who is known to subscribe to any rebel fund, or to assist in anyway the murderous gang of assassins known as Sinn Fein (i.e. the democratically elected Government of the Irish Republic—MO'R), had better increase his or her fire and life insurance, as it will

be needed. It will be better than buying spurious Dáil Éireann Bonds'. The notice ends by quoting 'Remember 1641; remember 1798.—By order of the Committee. J. P. H. D., Secretary'."

Ruxton gratuitously inserted his own language into his account of the December 1920 *Irish Times* reportage, replacing "**party**" by "**mob**" and "**body of men**" by "**gang of men**". While thoroughly condemning the Christmas Eve raid as criminal, the Unionist *Irish Times* knew that it was no mob action, but the military action of a disciplined body of men, "*only slightly disguised*", and acting on behalf of Dáil Éireann, whose writ neither the *Times* nor the Redmondite *Examiner* was prepared to recognise. Bishop Cohalan had first pronounced his decree of excommunication, directed against Dáil Éireann's Army, on Sunday, December 12th. His decree was published by the *Irish Times* on December 14th. Under the heading of "BISHOP COHALAN AND MURDER: EXCOMMUNICATION DECREE", it reported:

"The Most Rev. Dr. Cohalan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork, has addressed the following letter to the editor of the *Cork Examiner*: Dear Sir, Kindly give me space to publish and thus promulgate the following decree: DECREE OF THE BISHOP OF CORK IN REFERENCE TO AMBUSHES, KIDNAPPING AND MURDER."

The *Irish Times* accompanied its own publication of this Decree with a report of the Bishop's December 12th sermon, and the paper itself proceeded to editorialise:

"We welcome very heartily the action of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork in summoning the most awful sanctions of his Church to the aid of morality and peace. It would be easy to complain that this action comes late in the day... (but) criticism which could not be immediately helpful would be out of place... That is the most solemn penalty which the Roman Catholic Church can invoke... It would be unfair to Dr. Cohalan to separate this decree from his sermon on Sunday in Cork Cathedral (on the morning after the burning of Cork city centre by British forces—MO'R). There he denounced not only murder but reprisals. 'Murder', he said, 'is murder and arson is arson', by whomsoever committed. With that verdict no honest man can quarrel. Reprisals, even when committed under the direst provocation, are utterly wrong... Reprisals, however, are the direct outcome of murder... There were no reprisals before the murders began. On the contrary, it was not until forty-one servants of the Crown had been foully done to death in the present year that the first case of real or alleged reprisals was reported... As to

men maddened by the loss of comrades (the Auxies—MO'R), and living in imminent peril of assassination, reprisals seem to reduce the chances of murder... If the Bishop's decree stops murders in the diocese of Cork, the fear of reprisals will cease to keep a solitary member of his flock awake at night... We venture to hope that every one of Dr. Cohalan's colleagues in the Hierarchy will follow his example. (None did, for none but he dared to malign, as murder, a War of Independence that the Army of Dáil Éireann was compelled to wage following the suppression of that democratically elected body by the Auxies and other Crown forces—MO'R)... The Roman Catholic Bishops' influence in Irish affairs is still very great (but, in this case, not that great!—MO'R), and it is equalled today by the measure of their opportunity."

It is clear from what Ruxton wrote this Christmas Eve that he shares the basic perspective of that December 1920 Editorial. He wrote of War of Independence "murders" provoking the "inevitable reprisal", and he held the Army of the Republic's ambushes at Kilmichael and Dillon's Cross responsible for the subsequent burning of Cork. Furthermore, nowhere did his article ever describe those British military arsonists and looters as either "a mob" or "a gang". Moreover, his references to either Crown or British forces mask the fact that the particular forces ambushed on those occasions, and who engaged in arson, looting and the murder of Canon Magner among others, were the notorious Auxies, or Auxiliary RIC. Indeed, as we have seen, Ruxton proved unwilling to use the word "murder" in respect of any killing at all by the Auxies, even in respect of the shooting dead of Canon Magner. Yet "THE MURDER OF CANON MAGNER" had been the headline used at the time by the *Irish Times* itself when, on 17th December 1920, it reported:

"The official report received yesterday with reference to the murder of Canon Magner, Parish Priest of Dunmanway, West Cork, states: At one o'clock yesterday about thirty Auxiliary police left Dunmanway in two motor cars, with a cadet in charge, to go to Cork to attend the funeral of one of their partners who was recently shot dead in Cork. About a mile from Dunmanway they met the Rev. Canon Magner and Timothy Crowley, son of a farmer in the locality. The cadet in charge stopped the lorries, and walking over to Timothy Crowley and asked him for his permit and shot him dead with his revolver. The cadet then turned to Canon Magner, who was close by, and shot him too. Mr. Brady, a Resident Magistrate, was present at the time and narrowly escaped a similar fate... The late Canon Magner, the report adds, was a most

inoffensive priest, and most anxious for the peace of Dunmanway. Crowley was a respectable farmer's son, who took no part in politics."

But Ruxton also engaged in an unconscionable piece of censorship of the *Irish Times* of December 1920, by excluding any mention of the one murder and two attempted murders carried out by the Auxies in the immediate aftermath of the Dillon's Cross ambush, and preceding their burning of Cork city centre. His account of the £2 million worth of damage done was taken from the issue of December 18th which, however, had also related rather more than Ruxton was willing to repeat:

"On Saturday evening a party of Auxiliary R.I.C. were attacked with bombs at Dillon's Cross, Cork, one cadet being killed and eleven wounded. Shortly after a young civilian named Delaney was shot dead, and his brother and uncle wounded. Between nine and ten o'clock fires broke out in a large number of business houses in Patrick Street. The flames spread rapidly to adjoining thoroughfares, and a large area of the city was completely burned down... The damage to the city is estimated at about £2,000,000.... YOUNG MAN SHOT DEAD. It was learned on Sunday that after the outrage at Dillon's Cross a young man named Jeremiah Delaney, a farmer's son, of Dublin Hill, was shot dead in his father's house. His brother, Cornelius, and their uncle, a man named Leahy, were both seriously wounded... Cornelius was shot in the left shoulder, right thigh, and abdomen..."

I have already mentioned Ruxton's act of censorship in omitting—from his reprise of the *Irish Times* reporting of the raid on the *Examiner*—the fact that the latter had denied to Cork's elected representatives a publication of their statement of protest against the Bishop's actions. The Unionist *Irish Times* did record a protest jointly made by Cork city's Sinn Fein TD, J.J. Walsh, and its Lord Mayor, Donal O'Callaghan, and, under the heading of "DR. COHALAN'S DECREE", its issue of 18th December 1920, reported from Cork:

"The extremists are showing much resentment. The remarks made at the meeting of the Cork Corporation yesterday bear this out, and they are accentuated by the terms of a telegram which was sent to the Bishop this evening, signed by the Lord Mayor and Alderman J.J. Walsh, as follows: 'Taking advantage of your pronouncement, the British Government has informed the world that Cork was destroyed by her own citizens. We urgently request your lordship to inform the British Government and the Press that this was done by enemy forces.' ... The Lord Mayor and Mr. Walsh have

also issued a statement, in which they say that Dr. Cohalan's action concerns not only that diocese, but every part of Ireland. The issue raised by the bishop's decree of excommunication, they say, cannot be hurriedly decided by individual bishops, and should be considered by the Irish Hierarchy as a whole. And such a tremendous moral and political problem cannot be decided without reference to those who, politically and nationally, have a full mandate to represent the Irish people. No English or American bishop, they say, would solemnly excommunicate every English or American soldier in his diocese who carried out military or police functions. The letter further suggests that Dr. Cohalan's pronouncement assumes that Ireland is not a nation, and it concludes by stating that the bishop was not only gravely jeopardising their whole national struggle for existence and liberty, but was speaking in patent contradiction to the recent pronouncement of the Irish Hierarchy. They, therefore, as the Parliamentary and municipal representatives chiefly concerned, lodged a public protest against any action which sought, directly or indirectly, to cripple or condemn the Government set up by the Irish people."

Undoubtedly pejorative in its characterisation of Cork Corporation—and Cork's democratically elected public representatives in general—as "the extremists", but it was nonetheless a meaningful record of their coherent democratic argument. Cohalan returned to the fray at Sunday Masses the next day, December 19th. "BISHOP COHALAN AND MURDERS. REMARKABLE PASTORAL. EXCOMMUNICATION DECREE REASSERTED. REPLY TO CRITICS." These were the headlines in the *Irish Times* on Monday, December 20th, as it reported Cohalan's further condemnation of the War of Independence:

"Our Cork Correspondent, telegraphing on Sunday, says: At the Masses in all the Roman Catholic churches in Cork today a remarkable Pastoral letter was read from Bishop Cohalan, condemning murders, kidnappings, and arson. In several instances members of the congregation, as a protest, left the church before the conclusion of the Mass. The Pastoral stated—In presence of the ruin of a great part of our city, the pastoral duty impels me to address to you a statement about the crimes that have been committed in the diocese—crimes by the people, and crimes by the agents of the Government—to condemn and deplore these crimes, and in order to prevent a repetition of these crimes in future, and to protect the lives and property of innocent people, to notify again a decree of excommunication which I have already promulgated against those who should be guilty of these crimes within the

diocese in future. We were singularly free in this diocese from the crime of murder until about the middle of last March. But policemen had been shot here and there throughout the country, and the police believed that the murder of their men was a studied and settled part of the Volunteer policy. A general meeting of policemen was called by someone in this city, a resolution was proposed that if any policemen were shot in the City one of the leading Volunteers should be shot by way of reprisals, and I am glad to be able to say that the resolution was defeated. Later on a clique succeeded in carrying out the wicked project which the general body of the police had refused to accept. In March last the terrible reprisal murder of Lord Mayor MacCurtin took place, and since then it has become like a devils' competition in feats of murder and arson between members of the Volunteer organisation and agents of the Crown."

"It will be instructive to consider some of the features of those crimes. Constable Murtagh was murdered on Pope's Quay on the night of the Lord Mayor's murder, but earlier in the night, and it is certain that it was the murder of Constable Murtagh that gave occasion to the murder of the Lord Mayor... It was these irresponsibles who brought on the murder of the Lord Mayor, by agents of the Government, on that same night... Some, probably, too, will say that nothing occurred at Dillon's Cross. But fables are poor consolation to the sufferers by the burning of Patrick Street. Proceeding, the Pastoral states that some Republicans spoke of 'the receding authority of England', and of the occupation of deserted districts by the advancing authority of the Republic when some policemen were murdered, and their barracks burned. He would be a brave Republican who would talk now, in city or county, of districts delivered from British rule... Dealing with his decree of excommunication and the discussions thereon by the Cork Corporators, the Bishop said that the decree added nothing to the Divine law and his condemnation of murder, attempted murder, ambushes, and kidnapping, which all violated God's law, and should not cause the Corporators and their lay theologian to rage. He appealed to the Volunteers and those who believed in the Divinity of Christ, to bow to the teaching of the Gospel, and he exhorted all to pray God for an honourable, and satisfactory political settlement for Ireland."

The contempt displayed by that Prince of the Church—a Bishop by the "Divine" appointment of "Christ's Vicar on Earth"—towards the "Cork Corporators", who had "merely" been elected by the Democracy of Cork, was blatantly expressed. Indeed, it was quite ironic to find such an attempt at Church dictation to the Republic

being applauded in today's self-admiringly secular *Irish Times*.

But Democracy was not prepared to take this belt of a Bishop's crozier lying down. That the Volunteers' Christmas Eve action had not been designed to put the *Examiner* out of business was shown by the fact that they had twice bypassed the linotype equipment and left it undamaged, although the intention was to do enough damage to other machinery for the paper to lose somewhat more than just the one day's production that it actually lost. The Redmondite *Examiner* had denied free speech to the Democracy, and Dáil Éireann's Volunteers took action in order

to give that paper a taste of its own medicine. But let me give credit where credit is due, by again recording how the unashamedly Unionist *Irish Times* of that time possessed sufficient journalistic integrity to honestly report how the Volunteers' raid on the *Examiner* had ultimately been triggered when that paper "refused to publish a protest against the Bishop's actions drawn up by the Lord Mayor and others". Ruxton's withholding of that critically significant democratic detail rendered the Christmas Eve online 'gift' from today's *Irish Times* a travesty of decent journalism.

**Manus O'Riordan**

## February Brexit Summary

There have been few formal negotiation sessions during February but recent weeks have seen a number of important developments.

One is that expressing in law the agreement reached in December regarding the Irish Border is proving impossible and a fudge in the form of a protocol outside of the Withdrawal Agreement is being discussed.

Another is that UK officials have let it be known that an emergency insurance measure is being planned whereby Britain will refuse to pay its financial settlement if Brussels rejects a Free Trade deal with the UK.

Other matters that need to be reported are a possible shift inside the Irish Government towards a more supportive stance in relation to the UK, a number of important logistical consequences of Brexit and some notable contributions to the media debate.

### FUDGES COMING UNSTUCK

Developments during February are summarised in an article entitled, *Irish Border issue is a legitimate threat in Brexit talks* by Patrick Smyth (*Irish Times*, 19 Feb). Smyth explains that, arising from Phase 1, Citizens' Rights, the 'Divorce Bill', the Irish Border, and the Common Travel Areas are to be expressed in a legally binding Withdrawal Agreement. The future relationship between the two parties cannot be discussed until that Agreement is signed off on.

Much of the Withdrawal text is already drafted—following pressure from the UK a section on transition sanctions against the British if EU rules are transgressed has actually been toned down—but the text on the Border is proving impossible to agree. Full alignment with EU rules is interpreted by the EU side as having the

same rules and enforcement mechanisms in all trade sectors, whereas the UK side sees it as affecting only a few sectors and not falling under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. Smyth concludes that the talks will fail if London refuses to reappraise its stance.

Since that article was published there has been a new development. According to the Open Europe blog of February 20th quoting a Bloomberg article that cites a note from a political consultancy for international companies called Eurasia Group, the Withdrawal Agreement will suggest that the Irish Border issue could be dealt with in the context of the future UK-EU deal, adding that "a protocol sitting alongside but outside the agreement will outline full regulatory alignment as a contingency should the EU decide other options won't avoid a hard border". So the Border is to become a bargaining chip in the EU-UK Trade Talks.

In the same Open Europe blog a report in the US news service, Politico, is quoted to the effect that senior UK officials have stated that, if the EU is unwilling to reach a free trade deal with the UK, then the UK will be "forced to withhold its financial contributions as agreed in Phase 1—because nothing is agreed till everything is agreed." It seems that, despite all the commentary regarding the chaos in London, the UK is about to move the negotiations to the position it demanded on day 1: the exit agreement will only be signed if the UK gets the free trade deal it wants. All of this playing of hardball means that the danger of a *No Deal* outcome remains.

**COVENEY SHOWING HIS TRUE COLOURS?**

Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon



Coveney met with Boris Johnson in London at the end of January, where Coveney asserted that Irish representatives had "*a role to play in ensuring that the EU understands the British mindset*" (Irish Times, 31 Jan). Emphasising the need for bilateral links between Ireland and Britain, he proposed that an annual meeting between the two Governments should take place, backed up by preparatory work from officials from both sides. This statement from Coveney sounded like a throwback to the position contrived during Bertie Ahern's tenure as Taoiseach and consolidated under Enda Kenny: that Ireland's EU role was to be the sidekick of Eurosceptic Britain.

In response, the *Irish Political Review Group* submitted a letter to the Irish Times on February 2nd, reproduced in this edition (page 27), which was not published.

An unsigned article headed "*Coveney warns of 'other form of governance' if Stormont not restored—Tánaiste says Brexit will mean 'fundamental' change in British/Irish relation*" (Irish Times, 2 Feb) quoted the Minister stating what seems to be a different line:

"What is happening at the moment is going to fundamentally and permanently change the relationship between Ireland and Britain because the relationship between Britain and the European Union is going to fundamentally change."

So, different diplomatic messages are being conveyed. However, a journalist who has good connections with senior officials in the Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs, Pat Leahy, penned a pro-Britain article with the title, "*We will miss the British when they're gone*" (Irish Times, 10 Feb). The gist of Leahy's piece was that the tax harmonisation that the EU federalists are pushing for is inimical to Irish interests and that in the past Ireland relied on the UK to hold back that agenda.

Leahy doesn't seem to realise that his dread of the Franco-German EU engine betrays an essentially British view of the EU. It's possible that officials with an Anglophile predisposition with whom Leahy has contact are continuing to get in the way of hard thinking about Ireland's long term interests post-Brexit.

#### LOGISTICS AND OTHER PRACTICALITIES

The topic of public expenditure on our airports and seaports that is needed as a result of Brexit received scant attention during the debate on the *Ireland 2040* plan for future capital expenditure, yet capital projects under that heading have all

commenced and all are estimated to complete by 2022; these projects are far from being pie in the sky. Strategic investment on Airports and Ports 2018-2027 is estimated to total 4.8 billion euro. The following table shows the expenditure and completion dates for the major projects.

Facility	Cost	Completion Date
Dublin Airport	320m	2021
Shannon Airport	150m	2022
Dublin Port	230m	2022
Port of Cork	90m	2020
Shannon Foynes	27m	2022

The conclusion to the relevant section in the National Development Plan states:

"The importance of this objective cannot be understated in the context of the UK's exit from the EU in 2019."

Dublin Port has applied for Planning Permission to construct infrastructure to deal with the additional customs checks that will be necessary following Brexit. The Chief Executive of the Port, Eamonn O'Reilly, has stated that "*whatever about the uncertainty around the land Border the sea border is a different matter*". He said that all of the State agencies now understand what they require in Dublin Port (Irish Times, 14 Feb).

A report from the Irish Road Haulage Association on February 9th stated that new legislation in the UK to replace the EU licensing system for hauliers may result in Irish lorries avoiding Britain entirely.

This could be unduly alarmist in that the UK is seeking a deal on mutual recognition of licensing with the EU. However, Verona Murphy of the Association said that extra capacity on routes from Irish ports to Europe was a significant development "*and it seemed as if hauliers were drifting towards that route instead of travelling across Britain*" (IT, 9 Feb).

Other relevant practical developments include an announcement by Euroclear, a Brussels-based company owned by a grouping of large banks, that it will create a Securities Depository for Irish equities. This will ensure that the Irish Stock Exchange will avoid disruption as a result of Brexit.

The trend whereby US financial institutions are moving parts of their operations to Dublin is also continuing. The first movers were Morgan Stanley and Citigroup. These are being joined by AllianceBernstein, and Bank of America

is considered likely to follow. The expected flood of jobs from the City of London has turned out to be trickle, however, and this may be partially the result of overly stringent regulations from the Irish Central Bank (see the article by Sean Owens in the January *Irish Political Review*).

#### CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEBATE

In the Open Europe blog of 20th February Jonathan Hill, the former European Commissioner for Financial Services, is reported urging the UK to leave the Single Market so as to avoid becoming a 'rule-taker'. Lord Hill considers that the EU is "*already moving in directions that we have traditionally resisted*", by which he means EU support for "*a financial transactions tax, more screening of overseas investment and more centralisation of supervision of financial services*."

The former Commissioner must surely be aware that, following the Euro debt crisis, the Eurozone had no choice but to instigate supranational supervision of financial services, yet the point he makes is valid. The direction in which the EU has moved and is moving since the Brexit vote makes the possibility of a change of heart on EU membership by the UK increasingly unlikely.

In an Opinion Piece published on January 31st European Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan stated that, in maintaining a united front following the Brexit referendum, the EU passed a difficult test and that political leadership from Dublin played an important part in that. The relevant section of the article reads:

"Another thing, Brexit did not sunder the union. And that was largely due to determined leadership by Dublin and Brussels. Make no mistake about it. There was always a very real fear that a 'divide and rule strategy' would have worked. But European unity has been remarkably strong" (IT, 31 Jan).

Irish economist John Fitzgerald has expressed scepticism concerning a recent report from *Copenhagen Economics* commissioned by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. The report predicted that the Irish economy could be worse off by between 3 and 7 per cent as a result of Brexit. Fitzgerald considers two aspects of the study to be implausible, those relating to pharmaceutical exports from Ireland to Britain and the response of the agri-food sector. He states:

"Post-Brexit losses in any event are unlikely to be on the scale envisaged in the study. In what is largely a sellers'

market, if the NHS want the drugs made here, they will generally pay the going price, along with any new tariffs.

The study also assumes that the food industry is transfixed by the juggernaut heading its way. The initial effects of Brexit will be very serious for food and agriculture. However, over time, it is reasonable to expect the sector will adapt, offsetting some of its losses. For example, it is likely eventually to shift from producing cheddar for the UK to producing Camembert or some other cheeses for the wider EU market. The

transition will take years and will be costly, but it will happen (IT, 16 Feb).

Fitzgerald concludes his piece by chiding the Department for failing to take account of ESRI research in 2016 which showed that over the next 15 years many foreign multinationals will choose Ireland over the UK, thereby offsetting some of the cost of Brexit for Ireland. In exhorting official Ireland to adopt a more positive approach to Brexit, Fitzgerald gets my vote.

**Dave Alvey**

because we thought they were German every time.

The British Army brought tanks, Bren gun carriers and belt machine guns into a field beside the school and we were shown how everything was operated. At lunch time we began to play war games, the school dividing up into English and Germans. That was odd when I look back for, though this was a Protestant school, WW2 was looked on as their war.

What does all of that do to you. Well, you hope the war won't finish until you are old enough to fight. The end of WW2 was a terrible anti-climax and it was back to football and rounders in the playground. The air raid shelter would be demolished and all the wartime posters were taken from the walls. In the end you learnt war was good and you kept those memories for the rest of your life as the most exciting part of your childhood, despite the sectarianism in a school of 72 Protestant children and 10 Catholic children.

Also, being WW2, most foodstuff were rationed. Living in the countryside there were plenty of eggs to be bought on the black-market.

City people would take the bus out to the countryside to buy eggs and butter. The RUC would be waiting at the city limits to board and search, confiscate and issue Summons. But dried eggs in waxed packets were arriving from the US and dished out in the rations. it seemed odd that ships and their crew were risking being torpedoed with a cargo of dried eggs when NI had plenty, and in the Border areas plenty were available. On the packets was the Stars & Stripes and message about 'help' coming. So maybe it was morale booster that seamen had to pay for with their lives.

I remember a retired RUC man, who lived near my family in Carryduff, County Down during WW2, and was said to have killed two Taigs while on Border Patrol. He did so well, as part of Customs there on the Border, that in his retirement he bought a large house and acted the country gentleman while wearing tweeds and carrying a hawthorn stick. He also bought a nice new car and got around petrol rationing through having the right connections. He became a nice old gentleman, and while we Taig children (my four sisters and me) were on our way to school he'd stop and give us a lift to the very gates. His favourite joke was, if you had a bad cough: *'Bring it up it might be a gold watch'*. Or if you hesitated when talking: *'Cough it up even should it be a row of houses!'* They sure

## ANOTHER DAY ANOTHER SCHOLAR

Guns speak when spoken to precisely.

You bring them to life in order to take life.

They birth in millions when such thoughts are rife,  
a companion where the world burns nicely.

Under a permanent hunter's red moon

the killer acts out a nation's suicide,

drove many brides to Sati when he died.

Wear a uniform and cease being a loon.

The planet creaks with this monster abroad,

the home-alones oil their automatics,

In their darkest dreams they forget their gods,

hair-trigger minds, insults symptomatic.

How the settler still bloodies the prairie,

the native beneath his feet axiomatic.

15 February 2018

## Looking Back

We could be called Jihadi children during WW2 In a school in Clontonacally, County Down. When WW2 started this school was militarised. The teachers became officers. You couldn't speak to them without being spoken to you first.

This was usually the norm then but it became worse when you were constantly told to take you hands out of your pocket and to straighten up. Then it was marching up and down in the playground and keeping in step. Teachers roared at the top of their voices like sergeant-majors to the weekly parade, which involved children, boy and girl, from the age of 5 to 14. There were air raid drills, keeping close to walls, hiding under hedges, fire-drills with fires lit and the pupils having to put them out with stirrup pumps, gasmask drills (you carried your gasmask to school with you everyday or else), huge posters were put on the walls identifying German munitions and booby-traps, RAF fighter planes buzzed the school during a lunch hour and you automatically knew to fall flat on the ground and not move. It was quite a shock

## WELCOME HOME JUST THE SAME

Kitchy plays seed-fiddle on the hill-field,

Shaw farm, Carryduff, the A24.  
(Ceathrú Aodha Dhuib when named long ago)

And the tune he plays is never to yield.

Black Hugh did but will he himself move on.

Horse and plough cut the bible furrows.

The rising rage of Old Testament sorrows.

The shotgun by the harrow, the

work brawn.

And when it happened it wasn't by the gun.

The rich earth as a promissory note.

Grows homes in rows, strides the hill-field by quotes.

There is a different harvest now to come.

The seed-fiddle player has a new song he wrote:

'Black Hugh's mortgage has thirty years to run.'

**Wilson John Haire**  
21st November 2017

don't make them like that anymore. There was life before Gerry ye know.

\*

Paedophilia was quite open in Belfast during the late 1940s and early 1950s. I remember as a 14 year old going into Belfast in the evening with my weekly bus ticket which had one free daily journey which I could use after work in the shipyard. It was mostly to do with hanging around amusement arcades trying to win pennies out of the machine, with a pocket money of 2 shillings that was supposed to last a week. These amusement arcades were full of youth of my own age. They were usually haunted by this strange element of religiously born-again, well-dressed, middle-age men carrying a bible or a hymn book. They would try to get you into conversation and even supply a few pennies for the machines. Being a country boy at the time, I was lucky to mix with the more street-wise Belfast boys in the shipyard who knew all about the paedophiles and the arcades. I did see boys go off with these men.

Going home to catch the bus to Carryduff, you would encounter them again at the back of the Belfast City Hall, standing around with bibles and hymn books, and asking young lads if they were 'saved'. I was myself asked if I was a Christian (I was only a heathen Catholic) by a man carrying a sheaf of papers on which was written 'Sacred Music'. The street led to Alfred Street and then to Ormeau Avenue which was used as a bus station for the country buses. I think these men thought every youth passing was a country naïve young lad. It was like the wildebeest trying to cross a river full of crocodiles. I think, if the RUC questioned these men, they could claim to be trying to 'save souls' and that's why they carried the religious paraphernalia. But the RUC never obviously ever did, for there were never any court cases.

The shipyard also had its predators and I remember one man being sacked only for molesting young teenagers. It was all treated as a joke by the workforce. A lot of the boys made themselves knives on the outside grindstones out of fear. The few known gay workers were no problem as they had outed themselves by their mannerisms. They were well-tolerated and many men joked with them about their sexuality.

I don't know what was going on in the Catholic areas as I only lived in Protestant areas.

**Wilson John Haire**

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

**'Letter submitted to *Irish Times*, 2nd February, but not published**

## **New Irish/British Structure Post-Brexit?**

Can the Government as represented by Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney be trusted to represent Ireland's long term interests inside the European Union at a time of fundamental change?

A report by Denis Staunton ("Simon Coveney says UK too vital not to have role in single market", January 31st) outlines Minister Coveney's plan to create new bilateral structures between Ireland and Britain which will include "an annual meeting of both governments" which could be "prepared for in the preceding weeks and months by teams of officials from the relevant departments or ministries".

Presumably this proposed structure would supersede the current arrangement agreed between Enda Kenny and David Cameron in 2011 whereby a contingent comprised of all senior Irish Government officials meets annually with a contingent of their UK counterparts.

In our view the 2011 arrangement reflected a predisposition that prevailed at the time towards close alignment with Britain. The close alignment with Britain policy, being based on an ahistorical viewpoint, was problematic even before the Brexit vote, but after the referendum result it became a positive hindrance to clear thinking about Ireland's national interests.

The choice facing the Irish State as a result of Brexit has always been stark: Irexit or Europe, one or the other; a half-way house will only lead to incoherence. In the coming debate about the future of the EU it would be preferable if the governmental machine was not encumbered by the sentiment associated with the recent alliance with Britain. It would also be advantageous to jettison the habit of viewing our membership of the EU in purely 'transactional' terms.

Minister Coveney's proposal represents an attempt to remain within the British sphere without leaving the EU and as such is a threat to EU solidarity; on that ground alone it should be rejected.

**Dave Alvey**

*Irish Political Review Group*

## **Bungalow blitz' and rural villages**

Frank McDonald claims that giving planning permission for rural housing undermines the viability of villages and small towns (Opinion & Analysis, February 13th).

Does he not know that the planning authorities have been refusing planning permission for rural housing for the past 15 years, and it has only contributed to the further decline of villages, because it has prevented the older, rural population being replaced by new families, leading to the closure of shops, schools, pubs and churches in villages all over the country? A village lives off its hinterland as well as on its resident population.

There may be a case for restricting one-off houses in scenic locations, but the vast majority of rural areas never see a tourist, or a journalist, and huge tracts of the country are being slowly denuded of population, for no good reason.

There is absolutely no evidence that restricting one-off housing leads to growth in house-building in villages.

The national census figures since 2006 show an unrelieved decline of virtually every village that is not within commuting distance of a large town or city.

If the new National Planning Framework wants to encourage the development of villages, as it aims to do, local authorities must put in place positive incentives to induce people to live in those villages, and stop banning housing in rural areas that would feed those villages.

Some social housing would help, too.

**David Buttimer**

**(Report of letter in *Irish Times*, 15.2.18)**

Gavin Daly claimed in reply to this letter: "the period since 2002 has been the most prolific era of one-off dispersed rural house building in the history of the State with 117,290 (27 per cent) of the national total of 425,840 added... 70 per cent of all one-off house building is between one to five kilometres from an urban settlement" (IT 17.2.18, Mr. Daly claims that nearly all applications for such housing are granted. No reply from Mr. Buttimer was carried).

### PROJECT IRELAND 2040

The Project Ireland "Plan" unveiled in Sligo on Friday 16th February 2018 is very much a political restatement of electioneering promises. Promises made not just in the last previous election but also promises made in other previous elections. The sort of promises that are wishful and, as they say in the USA, "*on my bucket list*". The name too is not propitious because a "Project" is a forward looking idea and to look forward with 2040 vision is to have a severely astigmatic view of the future. To look forward five years is difficult enough but to look forward twenty-two years is, in my opinion, impossible. Admittedly Orwell in his book '*1984*' got many things right but his dates were twenty or thirty years out of kilter. A five-year plan has to be acted on but a twenty year-plan can be put off, stretched out and forgotten. Perhaps the real reason for announcing '*Project Ireland 2040*' at this time is in preparation for a General Election? Surprisingly Taoiseach Varadkar's popularity has increased. Apparently many people feel he has achieved things—exactly what, is not specific but the feel-good feeling is there.

Dublin is promised most by Project Ireland which is because most of the votes are in Dublin. This is not good for Ireland as a whole. While Dublin is a small city by international comparisons, yet Ireland is a small country and Dublin has concentrated too much of the population of Ireland in it. It might make economic sense to reduce development in Dublin and increase development in regions such as Letterkenny, Sligo, Galway, Athlone, Limerick, Cork and Waterford but politics and not economics determine where money will be invested. The TDs in every area got to be elected in the present state of development of their areas and so they actively do not want to change the *status quo*. They do not want to change the conditions under which they were elected.

Voters fail to understand this—the Voters think they are voting for "*one of us*" but as soon as he or she is elected they become "*one of them*". A politician will take up a cause to be elected and then after

the election that cause is to be carefully nursed and maintained so as to be used again in the next election. A good example in the north was Rev. Dr. Ian Paisley who got elected by preaching hate and dissension against Nationalist Catholics in election after election. He did not allow himself to become affable and smiling until the end of his career when he had no more use for hate and dissension. A good case in the south was the late Martin Corry TD Fianna Fail, who got elected time after time on the basis of getting a new bridge built across the River Blackwater at Youghal, Co. Cork. A bridge was very badly needed but it did not get built until the end of Martin Corry's long career as a TD.

And so it is and will be with many of the capital projects listed in Project Ireland 2040.

Consider the National Children's Hospital which has been in the pipeline for twenty years or more already and now again it is trotted out in the new Project Ireland 2040. Sites for the hospital have been changed, various architects have been employed, medical consultants are blamed for the delays and even religious beliefs have been blamed for lack of progress so that the National Children's Hospital can be maintained as a political aspiration to get TDs re-elected into the future. Taoiseach Varadkar stated in Sligo on Friday 16th February 2018 that "*we have the plan; we have the money, now we need to move to implement it*". But on Monday 19th February 2018 there is no report that a contract is signed or a sod turned. We will be waiting for any development on this issue.

And speaking of sod turnings, one of the new projects referred to in Project Ireland 2040 is the proposed Convention Centre for Cork. In 2016, then Taoiseach Enda Kenny was pictured turning the sod for this project on the former Beamish & Crawford site in Cork before the election. We all fell for it. Progress at last! Alas, nothing further happened except that BAM the builders asked for a further State contribution of €10,000,000 of our money. No problem (?) it was approved. But nothing is happening. This just does not stack up. And unknown to us all, at the time of Taoiseach Enda Kenny's sod-turning, and possibly unknown to him also, is that there were no sods on the 'brownfield site'. The sods pictured being turned were brought onto the site for the purpose of the action photograph! Where are they now? The sods, I mean. I mean of course the sods of earth and grass. Surely they can't be turned again whenever work starts?

When Finance Minister Pascal Donohue TD, Fine Gael, was asked where will the money come from he gave a vague but seemingly authoritative answer, stating confidently that it will all be funded from projected growth rates. Unfortunately, he was not pressed for an explanation of what he meant by "*growth*". Growth in population is mentioned several times in Project Ireland 2040, in connection with hospitals, treatment centres, schools and universities, all of which swallow up resources. And so what growth can the Minister be referring to? It most likely is growth in taxation but the Minister perhaps did not like to say that. Why not? Well, this is all about gaining votes and there are no votes in taxation. If we as a people are to grow up we will have to think taxation when a Minister speaks of spending our money.

Take carbon taxes for example. The Project Ireland 2040 proposes to spend €22,000,000,000 of our money on reducing carbon emissions and making our homes and offices greener so as to affect Climate Change. The money for this €22Bn will be extracted from us in carbon taxes. And yet there is no sound scientific evidence whatsoever that our activities affect the climate. Compared with emissions from constant volcanic activity around the world, producing emissions of sulphur, carbon dioxide, and methane, our emissions from trucks, coaches, cars and plane are negligible.

There is serious scientific evidence that enormous climate changes have occurred in the past long before the use of oil and coal by human beings. Why is this evidence being ignored? Because there is no money in it.

It is a good idea to reduce pollution in cities but we need to be more focussed on what pollution we are talking about. In California, it has been found that the air in San Francisco and Los Angeles is slightly more polluted by domestic cleaning sprays, hair sprays, paint and the use of other domestic aerosols than the pollution from cars and trucks! It seems the heat from the sun alters the airborne particles from millions of aerosols and converts them into particles which are very cancerous when breathed by humans. On the other hand, the pollution in Beijing is primarily caused when sand blows in westerly winds from the Gobi desert. In Kuala Lumpur, and in Singapore, the pollution is mainly smoke from the clearance of forests by burning.

In Ireland, the production of electricity

**Concluded on page 29, column 2**

## OPEN LETTER continued

out Blow" is now the cry of you who once preached the gospel of the Prince of Peace, the glad tidings of great joy of the Poor Man of Nazareth. You once had your disciples, simple, honest men who walked in the fear of God, led by your teachings. To-day these followers of your Christian doctrines of self-sacrifice, of abstinence from blood, are herded by your orders with criminals—vile criminals, perhaps, but not with your foulness. You have betrayed your God and persecuted His children.

Pledged by your latest word to battle—by proxy, of course—for the liberties of small nationalities, you have joined with the confessed and convicted peculator George, the German Milner, with Bloody Balfour, and all the vileness that has risen like scum to the top in mud-minded England stirred by the storm of war, and with them you would enrol our manhood to fight the battles of your war-lords.

Before the International we denounce you, traitors to our common class, false to your own people, accomplices in the oppression of the Irish race. Your ranks are not redeemed by one honest figure. No voice of sincerity and truth speaks from your midst.

But we have no hate for you. A man may kill a louse—he cannot hate it.

COLKITTO.

**CATHAL O'SHANNON** (1889-1969). Born Co. Antrim. Brought up in Derry city. He joined the Gaelic League where he met Sean Mac Diarmada and was sworn in as a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. At James Connolly's request in 1912, he joined the staff of the Irish Transport and General Worker's Union in Belfast. In Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, on Easter Saturday, 1916, he mobilised 100 volunteers but, without orders, they dispersed. In 1917, he became Editor of *The Voice of Labour*. He unsuccessfully urged that the Labour Party should contest the General Election of 1918. He was an Irish delegate to the *Socialist International* Conference held in Berne, Switzerland in 1919. In 1920 the defunct Second International was reorganised.

O'Shannon was also a founder member of the Socialist Party of Ireland from which

he was expelled along with William O' Brien, General Secretary of the ITGWU after it had been taken over by Roderic Connolly (James Connolly's son) late in 1921.

He was imprisoned in England and Wales. In 1922, he was elected to the Dail for Louth-Meath as a Labour Party candidate—lost his seat a year later. In 1941, he became Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and subsequently to the ITGWU-led breakaway Congress of Irish Unions. He was appointed to the Labour Court in 1946 and served for 23 years.

**Connolly and German Socialism** by Brendan Clifford. 80 pp. ISBN 0 85034 106X.A.B. 2004. **£5. £4.**

**The Labour Opposition of Northern Ireland.** Complete reprint of Northern Ireland's first Labour newspaper, 1925-26. Introduced by Joe Keenan. 212 p.p. Illustrated, ISBN 0 85034 054 3. AB & South Belfast Constituency Labour Party. 1992. **£20. £15.**

## Unveiling of a centenary monument to Thomas Corkie Walsh

A Chairde,

I wonder if you can let people know about an event we are organising for Sunday, March 4th next at 1pm. We are unveiling a centenary monument to Thomas Corkie Walsh, a Mason from Cork who fought in the 1916 rising with James Connolly's Citizen Army. He died in 1918 and was the brother-in-law of Thomas Mac Curtain and is buried in St Finbarr's Cemetery.

They will be a fascinating historical talk on the *Life and Times of Thomas Corkie Walsh* in the Carpenter's Hall, 6 Father Mathew Quay, Centre, on Saturday, 3rd March next at 8pm.

For more information contact:

**Jim Fahy, Chairperson, Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers Historical Society; Historian, Writer, Lecturer, Public Speaker.**

Contacts: 085- 1151774 / [james.fahy@hotmail.com](mailto:james.fahy@hotmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Does  
It**

**Up**

**Stack**

**?**

**From page 28**

generated from wind, wave, solar and biomass generators is not as clean as it looks. First of all, all of these methods require production of enormous quantities of concrete and steel to make the generators. Biomass for electricity generation is no different from burning coal or oil. To create the biomass, huge engines are required to shred timber, bushes and waste wood, etc. and these are usually powered by fuel oil. Generation by wind, solar or

waves will depend on the weather and will be spasmodic and will require the back-up by oil or coal generators for continuity.

An electrically-powered car is good for the climate in cities, but it is not green because the electricity has to be generated elsewhere and the generation and transmissions of electricity is necessarily a dirty polluting business. It does not stack up for the State to be proposing to spend £22Bn of our money on reducing climate change.

Maybe it will never happen. Some of what is in Project Ireland 2040 is already happening and more may be done in the future but much of it will never happen or will not happen in the way it is presented to us now.

**Michael Stack ©**



**LABOUR**

# Comment

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IRISH LABOUR PARTY PUBLICATIONS

## The VOICE OF LABOUR

Edited by CATHAL O'SHANNON

NEW SERIES. Vol. 1, No. 22.

APRIL, 1918. ONE PENNY

### We Will Not Have Conscription

Open Letter to the English Labour Party.

To the Right Honourable and Honourable Gentlemen,

But for the malign fate that links our nations and the unfortunate fact that you stand before the world as representatives of and types of the English working class, we would treat with that indifference you have always exhibited towards Irish Labour, whose very existence you have ignored, for when you have sought to learn aught of Ireland, you have made your enquiries of our governors and masters.

We are of the workers, labouring in harmony with the International to awaken our fellow-countrymen to a consciousness of the destiny of our class. We advocate industrial solidarity and we are answered with jeers: "*What about Havelock Wilson and 'Captain Tupper?'*" We urge independent social action by Labour and our fellow-workers point in scorn to the names of Barnes and Hodge.

Everywhere your puerilities, your follies, your servilities, and your crimes are used to libel Labour in a country that has been served by James Hope and James Connolly, which has given to England the earliest pioneers of Labour's freedom. Everywhere we must repudiate you and demonstrate your falsity to Labour, Democracy and Internationalism.

Largely by the zeal and practical political instincts of our fellow-countrymen you were created as a political force, and their unselfish labours helped you to Westminster, pledged publicly as men of honour and the trustees of your class to maintain complete independence of all capitalist parties.

You sold your independence and barter the people's trust for money, for place, and for patronage. Shackleton and Bell are but two of your leaders whose treason has raised them above that fear of to-morrow and its poverty which haunts our class. One Irishman, Willie Walker, your patronage bought, as in Britain it bought not a few "*whose minds were fixed on pelf and place*".

When two lives were sacrificed in Belfast in August, 1907, we heard no voice of protest from your benches in the House. We were not surprised at your silence. But Llanelly, Tonyandy and Liverpool, which paid their pence to make you great, passed into history with your silent approval. But when an English statesman from the green benches of "*the finest club in Europe*", announced the execution of men who had dared all for

land and liberty in the streets of Dublin, your voices swelled the chorus of "*Loud cheers*".

And members of your party served England and Capitalism in the Government that sent James Connolly to his death. Irish Labour can never acquit of that betrayal your leader, Henderson, who shares with Asquith and George the guilt of a martyr's blood.

You were the foremost battalion of the 'workers' army fighting for industrial democracy, seeking to escape the shackles of age-long slavery, but the weapon of political power they forged for you to wield, you turned upon the workers of England.

When the blight of war fell upon Europe you proclaimed a truce of God between Capital and Labour, a truce kept by your dupes until they awoke to the fraud of the master class and your deception. Their incipient revolts you strangled, their new leaders you penned in prison-houses, and you forged new laws—Defence of the Realm Acts, Munitions of War Acts, Military Service Acts, National Service Acts, aye, even Regulation 40d to punish the victims of your war lust—to bind in slavery the masses who had looked to you for deliverance.

You sneaked into the International with pledges of loyalty to your class and ours in its world-wide struggle for emancipation.

"*War to the Bitter End*", to the "*Knock-*

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