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Ireland: A Painful Re-Awakening?

In December 1918, when Britain had won its Great War for Democracy and the Rights of Small Nations, the Irish nation elected a party whose purpose was to establish independent government in Ireland. The British Parliament took no heed of the fact that the Irish democracy rejected British sovereignty over Ireland. When the Irish democracy set up an independent Government in Ireland, the British democracy—the British Parliament—took no heed of that either.

Without giving any reason why the great principle of national self-determination, which had been repeatedly asserted to be what Britain made war for, was not applicable to Ireland, the British democracy supported the British Government when it ignored the Election result in Ireland, and supported it when it tried to suppress the independent Government that was established in Ireland.

This is an awkward fact for the ideologists of British democracy in Ireland. It is a fact that is suppressed in thought in Britain itself. Democracy in its homeland remembers and forgets entirely in the service of its sense of self-esteem. And it has a deeply ingrained state of mind for thinking/not thinking about Ireland. It is spontaneously duplicitous, its duplicity having deep roots in centuries of casuistic Protestant reasoning about Catholicism. It is instinct born of fundamentalist theology.

Oxbridge-tutored Ireland did its best over the past generation to feel its way into this state of mind. But what now comes naturally in England could only develop in Ireland at the cost of self-destruction in the capacity for thought. And now it has been seriously traumatised by Brexit.

The standard way of excusing British democracy from responsibility for the war that came about when Westminster ignored the Election result in Ireland and supported the suppression of the Government based on that Election result was laid down by Professor

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Solloghobeg *again and again and again.....*

Please pardon the pun but the Solloghobeg ambush has been done to death as an event in the War of Independence. The message has been that this started the War of Independence. However, anyone who reads any number of BMH Witness statements will know that this was the continuation and not the beginning of anything to do with the War. See in particular the Witness Statement of Tom McEllistrim in Kerry who can legitimately claim (though he never did) to have launched the first serious action at Gortalea RIC barracks on 13 April 1918.

This action and its consequences were summarised in the *Irish Independent*:

"But in fact the first attacks on the RIC involving fatalities had begun in Kerry on April 13 the previous year, with an arms raid by Ballymacelligott volunteers on nearby Gortalea Barracks. In this instance it was the two RIC men, Sergeant Boyle and Constable Fallon, who

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January Summary

Brexit: now a crisis of British democracy

The major Brexit development since the Christmas break was the resounding defeat in the British House of Commons on January 15th of the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated between London and Brussels. The Bill was defeated because from the Tory ranks over 80 Brexiteers and over 30 "passionate Remainers" voted

against the Government. The vote against was higher than expected because of the action of the Remainers. As a result of the defeat the British political system is now convulsed and it remains impossible to predict whether No Deal, No Brexit or a last minute compromise that would allow a deal to be passed will be the final

outcome.

Effectively there is now a constitutional crisis in Britain. In the circumstances the Conservative Government is holding up well.

WESTMINSTER MANOEUVRES

There were a number of developments in the run-up to the vote which the May Government may have welcomed because they underlined the dangers of Brexit unravelling if the deal was rejected. In the event these had no effect on the phalanx of 80 plus Brexiteers in her party and in

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

The Irish Constabulary:

The Oath

T. Desmond Williams who shaped UCD in accordance with Cambridge ideals.

It was given expression in the Thomas Davis lectures in the 1950s. It was that the elected Irish Government just couldn't wait for Britain to start the war and started it itself before Britain had time to do anything.

In mid-January a hundred years ago a political party that had won three-quarters of the Irish seats in the British General Election of December 1918 assembled in Dublin, declared itself the Irish Parliament, asserted Irish national independence, and established an Irish Government to act independently of the British Government.

These actions were entirely in accordance with its Election programme, and with the principle of the right of small nations to self-determination which the British State, so it was said, had established as a universal right by means of a World War that cost about 20 million lives.

At the same time a handful of aspirant republicans, assuming that war with England would continue, set about equipping themselves for it, by robbing a small quantity of gelignite from quarry-owners, killing the two armed British policemen who were protecting it.

Centenary comment, in an Ireland which in all its authoritative institutions have become not only post-nationalist but anti-nationalist, has said little about the Dail, and has said nothing about the British response to the loss of the Election in Ireland, but has been lavish in condemnation of the gelignite robbery in Soloheadbeg. The one exception is a comment by an American Jesuit, Fr. Seamus Murphy, who condemns both the Dail and the robbery (Irish Times 15.1.19).

For the purpose of condemnation it said that the policemen were Irish. Maybe they were in a racial sense, if there is such a thing as an Irish race. What they were professionally was members of a British State force.

The RIC was not organised on the lines of the English County Constabulary. It was drawn from a damaged people—a people which at the time of its establishment was assumed by the British administration to be broken. It was centrally organised and was directed by the Secretary of State in Dublin Castle. It was trained to be an alien elite with its own sense of well-being. Its function was to spy on the people and report on their moods, while remaining itself superior to

those moods. Its world was the Empire, and it remained true to that world in defiance of the remarkable national development that occurred amongst the populace.

A recent British academic has attributed the rise of a national movement amongst the Irish people to a cut-back in the funding of the police in Ireland in the late 19th century. When there is a call for it in the British interest, the conscientious British academic can glamourise a particular nationalism as elemental—as heroic, romantic and *free*—but his systematic understanding is that it is an aberration made possible by insufficient administration.

Fr. Murphy SJ says that the Soloheadbeg group "*did not see themselves as answerable to any higher authority (such as the Dail)*". Well, the Dail did not exist as they planned their ambush. And the Provisional Government of 1916 had been killed by the British Government, its sole survivor being in prison.

And all that can be said of the British Government as a "*higher authority*" in Ireland to which Dan Breen might have considered himself answerable, is that not even the Parliamentary Party was loyal to it any longer. It had sacrificed thousands of Irishmen to the British cause in order to save civilisation from the Germans, but had refused the small final sacrifice of conscription in the emergency of 1918. When refusing this final sacrifice, it did not admit in words that the British war on Germany had not been about the saving of civilisation at all. But its action made it clear that it did not believe what it had been saying on the recruiting platforms for four years.

Redmondism walked out of Parliament in 1918, and it became Dillonism. And Dillonism had known very well, all along, that the British account of the War was false.

It is impossible to tell what Redmond thought. His mental medium was one of profound fog, and fragments of English upper-class rhetoric emerged from it to meet the occasion, without being accompanied by anything coherent enough to be called thought. Dr. Muldowney's researches into Redmond's relations with the Ballybricken Pig Deals have revealed the man in all his duplicity and obscurity.

Redmond might have had Home Rule in the 26 Counties in the Summer of 1916. Under the shock of the Rising, Lloyd George laid it on for him. If he had taken it, there would have been a "*higher authority*" in being which Dan Breen might

have accepted or rejected. But he refused to take it unless there was a guarantee that the Six Counties would come in at the end of the War, whether the Ulster Unionists liked it or not.

It is said in support of him by his idolaters—he has no *biographers*—that Joe Devlin, the Belfast Nationalist leader, would not let him accept 26 County Home Rule. In August 1914 he had committed the Home Rule movement to the British War without consulting Devlin or anybody else. In 1916 he chose to hide behind Devlin, leaving "*Home Rule-in-the-Statute-Book*" without any semblance of Irish national administration on the ground.

Between 1910 and 1914 Redmond drove the Home Rule issue to the point of Partition. It was against his policies that the Ulster Volunteer Force was organised. After the Curragh Mutiny of the Spring of 1914 Partition became as much of a certainty as anything ever is in politics. But Redmond refused to bring about what he had made inevitable, therefore he refused Home Rule in 1916—when it would not have been accompanied by the Six County Protestant regime added in 1920.

The net outcome of Redmond's leadership is that it left nationalist Ireland leaderless in 1918.

The country was politically leaderless in 1918, and was effectively under British military rule. Of course it had been effectively under British military rule ever since 1691, but the absence of any intermediary body between the Army of the Government and the populace had never before been as plain as in 1918.

The Home Rule Party had, for about forty years, served as a protest party against British rule and as a representative party of British rule. It was two-faced. It was *sincerely* two-faced, as it had to be in order to be functional. And an anonymous pamphlet published in Dublin at some point during 1918, *Is The Irish Party Nationalist?*, said it was time for the duplicity to stop:

"Let us call things by their names. The Irish Party, after an electioneering orgy of sedition and treason, swarms over to London to swear fidelity and true allegiance to England... 'Ireland has given away her case by sending members to the British Parliament', declared Count Beust, the great statesman who in 1867 arranged the agreement between Austria and Hungary. 'By doing so she acknowledges the right of the British Parliament. If Hungary had acted as Ireland acts she would not have regained her independence'. On the face of it,

1966 Recalled!

I remember the 50th Anniversary of the 1916 Rising when, for instance, the President of India recalled studying in Dublin in 1916, British newspapers praised the insurgents, the officer who arrested Dev was Dev's guest, and a veteran Bolshevik had a piece in the *Irish Times* recalling how his comrades had admired them.

There seems to be nothing of that spirit abroad nor at home for the Centenary of Dail Eireann.

The Smotherer of Parliaments does not seem to have sent to have sent Maternal Greetings, nor Socialist parties fraternal ones.

Sad, sad sad.

Donal Kennedy

The Levant

Optimistic words from Elijah Magnier:

"Indeed the Levant is returning to the centre of Middle East and world attention in a stronger position than in 2011. Syria has advanced precision missiles that can hit any building in Israel. Assad also has an air defence system he would have never dreamed of before 2011 thanks to Israel's continuous violation of its airspace and its defiance of Russian authority. Hezbollah has constructed bases for its long and medium range precision missiles in the mountains and has created a bond with Syria that it could never have established if not for the war. Iran has established a strategic brotherhood with Syria thanks to its role in defeating the regime change plan. NATO's support for the growth of ISIS has created a bond between Syria and Iraq that no Muslim or Baathist link could ever have created: Iraq has a "carte blanche" to bomb ISIS locations in Syria without the consent of the Syrian leadership, and the Iraqi security forces can walk into Syria anytime they see fit to fight ISIS. The anti-Israel axis has never been stronger than it is today. That is the result of 2011-2018 war imposed on Syria" (quoted in <https://www.moonofalabama.org/2019/01/the-war-on-syria-strengthened-the-anti-zionist-resistance.html>)

Peter Brooke

Beust is right, he is only voicing the verdict of common honesty. But Beust did not know that between the Irish Nation and Westminster there was an intermediary body, a Party neither Irish nor English, a bastard compromise between independence and servitude. Ireland elected them because they spoke like Irishmen, England welcomed them because they acted and swore like Englishmen; they had the voice indeed of Jacob, but the hands of Esau. For their English treachery we are not responsible. The time has come, in fact, when as a nation we much repudiate them and cast them out—I speak of the system rather than the men..."

But the men had been shaped to the system that they operated. Their own electioneering words in Ireland could be played back to them by the anonymous author, but all that the handful of them that survived the General Election could do was return to Westminster again, and pledge allegiance to the Crown again, even as the Crown was trying to snuff out the independent Parliament that met in Ireland.

There was no "*higher authority*" in Ireland on 27th January 1919—unless Fr. Murphy has in mind the authority of the theological concept of Natural Law, which is not law at all in any actual sense. British authority was comprehensively invalidated by the defeat of the Party that pledged allegiance to it. All that had been said in justification of the Wars against Germany and Turkey, for democracy and national self-determination, invalidated British authority in Ireland in January 1919.

The Sinn Fein Party had been given an electoral mandate to govern but had not yet established a Government.

The IRB was regenerating itself after the disruption of 1916. It did not in January 1919, or at any subsequent time, recognise the elected Dail as the sovereign national authority.

The Sinn Fein Party that was elected to establish independent Irish government had nothing whatever to do with the armed robbery of gelignite at Soloheadbeg. That was an IRB operation.

The Dail was intent on putting British democracy—and the much advertised democracy of the League of Nations, to the test. It did not declare war on anybody. What it said at its founding meeting was that independent Irish government was being established within a state of war. The country was under British occupation, and under British military rule as far as Whitehall wished it to be.

The Sinn Fein election Manifesto asserted the right to use "*any and every means*" to secure independence. The *Irish Times* (Fintan O'Toole, Jan 12) sees this as "*a deliberately slippery term*". We would have thought it was crystal clear. It was an assertion of the right to use whatever means were found to be necessary.

But, O'Toole says, the Manifesto "*specified only the peaceful ones*". And why, at the end of the Great War for democracy and the rights of nations, should it not have emphasised peaceful methods? Should they have declared in advance that the League of Nations would be all humbug, not worth putting to the test?

O'Toole says the Soloheadbeg escapade looks like a coup "*not against British rule but against those in Sinn Fein who favoured a nonviolent path to Irish independence*". Who were those in Sinn Fein who favoured a violent path if a non-violent one was available?

The great questions were whether the first democratically-elected British Parliament would concede Irish independence to a mere vote of the Irish electorate, and whether, if it refused, the League of Nations would take up the cause of the Irish democracy against Britain.

The "*nonviolent path to Irish independence*" proved not to be available. Democratised Westminster held Irish independence out of the question, just as aristocratic Westminster had done. That is the embarrassing fact which the well-heeled propagandists of the British newspaper do not care to address. So they write about Soloheadbeg instead—half a dozen articles in the *Irish Times* and its recent acquisition, the *Irish* (formerly *Cork Examiner*).

The suggestion is that Dan Breen hijacked history by making war on Britain and closing off the non-violent path. That is not said, but what other point can there be to all those jabbering articles than to suggest it?

It is doubtful that Soloheadbeg had any influence at all on the course of things. And "*Dan Breen's Book*", as it was called, was certainly not the book of the War. It

was Dan Breen's high-spirited account of his many escapades.

If there is a book of the War of Independence, it was Tom Barry's. And *Guerrilla Days In Ireland* opens in the British Army in Mesopotamia.

The notion that, when the Dail met in January 1919 it declared war on Britain, was put into circulation about half a century ago under the auspices of Desmond Williams, a British spy who was made Professor of History at University College, Dublin. Williams established the intellectual dominance of Cambridge University over UCD. In 1963-4 he appointed a British academic, C.L. Mowat, to deliver a Thomas Davis Lecture on Radio Eireann. Mowat said that, when the Dail met in January 1919, it declared war on Britain:

"the Irish Nationalist Party virtually disappeared in the general election of December 1918 and... the successful Sinn Fein candidates, constituting themselves the Dail Eireann, declared war on Great Britain". (This will be found in *The Irish Struggle 1916-26*, edited by Williams.)

The Dail did not declare war on Britain. And the British Government took no account whatever of the fact that its electoral base in Nationalist Ireland, the Home Rule Party, had been swept away by the Irish electorate.

The first democratically elected British Parliament met on 12th February 1919. A close English observer described it as consisting largely of "*hard-faced men who looked as though they had done well out of the War*".

The following sentence was put in the King's Speech at the opening of the Parliament:

"The position in Ireland causes Me great anxiety, but I earnestly hope that conditions may soon sufficiently improve to make it possible to provide a durable settlement of this difficult problem..."

Joseph Devlin, the Belfast Nationalist leader, who held his seat by his own efforts—others held their when Sinn Fein stood down to avert an electoral split that would let a Unionist take the seat—said:

"I have risen for the purpose of asking the Prime Minister, if he were here, or the Leader of the House, if he were here, or the Chief Secretary for Ireland, if he were here, or any responsible Minister, high or low, great or small: What is the meaning of this passage in the King's Speech?"

He reads the sentence, and continues:

"That is a very enigmatical sentence. It is characteristically Lloyd Georgian. Why was that paragraph put in the speech of

the King, unless we had some explanation of it from the Prime Minister? I waited here and listened to his reply to the two rather meek and humble speeches from the two leaders of the Opposition [Asquith Liberals and Labour]. I waited here and listened with interest to get some explanation as to what that passage meant. I wanted to know from him what is the position in Ireland, what is the Government in Ireland, what is going on in Ireland, and what do you propose to do with Ireland."

There was no answer.

Fr. Murphy SJ takes the 1912 Home Rule Bill as having "*enacted a constitutional revolution*", after which "*the primary historic project... in Ireland shifted to the problem of building a political community that could govern itself*". That would certainly have been the case if the Bill had gone on to be an Act and had established a devolved structure of democratic government in Ireland.

But "*Home Rule*" never happened. It never came close to happening. What happened was that the Opposition Party at Westminster, which was equal in size to the Governing Party, declared that a Home Rule Act carried with a majority supplied by the Irish Party—which had always refused to take part in the basic constitutional business of governing the state—would be unconstitutional. To prevent the implementation of a Home Rule Act, it supported the raising of a Volunteer Army in Protestant Ulster, and it supported the officers of the Army of the State when they said they would resign their commissions, rather than obey an order to impose a Home Rule Government in Ulster.

The Lords Veto had been abolished, but Home Rule was dead in 1914 than it had ever been under the Lords Veto. And, while Home Rulers might shout "*Treason*", there was no way that His Majesty's Opposition could be prosecuted for treason by His Majesty's Government. The Government might have made war on the Opposition but could not have put it on trial.

Fr. Murphy SJ says that Redmond and Dillon "*started to talk to the Unionists*" in 1914, "*But their delicate bridge-building was swept away by the first World War*".

There was no Redmondite bridge-building. There was fundamentalist confrontation to the bitter end.

The confrontation was not merely Irish. The two major parties of the state were pitted against each other in it, and their conflict was getting completely out of hand. And it seems very much as if the opportunity to make war on Germany was seized with relief as a way out of the domestic conflict.

Fr. Murphy then proceeds to construct the fantasy of an Ireland in which there was a Nationalist Establishment. But the whole problem—the glaringly obvious problem—was that in 1918-19, before the Election no less than after, there was no semblance of a National Establishment in Ireland. Britain had allowed none to be established. There was no structure of national authority in Ireland, partitioned or unpartitioned. Redmond had disappeared, "leaving not a wrack behind".

But Fr. Murphy SJ insists that Soloheadbeg set off "three civil conflicts", one of which was "Sinn Fein and the IRA vs a nationalist "establishment" of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the RIC".

If there had been anything remotely resembling a Home Rule/RIC national structure in Ireland, there would have been no Easter Rising, no Republican Dail, no War of Independence.

We may return to Fr. Murphy SJ. Meantime we will refresh our minds from that acute Catholic critique of the Jesuits, Pascal's *Provincial Letters*.

In his traumatised Anglophile recoil from Brexit, Fintan O'Toole has come to see the history of Britain as rubbish. It is "zombie history", he revealed in his *Irish Times* column of January 15th:

"Brexit is self-contradictory in its idea of history. On the one side it proposes a revolutionary break with the past. On the other, the word that conjured it into being was 'back'... It is full, not just of nostalgia, but of pseudo-history. It is an old curiosity shop of false antiques: the Dunkirk spirit, the Blitz spirit, Agincourt, Henry VIII, Winston Churchill, the Spanish Armada".

O'Toole, in the service of British ideology, has now been doing his bit to denigrate Irish history, trivialise it, reduce it to a sham. That is what the British presence in the world requires. And now O'Toole finds himself face to face with the emptiness of the Irish history which he has been helping to bring about with great profit to himself. Must he now live in the emptiness which he created.

England depends on him not at all. His service to it was in Ireland. England has now abandoned him and he calls it names. It will not even notice the names that he calls it. It will continue to live in its own history, layer upon layer of it.

O'Toole never showed the least interest in the circumstances of the British State in the Six Counties, in which there has been indeed a considerable amount of fakery. And now he emits this ignorant outburst:

"Northern Ireland is a pre-existing condition of the British state. It is just as much British history as Agincourt and Dunkirk—and, right now, much more so. And it exerts a gravitational pull that cannot be escaped... The circumstances in which the history of these islands is being made include both the 45 years of common membership of Europe and 30 years of the Troubles".

Northern Ireland is an undemocratically governed region of the democratic British state. The Six Counties were excluded from the democracy of the British state in 1921, in the process of being retained within it. They were cut off from the powerful gravitational pull of the party-political democracy of the British state, and confined in a political hot-house in which the two communities had nothing to do but grate on each other.

And O'Toole's eagle eye never noticed it. It is selective in what it sees, and it does not see what it would be inexpedient to notice.

As for the 45 years of common membership of Europe—Britain spent at least 35 of those years working within Europe to curb its development—a thing which even John Bruton saw and which has now been blurted out by former Irish Ambassador to Europe, 1985-91, John Campbell:

When Lloyd Met Michael

He said:

Sign here.

What!

Sign here, do I make myself clear?

Sign, you'll soon adapt.

Sign now.

Are you in a hurry?

Do I look like someone who crows!

Just sign, don't worry,

we're fellow Celts.

Of course, you're Welsh, I'm Irish,

you have the guns, I stand here in my pelt.

Sign or perish.

What do you mean by that?

A most terrible war.

Say that again.

It will occur.

Pick up the pen.

He signed.

But there did come a most terrible war and England's Irish problem went into decline with perpetual arguments about what it was for.

Well, at least those who died didn't have to do it Boer-style in a British concentration camp

through starvation, disease, beatings and loss of pride.

Twas better to be blown up tied to a landmine in Ireland's damp.

Wilson John Haire

23.1.2019

LEST WE FORGET (2)

Detailed list of the Acts of Aggression committed against the Irish people by the British military forces in Ireland during the short period of the visit of the Irish-American Peace Delegation, which extended from May 2nd to May 12th, 1919

N.B. In order not to disclose the real methods by which Ireland is held in subjection the English commanders in Ireland held their forces in some restraint during the period mentioned. The following list, therefore, though it may surprise foreign peoples is not fully indicative of the tyranny which is practised from day to day upon the people of Ireland.

| SUMMARY | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|
| <u>Arrests</u> | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 9 |
| <u>Civilians Court-martialled</u> | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | 9 |
| <u>Sentences</u> | - | 7 | - | - | 10 | 3 | 5 | 5 | - | 30 |
| <u>Deportations</u> | - | 10 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11 |
| <u>Armed assaults on Civilians</u> | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 5 |
| <u>Raids on houses</u> | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 6 |
| <u>Meetings suppressed</u> | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 4 |
| <u>Newspaper suppressed</u> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| <u>Hostile acts each day</u> | 3 | 18 | 8 | 3 | 11 | 7 | 16 | 7 | 2 | 75 |

As reports from the country were not to hand at the time of the departure of the Delegation the hostile acts for Monday, May 12th. do not appear in these lists.

The Peace Delegation left Paris for Ireland on FRIDAY MAY 2nd, 1919

COURTSMARTIAL

Thomas Clifford for failing to close his shop when ordered by British military to do so was tried by Courtmartial and sentenced to 56 days with hard labour.

William Duggan charged with having in his possession documents "which if published might cause disaffection" was tried by Courtmartial and sentenced to one year's imprisonment with hard labour.

ARRESTS

Mr. Pierce Beasley, Member of Irish Parliament for East Kerry was arrested and removed to Mountjoy Prison, Dublin on a charge of using "seditious language".

The Peace Delegation arrived in Ireland on SATURDAY MAY 3rd, 1919

SENTENCES

Six men fined for being in Westport Town without permission from the English Military Authorities who hold the town. Fine of ten shillings imposed on Mrs. Elizabeth Flynn, Dublin, for allowing her son of 16 to collect for the Irish Language Movement without a permit from the English Military. The boy was arrested and detained by the Police.

DEPORTATIONS

The news was published that ten political prisoners from Belfast Jail were secretly deported under a military guard to Manchester Jail, in flagrant violation of a solemn undertaking entered into by the English Chief Secretary for Ireland with the Lord Mayor of Dublin. Among those deported were Mr. Austin Stack, Member of Irish Parliament for West Kerry and Mr.

Finian Lynch, Member of Irish parliament for south Kerry. ASSAULTS

Ex-soldiers and sailors broke into and took forcible possession of the Loughrea (Co. Galway) Temperance Society's rooms.

The Peace Delegation visited Belfast City on MONDAY MAY 5th, 1919

On that day these incidents occurred in Ireland:-

COURTSMARTIAL

Patrick Callanan, Killeenmeemore, was courtmartialled for failing to obey an English Military order requiring him to live within five miles of Portadown which town is some hundred miles from his home in Co. Galway. This sentence has not yet been promulgated.

ARRESTS

Hugh Kelly, farmer, Borrisfarney, was arrested and carried under armed guard to Cork City.

RAIDS ON PRIVATE HOUSES

Hugh Kelly's house was, previous to his arrest, raided by armed police and searched.

DEPORTATIONS

Mr. Eamon Bulfin son of Senor Bulfin of The Argentine was arrested and deported under armed guard of English Military to England.

ARMED ASSAULT ON CIVILIANS

English Military raided Fr. Matthew Concert Hall, Athlone, where Mr. Lawrence Ginnell, Member of Irish Parliament for Westmeath, sought to deliver an address to his constituents. The military scattered the occupants of the hall. Subsequently Mr. Ginnell sought to address his constituents in the public street. The English soldiers then fixed bayonets and charged the

unarmed civilians dispersing them in all directions. Several were injured. Others saved their lives by taking refuge in St. Mary's Catholic Church. The military subsequently broke into a private house and turned out the occupants.

**The Peace Delegation visited Maynooth College on
TUESDAY MAY 6th, 1919**

On that day these incidents occurred in Ireland:-

ARRESTS

James McCann, Loughrea, Co. Galway, was arrested on a charge of having firearms in his possession. He was handed over to the English military authorities.

RAIDS ON PRIVATE HOUSE

Armed police raided private house in Grattan St. Cork.

ARMED ASSAULTS ON CIVILIANS

At Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone, police and English soldiers attacked an Irishman wearing a Republican badge. A fight ensued between the two. A crowd which gathered to watch were immediately set upon by the police who drawing their batons attacked the spectators injuring many.

The Peace Delegation visited Cork City on

WEDNESDAY MAY 7th, 1919

On that day these incidents occurred in Ireland:-

ARREST & SENTENCES.

Robert Galloway, Patrick Judge, Peter Cassidy, Andrew Wall, Richard Baird, Joseph McPhilemy, Patrick Carlin sent to jail for one month for "unlawful assembly" (the "unlawful assembly" consisted in participating in a public welcome given at Castledearg to two political prisoners released from Derry Jail.) It was mentioned at the trial that the police had assaulted the crowd of welcomers with batons, injuring many. Jer. O'Dwyer, Ml. Gregan, Patrick Kennedy, were tried at Bansha, Co. Tipperary for collecting for the Irish language Movement without a permit from the English Military; they were found guilty and were fined.

MEETING SUPPRESSED

Irish language Movement meeting in Belfast at which the Rev. Fr. O'Flanagan was to speak was proclaimed by the English by the English Military Authorities.

**The Peace Delegation visited Limerick City on
THURSDAY MAY 8th, 1919**

On that day these incidents occurred in Ireland:-

PLAY BANNED

The English Lord Lieutenant placed a ban on the production of an Irish patriotic play.

MORE MILIARISM FROM IRELAND

A Press Association telegram was published saying: "Fresh troops have been quite recently sent to Ireland in response to serious demand from (English) Government of Ireland".

ARRESTS

John O'Sullivan and Wm. Houlihan both of Listowel were arrested on a charge of an "alleged drilling".

SENTENCES

Lawrence E. Ginnell (nephew of Mr. Ginnell M.P.), Denis Hegarty, Ed. Leonard, were sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment for collecting for the Irish language Movement without a permit from the English Military Authorities.

MEETING SUPPRESSED

A Republican lecture in the Kingstown (Co. Dublin) Town was proclaimed by the military and suppressed by the police.

**The Peace Delegation attended a Public Session of
Dail Eireann on
FRIDAY MAY 9th, 1919**

On that day these incidents occurred in Ireland:-

COURTSMARTIAL

Maurice Keane, Dingle, Co. Kerry, was tried by Courtmartial for having in his possession a document which "if published might lead to disaffection". He was found guilty and was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour. Five men were courtmartialled on a charge made by the police that these men attempted to assault them. The five men were from Klaus, Co. Clare.

RAIDS ON PRIVATE HOUSES

Armed police raided In the middle of the night two private houses at Balbriggan, Co. Dublin. They seized and carried away many private letters.

ARRESTS

Patrick and Mathew Grace, Patrick Tucker, Mathew Horgan were arrested for "unlawful drilling".

SENTENCES

Sean Collins, Irish teacher, Bandon, Co. Cork, was sentenced to one month's imprisonment for collecting for the Irish language Movement without a permit from the English Military Authorities. Patrick Cleary, Elias O'Keefe, Michael O'Dwyer, Wm. Fogarty, were released after three weeks in prison for collecting for the Irish Language Movement without a permit from the English Military Authorities.

ASSAULTS ON CIVILIANS

Military and Police in full war-equipment and in great strength raided and occupied the Dublin Mansion House (Lord Mayor's Official residence) and the adjoining streets clearing the people from them at the point of the bayonet. They remained in possession of the House and the streets and prevented the civic reception arranged for the Irish- American Delegation. It was only after stern protest by the Lord Mayor that they were got to withdraw. The reception was then held. It afterwards transpired that during their occupation of the streets mentioned the troops fired what many people state was a volley. The military authorities state that only one shot was discharged. During the entire incident armoured cars passed up and down in front of the crowds that had gathered and at one point machine guns were brought up and trained upon the people.

**The Peace Delegation were officially received
by the Dublin Corporation on
SATURDAY MAY 10th, 1919**

On that day these incidents occurred in Ireland:-

ARRESTS

Patrick Noonan, farmer's son of Ardvillane, Co. Tipperary, was arrested by armed police. He was brought to Cork City under heavy guard and was there handed over to the English Military.

SENTENCES

At Newtownbarry, Co. Wexford, five men were heavily fined for collecting for the Republican Party without a permit from the English Military Authority.

PAPER SUPPRESSED

Twelve armed police accompanied by a soldierraided the offices of the "Waterford Evening News", dismantled the machinery and suppressed the paper.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

Mr. John Murray, of Ballyshannon, political prisoner In Derry Jail, having fallen seriously ill his friends demanded that as his life was in danger he should be removed from prison to receive expert treatment outside. The request was not granted.

The Peace Delegation visited the West of Ireland on SUNDAY MAY 11th, 1919

On that day these incidents occurred in Ireland:-

RAID AND ARREST

Armed police raided the house of Mr. P. J. Berrills, Dundalk, and searched it. Mr. Berrills was arrested and handed over to the English Military Authorities. He is now detained in the Military Barracks Dundalk.

ARMED ASSAULT ON CIVILIANS

The Peace Delegation sought to visit the town of Westport the ancestral home of Mr. Frank P. Walsh. The town is under stringent Martial Law and is occupied by English Military who without their consent will not allow even food to pass in to the people. English soldiers fully equipped for war blocked the road when the Delegation endeavoured to enter the town, and ignoring the Delegates' diplomatic passports, refused them admission. A crowd which gathered to welcome the Delegates was dispersed by the military at the point of the bayonet. Four armoured cars and a great number of military paraded the streets of Westport during the day. Professor Eoin MacNeill, President of the Gaelic League, Professor of Irish History at the National University and member of the Irish Parliament for National University and Derry City was roughly handled by English troops during this incident.

The following are the Acts of Aggression committed in Ireland by the Military and Police of the Usurping English Government, in the First Week of June, 1919.

| June 1919 | Arrests | Raids | Sentences | Months | Armed Assaults | Suppressions & Proclamations- | Murder | Courts Martial (Exclusive of terms of imprisonment.) | Daily Total. |
|-----------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|----------------|-------------------------------|--------|--|--------------|
| 2nd | 2 | - | 2 | (6) | 1 | 3 | - | - | 8. |
| 3rd | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 5. |
| 4th | 2 | *6 | 1 | (9) | - | - | - | 1 | 10. |
| 5th | 5 | 300 | 5 | (2½) | 2 | - | - | - | 312. |
| 6th | 1 | * | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 5. |
| 7th | 1 | - | 3 | (7) | 1 | - | - | - | 5. |
| Totals | 12 | 308 | 12 | (24½) | 5 | 7 | - | 1 | 345. |

* General Raids: no estimate possible.

MONDAY, JUNE 2nd, 1919

ARRESTS

Thomas Hayes, Cork, a boy of 17, was re-arrested immediately on his release from Belfast jail, where he had served a term of 18 months imprisonment for conduct likely to cause disaffection. His re-arrest was for assaulting policemen who maltreated him in prison.

McCarney of Shercock, Co. Cavan, was arrested on the allegation made by a man named McLoughlin that McCarney raided his house for arms. McLoughlin had identified two other men as having been engaged in the same offence and then admitted his identification to be false, and although he now confessed he was not sure of this identification either, McCarney was put to prison for a week to be charged at the end of that week with the same offence.

SENTENCES

Thomas Hayes, Cork, above referred to, was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment with hard labour for the alleged charge of assault. Martin P. R. O'Connor, Strokestown, was sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour. A Gaelic Sports Meeting was proclaimed at Matehy, Inniscarra and an attempt to hold it was suppressed by military and police who drove the people from the field in which the meeting was about to be held. A national festival was proclaimed at Tullylease, Co. Cork. Police and military occupied the grounds prepared for it. It was held secretly some miles away.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MALTREATED

Mr. L. Ginnell, M.P., was taken handcuffed to Mullingar under a heavy military escort and was tried for unlawful assembly. He denied that the Court had any right under international law to try him but was remanded for a week. The report of the trial was partially suppressed by the English Censor.

TUESDAY, JUNE 3rd, 1919

ARRESTS

Mr. William McNally, Co. Longford, was arrested for a charge not stated. Mr. McNally was six weeks ago shot by the police at Longford and wounded. He was now handed over to the military.

RAIDS

Military and police raided and searched the residence of Mr. M. Raftery, Fairymount, Co. Roscommon. Military and police also raided and searched the house of Mr. McNally above mentioned.

PROCLAMATIONS & SUPPRESSIONS

A Republican meeting was arranged for Middletown, Co. Armagh, was proclaimed by the English authorities. An attempt to hold it was suppressed by military and police. An effort was then made to hold the meeting in the neighbouring county, Monaghan. The armed forces again suppressed this endeavour. Armoured cars and military motor lorries made a display in Westport to frighten the country people from sending food to the town which is badly in need of it. The town is under severe martial law.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4TH, 1919

ARRESTS

Mr. Owen Sweeney and Mr. Michael Dillon were arrested at Athlone. They were charged with "unlawful assembly."

RAIDS

The house of Messrs. Sweeney and Dillon and several other houses in the district were raided by the police and military.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MALTREATED

Mr. Lawrence Ginnell, M.P. was again roughly handled by the police at the continuation of his trial.

SENTENCES

Mr. John Walsh, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, was sentenced by courtmartial to six months imprisonment with hard labour for "having taken part in movements of a military nature". (Drilling.)

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

Thomas Hayes, aged 17, re-arrested after serving a term of 12 months imprisonment and now sentenced to a further three months is seriously ill in Belfast Jail. He has not been removed from the prison.

MILITARISM

A big number of tanks, field guns and troops were landed at Dublin.

THURSDAY, JUNE 5th, 1919

ARRESTS

Misses Bridget Gleeson, Peggy Cahill, Kate Breen, Elizabeth Foley and Henrietta Woods of Killarney were arrested by military and police in Killarney, who raided their houses and took the girls to the police barracks in a military motor wagon (see sentences).

RAIDS

Strong forces of military and police gave a violent exhibition of wholesale militarism in North and South Tipperary and East Limerick. Many motor Lorries filled with troops scoured the country raiding every house in several wide spread districts. The total number of houses raided is not given, but from the districts in which the press says that "there was scarcely a house that was not searched" the total of 300 seems a safe estimate.

SENTENCES

The five girls mentioned above were each sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment for collecting money for the Irish Self-Determination Fund without a permit from the English military.

ASSAULTS

Military charged with bayonet a crowd that gathered outside the Killarney Courthouse to express their indignation at the imprisonment of the five girls previously mentioned. In the Thurles District many people were held up on the roads by armed English military.

MILITARISM

A troop ship arrived at the North Wall, Dublin, with the Scottish rifles on board. These are now added to the vast military force quartered upon Ireland. A Press announcement says that the Gordon Highlanders are to be shipped to Ireland at once. The English official explanation is that Ireland "Is very suitable for training of troops."

FRIDAY, JUNE 6th, 1919

ARRESTS

Patrick Murray of Dublin was arrested in that city. No charge has been brought against him. Warrants were issued for the arrest of six men on charge of collecting for the Irish Self-Determination Fund.

SENTENCES

Immediately on his release from prison where he had served a term of two months for disobeying an order by the English Military requiring him to live outside Munster and certain parts of Leister, Professor S. Fay of Tipperary was again ordered out of these districts. Professor Fay's house is in the heart of Munster.

RAIDS

Dundalk, a town of some 13,000 inhabitants, was surrounded by military and held as an occupied town. People in the town and coming to it were held up and put through an examination. One man who had no knowledge of the occupation of the town (of which no warning whatever was given) was shot as he drove into it in the ordinary course of his business as a Commercial Traveller. Although he was seriously wounded the car in which he was being hurried to hospital was twice stopped by the military inside the town. The military erected barricades across the streets and raided and searched the houses of many prominent townsmen.

SUPPRESSIONS

A Republican meeting at Bray, Co. Wicklow, was proclaimed by the English authorities. A strong force of police occupied the place of meeting. An effort made to hold it nearby was abandoned under a police threat to attack those who took part in it. A Dublin Concert to collect funds for a Monument to James Connolly, executed — when wounded — after the Rising of 1916, was proclaimed by the English authorities. Sufficient warning was not given and many gathered to attend the Concert. These, a strong force of police dispersed, roughly handling a number of young men. Revolvers were drawn on both sides, and four police and two civilians were wounded. One girl, 80 years of age, was aimed at and shot by a police sergeant.

Mr. W. J. McCann, formerly Inspector of U.S. Military Police and the Philippines, was an eye-witness of this occurrence said (in a press interview which was suppressed by the Censor) "The action of the police in firing upon the crowd was quite unjustifiable."

The Concert was held semi-secretly elsewhere.

SATURDAY, JUNE 7th, 1919

ARRESTS

Dr. T. F. Higgins, Medical officer of the Maryborough Dispensary district, was arrested on a charge of refusing to admit the police to a language movement concert. He was handed over to the military authorities.

SENTENCES

Mr. J. J. Clancy, Member of Parliament for North Sligo, was brought from Sligo Gaol, and at Dromore West was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour to commence at the termination of the sentence he is now serving. This second sentence was imposed on a charge of "unlawful assembly".

Mr. A. H. Anderson, Co. Wicklow, was sent to gaol for two months for "unlawful assembly".

ARMED ASSAULTS

John Harold, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow was savagely set upon by two policemen and beaten into unconsciousness. ■

And indeed for a while he was their leader, from 1933-'34, but by then even that party could see the General as just too incendiary a figure to remain on as leader, but he could still be a very effective organiser of their rallies, at which they went after the Fianna Fáil republicans whom they were hell-bent on ousting. There is a story that what led Taoiseach Eamon de Valera to get rid of O'Duffy as Commissioner of the Gardaí were some papers he found on taking up Office: these showed O'Duffy and his comrades were secretly plotting a *coup* against Dev, should he win the General Election.

I think that is fairly plausible, as they had used dirty tricks to stop Dev in 1931. I often wondered why Cumann na nGaedheal were so circumspect about O'Duffy's sacking but it seems, according to Jacqueline Hurlley, that Dev called in Richard Mulcahy and showed him what he found and all was quietly forgotten. After all, the Free State Officers who most feared for their army careers were told by the Taoiseach there was going to be no spoils system put in play—and to their amazement *he* kept to his word. (Unlike the Free State army, which completely looked after its own and made it extremely hard for those on the other side of the Treatyite War to get jobs or even the slightest look in.) However, soon the new Minister for Defence, Frank Aiken, Fianna Fáil TD, was getting on famously with the Army and everyone pulled together with the policy of neutrality. As the Minister himself famously stated:

"Neutrality is not like a simple mathematical formula which has only to be announced and demonstrated in order to be believed and respected... Instead of earning the respect and goodwill of both belligerents it is regarded by both with hatred and contempt. 'He who is not with me is against me.' In the modern total warfare it is not a condition of peace with both belligerents, but rather a condition of limited warfare with both..."

Minister Frank Aiken, 23rd Jan/ 1940.

Ireland was in many ways lucky to have men like Sir John Maffey, British High Commissioner to Ireland, and Eduard Hempel, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the German Reich, as basically their respective countries' representatives in Ireland—because they did a good job of keeping their own bosses out of Ireland's affairs as far as possible. It is strange to note that Hempel had the far easier task, unlike Maffey who had to deal with the irascible

Clair Wills and the Story She Tells (Part 8)

'The Welding of a West Briton'

"I'm always telling my brother Alan... that he shouldn't encourage the waltzes, polkas and all those English dances here in the country. I declare to God he's becoming more a West Brit every day'.

'What's a West Briton, Maggie? I suppose I'm one myself.'

'Sure of course you are! But we forgive you, for how could you be otherwise? You know less about your country than if you were a foreigner. Your parents have never given you the opportunity of understanding our struggle for our country's right to be free and independent'."

Walter Starkie, *Scholars and Gypsies*, London. 1963. p46.

"An Taoiseach's father was a *Portuguese Jew*. Erskine Childers's grandmother was a Jewess. Mr. Ruttledge has Jewish connections by marriage—and 'Jew' was written all over the face of Mr. Seán Lemass! Practically all the Fianna Fáil TDs are in the clutches of the Jews!

George Griffin, ex-Blueshirt and owner of '*Penapa*' the newspaper of O'Duffy's Irish Friends of Germany and its offshoot, the People's National Party (Penapa) in its first issue, the second one was confiscated by detectives in January 1941. They seized nearly two thousand copies and Griffin was brought before the Courts and sued for the printing costs of both issues and ended up broke and so too were his political ambitions."

Clair Wills. *That Neutral Island*. London. Faber & Faber. 2007. pp. 367-368. (Italics—Clair Wills.)

In case any readers wonder who this Mr. Ruttledge is—he is of course Patrick J. Ruttledge (1892-1952). He studied in St. Enda's School, Rathfarnham, while it was run by Pádraig Pearse and then at Trinity College, Dublin, where he qualified as a solicitor in 1918, building up a practice in his home town. In 1921, he was elected to the Dáil as a Sinn Féin TD for Mayo North and West and in 1921 he opposed the Treaty and was seriously injured during the Civil War.

He was one of the co-founders of Fianna Fáil with Eamon de Valera and was re-elected to the Dáil in 1923 for Mayo North, going on to be re-elected in a further ten elections until 1951, dying while in Office. He served in Dev's Cabinet in 1932 and onwards: as Minister for Lands and Fisheries, Minister for Justice, and Minister for Local Government and Public Health—resigning his ministerial position due to ill health in 1941, due in no small part to the injuries he received in the Civil War.

He was in illustrious company being thus targeted by the Blueshirts, with a *G2 report* produced by Clair Wills stating:

"Though the membership of these far-right organisations was extremely small, the Germans had some success in

spreading the virus of anti-Semitism in Ireland with the help of such elements as General O'Duffy's Irish Fascist Party which has adopted a Nazi-inspired 'Jewish peril' line."

Unfortunately, Wills does not cite here her G2 sources regarding the Germans, and I doubt very much indeed that the latter were fomenting any such feelings—knowing that O'Duffy and his ilk were more than able to come up with their own poisonings to target Fianna Fáil with what they hoped were damaging links to Jewishness.

Certainly, Wills always seems to downplay the numbers of O'Duffy's organisation—in fact the Gardaí were able to collect some nearly 2,000 copies of '*Penapa*'—which in those days of paper shortages amount to a fair old number.

But Jacqueline Hurlley, in her biography '*Walter Starkie, An Odyssey*', Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2013, has no such squeamishness about Irish politics, as she makes clear:

"In the Free State, General Eoin O'Duffy, in his capacity as Gardaí Commissioner, had visited Italy and met Mussolini, whose 'great experiment' and 'fierce opposition to communism' impressed the Irishman. O'Duffy's dismissal by de Valera in 1933 and subsequent taking up of the leadership of the Blueshirt movement led to his being

Churchill and his many schemes to take Ireland into the war by threat and by secret economic sanctions. It is rather strange to observe that it was the United States Minister David Gray who was the most troublesome of the lot, with his strange Anglophile sympathies and his nearness to the US President Roosevelt (via his wife's relations with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt who was her adopted niece). At the time of the so-called 'American Note' Gray completely overstepped his diplomatic mark and Maffey knew it, but if Taoiseach Eamon de Valera could be kicked or even tricked into a different position, Maffey was not going to go out of his way to stop the charade, nor indeed did he!

Robert Fisk *despite* his unending conditions on 'Eire's neutrality', in his tome *In Time of War* (André Deutsch, London, 1983), conveys very well the non-stop threats/entreaties upon Dev by the Americans and the British. Once Maffey thought he overheard the Taoiseach asking Joseph Walshe, a key aide in Dev's Foreign Policy unit, to keep "*that man away from me*" and thought it was Hempel whom the Taoiseach wanted to avoid. Maffey was delighted until he realised it was Gray that Dev couldn't stand! Afterwards the British—especially Lord Halifax who was now the British Ambassador to Washington—poisoned President Roosevelt ever more against the Irish and torpedoed Frank Aiken's attempts to purchase arms and ships by informing the American President that Irish Minister for Defence Aiken:

"from secret British Foreign Office sources... was not only anti-British but positively wished for a German victory."

This was total fabrication and would have hugely and dangerously impacted on our policy of neutrality. But it worked. Robert Brennan, the Irish Minister in Washington, remembered the explosive reaction from Roosevelt who caught the table cloth and pulled it out from under the table service, sending "*knives and forks flying all over the room*"—such was his anger at Aiken, who with Brennan, guessed that Gray had been at work.

For all Fisk's negativity about this trip, Roosevelt did sell two ships to Ireland and Aiken was feted by those "*Irish Americans who actively opposed the President's aid to Britain*". This trip in March 1941 was facilitated by the British, as Aiken went through Lisbon by flying boat onto Latin America and, when the passengers landed in New York, "*all the passengers were sick except Aiken who nevertheless felt unwell*" after such an arduous journey.

Fisk goes on to state that, in May 1941:

"the British quietly *gave* Eire" (my italics –JH) "ten hector training aircraft, some military wireless sets and 20,000 gas masks. In November, Britain sent across to Eire twelve 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns, four 18-pounders, twelve 75-millimeter guns with trailers, 100,000 grenades, a quarter of a million rounds of .303 ammunition, spare parts and armour plating. In the following month, two 9-inch guns arrived in Eire from Britain for the defence of the Shannon. These weapons were shipped with Churchill's personal approval... These transactions were kept secret even from the Americans".

And then Gray advocated a—

"well-publicised gift of Allied war material to Eire'... the British opposed the idea. Churchill was adamant that the United States should not interfere. In February, 1942 Churchill wrote to Eden: 'We request most incessantly that *no arms be supplied by the United States*. This would spoil the whole market. If necessarily I will telegraph to the President personally'..." (Italics are Churchill's in this case).

The British never "*gave*" Ireland anything, as we had to purchase everything we received, but isn't it interesting that the British moved almost immediately after Aiken's so-called abortive trip. And notice how Churchill was afraid, even then, of the market being spoiled by the Americans. Free Trade, oh how the British bray about it even to this very day—but of course they don't mean it. Besides, in fact Germany had broken the shipping codes of the UK and therefore for four years were able to target their ships—as Fisk admitted when I wrote that fact up in my December 2018 article. It is important to stress another point that historians nowadays always manage to neglect. Taoiseach de Valera appointed Frank Aiken his Minister for Defence but then, with the prospect of the coming War, got together a Defence Committee called '*The Coordination of Defensive Measures*' and "at this Defence Conference":

"ministers and Fine Gael leaders pored over charts of the northern Atlantic which Aiken brought to meetings, discussing interminably the convoy losses and the tactics which the RAF might have employed against the Luftwaffe and the U-boats if the British had been using airfields in Eire. When the Conference met in late December, Mulcahy recorded that

'a large number of sinkings are taking place close up around Malin Head. This apparently is the main stream of traffic. The next largest is in

a widespread area about 200 miles off the Mayo coast'.

"Aiken pointed out that some of the heaviest losses took place 'within easy reach from plane bases in Derry. He implied from this that no assistance from Ireland would be of any use."

After all the North was in play and Dev had quietly conceded to the Allies the right to over-fly Donegal when necessary.

Fisk here gives the truth about the situation. I looked at the sea-charts and Richard Mulcahy was very prescient about the sinkings being off the Irish North West coast. And then, after the Germans had captured France, Brest and other French ports were used by them to send out their bombers—the huge Focke-Wulf Condor: up the west coast of Ireland, to bomb ships and—with low fuel—land in occupied Norway. So the question of our ports were not really an issue, as any sailor could point out. As Fisk admitted:

1. German intelligence had broken the British naval codes *in the first four years of the war* and therefore could at will—and indeed did take out any ships they had in their sights.

2. The Royal Navy continued using Carley-Rafts, which decimated the lives of wrecked sailors. The huge number of deaths of UK sailors, in comparison to other navies, resulted from the continued use by the Admiralty of those cheap and deadly so-called safety features. According to the figures given by the Admiralty at the end of the war—2 in 5 British sailors died of hypothermia while clinging on to the useless Carley-Rafts.

But, even with all that, Fisk is a right *scuit* to go on to maintain that:

"The Irish Government could not escape the accusation—indeed should not have escaped the accusation—that dead British seamen were being washed up on Eire's shores because of the policy of neutrality ... Asked about the Treaty ports in November 1940 de Valera said:

"this question is one that involves our national sovereignty and our people's will. It is also one that involves the safety of our people'."

"*Put in even simpler terms*", as Fisk of course would willingly do, and gleefully did:

"de Valera would not risk the lives of his people for the lives of British seamen. Truly, neutrality was a form of warfare".

I would argue that that was the very job description of the Taoiseach, and that he did it with such exceptional skill is still what rankles most amongst the British

naysayers and of course our own home-grown ones as well!

Is Fisk really arguing that de Valera should have put the needs of another nation above that of his own? Well yeah—actually he is. The absolute cheek of it is beyond description. But the fusion around the Second World War by people of highly questionable morals is only outdone by those who now write about it!

And here I go back to Clair Wills who writes about the Ulster poet Louis Mac Neice and his great friendship with the fascist Trinity Professor Walter Starkie, who was a great friend of W.B. Yeats etc—the right circles were still everything to these people. I found one fact that took me by surprise and that is the story of Captain Hugh Pollard who, as Manus O’Riordan rightly wrote, was involved in the English shady enterprise of getting General Franco from the Canary Isles to Madrid. He was aided in this by another shady mercenary and former RAF pilot Captain William Begg. All of this is written up by Jimmy Burns, in the biography of his father Bobby Burns, *'Papa Spy: A true story of love, wartime espionage in Madrid, and the treachery of the Cambridge spies'*, Bloomsbury, London, 2009.

But one nugget of information almost got lost in the thicket of things and that is that, after the First World War, none other than Captain Hugh Pollard turned up in Dublin—

"where his duties included at one point working as a *police staff advisor in Dublin Castle, where suspect Irish republicans were interrogated*" (Italics mine—JH).

Where is Robert Fisk when one needs him to elucidate on why Spain's neutrality was actively contrived at by Churchill and his Cabinet. As the latter wrote to Anthony Eden:

"When the Spanish Civil War broke out Churchill agreed with foreign secretary Anthony Eden that it was essential for Britain to maintain her neutrality in the struggle. Their shared principal motive was a strategic one and based solely in what they believed best served British interests: the wish to avoid the Spanish conflict becoming the principle battleground for a general European war."

These statesmen were after all going for the bigger prize—Germany.

And with North Africa also in the frame they needed Gibraltar as a port for their navy ships, as it was their chief coal and oil station for their entire African troop manoeuvres.

It was interesting to watch Minister

Josepha Madigan TD, Fine Gael, representing the Irish Government on RTE 1 *News at 6* at Soloheadbeg, Co Tipperary, site of an ambush during our War of Independence talking about "*our shared history*" several times, alluding of course to that of Britain and Ireland. She insisted that there is no conflict today about "*our past*". And then the so-called 'Irish backstop' drops down on the head of our Government with such exquisite timing to its great horror and surprise. But there was also the Fianna Fáil leader, Micheál Martín, getting up in the Mansion House commemorating our Físt Dáil in 1919, also on RTE 1 News, stating in his speech that our parliamentary democracy saw off not only the threat of fascism but communism too! I have to admit that the latter assertion much amused me, as that part of our history must have passed me by, and really I thought he might be angling

a kick towards the Fine Gael benches about their fascism with General Eoin O’Duffy, their one-time leader and friend of one of questionable leanings—Walter Starkie (among many others).

Jacqueline Hurlley, in her biography of Starkie, wrote about the latter:

"The promotion of Italian fascism had been a feature of Starkie's pronouncements in the press" (especially in the *Irish Independent*—JH) "and of his political practice since 1922 and his dealings with O’Duffy would be acknowledged by the latter in the opening of his '*Crusade in Spain*' in 1938."

This was O’Duffy's book, published by Browne and Nolan, Dublin, in 1938—though Hurlley ever the enthusiastic scholar has a question mark over the date.

Julianne Herlihy ©

Solloghobeg

continued

surprised the raiders and fired through an open door without warning, killing Volunteers John Browne and Richard Laide. In reward for their actions, Boyle and Fallon were promoted to the ranks of District Inspector and Sergeant respectively.

But the repercussions in Kerry were huge. The funerals of Browne and Laide elicited massive sympathy and were attended by some 6,000 people. However, the most significant response came in the form of British reaction to an armed reprisal attack by the Ballymacelligott Volunteer leaders, Tom McEllistrim and John Cronin.

Both were of farming stock. Mc Ellistrim, a famous GAA footballer, had been interned in Frongoch after the 1916 Rising, and would later become OC of the Kerry Brigade's Flying Column, and Cronin would command the Ballymacelligott IRA unit. McEllistrim learned that the trial in Tralee on June 14 of a young man accused of perjury at the coroner's inquest into the deaths of Brown and Laide would necessitate the attendance of the RIC men Boyle and Fallon.

Accordingly, he and Cronin waited in the snug of Harty's pub overlooking Main Street, with two shotguns in a sack. When the RIC men appeared heading for lunch, he and Cronin dashed into the street, weapons drawn. But McEllistrim bumped into someone, slipped and fell. A woman screamed. The policemen were alerted and took evasive action as the shotgun fired. Fallon was wounded in the neck but recovered. Boyle escaped unscathed as did Cronin and McEllistrim, who dropped their shotguns in the middle of

the street, dashed back into Harty's and escaped out the back door of the pub.

In the climate of the time—politically febrile, but not violent—the attack, which like Solohedbeg was unsanctioned by GHQ, created a sensation. The 'Cork Examiner' described it as: "One of the most daring outrages in the whole history of the trouble in Ireland."

British reaction was stronger and more tangible. Tralee was placed under martial law and for weeks all the roads leading in and out of the town were barricaded and people passing through were searched.

Cronin and McEllistrim went on the run and fought throughout the course of the War of Independence to such effect that Ballymacelligott became one of the most hated, and feared, areas in Ireland to the eyes of some British military personnel, notably those of the redoubtable Auxiliary Major John McKinnion, Commander of Tralee Auxiliary unit.

McKinnion had a chequered career, having to leave the army over bouncing cheques. On the outbreak of World War I he rejoined the army as a private. He had further trouble with cheques and displayed a tendency towards going Awol, but managed to attain the rank of captain before being wounded and discharged, suffering from what the army termed 'nervous myopia'.

The fact a man suffering from what would nowadays probably be termed "post-traumatic stress" should have been given a commanding role in what were officially termed the Auxiliary Police Cadets says much for the exigencies of British policy at the time.

McKinnion, a tall, strikingly handsome man, was noted for both his courage and his ruthlessness; a man who shot first and asked questions later. As with many Auxiliaries the use of torture and the burning of farms and creameries as

reprisals were his trademarks.

The Ballymacelligott area seems to have obsessed him in his pursuit of McEllistrim and Cronin. On the night of Christmas Day 1920 he burst into a farmhouse and shot dead two unarmed Ballymacelligott Volunteers who were visiting for the night. Sometimes he went about alone in a car, armed with a machine gun, in an attempt to draw out Cronin and McEllistrim.

In the event it was neither of the pair, but a Tralee unit of the IRA under the command of the serial winner of All-Ireland football medals, John Joe Sheehey, which ended McKinnion's career on the Tralee golf links on April 15, 1921. McKinnion was thought to be wearing body armour so a head shot was required from the marksman Connie Healy, lying behind a ditch some 30 yards away. But McKinnion kept his head down until a scout, John O'Riordan, stationed in a tree alongside the green, let out a piercing wolf whistle causing McKinnion to jerk his head upwards and into the path of a bullet. After he fell face downwards some of the ambushers jumped onto the green and fired further shots.

His golfing partner, who was also his adjutant, escaped unscathed but McKinnion died in Tralee military hospital approximately an hour later.

At the inquest, Dr AA Hargrave said that apart from McKinnion's fatal head wound, his buttocks and lower back had been sprayed with "large shot". So it looks as though a Kerry version of the coup de grace was administered.

McKinnion's last words were said to be "Get McEllistrim and Cronin. Burn Ballymac". After his death the Auxiliaries did attack Ballymacelligott, burning 12 farm houses, a creamery, a presbytery and shooting a young man dead in the process. Tralee town was also attacked and the offices of the 'Kerryman' newspaper were bombed. However, neither McEllistrim nor Cronin was captured. They survived both the War of Independence and the Civil War" (22.1.2019).

This can only be described as war. In fact, there is an earlier action recorded:

"At Meenbanad, a plateau halfway between Kincasslagh and Dungloe in the Rosses of Donegal, stands a slab monument with the following inscription in Irish and English:

"To commemorate the first action in the War of Independence when the Irish Volunteers rescued two comrades James Ward and James Duffy from British Troops at this place on the 4th day of January, 1918."

'This place' was then the last railway halt (known officially as Kincasslagh Road) before the terminus of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway at Burtonport, and the volunteers were removed from the train that was to take

them to Derry Jail" (Edward Purdon, *The War of Independence*, Mercier Press, 2001.)

But Tom McEllistrim and many other were not writers of books and, like so many of his kind, Tom hardly ever talked or boasted of this and other events he led. Therefore to our academics, stuck in their archives, he does not matter, or even exist. For them, in the beginning was The Word and the word was Dan Breen's. By a total fluke, his action coincided with the opening of the Dail and, hey presto, his action overshadows the significance of the Dail and begins a war.

The fact remain that the Dail, in its statement to the free Nations of the world on that very day, clearly referred to: "*the existing state of war, between Ireland and England, (that) can never be ended until Ireland is definitely evacuated by the armed forces of England*". But this counts for nothing. By the logic of the people who proclaim Solloghobeg as the beginning of the war, the Dail must have meant that '*the existing state of war*' referred to a war that started earlier that day and was at most a few hours old? Or did the Dail not know the situation as well as our commentators?

Any of several events can be taken as the beginning—which means it had no specific beginning. If we rely on written records, there was no war at all because the British never declared one; so formally we had the Republicans fighting a non-existent war. Irish history then begins to look like a boxer fighting in a ring with no opponent. But for the British, like for Tom McEllistrim, the beginning was the Deed—not the Word. And the British deed had a very long history.

John Redmond, for it was him, said on 12th July 1916, that the terms of the proposed Home Rule Act amount "*to a declaration of war on the Irish people, and to the announcement of a policy of coercion*".

When Conscription was attempted in April 1918, and was opposed by the Bishops and every shade of political opinion in the country, the representative Mansion House Conference concluded with a declaration of "*Ireland's separate and distinct nationality*", asserting the principle "*that the government of nations derive their just powers from the consent of the governed*". Therefore there was no authority for the British Government "*to impose compulsory service in Ireland*

against the expressed will of the Irish people".

The passing of the *Conscription Bill* must therefore "*be regarded as a declaration of war on the Irish Nation*".

When Field Marshal Sir John French was appointed Viceroy, he took the job in May 1918 on condition it was as a "*Military Viceroy at the Head of a Quasi-Military Government*". Any self respecting Field Marshal would have done the same. And with the help of DORA and Martial Law that meant a war situation existed.

The Irish Times has had a regular series of articles and editorials that were a variation on the theme that Solloghobeg was Day Zero. The clear message being conveyed is that the incident undid the 1918 Election and the authority of the Dail—and that Irish Independence was begun as a war of choice by the Irish.

The paper had a feature on the 'what-iffery' of Solloghobeg (18 January). This described Lord Haldane's visit to Dublin in January 1919 with an idea of getting Dominion Status accepted. But Haldane was acting in a purely personal capacity. In fact he was *persona non grata* in Government circles at this time, despite his long service in the Cabinet and his preparation of the Army for the war on Germany. Unfortunately for him, he was an admirer of Germany, with portraits of Goethe on his office walls. And that tainted him as a Germanophile and he was cast into the outer darkness—like many others for the same reason.

However, Solloghobeg spoiled his plans, according to the *Irish Times*. This assertion assumes that his offer was likely to be accepted by the British Government—but that is flatly contradicted by, among many other things, the treatment of the Irish delegation at Versailles. That was the place to offer Dominion status.

Haldane's offer was pie in the sky. An insider's contemporary account of the incident (not quoted in the paper) gives a much better description and flavour of the episode and the actual Government policy: its attitude towards Ireland did not depend on an incident in Tipperary:

"He (Haldane) talked next of Ireland. Lord French has served under him for six and a half years, and having some regard for his old chief, he had invited Haldane to the Vice-Regal Lodge. Haldane went there on 16 January, (1919), stayed in the lodge for about three days, found Lord French very worried in the midst of some thirty-six departments, many of them on hardly speaking terms with each other.

During his visit Haldane disappeared from the Lodge and got in touch with some Jesuits and Sinn Feiners and evolved some scheme for conciliation by which a Committee would be set up with Haldane as Chairman whose duty it would be to do for Ireland what the Machinery of Government Committee had recently done for England, i.e., work out some scheme of administration for Ireland, on the assumption that there would be some day some Home Rule Act and some goodwill behind it. On this Committee Haldane would have put an Ulster man and De Valera himself, and he was certain from his enquiries that their co-operation could be secured. Haldane wrote a memorandum to French on these lines and French wrote to Walter Long, who in reply told him to 'go to Hell' or words to that effect" (Tom Jones, "Whitehall Diary", 10 April 1919.)

Walter Long represented the Cabinet and was considered by it as an expert on Ireland and was head of a Cabinet Committee on Ireland. We can therefore take it that he accurately reflected Government policy and that this policy was there long before Dan Breen was ever heard of, but it goes to prove that Dan and the others like had the approach that was proved right in the long run.

Jack Lane

Brexit

continued

consequence pro-EU groupings in the Labour and Tory Parties now see themselves as having opportunities to obstruct and even derail the Brexit process.

The most important such development was Dominic Grieve's Amendment passed on 4th December 2018 which set down that, if the Government's Withdrawal Agreement was defeated, the Prime Minister must come back to Parliament with a motion outlining what her Government intends to do. The significance of this motion was that it could be amended. MPs would be able to table anti-Brexit Amendments which potentially could be supported by a majority in Parliament.

A key objective of the anti-Brexit camp in the Commons, an objective which has a reasonable chance of being passed, is to rule out the *No Deal* option. If that objective is realised, the outcome would be a Government controlled by a hostile Parliament—the normal constitutional arrangement would be reversed—the legislative arm of government would be instructing the executive arm. Passing such an Amendment would also entail a by-passing of the party system in that it would

involve groupings of Tory and Labour MPs working against their party leaders.

The possibility that such a departure from democratic norms could occur has been increased by the behaviour of the Speaker of the Commons, John Bercow, who is anti-Brexit and has ignored Parliamentary conventions in recent decisions.

Preventing a No Deal Brexit in accordance with the will of Parliament sounds like a laudable objective but in practice it would amount to a subversion of British democracy. When the Westminster Parliament authorised by a massive majority the invocation of Article 50 in early 2017, the instruction it gave was that efforts should be made to negotiate an agreed exit but that if those efforts failed, an exit without a legal agreement would ensue. No Deal is therefore the default outcome.

What the anti-Brexit camp is now proposing is that a process that depends on having a default option should be freed of that option, even though no other option is available. That this is untenable was underlined in a recent letter to the *Irish Times* by former Taoiseach Alan Dukes, his point being that the only way to get No Deal off the table is "to construct a deal that is acceptable to the UK and the EU27". (IT, Jan 19). In the words of Theresa May, the strategy of removing No Deal will inevitably lead to "*Brexit paralysis*", which is of course exactly what the anti-Brexit camp wants. Once the process has been thus run aground, the only remaining option would be extending the Article 50 timetable and holding a second Referendum in an atmosphere where Brexit has become synonymous with chaos.

The large and influential section of the British political class that opposes Brexit is within its rights in holding Theresa May's pro-Brexit Government to account. But subverting Parliamentary conventions that are fundamental to the workings of democracy is another matter. By undermining the power of Government and the party system, Dominic Grieve and his many allies run the risk of undermining faith in democracy during an unstable period. Their strategy is being accurately called out by British Government spokespersons like Crispin Blunt as laying the basis for a "*constitutional coup*".

In last month's Brexit summary I speculated that, if her deal was defeated in Parliament, Theresa May would have to resign. A *Financial Times* report (20 January) describes how a proposal being

discussed in Conservative circles—for May to offer to stand down after Brexit in return for Eurosceptics supporting her withdrawal deal "*failed to excite Tory MPs*". Going by that report, it seems unlikely that she will resign anytime soon. As events are unfolding this is welcome news. Despite her defeat on January 15th she is holding to her red lines and continuing to "*woo Conservative and Democratic Unionist Eurosceptics, rather than moderate Labour MPs*" (FT, 20 January). Under considerable pressure May is standing by both the Referendum result and the constitutional order.

THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS LOBBY

Another grouping among whom opposition to Brexit, especially No Deal Brexit, has come to a head is that of international business leaders. Within hours of the defeat of May's deal on January 15th, Chancellor Philip Hammond, Business Secretary Greg Clark, and Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay conducted an hour-long video link discussion with representatives of 330 businesses including the heads of Tesco, BP, Siemens and Scottish Power.

The meeting was described in a *Guardian* article under the heading, "*Philip Hammond tells business no-deal Brexit will be stopped*" (17 January). A strange aspect of the story was that Hammond reassured his audience, not by stating that the Government would prevent No Deal from happening, but by adverting to a Bill aimed at rescinding Article 50 that is backed by a cross-party grouping that includes Tory MPs Nick Boles, Nicky Morgan and Sir Oliver Letwin, Labour's Liz Kendall, Yvette Cooper and Hilary Benn, and the Lib Dem MP Norman Lamb. He admitted that "*The Government is not in control of this*". This indicates that the leading pro-business representative in the British Cabinet, Hammond, sees his role as serving the business lobby, even to the point of cutting against the Government in which he holds the second most powerful position.

The concerns being raised by the business representatives are of course well-founded and will almost certainly be shared by the Trade Union movement. Where the business viewpoint on Brexit goes awry, however, is in the assumption that the political system must, at all times and in all circumstances, be subservient to the needs of the economy. This distorts the reality of the relationship between the State and society. Even at times when the economy is the main focus of political attention, the State holds responsibility

for a far wider brief than the economy. There are times, as during a major war, or when matters of national sovereignty are being resolved—as is clearly the case with Brexit—when economic issues must become secondary.

That this point is beyond the ken of almost every media commentator shows up the pervasiveness of the liberal narrative in modern discourse, a narrative that depreciates the role of the State and indeed of politics.

The Brexit vote arose from deeply-held concerns about the threat to national identity in England and Wales posed by the EU. Whether these concerns are historically sound or not is irrelevant; they have been subscribed to over a long period of time and are strongly supported by a majority of the electorate; even a fair proportion of those supporting Remain wish to reduce the EU to a trading bloc.

In a polite way the commentators endlessly bemoan the stupidity of the pro-Brexit masses and their representatives, but is it not more likely that the stupidity lies with those same commentators whose field of expertise is current affairs but who have no understanding of the primacy of politics?

THE IRISH DEBATE

As the constitutional crisis in Britain has heightened, the pathological aversion to Brexit of sections of the Irish elite comes into closer focus. The ostensible reasons for fearing the British exit—that it will disrupt cross border activity and be detrimental to Anglo Irish trade—conceal the real underlying sources of anxiety—that it forces Ireland to align with Europe and to cut the close relationship with Britain that so much effort has gone into cultivating; and that it represents an affront to the liberal belief that international market forces should have precedence over legacy issues like national sovereignty and State involvement in the economy.

One of the most interesting recent Irish commentaries is from Noel Whelan, a columnist known to be close to the present Fianna Fail leadership. In a piece entitled, "*No Brexit more likely now than at any point since June 2016*" he enthuses about the possibility that the nightmare will end.

"No Brexit is the result which suits Ireland most. It has been the fervent but silent objective of Irish diplomats and politicians all along. This objective was never publicly expressed. It doesn't appear in any documents. No Brexit is the preferred outcome for Ireland which has dared not speak its name" (IT, 18 January).

Whelan reveals the nature of the communications that have been passing "*through informal channels*" between London and Dublin and then denies that the two have been in cahoots to undermine Brexit. He says:

"The Irish Government have had to play a very careful game, especially since the withdrawal agreement was finalised. Last December, when Theresa May was being pressurised by Brexiteers to get Europe and Ireland to concede something on the backstop, Remainer politicians in Westminster reached out through informal channels to the Dublin Government saying 'give her nothing, this is all going to fall apart'."

To get some perspective on Whelan's anti-Brexit presumptions, it is instructive to cite a letter published on 20th December in the *Irish Times* from a Maurice O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan has clearly not been influenced by the revisionist narrative that is antipathetic to Irish independence. He says:

"We did not care about them [the British] 100 years ago when we fought them to a standstill to gain our independence and unless we wish to capitulate once again to their influence and control, and relinquish our own sovereignty—never the twain shall meet."

Yet O'Callaghan has a more respectful opinion of the Brexiteers than Whelan and his liberal associates. He argues that the British do not wish to kow-tow to the Germans and are prepared to go on a war footing on the point. Such determinations, he says, are not to be discounted. The finishing line of the letter reads: "*We may not like the British but we have to admire the iron in their soul*".

Notably, O'Callaghan's letter provoked a thoughtful reply from a Trinity professor who is presumably either English or Welsh, Dr. Gerald Morgan. Morgan wrote: "*I have come to the conclusion that it is better to be hated by the Irish than patronised by them. But mutual respect would be even better*" (IT 21 December).

This exchange speaks volumes. With all their talk of "*our nearest and dearest neighbours*", the Irish liberal elite cannot be trusted in the matter of creating greater understanding and tolerance between the peoples of Britain and Ireland. Not only has a plain speaking supporter of Irish nationalism less difficulty in respecting the expression of actual English political preferences than our current elite, but a tolerant English/Welsh observer finds his down-to-earth honesty more congenial than the outpourings of the Anglophile Irish media.

The narrowness of Noel Whelan's vision is shown up by another letter writer to the *Irish Times*, this time a retired diplomat of 1980s vintage. John Campbell, former Irish Ambassador to the EEC (1986-91) believes that, if the end result of the Brexit story is that the UK returns to Europe, the probable outcome will be the destruction of the European project. He states:

"The UK has worked in the past with admirable skill and perseverance to diminish and negate many of the planned advances towards a united Europe. The euro, social policy, Schengen, have all been rejected. If the UK returns to Europe, not only will this steady process of destabilisation continue but it will be greatly reinforced by the crazed demands of the frustrated Brexiteers" (IT, 19 January).

Campbell is less respectful of the Brexiteers than O'Callaghan but recognises that, regarding Brexit, the Irish national interest encompasses more than the Border and Anglo/Irish trade. He understands that Ireland has a primary interest in the continued development of the EU and consequently in keeping the UK separate from it. Outside of the *Irish Political Review* this viewpoint has been conspicuously absent in the Irish Brexit debate and its absence highlights the harm that the Anglophile mindset is doing to Irish Foreign Policy. No employee of Iveagh House would be allowed to express such a view since at least the signing of the Good Friday Agreement; Campbell can do so only because he served the State in an era when the sense of purpose that arose from independence was still maintained.

GIVING WAY ON THE BACKSTOP?

The day after Noel Whelan's candid article was published, and conceivably because it was published, an article by Pat Leahy appeared in the *Irish Times* headed, "*Brexit: Dublin starting to think about a move on backstop*". Leahy goes through all the reasons why he thinks the Government should continue to defend the backstop—it represents a diplomatic triumph for Ireland, the EU has solidly supported us on the issue, it is backed by a firm cross-party consensus, it has been hailed as a political victory for Leo Varadkar in particular—before describing it as a device that has become a barrier to progress. He refers to a critical view that some officials are now subscribing to:

"But very quietly, some senior sources have privately acknowledged that there is a potential flaw at the very heart of the Irish strategy—that holding out on the

backstop risks bringing about the very thing it is designed to avoid: a no-deal and a hard border" (IT, 19 January).

I still favour No Deal because it accords with the political reality of the differences that emerged during the negotiations; it would end the wrangling, provide a measure of certainty about the future and hasten the long-term political accommodations that Brexit requires. Yet, given the impasse in Westminster and the central role played by Ireland in the stalemate, it would be remiss of the Government not to keep its position on the backstop under review, always in cooperation with Brussels.

Both the UK and the EU seem to be agreed that they want tariff-free trade in goods and no lowering of product standards. If the UK could provide assurances about not pressing demands in the trade negotiations that would make border controls necessary, that would have the same effect as the backstop.

Having said all that the strong likelihood is that Leahy's article was a kite (a media story designed to test the water or convey a nuance of Government policy). There is obvious truth in Whelan's contention that the Government secretly wishes to stop Brexit and is happy to hold the line, knowing that the British Government faces major obstacles in attempting to follow through on the Referendum result.

AMENDMENT MAYHEM

As this is being written, various initiatives are being played out in Westminster as reported in the Open Europe blog of 22nd January. On January 29th Theresa May will propose a neutral motion on behalf of her Government which will not be a meaningful vote. Labour has tabled an Amendment to that motion containing two options: the party's alternative Brexit plan based on a comprehensive Customs Union and a strong Single Market deal; and a Referendum on any option supported by a majority in the Commons.

Amber Rudd has asked that Conservative MPs be allowed a free vote on the cross-party Amendment tabled by Labour MP Yvette Cooper, which could lead to an extension of Article 50 in order to avoid a No Deal. Up to 40 members of the Government are reportedly prepared to resign if they are not allowed to vote freely on the Amendment. Labour MP Hilary Benn has introduced an Amendment allowing for indicative votes among MPs on different Brexit scenarios and

Conservative MP Sarah Wollaston is reportedly planning to put forward an Amendment calling for a public vote on the May deal. Separately there are reports that Yvette Cooper is working with Dominic Grieve who is due to table an Amendment which allows backbenchers to put forward alternative proposals to the

Government's Brexit 'plan B'.

In my opinion the crisis will pass from the political class to the wider society if the anti-Brexit camp succeeds in thwarting the will of the majority through such machinations.

Dave Alvey

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR · LETTERS TO THE EDITOR · LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Debate: Who Creates Money?

Reply to Martin Dolphin and Angela Clifford

Angela Clifford in her letter (*Irish Political Review*, January 2019) says I suggested that:

"banks do not create money, a thing which can only be done by Central Banks".

But I did not quite say what Angela claims I said. This is a direct quote from my article:

"Contrary to popular belief a commercial bank cannot create money out of thin air. So, in order to lend it either must borrow or use money from its own resources (which is, in effect, borrowing from the owners or shareholders)."

The key sentence is the second one in the above quotation.

Angela then claims there are numerous rebuttals on the Internet. The reference she gives is a description of the money multiplier. But the money multiplier theory does not contradict what I said. Indeed, I also give a description of this theory in the accompanying article which was written before I had seen either Martin or Angela's letters.

So, is it a case that the difference between us is one of semantics or a misinterpretation of what I said?

Unfortunately, it would appear not. Later on she describes the expansion of credit as being created by the banks. There is no mention of the vast surpluses created by China or Germany, or the surpluses which are available to be lent because of increasing inequality in countries such as the USA and the UK.

So, Angela disagrees with the second sentence in the quotation above. According to her, a bank can lend without having to "borrow or use money from its own resources".

Martin Dolphin seems to agree with Angela. Like Angela he starts with an example of the money multiplier theory.

But, unlike her, he describes it in his own words. Also, unlike her he does not claim my views are in contradiction with the theory, but asks me if I agree with the description.

In answer to his question: I have no substantial disagreement. I have only two minor quibbles. He is not making explicit his assumption that the money lent out will return to the bank in question. There are no real grounds for thinking that it will in the case of an individual bank. Secondly, he goes on to describe a financial crisis as if it was normal. The lending by the Central Bank is a last resort. The ECB describes such lending as ELA which is Emergency (or Exceptional) Liquidity Assistance.

However, in his example, the lending is financed by borrowing. The total amount lent out to customers B, D, F and H equals £310. It is financed by borrowings of £344 from A, C, E and G with £34 held in reserve. His example in no way contradicts my thesis that lending must be financed by borrowing.

Martin appears to recognise that, in order to support his proposition that banks can lend without borrowing, he cannot rely on the money multiplier theory.

I'd like to focus on this quotation from Martin's letter:

"Commercial banks pay little attention to their reserve position when they make loans. As long as a bank thinks that a loan is good (interest and capital will be paid on time), it will make a loan. It will worry about finding reserves later, if the need should ever arise. So a commercial bank most emphatically does not need to borrow before it can start lending!"

Martin is correct that banks, like ordinary businesses, are not looking over their shoulder constantly wondering whether they have enough reserves (or, to be more precise, borrowing) to finance the credit they give. That would be impractical. But

the reason why banks can lend is they assume that they have adequate funding. And in almost 100% of cases the assumption is reasonable.

If the bank is not adequately funded, it will find out very quickly. That was the experience of Anglo-Irish Bank.

In my opinion the rapid expansion of credit cannot be explained without examining both sides of the equation: the lenders and the borrowers. Irish banks could only lend billions of euros because

they had access to savings throughout the euro zone through German and French banks.

Banks are extremely innovative: they create ingenious financial "products", but, at the end of the day, they are only financial intermediaries. They transfer funds from lenders to borrowers. While banks borrow and lend to each other, inter-bank balances cancel each other out. Ultimately the creditors and debtors must be external to the banking system.

John Martin

Can Banks Create Money?

The assertion in my article in December *Irish Political Review* that commercial banks cannot create money out of thin air deserves further discussion.

Economic textbooks invariably say that they do create money out of thin air. Let us take a closer look at this by examining a typical example given in text books. In this example the bank exists in an economy with other banks. The bank receives 100 million euro in deposits from the public (e.g. companies, individual depositors, shareholders etc).

It lends out 90 million euro and holds 10 million in reserve. The economic textbooks say that the bank has created 90 million out of thin air. So, according to the orthodoxy the money supply has increased from 100 million on deposit to 190 million (100 million on deposit plus the 90 million that it has lent out). But this is very arguable. All the bank has done is transfer 90 million of the 100 million it received from the public and kept 10 million in reserve. This is why commercial banks are sometimes called financial intermediaries. They facilitate the transfer of money from lenders to borrowers.

Even if it is accepted that the money that is lent out is newly created money, it is difficult to see how it can be contended that the money has been created out of thin air. Banks can only lend what they receive. If the bank in the above example had only received 50 million from the public in that case it could only lend out 45 million (assuming that it complies with a central bank requirement to hold 10 percent of its assets in reserve). The bank's assets always equal its liabilities.

The situation is less clear cut if one examines the banking system as a whole. But the principles still apply. Assets must always equal liabilities and banks cannot lend out more than they receive.

One way to analyse the banking system as a whole is to assume that there is only one bank in the economy. Let us use the same figures as above. A bank (this time the only bank in the economy) receives 100 million from the public. It lends out 90 million to, say, person A. Person A spends all his money on products produced by Person B.

So far, so good! The bank has transferred 90 million of the 100 million in cash it has received as before. But now the person the bank has lent the money to has transferred it to Person B. What does Person B do with the money? He could buy goods from another person but sooner or later some or all of the money will return to the banking system. For the sake of simplicity let us assume that 100% of the money is returned to the bank.

Now the bank has 100 million in cash. It still has the 90 million loaned out giving assets of 190 million. The liabilities, being always equal to the assets, are now also 190 million. The bank is now in a position to lend an extra 81 million (always keeping 10% in reserve). It lends it to person C. The bank has now 19 million in cash and 171 million in loans giving assets of 190 million. Its liabilities remain at 190 million.

At the risk of being tedious, let's go through one more iteration. Person C buys products from Person D and Person D lodges the 81 million back into the bank. The bank uses the 81 million to loan 72.9 million (90% of 81 million) back to the public.

What does the balance sheet of the bank now look like? It has 27.1 million in cash and 243.9 million in loans giving total assets of 271 million. It also has liabilities of 271 million. The bank's balance sheet has expanded. The loans have expanded to a multiple of the amount

of cash in the system. Also, a higher proportion of the cash in the system is now in possession of the bank.

Where will it all end? Some readers will spot that this is a similar pattern to the Keynesian multiplier. In mathematical terms it is a convergent geometric series. The formula for calculating the final liability figure in the bank's balance sheet is:

$$\frac{\text{(The original cash amount)}}{\text{(the reserve percentage)}}$$

In the above example 100 million in cash will be able to generate liabilities of 1,000 million or 1 billion euro. The final balance sheet of the bank will be cash of 100 million and loans to the public of 900 million giving assets of 1 billion. The total liabilities figure will also be 1 billion.

It is also interesting to note that there is no cash held by the public. We can deduce from this that the more credit in the system, the less there is a need for money in the form of notes and coins. All the cash in the system is held by the bank.

Also, the bank is acting as an intermediary between creditors and debtors in the economy. Of the 1,000 billion in loans held by the creditors, 900 million is ultimately owed to them by other members of the public and 100 million is owed by the bank.

Before drawing any conclusions from this a few caveats should be entered.

Firstly, not all the money that is lent out by the bank will return to the banking system: some will be held by the public outside the banking system.

Secondly, in the above example no one is paying back their loans. In the real world people actually pay back their loans. In this instance the balance sheet of the banking system contracts.

Thirdly, it must be remembered that the model assumes just one bank in one economy. If the money is borrowed from abroad there is no reason to believe that it will immediately return to the foreign bank that gave the original loan. It might enter the domestic banking system or be returned to another foreign bank in a different jurisdiction. So, for example when German banks lent to Anglo Irish Bank, Anglo then lent the money to developers. The developers used the money to buy land from landowners at inflated prices. But there is no reason to believe that the landowners who had sold their property then lodged the money with the

original German bank (I suspect most of it ended up in off shore tax haven such as the Cayman Islands). So, the German bank could not recycle the money.

Fourthly, the bank has to find someone to lend to and then it must find someone to borrow. Credit cannot be created out of thin air even if it can be recycled.

Finally, the bank is constrained by what it can lend. It must consider the borrower's ability to repay their loans. As Anglo Irish Bank found, once the bank's debtors cannot repay their loans the bank is in danger of going bust.

CONCLUSION

So, can commercial banks create money out of thin air? The answer to that question depends on how you define money. Certainly no new cash is generated by commercial banks, but it is undeniable that banks facilitate the expansion of credit even if it's not created out of thin air.

Is credit a synonym for money? By some definitions not only is credit money,

but ALL money is credit. The Central Bank creates money by lending to commercial banks. However, in the case of the Central Bank, unlike commercial banks, it does not have to borrow to lend. The credit in this case is created out of thin air.

The case against the proposition that commercial banks create money out of thin air is that the lender and the borrower cannot spend the money at the same time. When the borrower spends his money, the lender is foregoing his spending power until he is repaid. Secondly, if facilitating credit counts as creating money what is the position of non-financial institutions? Most companies allow credit terms to their customers and expect to receive credit from their suppliers. Are they also creating money?

Perhaps it is not too important to allocate labels to the elements of the financial system. It is more important to understand the functioning of the system as a whole.

John Martin

Remembering Dennis Dennehy And The 1969 First Dáil Commemorations

This January 21st has seen the 100th anniversary of the First Dáil. Fifty years previously, the 50th anniversary commemorations took place against the background of one of the most momentous social struggles to be fought for many a decade in Dublin, being led by Dennis Dennehy, of the Irish Communist Organisation, and the Dublin Housing Action Committee. Arrested and jailed for his protest and squatting activities, Dennis proceeded to go on hunger strike, forcing his unconditional release after twelve days. As narrated in *Letters To Angela Clifford*, it was memories of her husband Terence MacSwiney's death on hunger strike, as Mayor of Cork during the War of Independence, that resulted in Muriel MacSwiney being so inspired by Dennis's stand that she took the initiative in contacting him.

Dennis Dennehy's courageous stand was so inspirational right across the political spectrum that for a brief period it united such diverse political strands as the ICO (later the B&ICO), the IWP (Irish Workers' Party—later reunited with the CPNI to reconstitute the Communist Party of Ireland), and the IRA, in a common political purpose.

The 50th anniversary of the First Dáil was due to be commemorated in its birthplace, Dublin's Mansion House, on 21st January 1969—right in the middle of Dennis Dennehy's imprisonment and hunger strike. It was decided to mount an effective protest at source. A meeting was convened in our home by my father, IWP General Secretary Micheál O'Riordan, to secure agreement on a variety of measures with one common purpose. The minor item on the agenda was to issue me with instructions, as a CYM (Connolly Youth Movement) Executive member, to head off another protest that was being conspiratorially planned for that Mansion House commemoration, in respect of which I had been taken into the confidence of its Connemara organiser—the former IRA leader, native-speaking Irish writer, future Professor of Irish at TCD and irrepressible Gaeltacht agitator, Máirtín Ó Cadhain. And when I explained what that higher political purpose was, Ó Cadhain more than willingly pulled back.

My father had in turn persuaded IRA Chief-of-Staff Cathal Goulding and his Adjutant General Séamus Costello to escort to our home the 1916 battle of

Mount Street veteran Joe Clarke, who had gone on to be the usher-in-charge in the First Dáil. It was not, however, the case that Clarke "*had managed to secure an invitation*" to the 50th anniversary Mansion House ceremonies. It came to him unsolicited, and as of right. The obstacle to be overcome was to persuade Joe to make strategic use of it, after a lifetime spent rejecting all such State commemoration invitations.

One characteristic that both Goulding and Costello shared in common was a powerful sense of humour, and they initially adopted the 'good cop' approach of joking and teasing Clarke about the youthful crush he had on a young Sinéad Bean de Valera, when he had attended her Irish language classes. Judging from his bemused yet bashful response, the attraction still persisted half a century later, but Joe did not consider that a good enough reason to compromise his principles in order to heckle his heartthrob's husband!

The serious political argument was put by my father: that Dennehy's Hunger Strike was central to the exposure of how the State had reneged on the principles of the First Dáil's *Democratic Programme*, and that here was a golden opportunity for Clarke to secure Dennis's unconditional release by publicly shaming the State on live television. Clarke was impressed, but remained unyielding. It was only a resort to the military discipline exerted by Goulding that finally twisted Clarke's arm.

In 1938 the seven remaining no-compromise-with-Leinster-House members of the Second Dáil, constituting themselves '*the Irish Republic's Executive Council*', had transferred what they regarded as their legitimate authority to the IRA Army Council. Clarke took it that he was now receiving an order from the man he held to be *de jure* Chief Executive of the Irish Republic, Cathal Goulding, to heckle Dev the 'usurper'.

Once agreed, Clarke could not have been more impressive in the self-control and discipline he exercised. And indeed it would forever stick in his gullet that—after their initial surprise at his appearance at the door of the Mansion House—the 'Establishment' had made him most welcome: "*Let me take your coat, Mr. Clarke*" etc. But the experience that was to hurt him the most was that—in order to allay any suspicions as to his true purposes in showing up—"I had to accept a handshake from Dick Mulcahy", Free State Army Chief-of-Staff (and, in the eyes of anti-Treatyites, a hated executioner)

during the Civil War. Joe Clarke was, however, strong-willed enough to bite his tongue and stay the course.

So it was that the nation turned on its TV sets for live coverage of President de Valera's *Commemorative Address*, only to be greatly surprised to hear Dev being heckled on such a ceremonial occasion. The cameras then obligingly switched to this little man on crutches whom viewers nationwide both saw and heard shout out loudly and clearly, several times, "*Release Dennis Dennehy!*", before he was hustled away by the Establishment's bouncers.

RTE Archives also included footage of that protest in a de Valera exhibition, and further related:

"TDs, senators and members of the first Dáil and of the Diplomatic Corps gather in Dublin's Mansion House to mark the 50th anniversary of the first Dáil. President de Valera addresses the gathering. His speech is briefly interrupted by veteran Republican Joseph Clarke, who protests about the jailing of Denis Dennehy, a member of the Dublin

Housing Action Committee, for squatting in a house in Mountjoy Square."

The link to that footage is, however, no longer operational.

(See www.historyireland.com/volume-22/heckling-dev/ for a 'History Ireland' account, and see www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/eamon-de-valera/720795-50th-anniversary-of-the-first-dail/

See http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/ipr/2008/IPR_February_2008.pdf—pages 9-11—to read online "First Dáil And Protests", an article in the February 2008 issue of this magazine detailing the comprehensive press coverage of a number of 50th anniversary protests demanding the release of Dennis Dennehy.)

Manus O'Riordan

Muriel MacSwiney, International Revolutionary, Wife of Terence MacSwiney, the Irish Republican Martyr: *Letters To Angela Clifford*. Historical and biographical Introduction by AC, 168pp. Illus. **€15, £12**

The Revolutionary At The Áras

President Higgins' address to the Dáil on its centenary was nothing sort of revolutionary in the context of today's standard views on the subjects he covered. It was revolutionary in that it stated the obvious facts about the Dáil and the War of Independence and put them in the right narrative as regards cause and effect:

"The establishment of Dáil Éireann was not only a revolutionary act of national self-determination. It was an act of defiance against an empire that ruled over vast territories and diverse peoples, an assertion that sovereignty belonged not to the Crown, but to the Irish people alone.

Given the great forces ranged against that claim, the First Dáil represented an act of extraordinary imagination and courage, a courage that would be called upon to be matched and surpassed by the Irish people time and time again in the turbulent and difficult years that followed.

It is one of the tragedies of our history surely, that it is the vicious and arrogant reaction to events, as a response of empire, that has so often defined what was to follow, rather than any attempt at understanding.

It was to have tragic consequences that the authority of Dáil Éireann having been expressed in such a formal parliamentary way, was not recognised, and thus the will of the people was not respected."

But the most revolutionary aspect of

his speech was what he omitted:

"The form, structure and practice of Dáil Éireann, tightly choreographed as it was, on that day itself was inspired by the tradition of representative democracy that had been sustained by the great popular and parliamentary movements of the nineteenth century, such as the movements of O'Connell and Parnell, of Davitt and O'Brien.

For many years, those were the movements through which the Irish people sought to obtain the fullest measure of rights and realisation of national aspirations."

O'Brien! Where is Redmond? His name is almost mandatory these days when referring to the period Higgins was dealing with. It can be no accident that Higgins omitted him and instead lauds his great parliamentary enemy. And Higgins is quite right to have done so. William O'Brien was the great voice against the attempted sectarianisation of Irish politics by Redmondite thuggery and he predicted that Partition was the inevitable outcome long before it happened.

In forming a party in opposition to Redmondism, the *All for Ireland League*, he created the parameters for the essential party division (through various permutations) in modern Irish politics—the essence of our democracy.

Let's hope Michael D. has a third term!

Jack Lane

Britain And The League Of Nations

I've been a bibliophile for seventy years from a family including master book-binders, teachers, preachers with catholic (lower case) tastes. In that regard, might I mention my late Uncle Dermot, who, when Catholic Curate in Bantry, used read James Bond in the Confessional when awaiting other sinners? For many years I was a Librarian in London. I cannot recall ever coming across a book on the League of Nations, the brainchild of US President Woodrow Wilson, dominated by the victors of the 1914-1919 War which ended with the Treaty of Versailles. The US Senate refused to ratify that Treaty and America never joined the League.

The permanent members of the League's Executive Council were France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Japan. The Nations were bound by the League's Charter to mutually defend each other from aggression, using sanctions, including economic ones, and armed force drawing on the resources of all non-offenders. It was dedicated to international disarmament.

The League was founded in January 1920 and wound up in 1946 and it had grown to include 58 'Nations' by 1936. India, for example was subsumed by the United Kingdom 'Nation'. The Irish Free State sneaked into membership in 1924 when the UK was distracted elsewhere.

I read the Obituaries in *The Times* nearly every day and have done so for decades. I cannot recall any of persons who served the League of Nations in any capacity. But most days I read of soldiers, sailors and airmen who served in Britain's myriad wars and bloody emergencies. In December 2018 one obituary was of a gentleman who participated in a mass bombing raid on a German city which burnt to death an estimated seventeen thousand inhabitants. He had participated in many other raids. Every bookshop has shelf after shelf of books on war, in most of which Britain's forces had distinguished themselves without exception by heroism, gallantry and humour.

Why, oh why, have I never seen, or heard discussed, a book on the League of Nations, or how Britain discharged the obligations of her membership?

In the early 1930s, Japan—Britain's ally and permanent member of the League's Executive Council—attacked Manchuria. After investigation Japan was found guilty of aggression and withdrew from the League. But the League's Executive Council did nothing.

In 1932 Eamon de Valera, President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State and its Minister for External Affairs, was elected President of the League's General Assembly. In his first speech he demanded that the League honour its Charter. It was a splendid principled speech but in vain.

In 1936 de Valera was elected President of the Executive Council of the League of Nations. Italy, another of the Big Four Permanent Members of the League's Executive Council, had launched a war of aggression on Abyssinia, transporting some of its equipment through the Suez Canal (controlled by Britain). Emperor Haile Selassie, appeared before the League in Geneva, appealing for the support—which it was obliged to give under its Charter. De Valera demanded that the League do so,

Again the League, led by Britain and France reneged on its obligations.

Is it unfair to infer that Britain waives the rules internationally agreed?

The Boundary Commission, weighted with Britain's subjects; the refusal to accept international arbitration on the Annuities; the jurisdiction of international or European Courts; the immunity from prosecution of British servicemen guilty of crime: all suggest that there's no need to MAKE BRITAIN GRATE AGAIN.

When did she ever NOT GRATE?
Donal Kennedy

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The Centenary Of Dáil Éireann

Regarding your important supplement on the centenary of Dáil Éireann, the photograph chosen for the supplement was that of the meeting of Dáil Éireann on April 1st, 1919, and not that of the first meeting of January 21st, 1919. The selection of the correct photograph is important as it was the 24 men pictured in the January photograph who were mainly responsible for the significant declarations made on that day: the Declaration of Independence, the Message to the Free Nations of the World and the Democratic Programme. Michael Collins and Harry Boland also contributed to these statements but they were not present in January as they were planning the escape of de Valera from Lincoln jail. Members of the Labour Party also contributed to the contents of the Democratic Programme.

Second, there is no presentation of the character of Lord French's rule in Ireland, although there is an article by Ronan McGreevy on his attempted assassination. An understanding of Lord French's position is critical to any understanding of the War of Independence and the role of the Royal Irish Constabulary in that war. Lord French was appointed on May 6th, 1918, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on the understanding with Lloyd George that he was "to set up a quasi-military government in Ireland with a soldier lieutenant". His appointment was made to counter the response of all Irish politicians to the imposition of a Conscription Act on Ireland on April 12th, 1918. That response had been made on April 18th, 1918, at a large gathering in the Mansion House, in which it was declared that the Act was "a declaration of war on the Irish people". Eamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith of Sinn Féin were joined by John Dillon and Joseph Devlin of the Irish Party and by representatives of the Labour Party and trade unions. Their action was supported by the Roman Catholic hierarchy. It was in this context that Lord French, signing himself "Governor General", issued a proclamation on May 16th, which announced that some people were plotting with the Germans. This led to the arrest and imprisonment, without trial, of over 100 men and women of the Sinn Féin party.

So significant were these events that a case might be made that they marked the first steps of the War of Independence; at the very least they cannot be ignored in any consideration of the background to the meeting of the first Dáil Éireann. They also serve to confirm that the RIC was no ordinary police force. Since the start of the first World War in 1914, the RIC had implemented the Defence of the Realm Act and the Defence of the Realm Regulations, both of these measures taking precedence over civil law; and, while continuing to implement these Acts, they also enacted the martial law edicts of Lord French. In short they were not a normal police force; they sustained a military dictatorship.

Brian Murphy *osb*
(*Irish Times*, 23.1.18)

Unpublished Letter to *Sunday Independent*

Gene Kerrigan on Robert Emmet

Gene Kerrigan concluded his extravagant verbal rampage (*Sunday Independent*, December 30) "If Robert Emmet could see us now...", with a bizarre notion; "the people are no longer all white; the languages are varied ... but that is what a country looks like and sounds like when it's taking its place among the nations of the earth".

But Emmet lived more than two centuries ago in a world so very different; the Ireland we know today would have been unconceivable to him and his contemporaries.

To link the country we see today "outside on the streets", as Kerrigan puts it, with Emmet's well known phrase is absolute and utter jaw-dropping rubbish.

Ted O'Sullivan
(4.1.2019)

Does It Up

Stack ?

WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

To say that the article in *Irish Examiner*, 19th January 2019 by Michael Clifford was disappointing is an understatement. Usually, he writes insightfully, accurately and truthfully about current affairs. But his article on the War of Independence was the usual lying anti-Irish version put out by British propaganda. He writes of "*the second phase of commemorations*". There was no second-phase during the War, which started when Ulster Volunteers imported 20,000 guns at Larne in support of the British State. That led to the formation of the Irish Volunteers throughout Ireland from 1914 onwards. The Irish Volunteers then began buying guns with money contributed by the people. Consignments of guns were brought in at several places around the country including near Youghal, Co. Cork. Guns and ammunition were also bought from sympathetic and needy members of the British forces.

Soloheadbeg was an incident in the ongoing War of Independence but it certainly and verifiably was not the first as stated by Michael Clifford. From the first gunshots fired on Easter Monday 24th April 1916, the War of Independence continued for four years until the Truce, and it went on throughout Ireland. For those four years, the Irish Volunteers' activities were punished by the RIC and by the British Army on a day-to-day basis. The British forces murdered and tortured prisoners routinely throughout the four years. Irish Volunteers were in gaol not only in Ireland but in British gaols in England. Michael Clifford should have on his bookshelf and he should read '*Rebel Cork's Fighting Story*', '*Dublin's Fighting Story*', '*Limerick's Fighting Story*' and '*Kerry's Fighting Story*', to name just four books published by Mercier Press in Cork.

And you don't have to depend only on Tom Barry's great book '*Guerrilla Days in Ireland*'. There is also '*Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter*' written from verifiable sources by the great Irish historian Meda Ryan and also published by Mercier Press.

It is a fact that, at Kilmichael, Tom Barry stood waiting in the middle of the road in an Irish Army uniform in front of

the oncoming lorry-load of well-armed British Army Officers until he threw his hand grenade into the lorry as the signal to begin the battle. Beat that for sheer courage! Later at the battle of Crossbarry where the British Army were trying to encircle Tom Barry and his Volunteers, the Irish were outnumbered 10-1 and yet Tom Barry and the Irish Volunteers stood and fought and won the battle. British Army deaths were 33 and the rest of them, over 1,000 war-hardened soldiers ran away. Tom Barry lost three of his men.

These two battles were discussed in the English Parliament in London. They had cause to be very afraid. The English soldiers who fought and died at Kilmichael were battle-hardened officers who had fought in the Great War whereas the Volunteers who beat them had no battle experience and had only one week of training by Tom Barry who had been in the British Army himself.

The British soldiers, over 1,000 of them who fought and lost at Crossbarry were all battle-hardened men commanded by the then Major A.E. Percival. They attacked the Irish Volunteers on four fronts: from barracks at Cork, Kinsale, Bandon and Ballincollig. The Irish were 104 Volunteers including Flor Begley the Piper, who played his bagpipes throughout the battle which put great fear into the British. The British soldiers ran away as their divisions were defeated. They threw away their guns to lighten themselves for the running away across a small river and over a bog to the main Cork-Bandon road from where they walked back to Bandon (7 miles) and to Kinsale and Cork.

As they fled, Tom Barry and his men set their Lorries and armoured cars on fire. Major Percival must have run away too because he was not afterwards seen. He was an extremely cruel commander of the Essex Regiment. Many men went out of their minds due to torture by the shameful Essex Regiment under Percival. In true British form, Major Percival was promoted to General and as General Percival, he next appeared in public in Ireland on our cinema screens when he starred in a Pathé Newsreel—surrendering his sword to the Japanese Army at the Fall of Singapore.

Tom Barry and his friends, among whom was my father, were invited to a private showing of the newsreel by the Manager of the Savoy Cinema in Cork and when he saw General Percival surrendering again to a smaller force than what he commanded, Tom Barry commented:

"Ha, you coward Percival and you were a coward at Crossbarry too!"

As a result of his conduct at Singapore and Crossbarry, it is almost impossible to get any information on Percival. Any references have been airbrushed out of their reference books. Take the extensive '*Cambridge Biographical Encyclopedia*', a massive work—yet there is not one reference to Percival except to a former British Prime Minister of that name who had been assassinated. But from the material we have about him and from sources like Tom Barry—we do know that not only was he a coward but he was a despicable character too.

The British now, after Crossbarry, knew that this was a war they could not win unless they invested at least another 70,000 troops into Ireland. And the British were already in trouble because soldiers with Irish connections were refusing to be sent to Ireland as is revealed in the diaries of Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson which show the following entry:

"July 5th 1921. This afternoon S. of S" (Secretary of State—MS) "A.G." (Adjutant General- MS)) "Macready and I had a long talk about what we were to do with officers and men who applied not to be sent to Ireland when ordered there. These cases are becoming more and more numerous"

Also, the British were spread over too many fronts from which they would have had to withdraw regiments and also, as General Montgomery put it bluntly later on, stating:

".. we must always keep at least two regiments at home to quell any civil unrest."

The biggest problem the British had, and the reason they ran away at Crossbarry, was that the British soldier was only fighting for his pay and the Irish Volunteer was fighting for his home and family. Such was the crucial factor that proved who had the greatest motivation and that was hands down—the Irish.

Michael Clifford in his untruthful propaganda article casts doubt on Tom Barry's truthfulness and by his tone belittles the men and women who fought for and partially achieved the freedom of Ireland. Let him ponder and meditate on the following extract from '*Guerrilla Days in Ireland*':

"Just one more of the many memories of those splendid people whom British aggression failed to break. The Crowleys of Kilbrittain. On a February day four of us left the Flying Column to visit the parents of Lieutenant Patrick Crowley who had been killed by the Essex Regiment. We came out from a wood at the back of the place where their homes once stood, about five hundred yards from Kilbrittain Black and Tan Post. Unseen

Honouring Or Traducing Irish Heroes *While Covering Academic Ass*

we approached the destroyed house and saw Mrs. Crowley sitting on a stool in the yard, gazing thoughtfully at the ruins of her blown up and burned out house, while Mr. Crowley moved some rubble to strengthen the little henhouse which alone had escaped the orgy of British destruction.

Those two, near the close of their days, he, grey-bearded, thin, and hardy, she ageing and frail looking, neatly dressed in black, were alone. Paddy had been killed by the British a week previously, Denis lay badly hurt in a British Jail after a merciless beating by his captors. Con, one of our best fighters was also a prisoner under the name of Patrick Murphy, and the shadow of death hung over him too, for should he be recognised, another Crowley would die for Ireland. The fourth and remaining son, Mick, seriously wounded early in the struggle, was a leading Flying Column Officer, and his chance of survival did not appear to be high as he, too, was a most active and daring officer.

The two daughters, Ciss and Birdie, among the most excellent of our Cumann na mBan, were absent on IRA work and would not return until late that night. The sorrows and sufferings of this ageing couple must have weighed heavily on them, but there was no signs of weakness or complaints as they listened to our words of sympathy at the death of their fine son. They were indomitable, unbreakable and proud of the part all their children were playing in the battle for freedom. To them, Pat had died well for Ireland, and it was unthinkable that any other sons would not fight on equally well until the end. It was God's Will that Pat had died, and perhaps He would see that the others would be spared. And one day when the British were driven out they would rebuild their home.

Who can fully estimate the value of men and women like those in a Nation's fight against alien rule?"

These were real people and their families still live and thrive in West Cork and bear witness to the truth of what Tom Barry wrote. It is despicable of Michael Clifford to abuse War of Independence material in the way he did. His justifications for his hatchet job may be that he gets paid to write like that. We are supposed to be commemorating the War of Independence and not criticising it.

Pdraig Pearse, Eamon de Valera, Michael Collins, Tom Barry, Constance Markievicz, Leslie Price, Mary and Muriel MacSweeney, Richard Mulcahy *et al* are in my opinion the principal heroes of our War of Independence. Take any one of them away and it would not have happened or been the success it was.

And where would be the likes of Michael Clifford be in a world that the above had not been able to create? Truly was the word "*presstitutes*" coined for his like!

Michael Stack ©

This January 6th, I had the honour of being among the platform speakers invited to address the Memorial Meeting, held in the East End of London's Bishopsgate Institute, for the Dublin-born veteran Communist, Max Levitas (1 June 1915—2 November 2018). I had also attended his funeral in Rainham on November 6th, three decades on from having formed a particularly close bond of friendship with both Max himself and his International Brigade brother, Maurice Levitas (1 February 1917—14 February 2001), whose childhood home had been only a few streets away from my own childhood home a generation later.

(See <https://comeheretome.com/2015/10/02/max-levitas-100-year-old-jewish-dubliner-and-working-class-hero/> for when I hosted Max Levitas on his centenary return to his native Dublin in 2015.

See www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/max-levitas-obituary-dublin-born-jewish-communist-who-fought-british-fascism-1.3737515 for the online version of my obituary of Max in the *'Irish Times'* on 22nd December 2018.

See also <http://irelandscw.com/obit-MLevitas.htm> for my previous obituary of Maurice Levitas in the *'Irish Times'* on 24th February 2001. I had also given the oration at Maurice's funeral in Golder's Green that February 23rd.)

The last time I met Max himself was when I shared a platform with him at the *Battle of Cable Street* 80th anniversary celebration on 9th October 2016, where I stated:

"Thirty years ago, Maurice Levitas told me of the political choices that had faced him as a teenager here in Whitechapel: *'I could choose to be either a Communist or a Zionist. I chose to become a Communist.'*" Now, comrades and friends, I myself am not a Communist. I have not been one for 35 years. But, as an ex-Communist, I am also immensely proud of having been one! And in the wake of month after month of the most bigoted and hysterical Red-baiting in the British media, there is one historical fact that all of us should publicly acknowledge today. We would not be here celebrating the 80th anniversary of the defeat of Mosley's Fascists, were it not for the leadership given on that day by Britain's Communist Party, and the likes of Max Levitas, Secretary of the Young Communist League's Stepney Branch, and Maurice Levitas, Secretary of its Bethnal Green Branch."

Max Levitas had himself further related:

"We also had to fight against the Jewish

Board of Deputies, where the Jewish Board of Deputies said that if Mosley tried to march through the East End of London we should shut our doors. Our thoughts were: Why shut our doors? They shut the doors in Germany."

In my obituary of Max, it had also been important for me to place on the record the immigrant Levitas family's support for Ireland's War of Independence:

"The eldest of six siblings, Max Samuel Levitas—Motl Shmuel ben Hillel—was born in June 1915 at 15 Longwood Avenue in the South Circular Road, Portobello, area of Dublin, then known colloquially as 'Little Jerusalem'. A year later, the family moved as sub-tenants to an artisan dwelling at 8 Warren Street, where his brother Maurice, later an International Brigade volunteer in the Spanish anti-Fascist War, would be born in February 1917. Situated directly across the Grand Canal from Portobello Barracks, the area was the scene of numerous gun battles, during both the War of Independence and the Civil War, of which Max had vivid childhood memories. But there was no doubt about where the family stood. 'We're voting for Sinn Féin!' as Harry Levitas would inform Leah."

It was even more important to explain why, unlike his brothers Maurice and Sol, who had served overseas in the British Army during the Second World War, Max had not. As I stated at the memorial meeting, the heading given to the online version of my obituary—"Dublin born Jewish communist who fought British fascism"—was more to the point than the shortened "who fought fascism" wording in the print version. For Max had not gone on to fight German fascism. He had been prevented from doing so. My obituary explained both how and why:

"In 1941, determined to see the defeat of Nazi Germany, Max volunteered for combat in the British Army. But his military career was short-lived. "I was 'invalided' out", was how Max described the euphemistic language used by his superiors in dismissing him for punching a British Army officer. A court martial was deemed undesirable, as it would have revealed that Max had punched the officer for addressing him as 'a dirty Jew'. It was a case of literally having to strike a blow against anti-Semitism on the Home Front itself."

As I added at the meeting, Max Levitas had been prevented from fighting against

Nazi Germany by the anti-Semitism of the British Establishment itself. I regarded it as unfortunate that space considerations meant that, in the print edition of my obituary, my "strike a blow" sentence had been among those omitted. The previous "punched the officer" sentence had, however, been retained. There was no question of censorship here, not least because the whole of my obituary, as submitted, is available intact online.

But if the *Irish Times*' Obituaries Editor behaved with total integrity, it has been a very different story with its Letters Editor. The January 2019 issue of *Irish Political Review* has compared the doctored version of a letter in defence of the character and reputation of Father Michael O'Flanagan, as published by the *Irish Times*' this past December 17th, with what had been excised by its Letters Editor from that originally submitted by me on December 8th.

Now, Michael O'Flanagan (1876-1942) remains one of my all time Irish heroes, and I will always spring to his defence. When Cathal Brugha presided over the inaugural meeting of Dáil Éireann on January 21st, 1919, he hailed Fr. Michael O'Flanagan as "the staunchest priest who ever lived in Ireland", and it was yet another honour for me to have been invited by the Howth Peninsula Heritage Society to give a memorial lecture on Flanagan this January 22nd, one century and a day after that central historic event in the nation's democratic march.

In his 2004 book, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, Diarmaid Ferriter had maintained:

"Mrs Tom Barry's statement to the Bureau of Military History recorded that at the time of the Rising in 1916, Fr Michael O'Flanagan, later vice-president of Sinn Féin, had remarked of the fighters in the General Post Office, 'let these people burn to death, they are murderers'." (p151).

I refuted that falsehood more than twelve years ago, in my article entitled "What If A Patriot Priest Has Been Traduced?" which was published in *Irish Political Review*, July 2006. See <http://carrowkeel.com/frof/traduced.html> to access that article online.

Yet, as recently as just four years ago, Professor Ferriter remained a repeat offender. In the *Irish Times* of 11th March 2015, Patsy McGarry began his report on the launch of Ferriter's new tome, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution 1913-1923*, with the proclamation: "Historian and *Irish Times*' columnist Diarmaid Ferriter has warned against

'shameless celebrations' of Ireland's past ..." With no obvious change in his behaviour known to me, I was prompted to pen a further article, published two years later, in *Irish Political Review*, March 2017, and subheaded: "**An *Irish Times* history professor columnist**". I pointed out:

"In 2004, sloppy, incompetent and unprofessional research on Professor Ferriter's part had led him to confuse two very different priests, Fr. John Flanagan, of Dublin's Pro-Cathedral, and Fr. Michael O'Flanagan, the Roscommon Sinn Féin leader who had, of course, championed the Rising. The result was that Ferriter slandered the man hailed by Cathal Brugha as "the staunchest priest who ever lived in Ireland". In his 2015 book, Ferriter compounded the slander, by unapologetically regurgitating it:

"Leslie Price (who would later marry General Tom Barry—MOR) stated that at the time of the Rising in 1916 Fr Michael O'Flanagan, later vice president of Sinn Fein, had remarked to her of the fighters in the General Post Office: "let these people burn to death, they are murderers"." (p 160).

Up to this point, I had been quite content with refuting Ferriter in this magazine, and leaving it at that. But in the *Irish Times*' this past December 8th, in an 'authoritative' essay on the December 1918 General Election, its 'star' columnist, Fintan O'Toole, regurgitated the Ferriter falsehood, maintaining that Sinn Féin's "leading propagandist, Fr Michael O'Flanagan, had strongly opposed the Rising and allegedly referred to those who took part as 'murderers'."

That very day I emailed my aforementioned letter to the *Irish Times*'. When this had not been published a week later, I penned a report for the January issue of this magazine, based on the assumption that the wagons had been circled to protect Professor Ferriter's academic ass. I was correct in that assumption, but had not anticipated the precise form of such *Irish Times*' protective action. A full week had been taken to decide whether or not to publish my letter or in what doctored form.

Its publication on December 17th was just in time for me to amend my report for this magazine's January issue. I noted the omission of a key clause, exonerating Mrs. Barry for being responsible for that slur on the patriot priest, for while she—

"had indeed named the 1916 Easter Week curate at Dublin's Pro-Cathedral as a 'Father Michael O'Flanagan', she herself was in no way responsible for confusing him with the Father Michael O'Flanagan who was at that time a parish curate in his native Roscommon, and

already a public figure and member of the Sinn Féin Executive."

Moreover, my concluding reference to "an inaccurate historical narrative" had also been excised.

I did not, however, have the time at that precise moment to address the statement that had been also been attached to the published version of my letter: "*The error in the statement by Mrs Tom Barry (Leslie Price) was rectified in the paperback edition of Diarmaid Ferriter's 2015 book 'A Nation and Not a Rabble'.—Letters Ed.*" This surprised me in more ways than one. As soon as I got the chance, I proceeded to check out this supposed 'new fact'.

That editorial statement had been rather disingenuous, to put it mildly. For it had been as recently as 2015 itself, in my own copy of the hardback edition of 'A Nation and Not a Rabble', published in London by Profile Books—and in New York by Overlook Books—that Professor Ferriter had yet again written: "*Leslie Price stated that at the time of the Rising in 1916 Fr Michael O'Flanagan, later Vice President of Sinn Féin, had remarked to her of the fighters in the General Post Office: 'let these people burn to death, they are murderers'...*" (p 160).

When I went to a bookshop to check out the accuracy of the *Irish Times*' editorial statement, it was indeed the case that in the paperback edition, also published by Profile Books later that same year, Ferriter had rewritten that sentence to now read: "*Fr John O'Flanagan, of Dublin's Pro-Cathedral, had remarked...*" (also p 160).

Yet in his new footnote on page 427, Ferriter further wrote: "*Price mistakenly identified Fr John O'Flanagan (sic), as Fr Michael O'Flanagan, who was later Vice President of Sinn Féin, but was not in Dublin during the Rising.*" But she most certainly did not! While Price (Barry) had got Fr. John Flanagan's name wrong, as Ferriter himself continued to get his surname wrong, a thorough investigation of her Witness Statement makes it clear that in no way had she confused him with Sinn Féin's Michael O'Flanagan. That had been Ferriter's own mistake, and solely his, only to be repeated by Fintan O'Toole.

Rather than wrongly trying to shift the blame for his own mistake to Mrs. Barry, a gentleman scholar would have had the decency to put up his hand. But that would be too much to expect from the Professor. And, with the hardback edition still in the bookshops without any correction slip, perhaps Overlook Books is indeed the appropriate name for that imprint!

Leslie Price (1893-1984) was married to General Tom Barry (1897-1980), the heroic West Cork Flying Column commander and architect of the War of Independence victories at Kilmichael and Crossbarry. But she did not call herself "Mrs Tom Barry", as the Bureau of Military History designated her, but *Leslie Bean de Barra*. She was no appendage of her husband. Indeed, the independent mindedness of each was further illustrated by the fact that, while Leslie enthusiastically gave a Witness Statement to the BMH, Tom's own Witness Statement was limited to a denunciation of the whole project! More significantly, Leslie Bean de Barra was a hero of both the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence in her own right. Her Witness Statements at www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS1754.pdf and RTE interviews at www.rte.ie/archives/2014/0409/607504-remembering-leslie-de-barra-of-cumann-na-mban/ and www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1993-easter-1916/portraits-1916/799553-portraits-1916-leslie-de-barra/ are all evidence of her heroism. And it is in traducing such a hero that the *'Irish Times'* has now joined Ferriter himself.

This past October, Garda Maurice McCabe received his final vindication, with the publication of the Third Interim Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into protected disclosures. In his Afterword, the Honourable Mr Justice Peter Charleton was to single out one particular role model for heroic and ethical service to the Republic:

"This tribunal was set up by the National Parliament in February 2017. The previous year was when our republic celebrated 100 years since its proclamation in 1916. While the events detailed in this report constitute an unwelcome reflection on aspects of our national life, we must be reassured at least by the thought that we have both the right of free speech and the legal structures whereby the truth may be searched for. Putting matters to rights is, however, harder. While less prominent in 2016, in 1966, a time when many of the heroic men and women who led the national movement half a century earlier might still have been alive, there was debate as to the leadership they might have given had they survived and not been executed. In a way, that debate was futile. The reality was that the answers were there among us. Leslie Price, for instance, had shown amazing courage and independence of thought on the battlefield in Dublin, rising from volunteer to officer through her work as a messenger, and later in life showed unwavering support for and advocacy on behalf of the oppressed, under her married name of Leslie de Barra, through the Irish Red Cross" (p 301).

The *Charleton Report* is indeed replete with ethical considerations. On "*direct and indirect calumny*" he wrote:

"According to a sermon, a penitent once went to a priest for confession. The sin was gossip. The priest suggested a penance: that the person go to the top of the church tower and tear apart a feather pillow, releasing its contents to the wind. The penitent was to return to confession the following week. Smugly, the fulfilment of the penance was then announced. The priest said: that's not all—now go and pick up each feather" (p 222).

And from Immanuel Kant's "*On a Supposed Right to Lie From Altruistic Motives*", Charleton quoted: "*A principle recognised as true... must never be*

abandoned, however obviously danger seems to be involved in it." He elaborated:

"But one must only understand the danger not as a danger of accidentally doing a harm but only as a danger of doing a wrong. This would happen if I made the duty of being truthful, which is unconditional and the supreme juridical condition in testimony, into a conditional duty subordinate to other considerations" (p 296).

For the *'Irish Times'*, the duty of being truthful about Leslie Bean de Barra has now been made subordinate to no higher an "*altruistic motive*" than that of despicably covering the academic ass of its columnist Professor.

Manus O'Riordan

WW2 Food Rationing In Northern Ireland

There is a lot of foodstuff people can do without. During WW2, in Northern Ireland, there was rationing, and rations couldn't be got without British rationing books.

Adults and children were issued with an Identity Card with a number made up of digits and letters. The same ID number would be used for the NHS medical cards in 1948, when the NHS came into being. During WW2 any shop could ask you for your Identity Card if they were suspicious about your ration book origins.

Confectionery was rationed to two ounces per month per person. Children rarely saw the sweets as they were kept to sweeten the tea because of severe sugar rationing, non-rationed cough sweets were available for the under fives only.

Try putting one of those in your tea.

There was very little butter but instead there was vitamin-reinforced margarine, in wartime wrappers as if government-issued. It wasn't rationed but it had an unpleasant taste. Usually the butter ration was mixed with the margarine to take some of the taste away.

Belfast having easy access to the countryside meant butter could be bought from farms on the black-market at inflated prices. Usually it was the farmer's wife who churned it. It was known as country butter and was of a high quality.

Eggs being rationed the same farm could supply you with a dozen or two at inflated prices, also on the black-market.

Heavy industry for the war effort was going full belt in the shipyard and aircraft factories and other heavy engineering works and wages were high. A skilled worker could end up with money they had nothing to spend it on except on butter and eggs.

Everything you touched was rationed, like timber for example, which could only be got in a couple of three-foot lengths and

only issued if it was for repairing a bed, table or chairs. You might get that once a year but mostly it wasn't available.

But I am concerned mostly with foodstuff here. Besides sugar being rationed, there was salt, cooking oil, cooking fats, meat, eggs, bacon and cheese. The cheese was only of one variety—Cheddar cheese, usually called Government Cheddar by the disgruntled.

A form of socialism reigned during WW2 and, with Labour Party agitation, what was called British Restaurants was also set up in Belfast and in other parts of NI. They were vegetarian with potatoes being high on the menu. You could have mashed potato between two slices of wholemeal bread.

It might not sound appetising now but they were always full of mothers and their hungry children and the elderly living on miserable pensions because the prices were kept to a minimum.

Those who went hungry during the 1930s could now get enough to eat. That was the aim of the Labour Party. They also managed to bring down the price of the rationed foodstuff to a minimum.

There was free orange juice or black-currant juice plus free cod-liver oil for the under fives. Whole oranges were for pregnant women only, when available.

(In 1948 with the advent of the NHS orange juice and cod liver oil was again made available for pregnant women and the under fives.)

What wasn't rationed was rabbit, hare, liver and kidney, when available.

Coffee wasn't rationed but it was so expensive it was rarely bought. Anyway the majority of people in NI rarely thought of coffee though tea was severely rationed. Coffee was drunk when relatives arrived to show a form of genteel living.

It was bottled coffee mostly comprising of chicory. It was called 'Camp Coffee'.

The label on the bottle showed an officer in the British Army attached to a Scottish regiment decked out in kilt and sporrans being attended to by a bowing Indian servant who carried a cup of Camp Coffee on a silver platter. I think the regiment was the King's Own Scottish Murderers.

Anything that had to be brought in by the merchant navy was going to be severely rationed. They brought in dried eggs in waxed packets from the US. They were used for scrambled eggs or an omelette. But usually omelette wasn't thought of in NI nor was pizza and spaghetti. We were living in the middle of farms with roosters crowing everywhere and here we were getting dried eggs from the US through our ration books. Ships were being torpedoed bringing it in. It was hard to understand—until post-war when you heard of the hardships of rationing in London and Southern England where even bread and potatoes were rationed.

Distribution of the US dried eggs obviously had to cover what was called the UK

In the countryside my family, with myself included, grew potatoes and vegetables and reared a few hens. You just went out to the garden and pulled up an iceberg lettuce and made sandwiches with the wholemeal bread for the family in the evening.

The bread was almost black at the beginning until a widespread protest saw it go dark brown.

At school between geometry and algebra the alarm bells would go off and a shout of ATTACK! ATTACK! Hugging the walls, as instructed in what could only be military exercises, you would go to the air raid shelter. Then the all clear and a defiant march up and down the playground. Probably a demonstration against Hitler.

At other times a hand bell would ring around the school with shouts of GAS! GAS! You would put on your gasmasks. Wearing them for more than three minutes and you could suffocate. Totally useless. Real gasmasks issued to the British armed forces had an oxygen canister. Ours were just a propaganda exercise. You had to carry them every day to remind you that there was a war on, I suppose.

The teachers became barking sergeant majors and you square-bashed every day, boys and girls. At lunch time you played pretty aggressive war games of Ambush, boys and girls together. Only for the girls' intervention at times the boys might be taken to killing one another.

One of our teachers, a Miss Flack, suddenly turned up one morning in a British army officer's uniform. She had come to say goodbye to us. She was off to war.

There were tears in her class though she had used unarmed combat on one of the bigger farmer's sons when he kicked her. She was already ploughing the fields with two horses at the age of 13. He cried the loudest.

She was a pretty young woman with Russian-type plaits and with her leaning over you to examine your school book, and her plaits brushing your face tended to bring on previously unknown feelings. We never saw her again. You dare not ask the teachers what became of her as you only answered when spoken to in the best military style.

Each morning every pupil was given a third of a pint of milk free. The school cookery room had the girls learning how to make vegetarian dishes. One clever girl managed to produce a sauce that tasted like bananas. Bananas wouldn't be seen during WW2 so there was great excitement throughout the school. Everyone went bananas. The girl was asked to produce a bowlful. The usually stern, cane and tae-wielding headmaster was running from classroom to classroom overjoyed asking us to dip our finger into the bowl and taste it. There was sort of anarchy for a while until the shouting started and the playground became the parade ground again to re-instil discipline.

Then it was Dig-for-Victory, down to the plots to grow food. You were told, no, ordered, to cultivate your garden if you had one. Or there would be wigs-on-the-green.

No gardens? then pick a grassy verge by the side of the road and grow there.

That occurred and it was rare for anything to be stolen. A teacher might invite themselves up to your home to see your handiwork. No cultivation then it was a shouting match the next day and a marching up and down the playground and more shouting ringing over the countryside.

(The last time I heard that shouting was in 1966 when I was living in Monkstown, Dublin, beside a Christian Brother school. He was shouting in Irish and marching the boys up and down the playground. Being the anniversary of the 1916 Uprising, it was a happy enough sight and sound.)

But before that in NI during WW2 local farmers who had tractors ploughed all night with cowled lights. And continued even on the first night German bombers flew over Carryduff on their way to visit Belfast heavy industry. The pressure sure was on to grow food.

In Belfast there were plenty of chip shops and sometimes they might have fish.

There were also cooked pig trotter shops and shops or cafes that sold nothing but hot peas and vinegar. These shops still existed for a number of years after WW2.

For years post-WW2 women would call shopping for food '*Getting the rations in*'.

With all this cosy WW2 spirit, sectarianism was still the number one battlefield.

For a job in the shipyard I was interviewed at the age of 12 in 1944. The interviewer was more interested in my religion than in Hitler. I was asked a number of questions that could only be called entrapment but with my Protestant name and going to a Protestant school plus tuition from my father on how to

act as a Protestant (sit up straight and look him in the eye) I passed. It seems we Catholics walk the earth as if we are alien to it while the Protestant will step out as if they own it.

During the 1980s I was in Australia and, in talking to my then wife's uncle's wife, I discovered she had as a Jewish schoolgirl in Berlin during WW2, having been taken in by a neighbour. (The rest of her family had been arrested with her being missed, being late home).

Wartime rationing in Germany was much the same as in Britain, right down to the wholemeal bread and the digging-for-victory. She spoke affectionately of that period in Germany, maybe as I'm writing now about wartime NI, though none of it was of any use to either of us.

Rationing remained until 1954 in England. In NI I don't remember it lasting as long as that. It seemed to have just quietly faded away by 1946 when I first started work.

Coming to England in 1954 I remember how disgusting the food was with its anaemic sausages and almost black potatoes.

*

Obviously reminders of the Irish Famines are emotive—thinking of a Conservative Party apparatchik's threatening Ireland with a food shortage because of Brexit.

But Ireland is a different country now. The most of it is in Irish hands and the Northern section is half in Irish hands. Do we need McDonald's if the crunch came, or Pizza parlours or chicken outlets. We can now eat our own produce which we couldn't do during the English-controlled famines.

Wilson John Haire

RIC continued

"Patrick McCarthy and Gerard Lovett, retired gardaí, (Letters, *Irish Examiner*, August 24, 2012) appear to believe that the force they served was but a continuation of the R.I.C. and D.M.P. They say they sought, so far in vain, for official (Irish) state commemoration of the 'over 500 police officers who were murdered by the I.R.A. during and after the War of Independence and in 1916'.

"They claim, disingenuously, that the point of their memorial is not to denigrate the role of the I.R.A. and others in 1916 and 1922, but to mark the lives and deaths of the policemen who suffered and died for doing their duty.

"It beggars belief that two men whose professional careers were spent in the service of a sovereign democratic Irish state can so confuse their role with that of forces whose role was to crush the movements for democracy and sovereignty in Ireland" (*Irish Examiner*. Donal Kennedy, August 27, 2012).



HANSARD 1803–2005, 1880s, 1880, JUNE 1880, 17 JUNE 1880, COMMONS SITTING, QUESTIONS.

The Irish Constabulary —The Oath

House of Commons Debate: 17/6/1880. Volume 253-cc185-6

MR. O'DONNELL asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he will lay upon the Table the Oath or Form of Attestation of the Irish Constabulary; and, whether it is true that freemasonry is the only secret society to which an Irish constable is expressly permitted or recommended to belong?

MR. W.E. FORSTER With the permission of the House, I will read the Oath itself, as it is not very long. It is administered according to the 6th William IV, cap. 13, section 6, and recites—

"I do swear that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lady the Queen, without favour or affection, malice or ill-will, that I will see and cause Her Majesty's peace to be kept and preserved, and that I will prevent to the best of my power all offence against the same, and that while I shall continue to hold the said office I will, to the best of my skill and knowledge, discharge all the duties thereof, in the execution of warrants and otherwise, faithfully, according to law, and that I do not now belong, and that I will not while I shall hold the said office, join, subscribe, or belong to any political society whatsoever, or to any secret society whatsoever, unless to the Society of Freemasons."

As the Honourable Gentleman will see, the man is not recommended to join the society of Freemasons. He is not disqualified from holding the office because he belongs to the society. It must be plain to the House that it would be perfectly absurd, or worse than absurd, to allow a member of the Constabulary to belong to what is generally understood to be a secret society. The idea of a member of the Constabulary being a Ribbonman, or anything of that kind, would be preposterous. With regard to the society of Freemasons, it is not generally thought to be an extraordinary evil society, and many of the Royal

Princes—for instance, the Prince of Wales—belong to it, and I cannot imagine they would be guilty of anything disloyal.

MR. FINIGAN Might I ask the right Honourable Gentleman, whether Orangeism is included as a secret society?

MR. W.E. FORSTER I am very ignorant of what Orangeism exactly is. I do not know whether it is a secret society or not. If the Honourable Member will give Notice of the Question, I will inquire about it.

MR. O'DONNELL I beg to give Notice that, with regard to the question of Freemasons in the Royal Irish Constabulary, I will call attention in Committee of Supply to the complaints made of the manner in which Freemasons help one another in the matter of promotions.

Mr. Francis Hugh O'Donnell (Born 1848-Died November 2, 1916.)

Constituencies: Galway March 20, 1874—May 30, 1874; Dungarvan January 24, 1877—November 24, 1885.

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Mr. William Forster (1818-1886): Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Liberal member for Bradford in the Second Gladstone administration.)

Mr James Finigan (Died 1900) Constituency: Ennis, July 26, 1879-1882. James Lysaght Finegan or Finigan (died 8 September 1900) was an Irish barrister, soldier, merchant and politician. He was educated by the Congregation of Christian Brothers and described as an "Anti-clericalist". In the 1879 by-election in Ennis he was proposed as an alternative candidate to that of the Home Rule League by Charles Stewart Parnell; he won by only six votes, out of 247 electors. His service in parliament was brief; he resigned in 1882.

Irish Examiner letter. 27th August 2012

"The Garda Síochána were not generally seen as a continuation of the Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) nor of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) Tom Kettle, the Home Rule M.P. who was to die serving in the British Army in Flanders, was clear about the function of the D.M.P. In his maiden speech in the House of Commons he said that the D.M.P. should not be paid for by the ratepayers of Dublin, but by the British War Office.

"The D.M.P.'s 'G' Division had long been infamous as an agent of espionage and repression, and was eventually neutralised by infiltration or elimination by the forces of Irish democracy. The role of the R.I.C. was defined by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, [Ian Macpherson, Liberal] in London's House of Commons in March, 1919. It was a "*semi-military body, under the direct control of the Crown, under much the same conditions as the army and navy forces.*"