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Folk Memory vs 'History'?

The recent resurgence of Republican sentiment, sparked off by the Government's proposal to honour the Royal Irish Constabulary, disrupted a revisionist process which had been gaining strength for about fifty years. It began when Jack Lynch's Fianna Fail reneged on its Northern obligations under the 1937 Constitution when faced with war in the North. Fine Gael's proposal, on the eve of an Election, to honour the contribution made to Irish freedom by the British paramilitary police force in Ireland, has brought it to a halt for the time being.

Fianna Fail freed itself from its anti-Treaty heritage a generation ago. It came across to the view that the legitimate Irish State was a British creation—a creation of the Treaty. The change was not enacted at an Ard Fheis but was announced in letters to the papers by Martin Mansergh. And there is no doubt that the RIC did contribute to the creation of the Treaty State—the Free State against which the founders of Fianna Fail conducted a military resistance. But the present Lord Mayor of Cork, though a staunch Fianna Failer, found that he could not take part in the celebration of the police force that murdered his predecessor in the Office, Thomas MacCurtain.

So Progress, all of a sudden, has been crashed into reverse gear. And out of the blue comes the prospect of Micheál Martin, a pioneering revisionist, becoming Taoiseach on a wave of Republican resurgence. Will he eat his words? Or will he have the mastery over memory that will enable him to forget that he was ever Eoghan Harris's parrot?

Diarmaid Ferriter, a UCD History Professor, who has risen to the eminence of being an *Irish Times* commentator, is cheesed off because the RIC Commemoration (which he along with Martin Mansergh advised the Government to undertake) has been abandoned in response to the outburst of populist feeling. He refers to this as "*the RIC debacle*". It happened because people were "*naively ignoring the complications of commemorating the War of Independence*" (see *Commemorations Need Political Leadership*, IT 18.1.20).

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The 1918 And Other Elections

At the dissolution of Parliament in 1918, Irish Nationalists held 73 seats and Sinn Fein held 6. Following the 1918 Election, the Nationalists retained 6 seats (some of them by arrangement with Sinn Fein).

Sinn Feiners, the winners in 73 seats, abstained from Westminster: about half of them by choice, the other half of them being in British prisons—most of them on charges of being involved in a German Plot, which Lord Wimborne, the Lord Lieutenant, dismissed as bogus.

The Sinn Feiners not in jail, in accordance with their National Mandate, established a National Parliament in Dublin to which all MPs returned by Irish constituencies were invited. The 6 Nationalists and 26 Unionist MPs chose to boycott that democratic assembly.

In the 1880s and again in 1906 the Unionist vote in Ireland far exceeded the Nationalist vote, but the Nationalists took the lion's share of the seats. But the Unionists did not wail "*we wuz robbed*". Had Unionists contested most

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Commemorating The First Dáil 'On This Day' In 1969: Excising Joe Clarke and Dennis Dennehy from the RTÉ website's footage.

The RTÉ Facebook page has, on this January 21, posted archive footage of the State commemoration on January 21, 1969, marking the 50th anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the First Dáil on January 21, 1919.

See www.rte.ie/archives/2019/0110/1022429-first-dail-50th-anniversary/ where the accompanying blurb reads: "There was an interruption during his (de Valera's) speech when 1916 veteran Joe Clarke protested that the commemoration

was a mockery since the programme of the First Dáil had not been implemented. However, Mr Clarke was quickly removed from the chamber and the President continued his speech."

See also www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/eamon-de-valera/720795-50th-anniversary-of-the-first-dail/ where the accompanying blurb gives a more informative description: "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

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James Connolly:

Parliamentary Democracy

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**DUE TO PRESSURE OF SPACE,
THE INDEX FOR 2020 HAS BEEN HELD OVER TO MARCH**

The War of Independence is complicated only if one ignores the fact that it followed an Election in which the British State was deprived of even a vicarious representative connection with three-quarters of Ireland, and ignores the fact that 1919 was the first year of the League of Nations, which supposedly inaugurated a new epoch in world history based on the principle of national self-determination, and ignores the fact that Britain recruited 2000,000 Irishmen for its 1914 War by the use of that slogan.

He quotes British Ulster academic, Edna Longley, in a statement of the obvious: "*Commemorations are as selective as sympathies. They honour our dead, not your dead*".

Peoples, in their capacity as States, do not honour the enemy dead whose purpose was to beat them down—not in the Anglosphere in recent centuries, anyway.

In a bygone era wars were fought over conflicts of interest between States and were settled by negotiation in the

light of what emerged in the trial of strength. Whole peoples were not worked up into a war frenzy. The enemy was not depicted as a demon, without honour. Peace therefore did not require the utter destruction and defamation of the enemy.

But those were bad wars in the British view. The only good wars were wars of Good against Evil, in which it was out of the question that the enemy should be negotiated with.

The notion of an honourable enemy was discarded as a romantic delusion of mediaevalism, and the distinction between the Citizen and the Army was done away with.

This was first done in the war against the Boer Republics, in which the British Army swept up whole swathes of the enemy populace into Concentration Camps, and it culminated, for the time being, in the nuclear bombing of two inoffensive Japanese cities.

Edna Longley is an expert on the poems of Edward Thomas. Thomas, in

his Great War poem, began like this—

This is no case of petty right or wrong
That politicians or philosophers
Can judge. I hate not Germans, nor grow
hot
With love of Englishmen, to please the
newspapers.

He ended:

I am one in crying, God save England,
lest
We lose what never slaves and cattle
blessed,
The ages made her that made us from
dust.
She is all we know and live by, and we
trust
She is good and must endure, loving her
so:
And as we love ourselves we hate her
foe.

But Thomas knew very well—he was a biographer of Marlborough—that England was only at stake because it had launched a balance-of-power war on Germany which Germany could only survive by defeating Britain. It did not occur to Longley to explain this: or to explain that, while the English were never slaves, they became what they were in 1914 through having been slave-owners and –traders on a vast scale.

The only real complication for the Irish side in the War of Independence was the way it ended. The British Government—democratically elected by the British people—did not negotiate with the Sinn Fein party which had swept aside its Empire Party (the Home Rule Party) in Ireland and established a representative Irish Government. It would negotiate only with "*plenipotentiaries*".

On whose behalf did the half-dozen Sinn Fein delegates have full power? Not on behalf of the Dail Government. Britain did not recognise the Dail. In the British view the delegates were free-ranging plenipotentiaries. They were an independent body by means of which Whitehall sought to set up a new way of governing Ireland.

But, from the Irish point of view, they were representative of the elected Dail Government, acting under its instructions. At a certain point Michael Collins decided to act as a plenipotentiary, against the instructions of his Government, and he did so without informing his Government that he now considered himself a free agent.

When, in September 1922, the Dail met for the first time after the June Election, there was a thorny problem to be got over before any business could be discussed: Was it a continuation of the Dails elected in 1918 and 1921, or was it something else entirely?

Lawrence Ginnell asked this question. When he didn't get an answer, he asked again. Again his didn't get an answer. He said he would continue asking the question until he got an answer, because how could the Dail deal competently with anything else if it couldn't give a clear answer to the simple question: What was it? Was it a new session of the 1921 Dail, or was it the representative assembly of some other Constitutional body that somehow replaced the State system established by the First Dail in 1919?

Ginnell was forcibly ejected, and the Dail carried on as if it knew what it was. Subsequent events, however, demonstrated that it did not know what it was. It just was. It was beyond its own power of comprehension. It was a kind of accident—an unlucky accident. It kept going by means of military power and political makeshifts, but, lacking a sense of coherent purpose, it was predestined to wither.

When it met in September 1922, after the June Election, there was in existence a Provisional Government. Where had it come from?

That Provisional Government was engaged in a 'Civil War' with half of the Dail that was elected in 1921. That War was launched by the Provisional Government in late June 1922, after the Election of mid-June 1922, but before the TDs elected in June were assembled into a Dail. The September Dail, whatever it was, had not authorised the War, and did not seem to know quite what the Provisional Government was that had launched it.

An the June 1922 Election itself, what was it?

If the Treaty had been a Treaty between the Dail Government and the Whitehall Government, and if the 1922 Election had been fought between a Treaty Party and an Anti-Treaty Party, there would be some grounds for arguing that the Election gave *de facto* authority to the Treaty Party to make war on the Anti-Treaty Party. But it was not a Treaty, and the Election was not contested by Treatyites against anti-Treatyites.

OoLISSays

Brendan Clifford (*Irish Political Review*, December) is not alone in his low opinion of James Joyce's '*Ulysses*'. Here are a couple of early reactions to the publication of the so-called "novel":

"My God, what a clumsy *olla putrida* James Joyce is! Nothing but old fags and cabbage-stumps of quotations from the Bible and the rest, stewed in the juice of deliberate, journalistic dirty-mindedness."

D.H.Lawrence, letter to Aldous Huxley, 15 August 1928
(*Olla putrida* is a hash or stew. NC)

"The first 200 pages of *Ulysses*... Never have I read such tosh. As for the first two chapters we will let them pass, but the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th—merely the scratchings of pimples on the body of the bootboy at Claridges."

Virginia Woolf, letter to Lytton Strachey, 24 April, 1922.

"I walked to Joyce's flat in the Rue Gallilée... He told me how the ban had been removed from '*Ulysses*' (OoLISSays, he calls it) in America... He told me that a man had taken OoLISSays to the Vatican and had hid it in the cover of a prayer book, and that it had been blessed in such a disguise by the Pope. He was half-amused by this and half impressed. He saw that I would think it funny, and at the same time he did not think it wholly funny himself. It was almost as if he had told me the story in the belief that it might help to lift the ban in England. My impression of the Rue Gallilée was the impression of a very nervous and refined animal—a gazelle in a drawing-room... I suppose he is a real person somewhere, but I feel that I have never spent half-an-hour with anyone and been left with an impression of such brittle and vulnerable strangeness."

Harold Nicolson to Vita Sackville-West, 4 February, 1934.

In fact Nicolson had been sacked from the BBC in 1931 by Lord Reith for praising *OoLISSays*. But *The Wake* was too much:

"I feel pretty glum and devote myself to reviewing. There is Joyce's '*Finnegans Wake*'. I try very hard indeed to understand that book but fail completely. It is almost impossible to decipher, and when one or two lines of understanding emerge like telegraph poles above a flood, they are at once countered by other poles going in the opposite direction. I see that at the back of it all there is some allegory turning around the Tristan saga. But the research involved in working out this loose mosaic is greater than any ordinary reader can possibly undertake. I truly believe that Joyce has this time gone too far in breaking all communication between himself and his reader. It is a very selfish book."

Harold Nicolson. Diary. 29 April, 1939.

Mind you, Joyce was perfectly capable of sending himself up. When an ill-wisher remarked: "*But, Mr Joyce, isn't some of your work rather trivial?*", Joyce replied: "*Yes, some of it is trivial and some quadrivial.*"

(The Trivium and Quadrivium made up the Seven Liberal Arts in the curriculum of the mediaeval University. A very Jesuitical joke.)

Niall Cusack

PS.

Apropos of nothing. Once you start quoting Harold Nicolson it is hard to stop (rather like pistachio nuts). I cannot resist this snippet:

Harold Nicolson. Diary. June 11, 1942.

"BBC Board. We discuss whether the clergy should use the microphone to preach forgiveness of our enemies. I say I prefer that to the clergy who seek to pretend that the bombing of Cologne was a Christian act. I wish the clergy would keep their mouths shut about the war. It is none of their business."

Collins, in a little act of rebellion against Whitehall, made an Election Pact with the anti-Treatyites that was designed to reproduce the Dail membership of the 1921 Election, and to share Government seats between Treatyites and anti-Treatyites.

If that agreement had been carried

through, it seems highly unlikely that there would have been a 'Civil War'—but that Whitehall would have been displeased. It was vital to it that the Irish should be put fighting the Irish.

Collins was instructed to end the Pact. He half did it, "*obliquely and by inference*" at the eleventh hour

before the election, so that it could not be said either that the Pact was broken or that it held. And, before the elected representatives met as a Dail, the Provisional Government made war on the anti-Treatyites. (The Election returned 94 Pact candidates, out of 128: 58 Treatyites and 36 Republicans. It elected a National Coalition Government.)

The Election was held on June 16th. Twelve days later Collins launched the war against the Republicans in order to ward off renewed British military action, and that act of war determined what the Dail would be when it finally met in September.

Again and again, since December 1921, he had acted under duress—duress which it sometimes seemed that he imposed on himself as a tactic. But, unfortunately, he needed to present himself as acting freely, rather than under British threats. This was a profound strategic mistake in the important sphere of things that has many names: politics, psychology, propaganda.

By the time the Dail met, Treatyism had hardened itself by war, and Collins was dead. He had got himself killed in a wild escapade into the territory of the Irish enemy he had made in preference to taking the risk of disobeying Whitehall instructions. It was his home territory and he could not recognise the fact that he had made it enemy territory. It seemed that he still lived in the era of IRB conspiracy and did not realise how autonomously political County Cork had become.

His small convoy was caught in a fortuitous ambush, in which he responded with schoolboyish heroics rather than as Commander in Chief. And he was the only one who was killed in the ambush.

His Government was then left to its own devices. It had become increasingly restive under his apparently capricious behaviour—for example making war on Britain in the Six Counties a few months after making what he called a Treaty with it.

He failed to communicate to the Government he formed what his purpose was if it was not the establishment of a Government under the Crown, within the Empire, freed from the influence of the IRA. There seems to be little doubt that that outcome was not his purpose. But, if it was something else, then its realisation depended on a cult of his personality. There was no routine sense

to his conduct. But the Government he left behind him was only capable of a routine of terror for the Oath and the Empire.

Its inheritance from him was the Treaty War. His successor, W.T. Cosgrave, said the Treaty would be forced down the throat of the country, even if it took 50,000 lives to do it.

*

Celebrating the contribution of the RIC was a trial run to see how much the country would swallow. If it swallowed that, it would swallow anything.

*

Ronan McGreevy, the most besotted Anglophile in the *Irish Times*, tells us (January 14) that the Lord Mayor of Cork Tomás Mac Curtain “was shot dead by a group of RIC officers, led by District Inspector Swanzy, who was later assassinated by the IRA”.

President Trump’s spokesman has recently clarified the meaning of “assassinate”. To assassinate means to murder, and murder is a criminal act. Commander Soleimani was not assassinated. He was blown to pieces within the law, the relevant law being the will of the United States.

So the Lord Mayor of Cork was just shot dead, but his killer was murdered!

Ruth Dudley Edwards, a kindred spirit of McGreevy’s, has explained that RIC killings were lawful because the RIC was an agency of the State. IRA killings were murders because the IRA was not acting for the State.

The Election which established the authority in Ireland for which the IRA acted apparently escaped Edward’s notice. That is understandable. It was barely noticed on its centenary.

McGreevy, however, knows that there was an election and that Sinn Fein won it, but he does not mention that a Government was formed on the basis of the Election result. The authority which turns a murder into a mere ‘killing; therefore remained with the British Government, which had lost all semblance of political connection with nationalist Ireland?

And McGreevy takes up the argument of Professor Philips of Trinity almost a century ago that Sinn Fein somehow contrived to win “70 per cent of the seats with 47 per cent of the vote”. But he concedes that Sinn Fein “would have achieved more than 50 per cent of the vote had it contested every seat”.

He does not explain why it did not contest every seat. It could not “contest” a seat in constituencies when no candidates stood against it. More than 20 constituencies were of that kind in 1918: constituencies which were heart and soul Sinn Fein in spirit.

McGreevy suggests that much of the damage to the British interest was done by the British system itself:

“Alarmed by how the British electoral system magnified majoritarian rule in Ireland, the British introduced proportional representative to give Protestants and unionists in the South and nationalists in the North a voice in elected assemblies.” (He does not mention that an early official act of Unionist government in the North was to abolish PR!)

He concludes by reflecting that “the chronic unfairness of the British electoral system” no longer exists in Ireland, thanks to British benevolence in imposing a better system on us in 1920, while retaining a bad system for themselves. So “Whatever the outcome, the electoral system first introduced 100 years ago this month will ensure that the result is a fair one”.

The British concern, of course, is to provide effective government for itself, while disabling others with a system that encourages fragmentation and incoherence.

The influence of “*Unionists in the South*” is exerted by other means than elections, where they are a negligible quantity. The voice of the Catholic minority in the North was going to be heard in any assembly, however elected, but it was arranged that it should be a futile voice in the only Assembly that mattered, the Westminster Parliament, from whose real and effective party-political life it was altogether excluded. The Parties that governed the state withdrew from the Six Counties when they were dressed up as ‘Northern Ireland’. And a voice outside the party system of the state is a voice in the wilderness in Britain.

CORRECTION to last issue

A Meeting At Skibbereen, Part 2:

Unfortunately the ‘Sir’ was inadvertently omitted in the allusion to Simon Kingston in paragraph 1.

**A Meeting At Skibbereen, Part 3
will appear
in the next issue**

[Continuing our series on the events of 1919 with the help of the daily newspaper of the First Dail, the *Irish Bulletin*.]

LEST WE FORGET (3)

The following are the Acts of Aggression committed in Ireland
by the Military and Police of the Usurping English Government,
during the week ending
June 14th, 1919.

SUMMARY

Date	July	Arrests	Raids	Sentences	Months	Armed Assaults	Suppressions & Proclamations	Courts Martial	Daily Total. (Exclusive of
7th		-	terms of imprisonment.) About 500	-	-	-	1	-	About 501 Approx.

Myths of pre-Boom Irish Employment

This Column had occasion last month to take issue with Paul Sweeney, ex-Workers Party/ICTU economist, over various sleights of hand in his description for a European social democrat audience of Irish economic development since the 1980s. He managed to account for that spectacular development in a few articles in *Social Europe* without once mentioning its prime architect, the social democratic nation builder, Charles Haughey. He also managed to insinuate some sort of an important role for the self-styled social democrats of the Labour and Democratic Left parties in the Irish economic success and in the project of social partnership, Haughey's unique instrument for affecting the "Irish economic miracle". Labour and DL/WP had in fact opposed every major decision paving the way for the boom and had even sought to derail social partnership from its earliest days, almost succeeding in destroying the ICTU position at the time.

Focusing on the key role of social partnership and the state/industry/union alliance that underpinned it, engineered by Haughey, the Column allowed various other throwaway remarks and sleights of hand by Sweeney to pass unremarked. One such was his assertion to the social Europeans that prior to the 1990s jobs boom, "*since Independence in 1922, the number of jobs in Ireland had remained stagnant at 1.1 million.*"¹

This assertion cannot be allowed stand. It portrays an image of a chronically stagnant economy and society over nearly a century, a failed state whose fortunes since "*Independence*" had been a catalogue of awfulness. That a trained Irish economist makes it can only bespeak malevolent propagandist intent.

In a fine article in this journal last year ('*Lemass in the De Valera Era—Some Economic Assessments*', *Irish Political Review*, July 2019), Manus O'Riordan referenced numerous economic authorities, from Prof. Kieran Kennedy to Prof. James Meenan and even Keynes himself, to demonstrate the extraordinary industrial successes of the two phases of De Valera's and Lemass's economic policies

between the 1930s and the 1960s, through protectionism in the earlier decades to the subsequent expansion boom following the "opening" of the late 1950s.

A pedant can point out that the overall level of employment remained unchanged throughout, and indeed actually declined, from 1,224,000 in 1936 to 1,063,000 in 1967. This was largely due to the economic crisis and mass emigration of the mid-1950s transition period. But in assessing the realities behind the figures for the Dev/Lemass periods it is important to drill down into them.

What occurred from the 1930s onwards was a large real shift from often purely fictitious "*employment*" in agriculture, forestry and fishing to manufacturing and industrial jobs. Between 1936 and 1967, employment in the former categories plummeted from 600,000 to 322,000 while those in manufacturing grew from 113,000 to 187,000. The catastrophically narrow industrial base bequeathed from British times – when less than one in ten workers was employed in any kind of manufacturing – was greatly expanded under the first decade of protectionism after 1932. It was the first expansion of employment and industry the country had experienced at all after nearly a century of laissez-faire economics, and was accompanied by a major expansion of productive wealth.

Between 1931 and 1938, under the first De Valera government, the volume of industrial production grew by an astounding 50 per cent. Given that agriculture was depressed and the international economy contracting and in turmoil, this growth was due almost entirely to the protectionist import-substitution drive by government and its other stimulus measures, such as house building, with over 70% of all new houses built in the period between the "Treaty" and the Second World War being constructed after 1932. Total industrial employment, according to the Census of Industrial Production, rose from 110,600 in 1931 to 166,100 in 1938, an expansion of 50% in just six years, or an average annual employment growth rate of over 6 per cent.

This economic success was achieved against a background of emigration,

which had been relentless since the 1840s, almost ceasing entirely. With Britain in deep recession, and the US, reeling from the Great Depression, closing its doors to immigration, Irish emigration between 1930 and 1940 averaged just 14,000 per annum, compared with 35,000 during the preceding decade. In 1932 there was even a small net inflow. The protectionist industrial boom in Ireland, against an international background of crisis, was a significant achievement. The new industries established also created pools of new skilled labour and managerial expertise which would provide the basis for the post-1950s second industrial expansion, of the Lemass era.

So, what of Sweeney's statement that "*since Independence in 1922, the number of jobs in Ireland had remained stagnant at 1.1 million*"? The fact is that in neither industry nor agriculture did the figures for "employment" refer to fully employed people. Many hundreds of thousands counted as "engaged" in agriculture, forestry and fishing – and even in industry – had been massively underemployed. In the absence of alternative opportunities, large families engaged on often subsistence marginal farms were viewed as "employed" in that enterprise, with family members euphemistically described as "relatives assisting". But those moving into industry from the 1930s were moving to new full-time paid and fully occupied industrial livelihoods created under protectionism. As Professor Meenan pointed out at the time, those at work, both in agriculture and in manufacturing, in 1967, "*were a great deal more fully employed than the larger numbers at work in 1936*".

Of those "employed" in 1936 and 1967, a far greater number in modern industrial trades at the later date compared to vast numbers merely being "relatives assisting" in often subsistence agriculture a generation previously. An industrial revolution had occurred, changing Ireland dramatically, and while it would again go into crisis in a further period of misplaced laissez-faire economics in the 1980s, the earlier transformation provided a bedrock for the 1990s recovery. That a highly trained Irish

economist of many decades' experience would glibly "inform" an audience of European social democrats that nothing of economic note occurred under nearly a

century of "Independence" ("stagnated") is a propaganda point too far even by one schooled in the curious Workers' Party school of history.

1. Sweeney's assertion is in [HYPERLINK "%22ht"www.socialeurope.eu/irelands-route-from-boom-to-bubble-to-bust](http://www.socialeurope.eu/irelands-route-from-boom-to-bubble-to-bust)

Fine Gael abandons the "Tans"!

Despite the undying efforts of many, "civil war politics" just keep coming back. You have "left" and "right" factions on both sides of that divide, but in itself it remains the stubborn basic fault line in Irish politics, and will remain so as long as there is a "national question" to contend with.

The recent row over Charlie Flanagan's RIC fest is instructive. That such a dispute would move to the centre of politics was unimaginable a few short years ago. The 2016 centenary celebrations of 1916 changed all of that. Initial plans for 2016 had foreseen an inane affair, with a PR video along the lines of "look how far we've come", and hardly mentioning the Rising at all, sparking a popular backlash. Public sentiment was mobilised by Sinn Féin in an extraordinary centenary re-enactment of the O'Donovan-Rossa laying-out in City Hall and funeral procession to Glasnevin of 1915. This was followed by Sinn Féin's largest ever poll result in the Republic in the 2016 election. The then Fine Gael-Labour coalition quickly drew the appropriate lesson, and organised ultimately impressive 1916 centenary celebrations, with the official Army at its centre. The popular demand to celebrate national independence as the greatest achievement of 20th century Ireland, and the 1916 Rising as unequivocally the seminal event of that heroic struggle, was satisfied.

The Flanagan RIC commemoration announced last year again raised suspicions that funny business was afoot. There was bewilderment about why the state felt compelled to "commemorate" such a force at all, as if anyone had forgotten them. But the government handling of its planned event became a "civil war politics" issue. It was soon credited in the first opinion poll of the general election as accounting for a massive slump in FG support. On 19 January the *Irish Times* reported Labour leader Brendan Howlin opining that FG's "poor showing" in the poll – at 20% compared to FF's 32% after being consistently equal in polls hitherto – was down to the "debacle that Fine Gael made of the black and tan issue." Tánaiste and Fine Gael deputy leader Simon Coveney "acknowledged the controversy surrounding Fine Gael's handling of a proposed

commemoration of the Royal Irish Constabulary 'probably' contributed to his party's poor performance in the poll".

But despite the government climbdown over the issue, it has not been resolved. What rankles with many is the "murder" issue. In his initial announcement of the planned commemoration, Charlie Flanagan fired from all cylinders. RIC men killed in the War of Independence, he said, had been "murdered" in the "line of duty", while "protecting communities from harm" (IT, 15/09/19). Ronan McGreevy is the current star *Irish Times* reporter, having been spotted and scooped up by Tara Street when he stood out in an earlier controversy with his book on Irish soldiers who fought with the British in the First World War ("Wherever the Firing Line Extends"). McGreevy championed Flanagan's ill-fated RIC fest from the start, ensuring it a prominence it might otherwise not have enjoyed. McGreevy reported as fact rather than as a quote from the minister that these RIC men had indeed been "murdered".

"Murder" is unlawful killing. The *Irish Times* uses such language carefully. When US President Trump had the senior Iranian state official, General Qassem Soleimani, blown to unrecognisable pieces, Tara Street, though aware that this occurred in breach of international law and was hence an illegal killing, i.e. murder, never once described it as "murder". But in repeated articles by McGreevy, the death of RIC men in 1919-21 was consistently described as such. When it came to Tomás MacCurtáin, the elected Cork Sinn Féin Mayor murdered by a pre-Tans RIC assassination team in March 1920, the *Irish Times*, through McGreevy, assiduously avoided the "m" word: MacCurtáin had simply been "killed"! The fact of the matter of course is that Dáil Éireann, elected in a landslide in December 1918, had decided to implement its mandate of establishing an independent state and parliament and resisting the attempts by the British state to crush them. The cutting edge of British enforcement was the RIC, and the Dáil called for a boycott of that imperial force, urging the "true Irishmen" in its ranks to resign rather than act against their own people. In clashes between the remaining loyalist RIC force and the democratic

forces of the Dáil, RIC men may be killed. They would be casualties of war, their deaths by definition not "murder". Using the term "murder" today to describe their deaths is to emphatically deny the political legitimacy of the 1918 election and the First Dáil. But, undeterred, the *Irish Times* continued with its injudicious use of the term.

A sense of a bridge too far gradually gained momentum. In the general hurly-burly of party conflict, a certain decorum maintains, and the main parties at least refrain from over-sharp rhetorical confrontation on historical matters: wasn't it all a century ago, after all? Initially objections to the RIC event came from individuals like the indomitable Tom Cooper and Fr. Brian P. Murphy OSB, whose letters are occasionally printed by the *Irish Times* and other newspapers in the spirit of what one editor told this Column was allowing "the usual suspects to vent their spleens". Revisionist academics, such as Brigid Laffan and Ben Tonra, and many others, with a sense of self-satisfied smugness that the gadflies would be brushed aside, sniffily deplored the voices of "exclusive nationalism", said we were surely now "mature" enough to embrace and commemorate all the "different traditions", and anyway what were unionists to think of a prospective post-Brexit United Ireland while such views were still aired in the Republic?

The political world stayed aloof initially. But then the Fianna Fáil Mayor of Clare broke ranks. He could not attend any such event he said. Co. Clare in 1920 had the proud distinction of being the only county where every single one of its elected councillors had been "on the run" and he was not about to commemorate the force that had hunted and tracked them down to imprison them or worse. Several other mayors followed suit, notably the Independent politician holding that position in Cork City, two of whose predecessors had met violent deaths in 1919-20, one on hunger strike in a British prison and the other at the hands of a plain-clothes RIC death squad long before the Tans even arrived in Ireland. Then Dublin City Council, by a massive 38:10 margin, passed a resolution denouncing the whole "commemoration". The minority supporting Flanagan's em-

bracing of the RIC “tradition” included two Labour councillors, Dermot Lacey and Jane Horgan-Jones, of Donnybrook and Clontarf respectively (a third Labour councillor, Mary Freehill of Rathmines, absented herself). Outside of Dublin some Labour politicians – such as the Mayor of Waterford – dissented from this Dublin RIC revisionism. Soon various government Independents and other TDs were expressing misgivings. Civil war politics knows no “left” and “right”!

Joseph Madigan, the minister responsible for the Commemorations programme, and a formidable politician in her own right, reflected the general rout of FG in the whole affair. Her advisory Commemorations Committee hadn’t proposed the event, and neither had the government. The whole thing was a “solo run” by Flanagan! She went further, to disown the Glasnevin Trust, whose infamous “Wall” alongside the Republican Plot in Glasnevin already carried the names of 1916 rebels as well as those of British soldiers and civilians who lost their lives in the Rising. It had been planned to add the names of “all victims” of succeeding years on an annual basis. Already relatives of dead Republicans were threatening to refuse to allow their forebears’ names to be added to the Wall alongside those of Black and Tans and others. As yet no names have been added since 2016, with the Trust engaged in a period of “reflection”. But when someone intimated that Madigan was somehow supporting the Glasnevin Trust project, she reacted furiously, tweeting on 12 January:

“Glasnevin Cemetery is a private trust & neither the Govt nor I have ever put plans to the All-Party committee or to any other fora to inscribe the names of Black & Tans on the wall. A vicious lie. I will be seeking legal advice ...”

The RIC had never of course been a simple “police force”. While its ranks had been composed mostly of Catholics, overwhelmingly the sons of small farmers, virtually its entire officer corps was Anglo-Irish or unionist, and its most senior officers exclusively Protestant. Its commanders were mostly English, seconded from the military, not the police, and usually coming from years of “policing” experience in India and other colonies. Saving cats from trees was not their priority.

Uniquely in the UK the RIC was heavily armed and all “constables” received military training. It was garrisoned in fortified houses honeycombing the country, not “police stations” as elsewhere in the UK. In Ireland they were known as “barracks”. The RIC was never under even semi-democratic county control,

as police forces elsewhere in Britain, but came directly under the War Office through the colonial administration at Dublin Castle. Eunan O’Halpin, TCD Professor, declared on *Newstalk* radio that the mostly unarmed Dublin police, the DMP (apart from its notorious heavily armed G Division), was a “municipal police force” similar to those of American cities. But even this is untrue. The DMP had initially come under the colonial Dublin “local authority” and been paid from the rates, but this was ended in the 1880s as the democratisation of Irish local government began. The DMP henceforth was run directly by the British military administration from Dublin Castle. Both the RIC and DMP had very large detective and intelligence functions specifically tasked with nipping “revolutionism” in the bud, and were thus ever a politico-military counter-insurgency force, and at senior level understood themselves as such. In January 1919 the British government declared that RIC members could not even join the National Union of Police and Prison Officers because the RIC was “a semi-military force directly under the control of the Crown, and subject in many respects to the same conditions of employment as the army and navy forces.”²

From the 1890s to 1910 Ireland enjoyed a great economic boom as the land question was solved through the generously subsidised abolition of the landlord class, local government was democratised at one fell swoop in 1899 and state agencies were established to invest in rural economic infrastructure (Congested District Boards), agricultural training and modernisation, and other investment programmes designed by Balfour to “kill Home Rule with kindness”. Imprisoned Fenians were even gradually pardoned and released. Some in the Irish Parliamentary Party feared the reforms would erode Irish grievances and hence succeed in “killing” their pet project. It was a remarkable period, halcyon days of benign Tory colonial rule and rapidly rising living standards. The RIC, which had provided the cutting edge of previous government violence against Irish society during the “Famine”, and then implementing “Bloody Balfour’s” policy of “coercion” in the Land War and in suppressing the Fenians, morphed into apparent “village bobbies” and gained a reputation as a rough but fair and well-liked local constabulary. But after 1916, with the chips again clearly on the table, the RIC was quickly refitted for purpose and re-assumed its primary original politico-military function.

On 10th April 1919 Dáil Éireann decided to institute a boycott of the RIC.

“True Irishmen” in its ranks who had thought of themselves as mere village bobbies had that illusion shattered, as they were increasingly deployed as the cutting instrument of the British suppression of the Irish democracy. In Dorothy MacArdle’s straight-forward account, the Dáil position was announced more in sadness than in anger. The extent of the RIC’s role in suppressing the Dáil, its personnel and its institutions, was being reflected in thousands of arrests, armed raids, attacks on individuals and even murders by RIC operating with the British military since the 1918 election. These “incidents” were listed in exhaustive detail in the Dáil’s creditable *Irish Bulletin*, which this journal, the *Irish Political Review*, has reproduced for each month from that period under the rubric ‘Lest We Forget!’. It was Professor Eoin MacNeill who, as Minister for Industries, seconded the President of the Dáil’s proposal, which was adopted unanimously by the Dáil: The English government, he said, was determined “to make the police supreme in Ireland”. The RIC had made themselves “the eyes and ears of the enemy” and must be countered by its members being “ostracised socially by the people of Ireland”. The aim was not to “inspire terror in that body of Irishmen”, wrote MacArdle, but to bring home to them the “shame of the position which they occupied”. The subsequent mass resignations from the force were what occasioned the British government to rebuild its ranks with mercenary recruits in the form of the “Black and Tans” and the “Auxiliary Division of the RIC”.³

The whole sad affair has ended in a whimper. Commemoration Committee experts want the issue kicked into the long grass, suggesting maybe an “academic conference” to consider the role of the RIC/DMP, or incorporating some consideration of them when commemorating the centenary of the founding of An Garda Síochana in 2022.

But there is still the unfinished business of the “murder” accusations levelled against the forces of the elected First Dáil. This Column will not rest until the *Irish Times* and its star reporter come clean on that very political calumny which in essence denies of legitimacy of Irish democracy.

2. O’Halpin on RIC at www.newstalk.com/podcasts/on-the-record-with-gavan-reilly/eunan-ohalpin-ric-commemorations; on RIC and the Police Federation, Chief Secretary for Ireland, Ian MacPherson, in *House of Commons, Hansard*, 6 March 1919

3. Dorothy MacArdle, *The Irish Republic*, 1953, p. 288

MEDIA REPORT: The 'Paper Of Record' Distaste For Some RIC Facts

(1) Eoin O'Duffy and the RIC

(Letter submitted to the *Irish Times* on January 9, but denied publication)

The Irish Fascist leader Eoin O'Duffy, and formerly the founding President of Fine Gael, brought out an Irish Brigade in support of Franco's revolt against the democratically elected Government of the Spanish Republic, where he disgraced himself as much militarily as he did politically. But I will always give credit where credit is due, and I have nothing but admiration for O'Duffy's War of Independence record in his native Co Monaghan, both militarily and politically, when he did fight to uphold democracy.

O'Duffy's February 1920 IRA raid on Ballytrain RIC barracks, Co Monaghan, has been colourfully recalled by Frank McNally ('An Irishman's Diary', January 9). He writes: "In his own statement on the attack, as if writing them a reference for their next posting, O'Duffy praised the RIC men's courage." But certainly not for another RIC posting! It is a pity that Frank McNally omitted the account given by Fearghal McGarry in his 2005 biography of O'Duffy, of how he had addressed those same RIC men with the following valuable lesson in democracy: "At the general election the people had voted for freedom. The police were acting against the will of the Irish people. He appealed to them to leave the force and join their brother Irishmen."

As far as O'Duffy was concerned, the only honourable course of action for RIC men to take was to resign, and for the more courageous of them to enlist in the IRA.

Manus O'Riordan

(2) The RIC and Policemen

(Letter submitted to the *Irish Times* on January 11, but denied publication)

Ronan McGreevy reporting on the *Historical and Reconciliation Police (Harp) Society's* reaction to the cancelled commemorative event in Dublin Castle writes that "It is clear from the response to the proposal that some sections of Irish society do not see the RIC and the DMP in the same light as the Harp Society does. Mr Herlihy maintains that they were respected police forces up to 1919." (10/1/2020).

The negative response to the planned commemoration might be better understood if it is appreciated that the RIC were *never* policemen. That was clearly stated by the relevant British Government Minister, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Ian MacPherson when he explained: "It was decided by the Government that the Royal Irish Constabulary could not be permitted to join the National Union of Police and Prison Officers, in as much as the Royal Irish Constabulary is a semi-military force directly under the control of the Crown, and subject in many respects to the same conditions of employment as the army and navy forces." (March 6, 1919, Hansard, Volume 113, Series 5, column 626.)

In other words, they were a British paramilitary force and an integral part of the Crown Forces that always did all they could to preserve British rule in Ireland until they were disbanded and replaced by a normal police force in which Mr. Herlihy honourably served.

Jack Lane

(3) The Murder of Lord Mayor MacCurtain

(Letter submitted to the *Irish Times* on January 14, but denied publication)

Ronan McGreevy writes ('An Irishman's Diary', January 14) that Cork Lord Mayor Tomás Mac Curtain "was shot dead by a

group of RIC officers, led by District Inspector Oswald Swanzy, who was later assassinated by the IRA". Merely "shot dead" - was MacCurtain's death an accident?

In April 1920 a Coroner's Jury brought in a unanimous verdict which declared: "We find that the late Alderman MacCurtain, Lord Mayor of Cork, died from shock and hemorrhage caused by bullet wounds, and that he was willfully murdered under circumstances of the most callous brutality, and that the murder was organised and carried out by the Royal Irish Constabulary, officially directed by the British Government, and we return a verdict of willful murder against David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of England; Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Ian McPherson, late Chief Secretary of Ireland; Acting Inspector General Smith, of the Royal Irish Constabulary; Divisional Inspector Clayton of the Royal Irish Constabulary; District Inspector Swanzy and some unknown members of the Royal Irish Constabulary."

Manus O'Riordan

(4) The Taoiseach, the RIC and Civil War politics

'This Week', RTÉ Radio 1, January 12, on commemorating the RIC:

David McCullagh: "Do you understand the public reaction to this—the idea that the State would formally commemorate police forces which were used to deny the democratic wishes of the Irish people?"

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar: "I do understand the public reaction to it. I also understand that there is divided opinion on it as well... There are lessons to be learned as to how we commemorate the Civil War, for example, which is coming up. And, as you mentioned, in the Civil War there was one side that were for the democratic will and another side that thought the Irish people didn't have the right to do wrong. So this is going to be a difficult area."

But McCullagh had not mentioned the Civil War at all!

Manus O'Riordan

(5) The Taoiseach and Indian and Irish history

(Letter submitted to the *Irish Times* on January 17, but denied publication)

Sinn Féin rightly instructed Councillor Paddy Holohan to apologise for his statement that Leo Varadkar's Indian heritage left him separated from Irish history, and the Taoiseach rightly accepted that apology. For it is precisely that heritage which should have doubly informed the Taoiseach just how unacceptable it was to contemplate a State commemoration of the Royal Irish Constabulary that fought to suppress the the 1918 General Election vote for an independent Irish Republic. The Taoiseach's uncles, Madhu and Manohar Varadkar, had been among those Indian heroes who stood up to the British Empire during that country's own long struggle for freedom. Both Varadkar brothers were to spend up to a year each in prison, and both would be decorated for their contribution to that struggle by the Government of an independent Republic of India.

In fairness to the Taoiseach, there was once a time when he was willing to demonstrate a clear understanding of Irish history in its own right. On November 24, 2011, Sinn Féin TD Martin Ferris referred to the May 1923 massacre of Republican prisoners in County Kerry. Fine Gael TD Leo Varadkar responded: "Deputy

Ferris raised the issue of Ballyseedy. I can say, in clear conscience and without any doubt in my mind, that the events at Ballyseedy constituted an atrocity. I can also say that people who were murdered, or executed, without trial by the Cumann na nGaedheal Government were murdered. It was an atrocity and those people killed without a trial by the first Government were murdered. That is my view."

On the 'This Week' programme on January 12, however, the Taoiseach

gratuitously chose to characterise, as follows, the nature of the War waged by that Cumann na nGaedheal Government: "In the Civil War there was one side that were for the democratic will." This simplistic description was not made through any lack of understanding of the complexities of Irish history, but rather was it a cynical choice by the Taoiseach to play Civil War politics as a distraction from his own Government's RIC debacle.

Manus O'Riordan

The 1918 And Other Elections

continued

seats, they might not have been robbed, but they would have lost their deposits. In 1918 financial prudence prevailed in the 25 or 26 constituencies in Ireland which the Unionists chose not to contest.

(In Britain in 1918, and before 1918, uncontested seats were common. Incidentally, the only time Winston Churchill led his party into a winning election was in 1951, where his party gained less votes than the Labour Party.)

The introduction of Proportional Representation was recommended by the high command of the Royal Irish Constabulary, whose force was largely responsible for the arrest, incarceration, and other visitations on elected Sinn Feiners. PR was championed for all elections in the UK by J.P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, a confidant of David Lloyd George, who described it to him as a *Crank's Charter*. I paraphrase. But Ronan McGreevy and readers may check my claims against his Irishman's Diary contribution on 15th January.

Donal Kennedy

The piece below first appeared in the 'Shorts' Column in the November, 2012 issue of the *Irish Political Review* and seems particularly relevant in the light of the State's plans to commemorate the RIC.

Supporters of the commemoration claim that the RIC was an ordinary police force consisting of Irish people only interested in upholding the rule of law. Conor Brady, the former editor of *The Irish Times* is sympathetic towards that viewpoint.

But if that were the case one would expect continuity in personnel. The career policemen in the RIC would have had no difficulty in working for the new Garda Síochána. But Brady says that a mere 13 people made the transition.

That figure alone suggests that the RIC was very far from being a normal police force. It was, in fact, part of the British military apparatus intent on subverting the will of the Irish people as expressed in the 1918 election and subsequent elections.

The RIC Commemoration

What is the point of history? That is the question that arises from the RIC commemoration last August. It might be thought that the purpose of history is to explain why 'we are where we are', to use a current cliché. In most countries the present ('where we are') is not considered a bad place and accordingly the national heroes of the past are commemorated.

In this country, long before the current economic crisis, a large swathe of Establishment opinion became embarrassed with the present and therefore history became problematic. If 'where we are' is not a good place to be, the events which caused the present must be denigrated.

What is called 'revisionism' is not a re-interpretation of history, but rather an expression of regret that the past was not different to what it was. In present day France there may be people who regret the demise of the *Milice*, but they are on the outer reaches of the political fringe. Their sentiments do not find their way into a mainstream newspaper.

The former Editor of *The Irish Times*, Conor Brady, had an article in that newspaper (24.8.12) welcoming the commemoration of the RIC planned for the following weekend. His thesis was that the Garda Síochána was a continuation of the RIC and that it wasn't—the murder of Cork Lord Mayor Tomas MacCurtain notwithstanding—as bad as is made out. No mention of Bloody Sunday 1920!

Brady starts off his article tentatively enough. Apparently the old RIC symbol (the heart and the crown) is somewhere at the back of a staircase in the officers club of the Garda Depot. However, in the course of his article he has the following remarkable statement:

"Contrary to the common belief that the early Garda Síochána was heavily populated with former RIC members, just 13 men transferred to the new force."

By any standards that constitutes a revolutionary change in personnel. So much for continuity! Like so much of revisionist thought it is nothing more than wishful thinking.

Denis Dennehy

continued

member of the Dublin Housing Action Committee, for squatting in a house in Mountjoy Square."

Twelve years ago, in the February 2008 issue of *Irish Political Review*, I wrote:

"Readers can now view archive footage of the TV coverage of Joe Clarke's First Dáil commemorative demonstration on the RTE website at www.rte.ie/laweb/11/11_t09c.html for which the following explanatory note is also provided:

'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 above link, where the RTE website had clearly shown footage of Joe Clarke's protest in solidarity with my comrade and friend Dennis Dennehy, was subsequently removed. What is most notable of both versions of the de Valera address now on the RTE website, is that the footage has since been sanitised. The footage show-

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Casement: The Bigger Mystery

Synopsis: *The Bigger Mystery* concerns two versions of an alleged secret involving Professor Joseph W. Bigger, nephew of Casement's Belfast friend Frank Bigger. In 1956 when René MacColl published his biography *Roger Casement: a new judgment*, he reported for the first time a 'secret' allegedly told to him in 1954 by an anonymous 'well-known resident of Cork'. That 'secret' concerned further scandalous diaries allegedly found in 1916 and at once destroyed. However, MacColl's story already had a secret history and was known in 1937 when it first emerged in curious circumstances.

Part One

René MacColl was a leading British journalist with the Beaverbrook press empire and was foreign correspondent with the mass-circulation *Daily Express* for 24 years. In 1956 he published a biography entitled *Roger Casement; a new judgment*, (Hamish Hamilton). In late March 1955, having completed his research and before sending his final version to the publishers, MacColl wrote to the Home Secretary to ask if the diaries actually existed. (HO 144/23453.) Early in April he received the standard reply that no comment could be made. His earlier requests to see the diaries had also been rebuffed.

Dennehy

continued

ing the Joe Clarke protest has now been edited out - that is, CENSORED. Section 31 revived?

So, one must now have recourse to YouTube in order to recapture that footage of the Joe Clarke protest.

See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dIoqrBRZcGI&feature=youtu.be> to view Joe Clarke interrupting de Valera.

See <https://www.historyireland.com/volume-22/heckling-dev/> for "Heckling Dev", my account of the meeting that planned the protest.

See http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/ipr/2008/IPR_February_2008.pdf - pages 9 to 11 - for "Commemorating the First Dáil", a comprehensive account of the protests that continued throughout January 21, 1969, in both Dublin and Cork.

See also http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/ipr/2006/IPR_August_2006.pdf - pages 12 to 13 - for more details of the meeting that planned the Joe Clarke protest.

Manus O'Riordan

MacColl's question to the Home Secretary reveals that he had found no evidence of the material existence of the diaries at any time since 1916. Nonetheless, he proceeded with publication of his book and asserted the authenticity of those diaries without knowing if they existed in 1916 or in 1955.

His book was a commercial success and enjoyed four editions until it was superseded by Brian Inglis' *Roger Casement* in 1973.

The story below, which MacColl reports, is a mystery not least because it is a hearsay story from an anonymous source who, we are told, heard it from a person since deceased who had heard it from another since-deceased person.

Moreover, it involves a chance encounter between two strangers and no part of the story can be verified. Nonetheless, MacColl describes it as a fact.

MacColl presents the story on page 284 as follows:

"There was a second group of Casement homosexual diaries and account books. This fact has until now been a secret."

MacColl explains that in 1914 Casement left a "tin trunk" with his Belfast friend, the well-known antiquarian Frank J. Bigger. After the execution Bigger opened the trunk and was shocked to find 'a voluminous diary, full of homosexual notations and reminiscences'. Bigger at once burned the diary (or diaries) and letters found in the trunk. MacColl then explains how Frank J. Bigger related this event at some later time to his nephew, Joseph W. Bigger, who "not long before his death" in 1951 recounted the story of the destroyed diary (or diaries) to "a well-known resident of Cork" who in turn related it to MacColl during an interview in November 1954. In his book MacColl declined to name his source without explaining the reason.

Joseph W. Bigger was a noted professor of preventative medicine and bacteriology at Trinity and Dean of the Medical School; he was also a Senator in the Seanad. He died of leukemia in August 1951.

MacColl explains that the Professor was dining at his club when he "fell into conversation" with the anonymous resident of Cork and related to him the story which "had always deeply worried him". Unlike his uncle, who had known Casement well, Professor Bigger never knew Casement.

On 18th August 1967 *The Times* published a letter from MacColl revealing the name of his source: John J. Horgan, the well-known coroner of Cork. Horgan had died on 21st July 1967. With MacColl's death in 1971 the secret of the Bigger mystery also seemed to die.

§

There is much about MacColl's hearsay story which is tenuous and which strains credibility. With regard to the unexplained anonymity, an astute reader could have guessed the identity of the source: in the Foreword, MacColl thanks various persons for interviewees for interviews with him, and among these is "Mr. John J. Horgan, the Cork Coroner" and the only interviewee resident in Cork.

On pages 124-5 MacColl writes disparagingly about Casement's contacts with Horgan in December 1913 and January 1914 about the restoration of transatlantic shipping to Cork. Horgan's name also appears in the Index and merits four lines in the biographical Appendix 1.

Besides Horgan in Cork, MacColl also interviewed Casement's friend Bulmer Hobson in Connemara and his defence lawyer A.M. Sullivan in Dublin. Both interviews are dated (14 and 16 November 1954) and reported in journalistic style with context, description and detail. And both cite extensively the direct speech of the interviewees. But these features are missing in MacColl's report of the Horgan interview, and his memories and impressions of Casement are omitted. Not a word spoken by Horgan is reported.

MacColl's locution "...fell into conversation with ..." means that the encounter with Bigger was by chance and that Horgan did not know him beforehand.

MacColl's story is that, at the 1954 interview, no-one but Horgan knew about the destroyed diary/ies of 1916. And that, until Horgan's alleged meeting with Bigger, "not long before his death", no-one but Bigger knew the story.

Thus MacColl reported a story which cannot be corroborated and which rests on

a chance encounter between two strangers on an unknown date but not long before the death of one of these.

In order to report this 'secret', MacColl conceals the name of his alleged source, and omits all details of the interview so that nothing remains except the alleged revelation of the 'secret'.

That he resorts to further secrecy in order to reveal the 'secret' must be cause for maximum suspicion. MacColl does not explain why he chose to interview Horgan, who had never been a friend, colleague or associate of Casement and who had met him *only once* some forty-one years earlier.

What further strains any minimal credibility in MacColl's report of a 'secret', revealed but on conditions of almost total secrecy, is precisely what he does not provide—a means of external corroboration. Without such corroboration, Horgan's 'secret' is not revealed at all but is merely *transmitted* by MacColl alone. Sensitive to this, he attempted to mitigate the tenuousness of his story by assuring us that his anonymous source "*has no doubts about the genuineness of the story*".

Horgan's purported conviction about the genuineness of the story must have followed a rather dramatic conversion during that chance encounter with Professor Bigger some years before. This is because Horgan had already publicly stated his belief in Casement's moral integrity. In his 1949 book *Parnell to Pearse*, Horgan wrote the following testimonial:

"Yet no one who knew him could believe the vile, and entirely unproved, suggestions which, with diabolical cleverness, were later made against his moral character by British propagandists" (p. 240) (1)

MacColl's report does not mention this book.

It is just possible that MacColl had not read Horgan's book before the interview, but it is not credible that, in a conversation about Casement and the diaries, Horgan did not mention such a dramatic conversion and did not refer to his own published testimonial. MacColl's report therefore asks us to believe that in 1954 Horgan spoke to him exclusively about the purported encounter with Bigger some years earlier, which encounter took place by chance in Bigger's club. This, therefore, occurred in Dublin. Again by chance Horgan was a member of that same Dublin club, although a resident of Cork. And yet again by chance they happened to talk about Casement.

"*This fact has until now been a secret.*" What MacColl here describes as a 'fact' is something which has not been verified and which is incapable of verification. That which is incapable of verification cannot be defined as a fact. Relying only on his reputation as a distinguished journalist, MacColl begs the trust of the reader who cannot determine if the so-called fact is indeed a fact or if it has been a secret.

It is clear that all detail in the report which might identify Horgan has been omitted, ostensibly to safeguard his anonymity. Thus nothing is left of the interview, which rests entirely upon MacColl's word. From MacColl's report, we are to believe that Horgan, an experienced lawyer, listened to Bigger's hearsay version of the story, believed it without evidence and in 1954 passed it to MacColl for publication, again without evidence—but accepting MacColl's assurance that his name would not be associated with the story. In safeguarding Horgan's anonymity, for unexplained reasons, MacColl is in fact safeguarding his story from all possibility of investigation.

On balance there are sufficient grounds for considerable suspicion about the veracity of MacColl's report, not least because no part of it can be verified. If, indeed, Horgan was not the source of the story attributed to Professor Bigger of long destroyed diary/ies, then it follows that MacColl must have obtained it from another source.

PART TWO

William J. Maloney was a Scottish-born neurologist who moved to New York in 1911. During WWI he served in the British Army Medical Corps and was seriously injured in the Gallipoli campaign. He became disaffected with Britain following the executions of the 1916 leaders and returned to the US. The execution of Casement particularly incensed him and by 1934 he had completed the investigative study which was later published in Dublin as *The forged Casement diaries*.

Maloney sent a copy of his typescript to Bernard Shaw in 1934, having been told that Shaw would show it to influential people in London who, Maloney hoped, would put pressure on the Home Office to issue a statement about the diaries. Shaw thought little of the proposed book, which espoused the unfounded theory that the diary materials used to smear Casement in 1916 were in fact Casement's handwritten translations of the obscene writings of a Peruvian criminal named Normand involved in the Putumayo atrocities; these

translated pages, Maloney believed, had been sent by Casement to the Foreign Office in 1910-1911 and in 1916 they were mistaken for records of Casement's own behaviour.

Maloney unwisely hoped that, when the responsible Whitehall officials perceived their error, the Government would investigate and issue a statement and apology. In this reasoning Maloney was wrong, and no statement was forthcoming. The Whitehall officials noted that the Normand theory of translated pages did not correspond with the three diaries and ledger then secretly held in the Public Records Office. No statement was necessary.

In the meantime, De Valera turned down the request to write a Foreword for Maloney's book on the grounds that "*the British allegations against Casement have never been believed by Irishmen and so far as they are concerned no refutation is needed*". De Valera feared that publication "might only result in a renewal of the campaign of defamation" (NLI Ms. 17,604).

When Maloney finally published his book in late 1936, the Home Office officials faced a predicament. They knew that Maloney's theory was wrong but knew also that *the public could not know it was wrong* unless a statement was made which demonstrated the physical reality of the diaries. Whitehall declined to make such a statement. The Home Office was not disturbed by the wrong theory but by the reasonable apprehension that the forgery claim itself would be believed. And many did believe in forgery albeit on the basis of a groundless theory.

One of those who believed Maloney's thesis was W.B. Yeats, who published his famous ballad in *The Irish Press* on 2nd February, 1937, so bringing the diaries controversy to tens of thousands of people. On 1st March 1937 *The Irish Times* published a reasonably balanced review of Maloney's book by former British diplomat and author, Shane (Sir John) Leslie which conceded that there were serious questions which should be answered. It would have dismayed Whitehall officials to note that his neutral review did not quash the forgery claim and did not cast doubt on it.

Moreover, Leslie was a cousin of Winston Churchill and had been assistant to Ambassador Cecil Spring Rice in Washington in 1916. Several items of his correspondence in NLI, predating publication of his review, reveal Leslie's support for

Maloney's book and for Casement himself. (Ms. 17,604/5/8, Ms. 17,604/5/12, Ms. 17,604/6/14.) It is not credible that the Home Office officials were indifferent to the charge of forgery.

On 8th March 1937, *The Irish Times* published a letter from the Irish writer and editor Francis Hackett who criticised Leslie for being too lenient on the British Government and for overlooking Maloney's distinguished career. (Maloney also held a doctorate in law and several military honours.)

Hackett had little patience with Leslie or with the wealthy land-owning class to which he belonged. Hackett was a friend of Maloney and unsurprisingly his letter repeated the Normand story. Later in March Hackett received a 'statement' purporting to come from Professor J.W. Bigger of Trinity. It is not known if this document was typed or handwritten and to this writer's knowledge no original is extant and only some copied extracts are available. At this point the Bigger mystery becomes even more confusing and mysterious because MacColl's 1954 story of the destroyed diary/ies had a secret precedent in 1937.

Hackett was shaken and angered by the 'statement' and on 24th March he wrote to inform Maloney in New York:

"Dr Joseph Bigger of Trinity has [given] Leslie and myself a statement for private consumption that Casement was a homo. You know this I assume. I'll copy the statement" (NLI Ms. 17,604/9/5).

On 25th April, having read the copy of the statement sent to him, Maloney wrote to Hackett:

"It came safely, was very interesting but more so to me was your reaction to it... The proof offered to you is the good faith of your informant, Joseph W. Bigger. You think Bigger is telling the truth... he seemed a straightforward chap. But he offered no evidence beyond his unsupported word" (NLI Ms. 17,602).

Maloney then quoted from the Hackett Copy Statement as follows:

"My object in writing is to attempt to bring the controversy to an end because I am convinced that the British Government had and probably has diaries of Roger Casement which if published would establish beyond question that he was a pervert... I should be sorry to have publicly established Casement's immorality as it would displace him from his present position of national hero and martyr, a position which he well deserved..." (Italics added.)

The author of the above lines is purportedly Professor Bigger. This conviction concerning the reality of Casement diaries in government possession was then reported in the statement as being founded on Bigger's purported experience of finding a scandalous Casement diary in his uncle's Belfast home some 22 years earlier. The story, reconstructed from Maloney's quotation from the text of the statement, is that the nephew Bigger had found the diary in his uncle's home, that the uncle fainted with shock and that the diary was burned at once. No specific date for this alleged event is given in Maloney's quotation from the copy of the statement. Maloney himself regarded the statement as 'drivel' and entirely false.

The following brief extracts given in *italics* indicate that those italicized phrases were present in the statement received by Hackett and then copied and sent to Maloney who reproduced them in his four-page typed reply to Hackett. The remaining phrases in normal type were Maloney's own comments in the same letter.

"Your informer states it was destroyed: *"immediately... in the kitchen fire—it was late at night and everyone but ourselves had gone to bed."*

... I am sure he would not have *"actually fainted"*.

... as late possibly as September 1915 ... *"in the small room on the right of the hall at Ardriagh, which Mr Leslie may remember ..."*

The informer Bigger tells you that his uncle when Casement's activities in Germany had become known (which was in October 1914) *"feared a search by the military authorities and got rid of his (Casement's) bags and old clothing."*

... as he says, resisted the temptation to steal it ..."

§

Professor Bigger was a Unionist and he strongly favoured dominion status for Ireland. In 1948 he made a controversial two-hour speech in the Seanad debate opposing *The Republic of Ireland Act* which ended dominion status and took Ireland out of the Commonwealth. There is no record that he had ever shown any interest in the Casement controversy before 1937. It is unclear why he purportedly took such an interest following *The Irish Times* review of Maloney's book.

There are grounds for doubting that the statement was written by Professor Bigger. The grounds for doubt derive from scrutiny of the following parts of the statement as cited by Maloney in his letter to Hackett of 25th April, 1937:

1 – "...because I am convinced that the British Government had and probably has diaries of Roger Casement which if published would establish beyond question that he was a pervert."

2 – "I should be sorry to have publicly established Casement's immorality as it would displace him from his present position of national hero and martyr, a position which he well deserved ..."

Here we have Casement described as a national hero and martyr *and pervert*. Bigger was a professor of medicine and the use of the derogatory term '*pervert*' is improbable and incongruous. It is even more incongruous that Bigger, an anti-republican Unionist, should respect Casement's status as hero and martyr since he gained that status by his efforts *against the Crown* to which Bigger owed his first loyalty. That a convinced Unionist should entertain any respect for someone hanged as a traitor by his own monarch and whom he describes as a '*pervert*' is beyond comprehension.

The author states that Casement was an immoral '*pervert*' who nonetheless deserves our respect and he does not wish to destroy his status as a republican hero. The incongruity expressed in these quotations is difficult to reconcile.

It is when those surviving parts of the 1937 statement are scrutinised that its incoherence is revealed: the author states his motive for making the statement as being a desire to "*bring the controversy to an end*". However, it is difficult to understand how this could be achieved by sending a statement "*for private consumption*" to only two people: private individuals who had not played any significant role in the twenty-year-old controversy.

With the publication of Yeats' ballad, the diaries question was made known to tens of thousands of people. It cannot be understood what either Hackett or Leslie could have done to terminate such a widely publicised controversy and there is no indication that they are asked to take specific action to that end. Therefore the motivation given for the statement is not credible and the true motivation remains to be discovered.

It is even less credible when one considers that the statement attributed to Bigger was intended "*for private consumption*", which can only mean that it was not to enter the public domain. The author of the statement knows that there is no guarantee the recipients will respect his wish for privacy. The purported reason for not wishing to be publicly identified as author is given

as a reluctance to be held responsible for damaging Casement's status as hero and martyr. Therefore the author is someone who wishes to defend the diaries as the authentic records of a 'pervert' and who, at the same time, *knows that denial will follow any publication* of the statement.

It has been demonstrated that Bigger's political pedigree makes it untenable that he was the author of the statement sent to Hackett.

It has been demonstrated that the given motivation—ending the controversy—is false.

Bigger was nonetheless an authoritative voice since he was the nephew of a well-known Casement associate, Frank Bigger, at whose home Casement had left various belongings before he travelled to the US in 1914.

§

On the hypothesis that Professor Bigger was not the author, an interpretation is possible which eliminates much of the incongruity. If the statement was falsely attributed to Bigger, it was made by someone who wished to communicate anonymously not to, but through, Hackett.

The unknown author proposes that the British Government holds Casement diaries which, if made public by that Government, would destroy his reputation as hero and martyr.

Support for this hypothesis of an unknown author comes from the "*for private consumption*" condition, with its implicit intimation of denial if not respected. In the event of the statement being made public, that denial would logically come from Professor Bigger himself as the purported author. The true author would in any case remain anonymous and unknown to Bigger.

In 1937 the existence of the statement was made known only to a handful of people who continued to believe that Bigger was the author. Since the statement was not made public, Bigger himself never knew that his respected name had been 'borrowed'.

In order to determine who 'borrowed' Bigger's name, it is necessary to examine both motive and method. The motive attributed to Bigger, of ending the controversy, has been discounted as untenable. The implicit hint that the statement will be denied if made public indicates that the unknown author is certain of Professor

Bigger's denial. That certainty of denial is in turn predicated upon the knowledge that Bigger is not the author.

It is not credible that Whitehall officials were indifferent to Maloney's public accusation of forgery. They nonetheless felt it necessary to limit the damage and to *indirectly* assert the existence and authenticity of the Black Diaries. And at this point, the revelatory statement appeared—a private communication containing a shocking revelation purportedly from a respected professor of medicine who was the nephew of a close associate of Casement.

It becomes clear that the purpose of the destroyed diary story was to assert the existence of the Black Diaries *without having to publish them*. Yet the only thing which would have the effect of appearing to 'verify' *by default* the Bigger revelation would be publication of the diaries.

Knowing that it was in fact kept secret by the recipients who *believed* that the statement came from the purported author, the unknown sender ran no risk of being discovered. But a shocking revelation which intimates a risk of subsequent denial by its purported author merits maximum suspicion. The method is that of a false attribution to a known and respected name which conceals both the true motive and identity of the sender.

In the statement we discern a balance between Casement's acquired reputation as hero and a risk to that reputation through publication of the diaries held by the Home Office. It is in this balance that the real motivation of the statement is revealed.

The decoded message is that those who wish to protect Casement's status as hero must renounce claims that the diaries are forged. Such a message could only have come from someone who *was in a position to threaten Casement's status as hero*. If that someone was Bigger who "*should be sorry to have publicly established Casement's immorality ...*", it is unclear how he (Bigger) could have proceeded to achieve what no-one was asking him to do.

Obviously he could not constrain the British Government to make a statement about the diaries or to publish them. Therefore Bigger could not damage Casement's status as hero. The only person who could threaten Casement's status was someone with *certain knowledge of the Black Diaries* held by the Home Office. Bigger did not possess that knowledge.

If we are to believe that Bigger related the story to Horgan in 1950-51 we are also required to believe either that Bigger did not tell Horgan about the 1937 statement he allegedly sent to Hackett reporting the destroyed diary/ies. Or if Bigger did tell him, we are to believe that Horgan did not tell MacColl. In either case, the 1937 statement is missing from MacColl's report.

If Horgan knew the 1937 story and told it to MacColl, then he suppressed it in his report. There is simply no evidence whatsoever to demonstrate that a chance encounter between Professor Bigger and Horgan ever occurred. Nor is there any evidence that Horgan related anything to MacColl.

However, the key which finally unlocks the Bigger mystery is to be found in one simple sentence: "*This fact has until now been a secret.*" This sentence is unnecessary since it does not verify the Bigger story; by 'secret' MacColl means not in the public domain. Whereas this is true, MacColl could not know that it had not been in the public domain unless he had been informed by someone with *inside knowledge*. Sharing the secret privileges, the reader—trusting in MacColl's reputation as a distinguished journalist—is compromised into believing it to be a fact.

The term 'pervert' used in the 1937 statement undermines the 'well deserved' admiration of Casement as 'national hero and martyr'. Charged with negative moral judgment, the term betrays a contempt which is utterly incompatible with sincere admiration. Conversely, a sincere admirer would not use a term meaning sexual deviancy which at the time was a criminal offence. It follows that the author of that sentence was not a sincere admirer of Casement as hero and martyr but was someone who, with one word, revealed his distaste for Casement.

Hackett's letter to Maloney states he has received "*a statement for private consumption*" which can only mean that the content is 'for your eyes only'.

It has not been confirmed that Sir John Leslie also received an identical statement or if he received any statement but Hackett believed he had and that Leslie would send it to the Foreign Office. Nonetheless, the intimation of secrecy is explicit and is therefore motivated. "Private consumption" does not, however, exclude sharing the secret; rather it indicates that the statement is not intended for public

consumption – not for publication. Both Hackett and Leslie were authors and had shortly before published about the diaries in *The Irish Times*. The phrase “for private consumption” is therefore an admonition that the statement ought to be kept in the private sphere. It is at once obvious to the true author that this cannot be practically enforced and that in the event of publication, the alleged author will deny authorship.

The phrase in MacColl’s report ‘...not long before his death ...’ is not strictly necessary since the chance encounter obviously could not happen after his death. But the timing, although vague, does indicate that MacColl was aware of Horgan’s 1949 published testimonial. The alleged encounter had to be inserted in the period after publication between 1949 and 1951; otherwise the encounter might have occurred at any time between 1926 when the uncle died and 1951 when the nephew died.

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MacColl asserts that the unverifiable story is a fact which has not been in the public domain. It is not clear how MacColl knows it has not been in the public domain but the unwary reader *assumes* that his un-named source assured him of this. A story the content of which cannot be verified is not a fact. Nor can it be verified that the unverifiable story came from MacColl’s un-named source. These two major weaknesses demonstrate that MacColl’s report rests entirely on the faith of the trusting reader.

It is axiomatic in journalism that a story, particularly if controversial, must first be corroborated before it will be published. MacColl’s story was constructed so that no corroboration was possible. MacColl was a prominent and experienced journalist but he did not follow the most basic rules of his profession.

Inglis, the most influential Casement biographer, also found the Bigger mystery confusing. In an appendix to his 1974 edition, we find the following: that MacColl’s ‘*voluminous diary*’ has become plural *diaries*, that J. W. Bigger has become Professor of Pathology rather than of bacteriology and, more surprising, that the Professor is no longer the nephew of F.J. Bigger but has become his son.

Inglis does not mention Horgan’s book but, following MacColl’s suggestion, he does assert that “*Horgan did not wish his identity to be disclosed*”.

Then in the Preface to his 1993 edition (2), Inglis retracted this assertion

and finally admitted that the story of F.J. Bigger destroying Casement papers after the execution was “*unauthenticated*”. He does not explain this loss of faith in MacColl’s 1956 version but he does offer the following in compensation: Inglis refers to being contacted in 1973 or '74 by Ernest Blythe, then aged 86, who *insinuated* that the allegedly destroyed papers might have been scandalous rather than political.

Blythe was an extraordinary character, a theatre lover, fluent in Irish, journalist, former Government Minister, founder of the fascist Blueshirts, self-educated and in early life a sworn member of both the Orange Order and the IRB *at the same time*, a fact he concealed throughout his life. During WW2, intelligence files described Blythe as ‘100% Nazi’.

§

There are grounds for believing MacColl was aware of Horgan’s 1949 published testimonial. There are grounds for believing that Professor Bigger was not the author of the 1937 statement. That MacColl does not refer to the 1937 statement invites us to believe that Bigger either forgot or concealed this from the un-named source at a chance encounter for which there is no evidence.

The basic ingredients of MacColl’s story—hearsay, scandalous secret, unverifiable, un-named source—are those of gossip. That a journalist of MacColl’s reputation and experience should report *as fact* a story indistinguishable from gossip is both remarkable and suspicious. And yet one aspect of his story can be verified; the story had not been in the public domain as demonstrated in preceding paragraphs. A sceptical reader would ask how MacColl can know this.

When the 1937 and 1954 versions are compared we note they have in common:

- 1 - the attribution to a respected name,
- 2- which attribution cannot be verified in either case,
- 3 – both rest upon conditions of secrecy,
- 4 – and both present anomalies and incongruities difficult to resolve.

There are two major discrepancies between the two versions; when examined, doubts reach a critical point.

- 1 - MacColl states that the discovery and destruction took place *after* the execution in August 1916. The 1937 version indicates that these events happened when Casement was in Germany in 1914-15.
- 2 - This concerns who was present at the discovery and destruction. The 1937

version clearly indicates that the nephew Joseph Bigger was an eyewitness. MacColl’s 1954 version states that the story was “related to him by his uncle”.

Both versions ostensibly have the same origin—Professor Bigger.

It is not possible to reconcile these conflicting versions; to propose that one version is false requires proof that the other version is true. Neither can be proved true. These discrepancies are demonstrated to be fatal contradictions at the heart of the Bigger mystery.

The following hypothesis must be judged on its capacity to resolve all the incongruities and contradictions and also on its probability as a complete explanation of the Bigger mystery.

- A—the 1937 statement was falsely attributed to Professor Bigger.
- B—the 1937 statement was invented and written by agents of British Intelligence.
- C – MacColl was informed of the 1937 statement by British Intelligence.
- D – MacColl invented the chance encounter between Horgan and Bigger.
- E – MacColl interviewed Horgan in order to attribute the false Bigger story to him.

The device of false attribution is a basic tool in Intelligence work and it was used by Captain Hall for the *Zimmerman Telegram* and by MI5 officer Frank Hall for the Mil-lar story as demonstrated in Chapter 9 of *Anatomy Of A Lie*. False attribution acts as a decoy which conceals the true source of the misinformation.

§

(1) It is worth noting that Horgan’s testimonial was not influenced by his politics which were radically opposed to those of Casement. Horgan had been a supporter of Redmond and he repudiated republicanism. Moreover, he abhorred the Easter Rising which he described as unwarranted, undemocratic and un-Catholic. Horgan favoured the British Empire, the Commonwealth and Dominion Status for Ireland.

(2) The 1993 edition of the Inglis book is a facsimile of the text of the 1974 paperback edition and it includes the appendix with its reference to the Bigger story and the assertion that “*Horgan did not wish his identity to be disclosed*”. Inglis died while the 1993 edition was still in preparation. It appears that he was unaware that his new preface contradicted that earlier assertion.

Paul Hyde

‘The Captains and the Kings’

**“I remember in September, when the final stumps were drawn
And the shouts of the crowds now silent, and the boys to tea have gone
Let us, oh Lord above us, still remember simple things
When all are dead who love us, oh the Captains and the Kings
When all are dead who love us, oh the Captains and the Kings**

**We have many goods for export, Christian ethics and old port
But our greatest boast is that the Anglo-Saxon is a sport
When the darts game is finished, and the boys their game of rings
And the draughts and chess relinquished, oh the Captains and the Kings
And the draughts and chess relinquished, oh the Captains and the Kings**

**Far away in dear old Cyprus, or in Kenya’s dusty land
When we bear the white man’s burden in many a strange land
As we look across our shoulder, in West Belfast the school rings
And we sigh for dear old England, and the Captains and the Kings**

**In our dreams we see old Harrow, and we hear the crow’s loud caw
At the flower show our big marrow takes the prize from Evelyn Waugh
Cups of tea and some dry sherry, vintage cars, these simple things
So let’s drink up and be merry, oh the Captains and the Kings
So let’s drink up and be merry, oh the Captains and the Kings**

**I stumbled in a nightmare all around Great Windsor Park
And what do you think I found there as I wandered in the dark?
‘Twas an apple half-bitten, and sweetest of all things
Five baby teeth had written of the Captains and the Kings
Five baby teeth had written of the Captains and the Kings**

**By the moon that shines above us in the misty morn and night
Let us cease to run ourselves down, and praise God that we are white
And better still are English, tea and toast and muffin rings
Old ladies with stern faces, and the Captains and the Kings
Old ladies with stern faces, and the Captains and the Kings.”**

Brendan Behan.

Clair Wills and the Story She Tells.

Part 16.

In the books that I have reviewed here in the *Irish Political Review* by Professor Clair Wills, it is a tribute to her scholarship that I have learned so much. And she has made an incredible career trajectory from the University of Essex to the Milberg Professor of English at Princeton, US (where she is also Chair of Irish Studies) and simultaneously to the King Edward VII Professor of English at Cambridge. And, make no mistake: it was her publishing work that earned her those hugely influential and remunerative jobs as well as her sparkling personality.

Recently I was researching something else to do with her study of Ireland dur-

ing the war years *‘That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second World War’*, published by Faber & Faber, 2007 and I came across another book, *‘Culture, Northern Ireland, and the Second World War’*, published by Oxford University Press, 2015, which seemed to track Wills’s work but it was by a Dr. Guy Woodward who now lectures in the English Department in Durham University. The latter has quite an interesting background.

After doing his primary degree in Oxford, he came over to Trinity College, Dublin, where he obtained an M. Phil in Anglo-Irish Literature and subsequently a Ph.D. “*exploring the effects of the Second World War on literature and culture in*

Northern Ireland. This was followed by an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2012-13”. Woodward has since lectured at universities in Ireland and even as far afield as Mexico and from 2017-18, he held an International Fellowship at the New Europe College in Bucharest, Romania. His thesis led to his book on the North.

He now is a Post-Doctoral Research Associate in the Department of English Studies in Durham, which I found to be a very posh university and city when I did some research there some time ago. I was waiting to receive his book in order to review it in the *Irish Political Review* and see how his ‘take’ on the province panned out but it still has not come in so perhaps in another article. He claims that his analysis showed how the war:

”was a unique interregnum in the history of Northern Ireland, and challenged the entrenched political and social makeup of the province and had a profound effect on its cultural life.”

But what really piqued my interest was how he described his present work.

“I am Post-Doctoral Research Associate on the project ‘The Political Warfare Executive, Covert Propaganda and British Culture’, based in the Department of English Studies and funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The project is investigating the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), a secret service created by Britain during the Second World War with the mission of spreading propaganda to enemy and enemy-occupied territories, and one which employed a host of significant authors in its campaigns. These included the novelists Muriel Spark, David Garnett and Graham Greene; the poet Stephen Spender; the Bloomsbury writer Quentin Bell; and the historian A.J.P. Taylor.”

The Leverhulme Trust started when William Hesketh Lever made his fortune through the manufacture and marketing of soap and cleaning products. Sunlight Soap and Lux were sold around the world. The title ‘*Lord Leverhulme*’ was conferred upon Lever in 1917. Upon his death in 1925 he left a share in his holdings in his company to provide for specific trades charities and to offer “scholarships for ... research and education”. The Leverhulme Trust was established to undertake these charitable aims. In 1930, Lever Brothers merged with Margarine Unie to form Unilever —one of the world’s major multinational companies — and the shares held by the Leverhulme Trust became shares in Unilever PLC.

But Woodward is one busy academic and one very canny one, as his scholarships and fellowships reveal, and obviously a

very safe pair of hands too. He goes on

"In addition to my role as PDRA at Durham, I am working on a project entitled *Yugoslavia in British and Irish writing 1941-1980*, which examines how and why writers in Britain and Ireland became involved in military and political debates around the fate of Yugoslavia during the Second World War and Cold War.

The project addresses a series of major literary writers—Louis MacNeice, Anthony Powell, Rebecca West, Evelyn Waugh—as well as lesser-known texts and archival sources. An article arising from this project, examining the experiences of the Irish dramatist Denis Johnston in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, was published by the *Irish University Review* in 2018." (All the italics are by the academic).

Dr. Guy Woodward is someone whose career is worth watching.

But going back to Professor Clair Wills, I was shocked to read of an article that she wrote for the *'New York Review of Books'*, one of the most powerful literary magazines of our times. It was caught by Niall O'Dowd in late August 2018. I tried to obtain the original article but was blocked by the magazine on a number of occasions. But O'Dowd gives a good flavour of what Wills wrote. The block-billing headline reads:

"A Princeton Professor discovers the sad 'half-life' her Irish family were condemned to live due to a pregnancy scandal, a spurned girlfriend and dark secrets that came spilling out."

"Clair Wills, a Professor of English at Princeton University, who had close ties to Ireland, has revealed secrets about her Irish family in the latest 'New York Review of Books'.

"Wills writes how the stillborn birth of her own child in 1996 led her to embark on a journey of discovery of dark secrets surrounding her family in Ireland, where her mother came from. Her dead son, Thaddeus, and the discovery her cousin had been sent to a notorious Mother and Baby home inspired her to find out the truth about her relative and her family."

What comes next, I find is a ruthless exploitation of her own dead son and indeed of her family and her neighbours in Skibbereen where everyone knows everyone else and the past is *no foreign country!* Clair Wills gave an interview to Shane Hegarty in *'The Irish Times'* 10th March 2007 where she was promoting her new book *'That Neutral Island'*. The article ends thus:

"Now, the seam of Irishness running through her own family is visible in how her children have taken fiddle lessons. The Skibbereen roots still anchor her

family. 'If you looked at my family, it's lovely being a stereotype, but we are a stereotype. The 30-acre farm, most of us emigrating, and now most of us coming back in some form or other. So two of my sisters live back here, the third actually has a house here, but she lives in Vietnam. I've written about Irish literature and culture for twenty years.' She pauses for a moment, "I suppose there's lots of ways of returning."

But now, as a Princeton Professor, she has a story that she *can appropriate*, a story that happened to others and she uses *their* shame to virtue signal *her lack of it!* Her so-called "*journey of discovery*" is used here to savage effect:

"What I knew, or thought I knew, was that my mother's eldest brother, Jackie, had got a local girl pregnant in 1954. Jackie was then in his mid-thirties and living at home on the farm with his mother... My mother (nearly ten years Jackie's junior) was doing her nursing training at Whipps Cross (in England), and she had to take several months out to go home and nurse her mother, who had reacted to the news of the pregnancy with a sort of breakdown that everyone called a stroke" (Wills's mother was a psychiatric nurse which even now has a professional stigma and which Wills, in her books, acknowledges as such—especially how she was treated in the UK).

According to the tale Wills tells, the—

"pregnant girl Lily was shunned by Jackie's mother not so much because she got pregnant, but she had a withered arm, was from a poorer farm and was not worthy of marrying Jackie. Her decision set off historical consequences that last to the present day."

"Lily went into a home to have her baby; Jackie went to work in England, and he never came home again. The farm he was to inherit was destined instead for the second son, Stephen, who came back from Dublin to take over running it."

Wills writes that "*I felt outrage over my grandmother's behaviour*". In our have-it-all era, the poor sick grandmother is outed in a terrible fashion—all for the feigned *outrage* of Wills and her cohorts in fashionable academia. Wills attributes to her grandmother all that follows.

"... 'To destroy three lives (Lily's and the baby's but also Jackie's) for the sake of some false—indeed wicked—ideals of morality, propriety, and respectability, some bogus notion of genetic inheritance: **I could not accept it!**'"

"With all the relatives gone, Wills decided to track down Lily's baby, her second cousin Mary. She learned that Lily had her baby in Bessborough Mother and Baby Home, in Cork and that later,

when Mary was perhaps four years old, she moved to the Convent of Mercy, in Clonakilty, County Cork. Mary went to England to become a nurse after sixteen years in the home. She fell in love with an Indian doctor who spurned her. Mary committed suicide...

"All the people involved in that mess in 1954, including my uncles, were condemned to *live half-lives*. While Jackie was consigned to labouring on building sites in England and an early death, Stephan was *buried alive* on the farm. And the *half-lives* lived by Lily and Mary are all too plain.' She concluded: "*It is not what we know but how we know that matters*. The difficulties I encountered in the 1990s in penetrating further into the half-understood story of my cousin and her parents were in part because of secrecy that still surrounded them all these years later."

"So many secrets, so many stolen lives came down to Lilly's withered arm and her father's poorer land."

Clair Wills's removal of **agency** from all the lives she documents, hints—no shouts—of a superior person/intellect that cannot see ordinary lives other than *half-lived*. In effect, Wills weaponises her grandmother's heart-breaking decision in order to *flaunt* her own liberal credentials to the readers of the *'New York Review of Books'* and beyond.

To say that Wills's writings have caused me pain is an understatement because—in the end—we all have our own family histories of wounds, secrets and sacrifices, but it is the Irish way to keep them to ourselves i.e. that is to *our people!*

(All italics mine – JH)

Julianne Herlihy ©

Irish By-Election Results

(a belated report!)

Four Dail by-elections in the constituencies, Dublin Fingal, Dublin Mid-West, Cork North-Central, and Wexford, were held on 29th November 2019.

Fine Gael failed to secure any seats in these, while the Green Party, Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin made gains.

Sinn Féin topped the poll in Dublin Mid-West, the Green Party took Dublin Fingal and Fianna Fáil took two seats - one in Cork North-Central and the other in Wexford.

The combined percentage vote of the main parties in these elections was: FF 24.1%. FG 20.2%. Lab 14.2%. SF 13.7%. Green. 10.3%. All Others combined got 17.5%

111,027 votes were cast: 261,171 people did not vote: not surprising as a General Election was expected.

The Greens won their first byelection, while in Dublin Mid West, Sinn Fein's Housing spokesman, Eoin Ó Broin, did what most sitting TDs don't do and helped Mark Ward to unexpectedly win the seat.

Roy Johnston: Some Stray Thoughts

Roy Johnston is described in his *Irish Times* obituary as “*a man ahead of his time*”. A better description would be *a man outside of time*. He was a mathematician: mathematics is timeless.

He also tried to be in politics, but the world of politics is time-bound. It has to do with human behaviour in time: time being the sequence of unrepeatably events. And human behaviour, unlike the subjects of mathematics, is wilful, and therefore does not lend itself to mathematical treatment. Johnston did not have two mentalities for dealing with his two worlds (such as De Valera had). In political affairs he remained a mathematician. That was a pity.

The *Irish Times* obituary does not mention Desmond Greaves, but Greaves was, I believe, a major influence on Johnston in the 1960s. He conducted the Connolly Association in England. The Connolly Association was a Front organisation of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The Irish policy of the CPGB was determined by Greaves in consultation with the super-intellectual of the Party, Palme Dutt, who also edited its most influential publication, *Labour Monthly*. Both were members of the Party Executive, but I would guess that they acted autonomously. And I gathered that Greaves was also a scientist.

Johnston was, I believe, a member of the Hammersmith Branch of the CPGB in the early 1960s. He was sent to Dublin to work on a connection which Greaves had established with the leadership of the IRA, which was looking for a new orientation after the utter failure of the 1956 invasion of the North. He was accompanied by Anthony Coughlan, who was a member of the Connolly Association but know nothing of the CA connection with the CPGB. The understanding the circles from which I picked up information was that Johnson and Coughlan were re-making the Republican movement on socialist lines through the liaison established by Greaves with Cathal Goulding.

The obituary does not mention the Wolfe Tone Society. It was not a secret society, but a select discussion group

with the purpose of ideologically re-orientating Republicanism. Pat Murphy, through whom I got some understanding of Dublin, was not invited to join it, nor was Dennis Dennehy, who caused great disturbance in Dublin in the Winter of 1968-9 with his Housing agitation and hunger strike, which led to something actually being done on housing.

Murphy and Dennehy were members of the B&ICO, as I was. We could see no point in acting under camouflage that fooled nobody. The Connolly Association was well-known to be a Front organisation of the Communist Party. (Liam Dalton, the Republican, who went to London after the failure of the 1956 Campaign, explained to us that it was the Church denunciation of the CA that led him to it: but it proved to be a disappointment!)

I was arrested at some point for selling the *Irish Communist* outside the GPO. I was taken to Store St. Garda Station and interviewed by Lugs Brannigan (of the ‘Heavy Squad’). He didn’t seem to know what to do with me and I was just let go. And, a short while later, Dennis Dennehy became a Dublin folk hero and established *Capital Study Groups* in the housing estates for reading Marx.

Dennis timed his hunger strike to be reaching crisis point on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Dail and its adoption of its *Social and Democratic Programme* in January 1969. He was actually homeless, living in a caravan with his family breach of the law. He refused any fudge of the issue, got himself imprisoned, and went on Hunger Strike. A Hunger Strike on the issue of Homelessness was unprecedented. The Republicans and the Communist Party were drawn into support of it. At the Dail 50th Anniversary Commemoration in the Mansion House, at which De Valera had the place of honour, Joe Clarke, the only survivor of the last Republican Dail, issued a protest for Dennis Dennehy in the name of the Social Programme.

This was a crisis for the State, and it pointed up the inadequacy of the regime. It had to get this Communist agitator off his Hunger Strike and out of jail. But the regime did not have a properly constituted ruling class with tentacles reaching into all regions of society. And Dennis

refused to ‘jump the queue’ for a Local Authority house. In the first instance the Quakers acted for the Government, and then the Jesuits. Dennis was got out of jail and into an illegally-parked caravan in Mountjoy Square, where he set in motion the modernisation of Dublin.

About seven months later the ‘Explosion in Ulster’ presented the State with another crisis, which was also a crisis for the Wolfe Tone Society and the reformed IRA.

Dennis Dennehy had considerable influence in Dublin and he used that influence in support of recognising the Ulster Protestants as a distinct national body with which international relations should be established. This led to a rupture with the elements that had supported him in his hunger-strike, but must have exerted some calming influence on the volatile situation brought about by Taoiseach Lynch’s inflammatory speech of August 1969.

I don’t know how closely Johnston was involved on the military side of the IRA—in the de-militarising of it. But the scheme of demilitarising a military force in order to change it to a force of political erosion of an intransigent enemy, while refusing to accord that enemy a right of existence, never struck me as sensible, especially since the military force was never either publicly or privately disbanded.

Ulster Unionism regarded the Civil Rights movement as an IRA Front, and there is no doubt that it was in part an IRA tactic and that members of the Army were active in it under orders.

The obituary says: “*He never accepted British sovereignty over Northern Ireland, although he believed it should be brought to an end by political rather than paramilitary means*”. But British sovereignty was not so much *extended over* the North as founded within it. And it was founded in the will of the Unionist majority of the population, which was not a mere party-political body but a dense community with three centuries of evolution behind it and an inherent conviction, which was beyond the reach of political argument, that it was British.

Desmond Greaves wrote somewhere that the Irishness of the Irish was a fundamental fact which no amount of British political chicanery could conjure away. He compared the difference between the Irish and the English to the difference between dogs and cats. It

would always assert itself in the long run. It was a difference of nationality.

And he held that the difference between the Ulster Unionist community and nationalist Ireland was a comparatively superficial thing, brought about by English Party politics—specifically by the Tory Party—in the late 19th century.

This seemed to me to fly in the face of observable fact. Unionist Ulster was much more set in its ways than nationalist Ireland was. It was out of reach of the persuasive powers of nationalist Ireland. It was a well-established community on its own long before effecting an alliance with the Tory Party in 1886.

The nationalist belief that Ulster Unionism was the result of Tory prejudice and Tory bribery, and that it would collapse if the Tories could be made to betray it—which was the prevalent belief in the Dail around 1970—was put to the test in 1972, when a Tory Government abolished Stormont and its majority-rule structure.

The result was that the Ulster Unionist Party split into three parties, with each of them being more unionist than the others. There was no slippage at all towards the Nationalist Party—which by then was calling itself Social Democratic and Labour, in order to receive Protestants who had seen through Unionism!

Ernest Blythe appealed to Nationalist leaders in 1957 to stop reinforcing Partition by treating the Ulster Unionists as a non-people. His appeal met with no worthwhile response. And the Wolfe Tone Society took no account of the appeal when it was formed a few years later.

Ernest Blythe was the only Ulster Protestant I knew of who joined Sinn Fein, played an active part in it, and became a Government Minister in Dublin. If Protestant Ulster was part of a general Irish nation, then Blythe would be its representative. But his fate demonstrates that he was not a representative Protestant, only an eccentric one, and his opinions were discounted accordingly.

Roy Johnston too had an Ulster Protestant connection. His father was an Ulster Presbyterian. Joseph Johnston published a book against Carson and the Tories in 1913: *Civil War In Ulster*. Its title page says he was a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin and had been a Scholar at Lincoln College Oxford. His viewpoint was that of a Liberal Home Ruler, but his mindset was what I would call mathematician

and scientist, or administrativist. It elaborated what are now called ‘scenarios’ of the future, taking account of identifiable ‘variables’. The systematic mind is easily bewitched by general conceptions which are all-embracing and is blinded to actualities and particulars, which are the matter of politics. And Joseph Johnston, an academic high-flier in Oxford and Anglo-Ireland, apparently knew nothing about his place of origin, Toomog townland, Castlecaulfield, County Tyrone.

I recall a maxim from Desmond Greaves: *Progress is a vector and is irreversible*. It sounded impressive. I tried to find out what it meant. The best sense I could make of it was the idea of a valve that let things through in one direction, and then clamped itself shut against any movement back in the opposite direction.

The relevant piece of Progress seems to have been that of 1782 when the Williamite colony declared its Irish Parliament to be independent, made good its claim against the British Parliament in the circumstances of the American War, and then broached the project of bringing within its ambit the Ulster Colony and the native Irish. That project was aborted by Protestant resistance. This led to trouble with the natives and the Presbyterians, and Britain abolished the Parliament which it had created. But 85 years after the Act of Union a British Prime Minister declared that the Union Bill was carried by corrupt methods, was therefore not legitimate, and that Irish national development must therefore resume. Accidental circumstances which obstructed the Progress set in motion in 1782 were invalid, and therefore could not be real, and must be dispelled.

Looking at the actual course of events with eyes not directed by the winkers of a general conceptual scheme of Progress, what one sees is the Colonial Parliament becoming independent in 1782 and presenting itself as the Irish nation. The policy of drawing the Catholics and Presbyterians into its affairs, under close Protestant hegemony, was proposed to the Parliament. It was a realisable project. But the Parliament refused to undertake it, and set itself against it when it was taken up by the surrounding society. It was, however, a project that could only be achieved by the Parliament. It could not be achieved against the Parliament.

The complete opposition of the Parliament to national reform led to the various upheavals of 1798. The British Parliament then bribed the Colonial MPs to abolish their Parliament, leaving the Presbyterians and Catholics free to develop in their own

ways. And, with its Parliament gone, the Anglican Colony was worn away by erosion.

That was the particularity of things. It was unacceptable to the visionaries of Progress.

Roy Johnston was the only Official Republican, the only Stickie that I knew at all well. I was chary of the Stickies. They were an unstable, irrational element in the political life of West Belfast, living in a conceptual wonderland which blotted out the realities of the world for them. And they had guns. In fact, to begin with they had *the* guns.

But Johnston, though lost in abstractions like the others, was well-intentioned in a way that they were not. And he was intrigued by what I wrote—or horribly fascinated by it. He wondered where it came from. But I couldn’t tell him, because it didn’t come from any general theory of everything. It came from growing up in a world that consisted of a few townlands in Slieve Luacra, and, in those townlands, from Canon Sheehan, Gavan Duffy, Goethe, Dostoevsky, Kant, Spinoza, Nietzsche—and, after I left those townlands in my twenties, from Clarendon and Burke and Balfour. But, to Johnston’s scientific mind, all of that amounted to coming from nowhere.

Between us there was complete mutual incomprehension.

I assumed he was in the IRA but I never asked him about it. If he was reforming it, how could he not have been in it? I was surprised to see in his obituary how soon he said to have resigned from it.

He must for a while have been a colleague of Eoghan Harris, but I would imagine that there was even less possibility of communication between him and Harris than there was between him and me.

I don’t know if he became a Unionist, as Harris did. Harris was one thing one day and its opposite the next day. He denounced me as an Orange stooge for suggesting in 1969 that the Ulster Protestants should be treated as a distinct nationality, not living in false consciousness, who were beyond the reach of any variety of nationalist propaganda no matter how subtle or devious. When he became a Unionist, he denounced me for being an unreconstructed nationalist. To his mode of reasoning it seemed obvious that if you did not regard the Ulster Unionists as dupes you must regard the Irish nationalists as dupes. Recognising each as real and valid, and attempting only to establish practical accommodations between them, was theoretically untidy.

In Belfast in the early 1970s I knew a couple of embryonic Stickies fairly well, but I had no suspicion that that is what they were. I reckon they became fully-fledged Stickies about 1973. Twenty-five years later they emerged as political advisors to the leader of what was then known as the Official Unionist Party.

The Ulster Unionist Party had broken in two after its understanding with the Tory Party was disrupted by Ted Heath in 1972. The event that broke it was the abolition of the Stormont system. The issue was control of security.

In the 1950s and 1960s a legalistic group within the UUP came to the conclusion that the Northern Ireland system set up in 1921 was no longer just a devolved system of local government but had a power of State of its own. While it was the case that the 1920 Act said that full sovereignty remained at Whitehall, the fact that Whitehall had not used its sovereign authority for two generations meant that that clause in the Act had become a dead letter. Great legal minds came to the conclusion that Northern Ireland had become a State under a federal relationship with Great Britain. But these legal minds did their thinking in a political vacuum. Northern Ireland had no political life of its own. What passed for politics in it was a routine of getting Protestants and Catholics out to vote against each other at elections, and it was excluded by the State from the political life of the state, and so it dreamed legal dreams.

Ted Heath took no heed of this legalistic fantasy. He asserted Whitehall authority on security matters. The Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, resigned. Whitehall suspended the Stormont system.

There were great Unionist protests. The legal fetishists, led by William Craig, said they wouldn't stand for it. A mass independence rally was held in Ormeau Park, addressed by Craig. A "*Vanguard*" Manifesto was published: *Ulster A Nation*.

The Orange Order was the essential body on the Ulster Unionist Council which controlled the Unionist Party. It was led by William Molyneux, an Anglican gentleman, and the Rev. Martin Smyth, a Presbyterian Minister. In 1798 the Order opposed the Act of Union and supported the independence of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy. But in 1972 it came out decisively in favour of the Union, against Craig's Ulster nationalism.

Craig formed his own Party, *Vanguard*. Paisley organised his following into the DUP. Brian Faulkner, supported by the

Orange Order, held the UUP headquarters and won the decisive votes, and therefore was the Official Unionist Party. The UUP, DUP and Vanguard formed an alliance known as the *Treble UC*, which won eleven of twelve Six County seats at the February 1974 General Election.

The Vanguard movement was extraordinarily vigorous for a couple of years. I was acutely aware of it because of an unfortunate habit of only being able to write in busy public places—contracted through having begun to write during tea-breaks in cafes. Vanguard was a strong presence in the city centre and it would not have been unreasonable for it to suppose that somebody doing what I was doing was up to no good.

That was a subjective reason for seeing it as fascist, but it was not the main reason. The Vanguard programme, *Ulster A Nation*, was a kind of fascist project.

I use the term descriptively. The last conflict of Republicans (Fianna Failers) and Blueshirts in Boherbue happened when I was a child. Boherbue warded off an attempt to hold a Blueshirt rally. The Blueshirts were Fascists. They said they were, and they knew what they were saying. The Irish Christian Front was a widespread movement in support of Fascism in Spain while the issue there was still in contention. Blueshirtism ceased to be an issue when it supported Neutrality in Britain's World War.

Fascism won in Spain. It made the present Spanish State, consolidated it, and then transferred its running to a form of representative government by parties.

I have seen only one event of the kind described by historians as having been carried out by the Brownshirts in Germany. It was enacted by a group of Jewish nationalist militants which in 1967 broke up a large meeting of Palestinians and their supporters in London, protesting against the Israeli conquests in that year. The meeting just melted away before the menace exuded by the recklessness of the attacking group.

I could not see why the Jewish nationalist colonial enterprise in Palestine was not fascist in character. And I noticed that the *Ulster A Nation* tendency in Ulster Unionism in its worldview recognised kindred spirits in Israel and South Africa.

So fascism came within the range of my idea of European, and Irish, normality. And I later discovered that Churchill, the anti-Fascist hero, was a fascist until the opportunity came along for him to be a Man of Destiny as an Anti-Fascist.

But these are things that must not be said. The EU is in vehement denial of the fascist phase in European development. (Without Fascism it would probably have been Bolshevik.) It seems that only Croatia lives in its actual history—at least to the extent that it has as its national flag the chequered flag of its fascist period.

Professor Tom Garvin, lost in the subjectivism of fashionable ideology, denies that Fine Gael was a fascist party and says that fascism in Ireland centred on Fianna Fail. But, in his defence of the Treaty, Garvin comes close to saying that effective states do not arise in a medium of democratic ideology but are forged by authoritative use of force which gives them structure and cohesion. But he dared not say it outright.

Kevin O'Higgins, at the first meeting of the Free State Dail, was much more forthright about the constructive use of terror in State-building.

An Irish State might have been formed democratically if Britain had not decided that it must not be. I don't know what grounds there are for thinking that the Republican Government of 1919-21 would have failed if Britain had let it be. The 'Civil War' did not come from conflict within the Republican system of 1919-21. It happened only because Britain insisted on abolishing the Republic and setting up a different state in place of it. That was where Fascism came in.

But *Ulster A Nation* was something else. It was fascism as fantasy. The Irish minority had increased from a third to two-fifths during the half-century when the Six Counties were excluded from the political life of the state. There was no possible Ulster national consensus. What practical fascism did essentially was forcefully re-assert a national consensus after the body politic had fallen into party-political antagonism. There was no potential national consensus in Ulster. There were two nations aligned with two different states.

David Trimble stood out as a militant of the Vanguard movement in 1972. Vanguard burned itself out. About twenty years later he became the leader of the Official Unionist Party and took the Official IRA for his political adviser.

I did not know of his affinity with the Official IRA until Lord Bew and Eoghan Harris appeared as his political advisers at the time of the Good Friday Agreement a number of years later, but from the start I thought his election as leader would be disastrous for the Party.

I heard about it on a radio in some shop that I was in. I was at the time having to deal with an unbelievably stupid libel action brought against me by Mary McAleese, over a perfectly accurate article about her appointment to a legal position for which she was not qualified. I did not have the money to buy any law and had to conduct my own defence. The Defence document I entered consisted chiefly of a biography of McAleese drawn up by Dave Alvey, insofar as it related to the libel writ that she served on me. As soon as it was entered, her solicitors saw that her case hopeless—as well as being absurd for being issued against an unskilled labourer. They tried to get her to drop the action—so they told me. But she was stubborn. She was a winner. She was making money out of libel actions, and would not give up this one, even though there was no more prospect of getting money out of me than of getting blood out of a stone.

If her action went to trial, and she lost, there would have been Unionist jubilation. I did not want to be in the position of bringing that about. I got her solicitors to understand that I did not want to win, but neither would I have it said that I had published something that was not true.

In the course of preparing a Defence I met David Trimble. It was the second time I met him. The first was twenty years earlier when he was running a Unionist Students group in Queen's University and came round to Athol St. looking for political literature.

The appointment over which McAleese was suing me was a Director of the Institute for Professional Legal Studies. There was a shortage of legal apprenticeship positions in Northern Ireland at the time because of the upsurge in litigation during the Troubles and the idea was to supply some practical training for prospective lawyers. There was a vacancy in the Directorship, Trimble was a Law lecturer at Queen's and had been overseeing the Institute on a temporary basis. The job was designed for a barrister or solicitor who had been in successful practice in the profession, rather than an expert on Law as such. This was generally understood to be a condition of the job. However, when the job was advertised, nobody applied for it. Successful barristers and solicitors had no desire to take a drop in income. The authorities decided to alter the conditions for applicants, to allow academic legal staff to apply for the Directorship of the Institute. However, the position was not re-advertised under the altered conditions, as being open to law lecturers.

Instead, applications were solicited from Trimble, who was already doing the job, from McAleese, who was a law lecturer in a different legal jurisdiction, and from a third party whose name I forget.

Soliciting applications for a job was gross breach of the 'Fair Employment' rules then being brought in by Sir Bob Cooper. I put it to Cooper that his 'Fair Employment' rules were camouflage under which a quota system was being enforced to bring on Catholics and disable Protestants. I had nothing against a quota system, but it should be done openly as a political measure to make the artificial structure of Northern Ireland more functional, instead of pretending that it was a way of getting employers to make a better choice of employees from a business viewpoint than they had been doing on their own.

Trimble was out of favour with the authorities and had been passed over for promotion because of his political record. That was obvious in Belfast, which is a small place. And a law lecturer was brought in from Dublin and given a job whose purpose was to pass on some experience of the *practice* of law to lawyers about to enter the outside world.

I did not discuss politics with him. I knew there would be no point to it, and so I think did he. The information I got from him was in my Defence.

Then, a couple of months later, with McAleese still dragging her heels, I heard that Trimble had been elected leader of the Official Unionists. For that, and reasons connected with the sabotage of the Campaign for Labour Representation by Kate Hoey and Jeffrey Dudgeon, I decided to have done with Belfast politics. A Cork barrister suggested that I should send McAleese's solicitors an ultimatum: end the action within 48 hours or there would be no more communication until the Trial. It was ended within 24 hours without any statement of any kind being issued or any money changing hands. And the matter would have been lost in obscurity if Martin Mansergh had not made a jibe about it which made it necessary for me to publish the proceedings. That was published in 2007.

In 1998 the Good Friday Agreement was made. An immense biography of Trimble was published by a Dean Godson. Trimble had blown his opportunity by the time I got it, so I didn't bother to read it. But Mary Kenny wrote an article about it for the *Irish Independent* in which she said that I had some special relationship with Trimble. I sent in a letter, which it was

obliged publish, saying that my relationship with Trimble consisted of two meetings twenty years apart. Martin Mansergh said something similar to Kenny. None of the three (Godson, Kenny, Mansergh) asked me about the weird notion that I was Trimble's Marxist guru.

Kenny had entered the English upper middle class and was, I suppose, tickled by the notion of the quaint behaviour of the natives she had left behind.

It was a personal achievement for Trimble, a passed-over Vanguardist, to have come across to Official Unionism and become Party leader—much more of an achievement than it was for McAleese to become President. But it was bad for the Unionist Party—and it was bad for the Republic to have got an imported President from Northern Ireland, who set about discarding pretty well everything she had apparently stood for before becoming President, as listed in my Defence.

Then Trimble, just by being there, became in 1998 "*one of the architects of the Good Friday Agreement*". My information was that Blair pinned him to the wall and threatened to destroy him, to prevent him from opposing the Agreement. And that, while letting the Agreement happen, Trimble let it be known that he did not sign it. He then took the Official IRA as political adviser to Official Unionism.

The GFA implied a *de facto* accommodation between Ulster Unionism and the Provisional IRA. The Official IRA was founded on wonderland ideology, combined with single-minded hostility to the Provos. And, as the Provos waged a major war against the British State—for greater in extent, duration and density than the war of 1919-21—it took on the mantle of general national culture, especially after RTE banned the broadcasting of traditional Republican songs as being supportive of it. The Stickies then, in their singlemindedness, became disparaging of the national culture from which they had emerged. How Lord Bew fitted into this I cannot imagine, but the development is clear in the biography of Eoghan Harris.

So Trimble took the Stickie line and warded off implementation of the GFA by fetishising the issue of arms, in an attempt to humiliate the Provos. The demand for publicly-displayed disarmament and the breaking up of the leadership that had guided the war to a negotiated peace was absurd. And Trimble rejected the opportunity to do a deal with Seamus Mallon's doctrinaire Constitutionalism, and give credibility to the SDLP—presumably

because John Hume had tainted the SDLP by collaborating with Gerry Adams.

The years passed by. The IRA achieved the transition from war to politics, which was the purpose the Adams/McGuinness leadership had set itself. And Paisley, during those wasted years, eroded the OUP and took over from it. He was enabled to have it both ways by Trimble being associated with the GFA but refusing to work it. And then, having secured his position of dominance as a staunch Unionist, Paisley made the required accommodation with the Provos.

In the early 1970s Paisley adopted briefly Carson's position of 1919-22: government of the Six Counties as an integral part of the British state. He did not explain why he dropped it and became a devolutionist. I assume that what is now called "*the deep state*" at Whitehall had a serious talk with him and impressed on him that challenging the *status quo* would have serious consequences. But he obviously had thought about the matter and had seen what an artifice Northern Ireland was and was not blinkered on the subject.

In the late 1980s, when David Morrison had made the extension of the State parties to the Northern Ireland region of the state a serious issue within the Labour Party and it was beginning to gain ground in the Tory Party, I got a message from Whitehall that this would never be allowed to happen. Perhaps it was fortunate, then, that Kate Hoey MP joined the campaign and effectively sabotaged it by sectarianism.

Doing what the State does not want you to do can be a very serious matter if you are having any success at it.

In later years I only discussed Northern affairs very obliquely with Roy Johnston on the few occasions when we met. He may not then have been formally a part of whatever it was that the Official IRA had become, but it did not strike me that his views had changed, nor his mathematician approach to politics: Northern Ireland was a product of perverse Tory influence operating on religious bigotry. But it was Irish.

I imagine he must have discussed the matter with Official IRA man Lord Bew, who opposed the extension of British state political parties to the Six Counties and wrote books about Northern Ireland as being itself a state.

But Lord Bew is only a straw in the wind.

Insofar as Official Republicanism had a human face, it was Roy Johnston's. But the dearth of obituaries indicates that he has been forgotten.

Brendan Clifford

PS

Roy Johnston published a biography/autobiography of himself and his father under the title of *A Century Of Endeavour*. I have not seen it, but a detailed review of it by Seán McGouran appeared in the October 2007 issue of *Irish Political Review*, which does not conflict with my impression of Johnston.

drinks together. I learned his name was Casement and that he was visiting the German Minister Baron Nordenfletch (sic) I deserted my ship and remained in Montevideo for a month and during that time I frequently saw Casement and he visited me at his rooms".

Hyde says he "is unable to propose a credible motive which explains why Christensen might relate a self-incriminating and false story of a scandalous nature to three strangers". There is however abundant evidence that what Adler did was for revenge and money, even if his mind was changeable.

He accepts the police interviews took place but majors on the large number of typos and mistakes in the thirteen pages of the Scotland Yard report and the intended Adler statement. Paul effectively says they are fictional but offers no clue as to why they were "entirely invented" or the journey to Philadelphia made at all. In fact, the police had gone to see if Adler might give useful evidence at the imminent trial. In the event, nothing came of it, partly as he changed his mind and backed out (again).

As it was plain that the previous meeting of the pair was also of a sexual nature, Paul's defence technique is full frontal attack on errors in the police documents. It is worth repeating that he accepts some TNA items without question yet requires an 'authenticity guarantee' for others he disputes. So what criteria allow some documents to go unassailed? What would convince him by way of evidence of any fact or event? Is there any document, by his logic, that cannot be called into question? This is impossibilist historiography. Historians are not defence lawyers.

The Scotland Yard officers in Philadelphia did see Adler two times. But he returned without any of the promised documents, remarking that "*he had been led on to say a great deal more than he intended*". He explained that he had wanted "*to get even with Devoy*". The two had come to blows over Devoy's attempt to stop him associating with a German lady. He had also "*remonstrated with him as to his gambling habits*" which is an interesting new angle on Adler's vices. His motive, as he said himself, was revenge on Devoy not Casement.

Adler asked for fifteen dollars a week for his wife if he was absent in London giving evidence and a down payment of 700 dollars. The Yard report commented that he was "*an unscrupulous person*" who was in fear of the American police.

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

The Philadelphia Experience, A Reply To Paul Hyde

Paul Hyde, in November's *Irish Political Review*, asserted I was undeserving of mention in his book as my "*highly idiosyncratic approach excludes critical engagement*". He has, none the less, decided in January's edition, at length, to deal with an issue I alone have drawn attention to, although without naming me. It relates to Casement's Norwegian companion, Adler Christensen, in May 1916, going to the British Consulate in Philadelphia and offering to be a witness at Casement's trial. The proposal is first mentioned in a cable sent to the F.O. on 10th May 1916: "*Acting Consul General Philadelphia has received offer from a man named Christensen to give evidence against Casement and if necessary to proceed to England.*" (TNA FO 95/776).

This was Adler's second such betrayal at a British mission. The first in October 1914 was to inform about Casement and his arrival in Norway en route to Berlin.

In his article, '*Philadelphia Experience*' (*Irish Political Review*, January 2020), Hyde tries to deal with the revelation in Scotland Yard's interview report that Casement had met Adler previously, something I discovered from Casement's own archive (NLI 17,023). This was contrary to his other statements that they had first met by chance on New York's Broadway in July 1914.

In Philadelphia, Adler confirmed the earlier meeting to Chief Inspector Ward, saying, "I visited Montevideo and whilst there in a Hotel a man followed me into the lavatory, I walked into the bar and he followed me out and we had some

Frank Hall of MI5, on reading Ward's report, noted on 30 June: *"I doubt he is really of much use [the last two words Hyde could not decipher]. His personal quarrel with Devoy, if properly handled, might be turned to good account"*. Adler's story that, *"owing to Devoy trying to control my personal affairs we had a quarrel"* is confirmed by other material on his relentless perfidy being exposed yet, remarkably, he survived unscathed.

Devoy wrote to Casement on 19 December 1915 (NLI 13073/44):

"You may think we have nothing definite against him. Unfortunately, the proof is conclusive and overwhelming that he has been swindling us and recklessly and foolishly lying. The reason is a woman whom he brought over with him when he returned here the first time and who is now in a hospital across the river with a new born baby. All his pleas to me for money for his wife – which were in all cases generously responded to – were to keep up the dual establishment. She is the daughter of an official of a Berlin bank.

"The first proof we got was when he went to Joe [McGarrity]. Early one morning, broken from want of sleep, with a story that he had been robbed of \$4.50, a watch and a diamond pen, in a subway train and asked Joe. to lend him the money so that he could pay the passage of three men, for which I had given him \$300, as well as \$100 for himself. But two nights before he had told me a story which would leave him only \$280. Joe. insisted he must tell me and he (Joe.) came on and did so. The robbery story was too ridiculous for me to believe and Joe. did not believe it either, but when Olsen came to me I did not say an angry word and gave him \$300 again but told him it placed me in a very bad fix. Then I found he had gone to the man who had given him work and asked \$100 to pay for his wife's confinement in a hospital".

Later, in a letter dated 20th July 1916, to Lawrence de Lacey, and copied to London by the US authorities, Devoy wrote of how Adler's betrayal had been prevented: *"Christensen was going over from here to testify against him—and incidentally to give away all our secrets that he had got from Roger—but we kept him here"*.

So his Philadelphia treachery had become known to Devoy. Perhaps Adler told him of it to extract money in a Christiania-style triple cross. He was, as Devoy added, *"One of the worst crooks I ever met and... in the pay of the English all along... He, Casement was warned of that from Ireland and the first thing he did was to tell the fellow himself."*

Hyde makes much of police spelling and inconsistencies. He forgets that Case-

ment's spelling of foreign names was frequently variable and often incorrect while Adler's letters were not in educated English, as when he wrote on 23rd January 1915 about the diplomat Findlay: *"I told him to go and fuck himself... I bet you nobody ever talked to him as I did. He was right pale in the face."*

Police were recruited and, surprisingly still are, from the working class, and are undereducated, much like barristers' clerks in London today. Their writing style is often ponderous even if the content is extensive. They learn on the job but are rarely imaginative. This is exemplified by the failure to locate Casement's possessions in London despite considerable effort, especially around his financial transactions. His luggage was scattered but in plain sight if leads had been followed up. The diaries only surfaced when an Ebury Street landlord, who was known to have cashed cheques for Casement, suddenly arrived with the diaries at Scotland Yard—after the arrest and interrogation.

Standard police procedure is or was to write down the evidentially useful facts they want any witness to sign up to. In this case, the words were plainly not written on the page or dictated by Adler. The statement is anyway entitled *'Copy'* and thus not signed by C.I. Ward. Paul Hyde lists fourteen errors in the police papers and, correctly, three examples of historians' *"false"* statements, actually mistakes or elision of the documentary evidence about Adler and Casement's *'unnatural relations'*. He is a little unfair in that Christensen's age is indeed given as 36 but later, correctly, as 26; Devoy is spelt De Voy throughout but this is hand-corrected by an MI5 reader; while the spelling of the name Brogan is not always wrong and the typist changes it (TNA KV 2-9-3). Paul himself makes one such error in his use of the American spelling of jewelry for jewellery.

Now Adler's statements were frequently garbled and with facts mixed up. I accept his locating that first meeting in Montevideo and its date were wrong, a meeting Hyde (speculatively) reckons Casement had "forgotten". It was most likely in Rio de Janeiro where Baron von Nordenflycht was also Consul and 1909. Adler was eventually to die in a French jail in 1935 after a very racketsy life.

Adler's remarks did contain a large number of memories and details that were new to C.I. Ward, such as Plunkett being *"a man with scars round his neck"* and Monteith's journey to Norway, as well

as about Casement in Germany, much of which MI5 had ascertained by 1916. It was interesting to learn from Paul's research that Ward was killed in a Zeppelin raid in 1917 while the SS *Cameronia* on which he travelled to America was later sunk in the Mediterranean.

Hyde insists, of my writing approach, that it consists of *"original syntactic mechanics, shifting registers, demotic verve, predicative and attributive nervousness—all of which persuades me I am lost in a grammatical earthquake zone a semantic black hole."* I could go on—as he does, regarding my investigative approach toward a statement by Casement's solicitor, George Gavan Duffy, which he avers

"owes something to magic realism, something to solipsism and something to paranormal powers. The statement is hermetically sealed against verification by logical enquiry. It rests upon mind-reading, second sight and telepathy—psychic gifts which enable Mr Dudgeon to confuse belief with knowledge."

The Gavan Duffy reference concerns the disappearance of many Casement documents to which I drew attention in my 3rd edition of the Black Diaries. To explain, Duffy provided the Bureau of Military History with a speech (WS 381) he had made in 1950 on Casement in Germany and his reasons for attempting to stop the Easter Rising. In it he mentioned tangentially,

"I had in fact received the year before, from a friend of his, three cases of his papers which the friend thought it unwise to retain and he wanted to dispose of them. I remember spending an arduous week-end with Art O'Brien, whom I called in, going through these documents to see what might be utterly seditious in them."

As I wrote,

"The concerned friend is most likely to have been Dick Morten, given that the inspection probably occurred in London where both Duffy and O'Brien lived. Morten had earlier been a custodian of Casement papers at his house, 'The Savoy'... It is unlikely there was anything seditious in the three cases, given the material predated the outbreak of war so it must have been the mixed in sexual material that was so concerning. We know Casement was worried about his papers as he expressed concerns about those left with F.J. Bigger. Indeed he had written in 1914 asking that they be hidden (or buried) and been assured they were."

The absence of letters to Casement from a number of his key correspondents confirms that a significant portion disappeared. That group, for whom there are mounds in archives written by Casement,

includes Gertrude Bannister, F.J. Bigger, Alice Stopford Green, Bulmer Hobson, and Dick Morten. There is, in contrast, next to nothing from them to Casement, pre-1913. Gavan Duffy did not explain what happened to the three cases of papers after the pair's inspection. One has to deduce they were destroyed in their entirety.

Such suppositions are what historians make when sifting documentary evidence, allied with reasonable presumptions, in this case based on the fact that Casement retained an enormous number of incoming letters yet nothing from these five of his closest friends. That is not unreasonable speculation, second sight or magic realism. If every conceivable option was addressed, biographies would become impossibly long and turgid.

Jeffrey Dudgeon

Casement:

A reply to Tim O'Sullivan

Tim O'Sullivan in his piece,

"Photographs, Photostats and Typescripts" (*Irish Political Review*, December 2019) continues to protect his long-held conviction that the controversial diaries did exist in 1916, although he admits there is no independent witness evidence for their existence. In order to do this effectively, he needs to produce verifiable evidence, rather than rely on speculations about what he considers probable and improbable. He might start with the following: he believes that it is highly improbable that Hall would have risked discovery if he did not have the actual diaries to support his claims. However, Hall did not show the diaries, therefore he took the risk in any case; there were no doubt persons who suspected deceit and for this reason the police undertook various corroboration exercises, rather than show the diaries; photographic evidence existed in 1916 but it does not exist today; Tim has never seen this evidence. Therefore the authorities destroyed their own evidence.

Jack Lane

under siege, caused by the suspicion that this mainly Catholic police force would enforce Home Rule, which was described as *Rome Rule*. One RIC barrack in particular, in Protestant East Belfast, had an all Catholic police force from the Southern counties. It became endangered through being besieged: on several occasions the RIC fired through the gun-slots of the armoured window shield, and once killing three besiegers and wounding up to a dozen.

Then came the claim that pro-Home Rule Catholics, working in one of the two shipyards—probably the smaller Workman Clark—expelled a Protestant worker who had opposed their views. Many skilled men like joiners went North from the South of the country to take advantage of Northern industrialisation. The two shipyards, one of which was Harland & Wolff, were booming in shipbuilding and would have needed all the skills they could find.

On 4th June 1886, a Protestant preacher called 'Roaring' Hugh Hanna organised retaliation against the Catholic workforce: 10 Catholics were so badly beaten they had to be hospitalised. One was drowned in the River Lagan.

In all 200 Catholics were forced out of their jobs. With them also expelled were a number of what they called *rotten Protestants*, the left-wingers of the day—advocating communism many years before the Bolshevik Revolution. Among these were a number of Scotsmen. (It was one of these who converted my father as a young apprentice joiner to communism in 1914.)

Things then quietened for a while until 1893, when the Second Home Rule Bill was read in House of Commons. Severe rioting broke out at a 12th of July Orange Parade, when they marched through a Catholic area. The RIC intervened and suffered the death of a superintendant and 390 of their personnel injured in the struggle, it has been said, to separate the two sides.

The RIC retaliation with gunfire, killing 13, most of them Protestants. This resulted in more pogroms, with even more Catholics expelled from the shipyards and other industrial complexes.

Then 1912 and the reading of the Third Home Rule Bill resulted in even more rioting, and even more expulsions of Catholic workers. There was the mass signing of the Ulster Covenant by the Ulster Protestant population against that Bill. My father's family signed it, except for my grandfather, who came from Donegal Protestant stock.

As a result of my father's personal experience of the RIC, he had nothing but hostility for them. The RIC created tension in the York Road area he lived in with just merely their

Finding Bobby In The RIC?

The Royal Irish Constabulary was disbanded in 1922: 1,330 transferred to the new RUC, making them 21% of that police force. Just 13 transferred to Garda Síochána, and most of them had had taken part in secret IRA activities. Some of the old RIC fled to England, Scotland and Wales with their families and became part of the police forces there. But the majority joined (or transferred) to the British colonial police service in India, China, Africa, Malaya, Palestine and to the Caribbean islands. Canada also saw quite an input. The claim was they were in fear of reprisals, and maybe so, but it could be said they wanted to continue their police careers under British administration. Being highly trained and having taken part in a major war, and being familiar with firearms, they were soon promoted and became an asset for British colonialism.

The RUC of the Northern Protestant community continued to be recruited for British Colonial service right into the 1950s. They were recruited for their height, their muscle, their discipline, courage and honesty, and their paramilitary training. The English police had 13 weeks training whereas the

RUC had six months training.

The RUC Inspector-General complained about his police being offered better salaries and free accommodation to serve in the colonies. The RUC did agree to transfer some of its members to police parts of Greece during the Greek Civil War in 1946-1949, where the Greek communists were defeated. After that war they resumed their positions back in Northern Ireland.

Post WW2 hoardings in Belfast had huge posters recruiting for the Palestine Police, offering £5 a week, all found. There was no image of normal policing in Northern Ireland. Even the Garda Síochána would have had personnel with a knowledge of war and firearms in the New Free State.

On the 8th of June 1886, the first Home Rule Bill, which would have granted Ireland a devolved government, came before the British House of Commons. Though it was defeated, Protestant rioting in Belfast cost 50 lives over a few weeks. Even the thought of this mild compromise infuriated the Protestant population and caused a rift between them and the RIC, most of whom were Catholic and from areas across what was to become the border.

A couple of police barracks were put

Southern accents. Boys would put cap—small harmless but loud explosive used in toy guns—on the tramlines, then wait for a tram to come along and detonate them. This brought the RIC out of their barracks in a long line, like something out of Hollywood's *Keystone Cops*.

All of this ceased when the RIC became the RUC, and was looked on as a Protestant militia by the Protestant population. The former Southern RIC members were mostly put into Catholic areas or kept in the City Centre of Belfast. They didn't prove to be popular in the Catholic areas with their Southern accents mocked by children and their jeer: "*Are you in the Movement?*"

Despite this the RUC even went on to recruit from the South. I remember their accents when in the City Centre, even in the early 1950s. You couldn't mistake them for their over six feet height and 16 stone of muscle and teeth like tombstones.

One in particular was accused of only using the baton on Protestant football supporters during a sectarian riot against a Catholic football team. On the other hand one notorious Southern RUC Branch-Man—who went to Mass wearing a bullet-proof vest—was tripped up on the way out of Church: with a gun applied to his anus *in order to blow his brains out*, as was said by a man, a possible participant, at Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner in London, back in the 1950s.

It is purported that the killing of a Northern Protestant member of the RIC serving in Cork by the IRA sparked the Northern riots that lasted from 1920-1922 and resulted in 450 dead and over a 1000 injured.

But, in the end, it is the Irish Government's efforts to rehabilitate the RIC, with its added ingredients of the Auxiliaries and the Black-and-Tans, and the denial, by one official, that the Tans and Auxiliaries had anything to do with the RIC that has caused a public backlash.

The Connolly Association, a British-based Irish exile association, with great faith in its missionary work to the *poor deluded* Protestant population of Northern Ireland felt, back in the 1950s, that Protestant action against the RIC in the 19th Century/early 20th Century, was anti-British/anti-Imperialist. Some of the finest minds in that organisation insisted on this being written into history. Many of them had no idea of what constituted the Northern Protestant, and some of the survivors of that now defunct movement can still see the bringing of Catholic and Protestant into one as a project still possible through their One-Ireland concept.

Wilson John Haire
20.1.20

State commemoration of the RIC

I write concerning your news report by Ronan McGreevy on the planned commemoration, on January 17th, of members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police who were killed in the War of Independence ("RIC and DMP policemen to be commemorated for first time by State", News, January 1st).

Unfortunately the words of Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan, which are quoted in order to justify the commemoration, fail to recognise the real role of the police force at that time. He said: "They were doing what police officers do. As they saw it they were protecting communities from harm. They were maintaining the rule of law."

In fact, the law that they were maintaining was often martial law and was often opposed to the norm of civil rights. This was especially so after the appointment of Lord French as governor general in May 1918 and the introduction of a new type of military administration into Ireland. Following a proclamation of Lord French, on May 16th, 1918, the police were responsible for arresting and imprisoning without trial hundreds of Sinn Féin activists or sympathisers.

This new reality was recognised by Lord Wimborne, the former lord lieutenant, who wrote in the *Times* of London, on March 25th, 1919, that "popular leaders were incarcerated and a military regime was established".

The police were an integral part of that regime.

The manner in which the police, both the RIC and the DMP, contributed to that military regime was spelled out by many speakers at a meeting of Dáil Éireann on April 10th, 1919. De Valera commented that "they are no ordinary civil force, as police are in other countries. The RIC, unlike any police force in the world, is a military body armed with rifle and bayonet and revolver as well as baton". He added that they are spies in our midst.

This last point was endorsed by Eoin MacNeill who declared that "the police force in Ireland are a force of spies. The police in Ireland are a force of traitors, and the police in Ireland are a force of perjurers." He said more in the same vein and concluded that was why you should take such measures as will make police government in this country by the enemy impossible".

One could give many more examples but the historical record clearly shows that there are serious questions about commemorating a police force which combined with the British military to defeat the democratic wishes of the Irish people.

Dr. Brian Murphy OSB

Is it not bizarre that the Government has chosen January 17th to honour and commemorate the Royal Irish Constabulary's role during the War for Independence, as that was the day 100 years ago that advertisements were appearing in the British media seeking constables for the proposed 'Royal Irish Constabulary Special Reserve', later known as the Black and Tans?

The advertisements were headed "Do you want a job?", and stated that "You can join the RIC today"

Breasal Ó Caollaí
Irish Times 4.1.2020

We shouldn't honour the RIC 'murderers'

I find it bizarre that the Government plans to formally commemorate those Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police members killed opposing the fight for Irish Independence.

Surely this is taking political ecumenism a step too far? How can one honour the RIC without also honouring the Black and Tans who were an integral element of policing in Ireland during the War of Independence?

Have we forgotten that it was the Royal Irish Constabulary who enforced evictions during the Famine? That it was the Dublin Metropolitan Police who attacked and killed workers during the 1913 Lockout? Is Leo Varadkar aware that it was the Auxiliary Division of the RIC which fired indiscriminately into the crowd in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday in 1920, killing innocent spectators?

Why on earth should we commemorate these murderers?

Tom Cooper
Sunday Independent 5.1.2020

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

The Banks in Ireland

It has been said that the bailout of the banks by the Irish taxpayers is still, in 2020, costing the taxpayers three million euros a day. This may not be quite correct but the bailout is still costing a lot of money.

And the question is did the Irish taxpayer get value for their money? No! seems to be the answer to that question. Banking services have deteriorated hugely since the bailout. The banks are like ghosts of their pre-crisis selves. Bank staff are reduced to skeletal levels. Where formerly, there were five or six staff, even in Bank branches in smaller towns—now there are two or three, and on days when staff are absent due to illness or holidays, a Bank branch may be closed altogether for days at a time except for the Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs).

Such temporary closures are barely noticed by the majority of customers who have become accustomed to being treated badly and who have been trained to use the ATMs for which the customers form queues on the streets in the open air. Incidentally, how is it that Banks are allowed to trade on the streets without a Hucksters Licence, without which any other street trader will be prosecuted by the ./..?

Even inside in the Bank buildings, the customers are trained to queue. Even in the busiest Bank branches, there is often only one human cashier on duty. I have had to wait 16 minutes recently in such a queue even though throughout all of these 16 minutes I could see two other Bank staff in a glass fronted room apparently just chatting to each other—no regard for the customers as customers who are contributing to their wages. Sorry, their salaries.

Services are being reduced, not only by reduction in staff numbers in Bank branches, but also in the reduction in the number of branches available to customers—many branches have been closed and the buildings have been sold. This is all

being done in the cause of “efficiency”, and the “cutting costs” mantra: but, if this is the case, where is the money saved ending up? Enormous savings must logically have occurred in recent years. Are the savings being expended on the costs of computerisation? If so, we are getting a bad deal because it is much better to have more people employed in the Banks and to have less expensive ATMs and less of all the other very costly computerisation. Computers are suited to the high volume of credit card transactions where the margins are high—about 16%—which pays for the computers and the high tolerance for bad debts.

But ordinary banking services do not need machines. Machines will not be customers for hairdressers, shops, restaurants or hotels. The machines are not made in Ireland and so the economic contribution is very negative for the Irish economy.

You may be thinking that we can't turn back the clock and that the progression in mechanisation and computerisation is relentless and unstoppable. But think again—it is all based on the generation of electricity, which many people think is leading to climate change. If the electricity

goes, so does the operation of computers, machines, iPhones and the cloud. The electricity grid is extremely vulnerable from many angles. In Ireland, electricity generation is heavily dependent on coal, oil, and gas for the foreseeable future. Everywhere in the world the generation and transmission of electricity is very vulnerable to terrorist attack. So the State should, on our behalf, take action to minimise the non-essential uses of electricity.

Laws and regulations should be made so that people are not deprived of their jobs by unnecessary computerisation. Town planning regulations should require buildings to be designed so as to be capable of being used without electric lighting during daylight hours. And buildings should be restricted to six floors in height. Six floors is the maximum sustainable height without electricity. And so on . . .

It is all achievable if only we change our habits and our ways of thinking. We do **NOT** have to be always rushing onwards towards what is ultimately an unachievable goal. The day will inevitably come when we will have to manage without electricity or, at least, without all the electricity we are presently using.

Michael Stack ©

Parliamentary Democracy

Continued

that one question it arrogates to itself the right to rule and decide on every other question without the slightest reference to the wishes of the electorate.

If Parliament, elected to carry out the wishes of the electors on one question, chooses to act in a manner contrary to the wishes of the electors in a dozen other questions, the electors have no redress except to wait for another general election to give them the opportunity to return other gentlemen under similar conditions and with similar opportunities of evil-doing.

The democracy of Parliament is in short the democracy of Capitalism. Capitalism gives to the worker the right to choose his master, but insists that the fact of mastership shall remain unquestioned; Parliamentary Democracy

gives to the worker the right to a voice in the selection of his rulers but insists that he shall bend as a subject to be ruled. The fundamental feature of both in their relation to the worker is that they imply his continued subjection to a ruling class once his choice of the personnel of the rulers is made.

But the freedom of the revolutionist will change the choice of rulers which we have to-day into the choice of administrators of laws voted upon directly by the people; and will also substitute for the choice of masters (capitalists) the appointment of reliable public servants under direct public control. That will mean true democracy—the industrial democracy of the Socialist Republic.

*(Workers' Republic,
Saturday, 22nd September 1900).*



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James Connolly Parliamentary Democracy

Workers' Republic, Saturday, 22nd September 1900

Parliament is dissolved! By whom? By whom was Parliament elected? By the voters of Great Britain and Ireland. Was it then the voters of Great Britain and Ireland who called upon Parliament to dissolve? No, it was the Prime Minister of England, Lord Salisbury to wit, whom nobody elected and who is incapable under the laws of his country of being a parliamentary representative; it was this gentleman with whom lay the power of putting an end to the deliberations of Parliament and sending its members back to the ordeal of the hustings.

This ridiculous situation is highly illustrative of many anomalies and absurdities with which the English Constitution abounds. Eulogised by its supporters as the most perfect constitution yet evolved it is in reality so full of illogical and apparently impossible provisions and conditions that if presented to the reasoning mind as the basis of a workable constitution for a new country it would be laughed out of court as too ridiculous to consider.

Let us examine a few of its provisions in order that we may the more effectively contrast this parliamentary democracy with the democracy of the revolutionist. Parliament is elected by the voters of Great Britain and Ireland. When elected that party which counts the greatest number of followers is presumed to form the Cabinet as representing a majority of the electorate.

But it by no means follows that a majority in the House represents a majority of the people. In many constituencies for instance where there are more than two candidates for a seat it frequently happens that although a candidate polls a larger vote than either of his opponents and so obtains the seat, yet he only represents a minority of the constituents as the vote cast for his two opponents if united would be much greater than his own.

The cabinet formed out of the members of the party strongest numerically constitutes the government of the country and as such has full control of our destinies during its term of office. But the Cabinet is not elected by the Parliament, voted for by the people,

nor chosen by its own party. The Cabinet is chosen by the gentleman chosen by the Sovereign as the leader of the strongest party. The gentleman so chosen after a consultation with the Queen (who perhaps detests both him and his party) selects certain of his own followers, and invests them with certain positions, and salaries, and so forms the Cabinet.

The Cabinet controls the government and practically dictates the laws, yet the Cabinet itself is unknown to the law and is not recognised by the Constitution. In fact the Cabinet is entirely destitute of any legal right to existence. Yet although outside the law and unknown to the Constitution it possesses the most fearful powers, such as the declaration of war, and can not be prevented by the elected representatives of the people from committing the nation to the perpetration of any crime it chooses. After the crime has been perpetrated Parliament can repudiate when it meets the acts of the Cabinet, but in the meanwhile nations may have been invaded, governments overturned, and territories devastated with fire and sword.

The powers of Parliament are also somewhat arbitrary and ill-defined. Every general election is fought on one or two main issues, and on these alone. It may be the Franchise, it may be Temperance, it may be Home Rule, or any other question, but when Parliament has received from the electors its mandate on

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