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## War And Sectarian Peace

“Although there had been significant sectarian conflict at the time of partition in the early 1920s, Northern Ireland experienced long periods of comparative peace for most of the fifty years that followed”.

But:

“the hand of history also continued to play a part in the situation” (*Years Of Darkness: The Troubles Remembered* by Gordon Gillespie).

“*Sectarian conflict*” is contrasted with “*comparative peace*”. But the “*comparative peace*” was sectarian too. There has now been comparative sectarian peace for twenty-three years.

The peace is certainly sectarian. But the War was not.

The War was not fought between the sectarian communities. It was fought between one of the communities and the State.

The two communities were sectarian because they were excluded from the political democracy of the state.

The two communities were cut off from the political life of the state and were set up in a pseudo-state of their own which had no actual State power, and in which they were required to carry out a number of subordinate functions.

Neither community wanted the system in which the State obliged them to live. The Protestant community wanted to be governed as an integral part of the British state by the Government of the state. The Catholic community wanted to be part of the Irish state.

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## Brexit:

### *Reading Johnson's Actions*

As of the third month of the post-Brexit dispensation neither of the two negotiated Agreements are going to plan. The 2019 Withdrawal Agreement is not working because its Northern Ireland Protocol is being half-heartedly implemented in a way that falls short of guaranteeing the protection of the Single Market. In Northern Ireland the Protocol is being opposed, with some measure of success, by all shades of unionist opinion—and the recently signed *Trade and Cooperation Agreement* remains to be ratified by the European Parliament and, according to reports from Brussels, there is no certainty as to when it will be debated or even what the outcome of the debate will be.

Both problems stem from the stance being taken by the UK regarding the

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## Remembering Gallipoli

### *The article The Irish Times refused to print!*

Five years ago, in 2016, President of Ireland Mary McAleese visited Gallipoli as part of her remembrance escapade. I was approached to write an article marking this event because I had written a book a few years earlier on Britain's *Great War on Ottoman Turkey*. It seemed a good opportunity to explain what Gallipoli was all about and why Irish people ended up

fighting and dying there, at “*Sud el Bar and Suvla side*” as the song goes. So far, so good.

However, this proved to have been very naive. I was, of course, aware that I had to tread carefully with the article because the *Irish Times* (along with Trinity College, Dublin) was one of the residues of

the British garrison in Ireland and would not take kindly to anything being said that might blacken the good name of Mother England.

I also knew that the then President was a “*peace and reconciliation*” woman who, having called the Northern Unionists “*fascists*” in an unguarded moment, was keen to make amends and butter them up through notions of “*shared sacrifice*” for the Empire in the interests of placing them within a United Ireland. I found this a disreputable project—honouring the invasion

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

Labour's 'Lost' Leader?

Dan Morrissey TD 1895-1981

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***Public Service Pay Agreement***

***European Works Councils In Ireland***

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The Protestants were allowed to be a semi-detached part of the British state on the condition that they ran the pseudo-state of Northern Ireland—which was set up by Westminster for reasons that had nothing whatever to do with good government of the Six Counties.

The “*hand of history*” had nothing to do with causing “*the Troubles*”. It was not brooding over past injustice that caused them. It was the actual effect of the aggravations caused by the continuing existence of the undemocratic structures set up in 1921.

Richard English, Professor of Politics at Queen’s University, Belfast, contributes this thought in a Foreword to Gillespie’s book:

“Despite talk of the Troubles as a ‘war’... and of paramilitary killers as ‘combatants’, the reality that emerges from this book is that so many Troubles victims did not die in combat at all, but were targeted when they were defenceless.”

This is quaint.

It might have had some validity before the Boer War when wars were usually fought between professional armies for limited objectives. It has had none since August 1945 when two Japanese cities, far from the battle-zone, which were without the means of defence, were targeted and obliterated with nuclear weapons by the leading democracy in the world.

The United States engaged in the mass killing of Japanese civilians for the purpose of compelling the Japanese Government to submit to it unconditionally.

The Provisional IRA declared war on the British State, which was the party responsible for the “*sectarian*” condition of public life in Northern Ireland. It did not target Ulster Protestants in order to exert pressure on the Government of the state to comply with its demands.

In 1974-5 the Government of the State tried to “*Ulsterise*” the War—to make it a sectarian war between the two communities in Northern Ireland. It failed.

There was of course some spontaneous communal killing. But there was a War between the IRA and the Army of the State—a fact which the Army frankly acknowledged.

Peaceful sectarianism was restored in 1998, when the Government of the State made a basic reform of the way its undemocratic governing of the Six Counties was structured. The principle of majority rule in its pseudo-state in the Six Counties was abolished. The pretence that there was a “*Northern Ireland community*” and a Northern Ireland body politic, and a Northern Ireland democracy, was discarded.

It was acknowledged that there were two distinct body politics with different national and state allegiances and that the difference between them was not a policy difference about how the state should be governed but was about which state the region should be in, and that the two communities were so close in size that a devolved government including both of them could not in practice be operated by majority rule.

The system set up in 1998 to establish sectarian peacefulness is not accurately described as *Coalition Government* or even *Power Sharing*. It involves a separation of the Departments of government into virtually autonomous institutions. The Ministers of the Departments are not chosen by a Prime Minister. They are chosen by the Parties, with the Party with the greatest vote having the first choice, etc., and they do not cohere into a Cabinet.

This arrangement would not be functional if Northern Ireland was a state. It is not now a state, and it never was. The state is the United Kingdom. The democratically-elected Government is the Whitehall Government. The electorate in Northern Ireland plays no part in electing the Government of the state, but the Government of the state is the supreme power in Northern Ireland.

Neither the old Stormont system, nor the system established in 1998 for the purpose of ending the War in the state and establishing sectarian peace in what is often called “*the Province*”, had any independent authority. There is no trace of federalism in the arrangement. Whitehall supplies all the means of government, and it could abolish its delegations overnight without any infringement of propriety, as it did in 1972.

The delegated Finance Minister, Conor Murphy, who qualified for the position by being an active member of the IRA in the War, made a Budget which was rejected by the First Minister. The First Minister is not a Prime Minister. She did not appoint Conor Murphy and could not sack him. The matter was sorted out with a bit of horse-trading.

Sinn Fein/IRA and the DUP, which is a product of Paisleyism, have become adept at making an impossible system work, while being sniped at by marginal parties which were too virtuous to be either Republicans or Paisleyites. The virtue of the sniping party has had no ground in the social and political reality of Northern Ireland. It is based on make-believe. But they are not content to have this virtue as its own reward. They want something more and, in their efforts to get it, they are willing, though not able, to break up the sectarian peace-settlement made by the realists.

Northern Sinn Fein has a purpose beyond that of having jobs in the *status quo*. It is the only major party in the island that has. The purpose is to use its segment of power to make the Six Counties as much like the Free State as possible. It is guided by the IRA that was, and that still is in principle, and that made a deal on arms in order to keep the spirit alive.

The bitter-enders who represented the Deal as a surrender have moved on. Mairia Cahill is now an established anti-Republican journalist in the Free State. Many of the others were decoyed by Official IRA-man Lord Bew into the self-incriminating activity of the *Boston College tapes*. But the Sinn Fein of Conor Murphy and Gerry Kelly are effectively conducting the peace as a continuation of the War by other means—which is entirely in accordance with the nature of the Northern Ireland set-up as an inherently self-contradictory Constitutional entity.

One of the issues in the Budget dispute was the funding of Pensions for victims of the War. Murphy held that it should be a cost on the State, as it was Westminster that established the scheme.

And, of course, the War was entirely attributable to the irresponsibility of the State authorities for holding the Six Counties within the UK state on condition that they were excluded from the functional democracy of the state and were locked into a local system of communal domination.

## Irish Times Gets Its Wrist Smacked!

After the *Irish Times* inaccurate reporting of President O'Higgins *Machnamh 100* talk on 2nd March for which it got a smack on the wrist from the *Áras*, it has now approached the British history of colonialism with a more reflective eye. Previously it reported favourably on the Irish role in the formation of the British Empire as something worthy of solemn November commemoration where reverential contemplation of past glories by Poppy wearing figures was the order of the day.

Now we are told that while we still need to recognise the part played by the Irish in British colonial history, it seems the shine has dulled and we must also consider:

“The violence and coercion exercised within the British Empire to acquire land, resources, and trading routes casts a long shadow on peoples and communities. The Ashanti Wars (1870s-1900s), Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80), Anglo-Zulu War (1879), Anglo-Boer Wars (1880-1: 1899-1902), Occupation of Egypt (1882), Matabele Wars (1893-7), Amritsar massacre (1919), Mao Mao Uprisings (1952-60) and Cypriot War of Independence (1955-9) are just some of the modern conflicts where the worst excesses of imperialism were employed” (*Irish Times*. 2 March 2021).

It did not mention any British excesses during the War of Independence here or hark back far enough to when the Tudors tried their hand at genocide in Munster or the 1845-50 *Holocaust* also called *the Famine* by revisionist historians.

No matter. In the wars mentioned by the *Irish Times*, many British troops, who were born in Ireland, were participants in the murder and plunder and sometimes like at Amritsar they were in high positions. It is the way colonial powers operate. In fact in Napoleonic times the British Establishment favoured Irishmen as army recruits simply because, living in rural environs compared to their English counterparts who were existing in the smoke and grime of industrial England, the Irish were better fed, healthier, bigger and stronger. The British Imperial Army in India was largely composed of Indians and, of course, the RIC military in Ireland was, with very few exceptions, made up of Irishmen. There are always people experiencing hard times, usually because of colonialism, who are driven, as a solution, to take the King's shilling. And there are always some who like to tug the forelock and strut in the shadow of the Master bully.

British soldiers who were born in Ireland have killed thousands of Germans in both Wars; they have killed people in countries and continents all over the world. Some Irish-born British soldiers must have taken part in the Wars of Intervention by the British army which were egged on by Winston Churchill as he tried to smother the Bolshevik Revolution when it was still in its infancy.

Now, according to the *Irish Times* rethink, that our part in British colonialism, which it promoted for years as a sign of our sophistication, maturity and citizens coming of age, is no longer something to puff our chests out about, the paper of Empire will hopefully rejoy its historical memory and remember the result, ignored at the time by the British Government, of the 1918 General Election.

Simon O'Donnell.

## Newspapers: A Sobering Thought!

At the time of the IRAQ War (2003) Murdoch owned 175 papers.  
All of them supported the war.

Donal Kennedy

The big issue of the moment is the State Funeral given to Bobby Storey last year. It was an entirely orderly affair, arranged by Sinn Fein and the police authorities. A large area of Belfast was sealed off.

The streets were lined by thousands as the coffin passed along it on the way to Milltown Cemetery in West Belfast. Social distancing was more or less observed. The coffin was then brought to the

Crematorium in Protestant East Belfast, with republicans providing security. More time was allocated for this cremation than normally allowed for personal funerals. It was ensured that there was no encounter between the Republican mourners and others. (A video recording of the funeral can be found online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbgXXU2e-sU>

It is well worth watching.)

The Assembly, or Parliament (?), has now adopted a motion of censure on Sinn Fein for organising the funeral. That motion, proposed by the SDLP, could be passed because it is of no consequence. Things of consequence are subject to communal vote on both sides. That is a necessary condition of the sectarian peace. The motion is a futile expression of resentment by the virtuously marginal parties supporting the DUP for the occasion.

And there is Loyalist rioting in support of a demand for the sacking of the Chief Constable (an Englishman) who not only allowed Sinn Fein to organise the funeral procession, but co-operated to ensure that the affair went off peacefully.

The SDLP virtuously contrasts John Hume's discreet funeral with the grand affair of the Bobby Story Funeral.

Hume is the idol of those moderate people who refuse to acknowledge the realities of the Northern Ireland situation. He is the Southern ideal of what a Northern

nationalist leader ought to be. But he did not deliver the goods. He was a kind of business moderate to begin with. When reality struck him in 1971 he said, at a critical moment, that *it must now be a United Ireland or nothing*, but he did not follow through. In 1974 he cried "*Fascism*" and refused to negotiate with the opposition in order to save the *Sunningdale Agreement*. He depended on Britain to use the force that he knew was necessary. Thereafter he was studiously moderate in a duplicitous kind of way that was not reassuring to Unionists. Then, towards the end, he facilitated the IRA transition from War to Peace, confirming Unionist suspicions, arousing hostility in the simple-minded Mallonites, and getting himself lionised by the Dublin press (with the exception of the *Sunday Independent*, which lambasted him for his role). He helped along the only development that was practically possible, but he was not a main actor in it. He retired from politics in 1998, letting Mallon have the SDLP and leaving the field clear for the unrepentant Republican transition from war to peace.

Hume was an assistant. Others were the statesmen of the development. It fell to Bobby Storey to have the State Funeral. He was the first of the small group which guided the transition to die.

Consider the position of the Six County nationalist community. Somebody wrote a book about them about forty years ago as *A People In Search Of A State*. There were no State occasions in which they could participate. They were excluded from the political life of the state which held them. The 26 County State asserted a right of sovereignty over them, and also over the hostile Protestant community under which they lived, but it did nothing whatever to alleviate their situation. When they began to do something for themselves against the State which held them, Dublin disowned them and condemned them, while continuing to deny the Constitutional legitimacy of that state.

When Bobby Storey died, they used his death to hold a State funeral. It was the first State ceremonial they have ever had to participate in.

BBC Radio Ulster has been ranting on about it ever since. There are now demands that the Republican leaders be prosecuted for organising an illegal assembly, and that the English policeman who had the good sense to deal with realities instead of formalities should be sacked.

On the other side of the hill, the British State has been indicating that it is not at all ready to discard the Six Counties. We never believed that it was, any more than we believed that it was tired of a national existence and was willing to sink itself in Europe. It went pseudo-European briefly for a purpose, just as a Secretary of State said Britain had no selfish interest in Northern Ireland for a purpose. And, just as when a hundred years ago it did not simply Partition Ireland but set up the mischief-making subordinate regime of Northern Ireland, it did so far a purpose.

The statement that Britain has no selfish interest in holding the Six Counties has now been revoked.

Efforts are being made through the BBC to familiarise the British public with Northern Ireland as a region of the state. It is routinely described on the BBC as one of the *four nations* which make up the UK. And the ambitious project of connecting up the territory with a land bridge over the sea, or to suspend a tunnel in the sea, is being noised about, at the same time as the 26 Counties finally seems to be half in earnest about restoring the direct sea links with Europe, by-passing Britain, that it used to have before the Williamite Conquest.

And all the while the *Irish Times* pines for its love affair with England.

There seem to be interesting times ahead. ■

### IRISH FOREIGN AFFAIRS – MARCH 2021

Ireland and its elections: 1918-22  
by Brendan Clifford

A Century of Greek Independence:  
Fact or Fiction?  
by Pat Walsh

The truth behind the myth of the  
'Tiananmen Massacre'  
by Dr. Dennis Etler

Shapurji Saklatvala MP: The Anglo-  
Irish 'Treaty' - A Conqueror's  
'Treaty'  
Manus O'Riordan

The road to Bretton Woods: Britain  
goes off the Gold Standard  
(Part one)  
Peter Brooke

A narrative of the Anglo-Irish negotia-  
tions in 1921 (Part one)  
from the 'Irish Bulletin'

## Lamentations!

The *Irish Times*, set up to be the newspaper of British Ireland, published a disordered editorial on April 18th: *Time To Reboot The Relationship: Anglo-Irish Connection*. Its Creator seems to be abandoning it, but it opens with lines from a Shakespeare sonnet:

"Let me not to the marriage of  
true minds  
Admit impediment. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration  
finds."

Is the relationship of Creator and creature a relationship of love in a marriage? Surely not. It is on the part of the creature a relationship of utter dependency. They are not equals and they never could be.

The poem that would be appropriate for West British quotation today is surely the *Book of Job! Or Lamentations!*

\*

# Brexit:

## continued

Northern Ireland Protocol, especially since Lord David Frost replaced Michael Gove as the UK Brexit Minister on March 1st. The change to a more hard-line approach on the British side was caused, or made possible, by a unilateral decision by the European Commission to trigger Article 16 of the Protocol on January 29th. At the least the Article 16 mistake is being used as an opportunity in London, an opportunity that Boris Johnson and David Frost now seem determined to take full advantage of.

The unilateral announcement by the British that the grace period for moving supermarket agri-foods from the rest of the UK to Northern Ireland has been extended to October is the latest British action regarding the Protocol. In a similarly provocative manner, and contradicting one of the cardinal principles underlying the *Good Friday Agreement*, Jacob Rees Mogg, the Conservative Leader of the House of Commons, stated on March 9th that Britain *does* have “*a selfish interest* [in the constitutional link] *in Northern Ireland*”.

Dublin’s response to these developments has been extreme frustration coupled with renewed diplomatic efforts, predicated on a belief that things will eventually come back on track. Nevertheless, the distance and hostility between Brussels and London is significant. In an article on the RTE website Tony Connelly states:

“While member states acknowledged the Commission had made a dreadful mistake with Article 16, they believed the UK was instrumentalising the crisis to unpick the Protocol” (*The NI Protocol: A worrying collapse in trust*, 7 March 2021).

The following from the same article indicates the depth of frustration in Brussels:

“Diplomats fear for what this latest flare up will mean for the long-term EU UK relationship, just weeks after the UK signed the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

“Why did you sign something, if you set out a couple of months afterwards to destroy it?” asks one diplomat from a large member state. “Why did we negotiate for nearly four years to get to some form of an agreement on our future relationship, if you don’t want the relationship anyway? You could have saved yourself the effort, we could have saved ourselves the effort”...” (ibid)

More recently (10th March) Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney and Vice President of the European Commission Maroš Šefcovic gave a virtual briefing to the *Friends of Ireland* caucus, a bipartisan group in the US Congress, on the latest Brexit developments. The tactic there is to formally appraise US politicians of the recent shift in the British position so that US pressure can be brought to bear on Johnson to honour the Agreements he signed up to.

And so the Brexit politicking goes on. As a means of weighing up the implications of political problems, it is sometimes useful to imagine scenarios as to the possible course of future developments. Being mere flights of fancy, these should not be seen as predictions or preferred outcomes. The remainder of this article is devoted to a discussion of benign and malign scenarios arising from the present deterioration of relations.

### BENIGN SCENARIO

By one reading, there are many grounds for believing that the negotiated Brexit settlement will eventually bed down. While Boris Johnson may see a short-term advantage in keeping up a state of belligerence with the EU—so long as battle is joined with the external enemy, Brussels, his Party will unite behind him—yet the electoral promise that won him the 2019 General Election was *Get Brexit Done* and the British electorate may tire of unending rows related to the exit.

It is also playing well for Johnson that his Government is treating sympathetically the clamour from Northern Irish Unionists that the customs regime created by the Protocol is weakening the connection between Northern Ireland and Britain. The idea that Brexit might break up the UK by separating Scotland as well as Northern Ireland from England and Wales received a lot of media attention as the UK made its exit, and Johnson needed to mount a defence against those possibilities.

But survey evidence has shown that opinion in England and Wales (population 59.5 million) was not overly concerned about losing the Ulster unionists (population 1 million), if given a choice between Brexit and the Union. For the moment Boris is defending his Ulster friends but, as is plain from the Protocol and Withdrawal Agreement that he signed, he is unlikely to risk the entire Brexit settlement for them.

It is distinctly possible that his attempt to negate clauses in the Protocol, and

thus break international law through the *Internal Market Bill* in September last year, together with the latest unilateral extension of the grace period, may damage Britain’s reputation as a trading nation. Johnson may get away with such tactics in the short-term but over the longer term it may be more difficult. In countries like the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, cultural ties might be enough to offset the reputational damage, but the same is not true for important trade partners like Japan and China.

The following passage contains a sobering message of how post-Brexit Britain, not to speak of a Britain that breaks signed agreements, is being perceived in China:

“One might say London is launching its ‘Global Britain’ initiative by marching in lockstep with a China-bashing America, but that doesn’t add up. Britain’s free trade deal with Turkey is no more than pint-sized; its bilateral economic agreement with Japan does not play to its advantage, given a lack of competitiveness in Britain’s industrial structure; and the United States no longer has deep enough pockets or the willingness to pay Britain for its ideological loyalty. A reinvented British Commonwealth aligning Australia, New Zealand and perhaps India? Good luck”

(*South China Morning Post*, Terry Su, 10 March 2021).

A case can be made that the British have not behaved unreasonably in extending the grace period for Northern Ireland supermarkets. Whereas Šefcovic was signalling that easements of the Protocol could have been agreed through the Joint Committee, the need to consult with Member Governments was taking too long. Supermarkets need to plan their supply schedules well in advance, so, by this line of argument, the British had no choice but to act unilaterally. If that is the case then the Brexit Agreements are less at risk than is being claimed in some quarters.

At a practical level a key consideration in the Brexit debate is that the Irish Border, being 500 kilometres long with hundreds of passing points, is almost impossible to close; whereas the ports and airports of Northern Ireland present natural pinch-points for controlling the movement of people and goods between the EU and Britain.

Pressure from the Biden Administration is also not to be discounted. Last year Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi spelled it out that, if

the Good Friday Agreement is undermined by the re-establishment of controls on the Irish Border, a US-UK trade deal will be blocked by Congress. Pelosi's party now has the Presidency as well as control of both Houses of Congress.

The EU has initiated two parallel legal processes against the unilateral extension of the grace period: one through the European Court of Justice, the other through invoking Article 167 of the Withdrawal Agreement which stipulates that both sides must endeavour at all times to agree on the interpretation and application of any aspect of the Agreement. In the latter case Article 169 allows for the matter to be discussed at the Joint Committee with a view to agreement being reached. While criticism can be made of the EU for using legal mechanisms to resolve a political problem, legal processes are always unpredictable; an adverse outcome could create difficulty for Johnson.

The final deterrent against British attempts to row back on its commitment to the Northern Ireland Protocol lies in the fact that the ratification of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement is still held by the EU as a bargaining chip. Were that chip to be played by the European Parliament through a refusal to pass the ratification, the economic damage of a No Deal outcome—the imposition of World Trade Organisation tariffs—would be felt more severely by the UK than by France and Germany. Johnson would also stand to lose the kudos he gained from delivering Brexit with a trade deal.

#### MALIGN SCENARIO

An alternative reading is that the British are pursuing a deliberate policy of making the Northern Ireland Protocol unworkable. In that reading, the Protocol was forced on the UK in the course of unevenly matched negotiations and, because the British Government perceives diplomatic defeat at the hands of the EU as a national affront, it is not worth the paper it is written on. There are plenty of historical examples of inequitable or biased international agreements (or agreements perceived to be so) that either failed or led to disaster. The Anglo Irish 'Treaty' of 1921 was imposed under threat of war by the British and eventually dismantled through a combination of minor disrespectful gestures and constitutional reforms by de Valera when he came to power in the 1930s.

An example that may be better understood in Brussels is the Treaty that was imposed on Germany, Austria and Turkey

after the First World War. The *Versailles Treaty* had the effect of intensifying the post-War degradation of Germany and ultimately led to the Second World War. From an Irish perspective there is a particular interest in Versailles because, as a leading figure in the League of Nations in the 1930s, de Valera pressed for its injustices to be confronted by a conference of the Great Powers. That is when it became clear that the League was no more than a talking shop. In the event, De Valera's proposal was not taken up, and international peace efforts continued to be conducted through the League until it was too late (see *Elizabeth Bowen—“Notes on Eire”* by the Aubane Historical Society, 1999, for a full discussion of that topic).

If there is a determination in the pro-Brexit British Establishment to negate the Northern Ireland Protocol, then all the arguments of the benign scenario fall. Johnson will retain electoral support by being seen to outwit the EU. Notwithstanding opinion survey evidence, the Tories may decide to honour their promises to the Ulster Unionists—witness Rees Mogg's statement in favour of the Union, a statement that hints that the Tories may even go so far as to jettison the *Good Friday Agreement*.

While there are undoubted risks associated with breaching international agreements, Brexit Britain could also gain by being seen as a country that is not to be messed with. Certainly, the Biden Administration would actively oppose a re-imposition of controls on the North-South Border in Ireland, but there is a limit to the extent to which the US can interfere in British affairs. Barack Obama made clear his strong opposition to Brexit before the Referendum and it had little effect.

As to the legal actions that the EU is taking against Britain, Weimar constitutionalism comes to mind. Political considerations arising from the real needs of states will always trump written agreements or rulings by international courts. Likewise, the practical advantages of using the Irish Sea as mainland Britain's border with the EU will be overridden if the Northern Ireland Protocol comes to be widely perceived as disruptive of trade between NI and GB.

That leaves the ratification of the *Trade and Cooperation Agreement* by the European Parliament.

Regarding that topic, the economist, John Fitzgerald, recently commented as follows:

“Another scenario is that the EU parliament fails to ratify the agreement reached at the end of last year, due to the UK refusal to deliver on the exit agreement. If that were to happen, we would revert to a no-deal situation, with the immediate introduction of tariffs, border controls and many other types of dislocation in the relations between the EU and the UK.

Because the cause of such a breakdown would be the failure to implement the Northern Ireland protocol, the result would have to be the immediate imposition of a customs border on this island” (*Irish Times, Ireland could end up as roadkill in UK's game of chicken with EU*, 12 March 2021).

However, Fitzgerald may be amiss in his speculation here. Refusing to ratify the trade deal is much less of an option than he thinks, precisely because it would be so disruptive. France, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland and Britain itself: all share a common interest in preventing the imposition of tariffs. That the avoidance of tariffs is crucial to the EU was shown towards the end of the Brexit trade negotiations when a new negotiator, Stephanie Riso, was added to the Barnier team by Ursula von der Leyen. Riso made sure, according to admittedly speculative media reports, that a way was found for getting an agreement across the line.

Much more likely, if the present deterioration continues, is that ratification of the trade deal will be deferred, repeatedly if necessary, but that the Northern Ireland Protocol will continue to be the main tension point. A critical issue like the protection of the Single Market cannot be left unresolved indefinitely. In that malign scenario EU Governments would eventually be forced to recognise that the current arrangements are inadequate; controls would need to be erected along with appropriate security defences on the Border between the two parts of Ireland.

Such an outcome would of course be a disaster for people and businesses who depend on easy movement across the Border. It would represent a major reverse for the EU and especially for the Irish Government. Ultimately though, the possibility that Brexit would entail the delineation of the EU frontier at the place where the EU's jurisdiction ends, was present throughout the process of the British exit.

A possible silver lining of that malign outcome might be renewed impetus for a united Ireland. In that eventuality the North's Catholic community would need tangible evidence that national

unification—permanently removing the Border—had acquired a top priority in Irish politics. The Irish political system would need to get its house in order. Apart from the obvious issue of placing the health service on a footing similar to the National Health Service in the North, a long overdue reconciliation between Dublin and the nationalists of the North would need to be put in train.

#### CONCLUSION

It is presently unclear how the row over the Northern Ireland Protocol will play out. It may be that Boris Johnson will push as much as he can against the Protocol while falling short of wrecking it. Or it may be that the malign scenario outlined above will come to pass. Either way there is no sign of easement in the politics of Brexit.

Dave Alvey

## Remembering Gallipoli continued

of other countries and killing people far away, in order to dupe the Ulster Protestants into a United Ireland. For one thing, I thought it a hopeless task since the Ulster Protestants are a substantial people with a resolute national will and they would not be taken in by such deception. And I also was of the firm belief that such a position was a betrayal of the leaders of 1916 and particularly of Roger Casement, who staunchly supported the Ottoman Turks against the British Imperialists. It was, in essence, a subversion of the position of the independent Irish Republic by the incumbent President.

This was confirmed to me by reading *The Catholic Bulletin* (1921-4) and its support for Mustafa Kemal/Ataturk in resisting the Treaty of Sevres and establishing the Turkish Republic.

But, although I trod carefully, the article proved too much for *The Irish Times*. I later heard that Diplomatic representation was made to *The Irish Times* at the highest level. Facing this *The Irish Times* apologised, saying they had employed another, unrevealed, historian to mark the occasion of President McAleese's visit to Gallipoli, and they would not bother with the article. Curiously, an article never appeared by this other historian! Perhaps it, and they, never existed at all! Who knows the secrets of *The Irish Times*?

Anyway, below is the article which *The Irish Times* never published in its original form. A forgotten aspect of Britain's Great War that *The Irish Times* was evidently determined should remain forgotten. Below it is a report I made of

## Remembering Gallipoli

President McAleese will this week deliver a speech at the site of a famous battle of a largely forgotten war—The Great War against Turkey waged between 1914 and 1924.

Ireland's participation in the Gallipoli landings of 1915 is well known as an isolated event. What is less familiar is Ireland's part in the Great War waged against Turkey. The Great War against Turkey was probably the most important thing that Ireland ever did in the world yet it is largely forgotten. That war helped make the Middle East what it is today and had the catastrophic effects on the Moslem world that persist to the present.

Of course, in 1914 Ireland was part of the British Empire and John Redmond had promised Irish help for Britain in its war against Germany. However, many of the Irishmen who had joined up expecting to fight the Germans instead found themselves being transported to Gallipoli to fight the Turk. It was suggested by nationalist politicians on the recruiting platforms that the war against Turkey was part of the war against Germany. But there was not the same enthusiasm for it and the *Irish News* of Belfast went as far as saying that it hoped Irish soldiers would not be sent to fight the Turk and instead be employed against the Germans.

The reasons for the involvement of the Turks in the Great War are clouded in the mists of war propaganda. It was suggested at the time that Turkey had an alliance with Germany but all the evidence suggests that the Turks did everything possible to stay out of the Great War and entered this alliance as a last resort. As Lord Kinross states in his book *'The Ottoman Centuries'*, the Young Turk Government, which was very well-disposed to England, made at least six attempts to establish defensive alliances with Britain, Russia and France, but found itself rebuffed.

The problem Turkey had was that Britain had made an alliance with Russia, which for years had had designs on Constantinople, as a warm-water port for its navy. That alliance had been necessary in order to fight Germany on two fronts. Britain had a comparatively small army and even with the Entente with France in

a talk from around the same time by the serving Turkish Ambassador to Ireland, Altay Cengizer, and of the remarks which Ulster historian, Phillip Orr, made at Collins Barracks Dublin, that illuminate the issue further:

place from 1904 Russia's 'steamroller' was a necessity in defeating the Germans. Britain had spent many years trying to deny Constantinople to the Russians and had fought in the Crimea to do so. However, in 1907 an alliance was made with the Czar which was aimed at encircling the new potential threat, Germany. The price of this alliance was Constantinople, war with Turkey and the destruction of the Ottoman Empire.

Britain also had designs on the Middle East itself. It had an interest in acquiring Palestine and Mesopotamia if the Ottoman Empire was going to collapse. So there were good reasons to involve Turkey in the War—in order to add its territories to the British Empire.

The War with Turkey was declared on 5th November 1914. The occasion for the declaration of war was an incident in the Black Sea where two formerly German ships had fired on Russian ports. These ships had been sailed to Constantinople by their German crews after Winston Churchill had impounded two battleships which English dockyards were building for the Turkish Navy. The German ships had been shadowed by the British fleet and forced into neutral Constantinople where they were handed over to the Turks. The Turks accepted them in place of two battleships built for them in Britain, and paid for, which Churchill refused to deliver in July 1914 when he thought he might have a use for them himself. But, while accepting these ships, Turkey remained neutral in the War. Nevertheless, it was blockaded by Britain. Then, when an obscure incident in the Black Sea in November led to a Russian declaration of war on Turkey, Britain too declared war and launched an immediate invasion of Ottoman territory.

Before the war, the Young Turk Government had invited the Royal Navy to take charge of the Turkish Navy and the defences of the Dardanelles Straits. It would have been madness for the Turks to have wanted war against Britain with such inside knowledge being possessed by the British Admiralty. But the incident in the Black Sea provided the occasion for a declaration of war on the Turks and the

putting into operation of the Allies ambitions in the area.

In many senses Ireland's participation in the invasion at Gallipoli was the price for Home Rule. Although John Redmond was an enthusiastic supporter of the war against Germany he could not, even if he had so wished, have objected to Irish participation in a war against the Turks. To have done so would have seriously disabled him in his competition of loyalty with the Ulster Unionists in relation to the British state. The Redmondites had to accept the enemy that the British Empire chose to take on. And they had to participate in the campaign of imperial expansion even if the original intention was to help 'little Belgium.'

However, the failure of the Gallipoli expedition seriously damaged the prospects of Home Rule. For one thing, the successful Turkish resistance lengthened the war, which the Irish Home Rulers banked on being over before the close of 1915. The calculation, which many of them made, was that a British victory in 1915 under the auspices of a victorious Liberal government, and with large Irish participation in the British Army, would have greatly enhanced the Home Rule position after the war—particularly in relation to the Unionists.

The defeat at Gallipoli instead led to the ending of the Liberal Government and its replacement with a Coalition including anti-Home Rule Unionist ministers, one of whom was Sir Edward Carson.

This sequence of events came from the resignation of the First Sea Lord, Jackie Fisher, who had been opposed to Gallipoli from the start. Fisher's resignation was the trigger for a Unionist move in May 1915 in which Liberal Ministers (including Churchill) were replaced by anti-Home Rule Tories in the Government. The Liberal Prime Minister Asquith was damaged and his days were then numbered. The Home Rule Bill that had been placed on the Statute Book in August 1914, and which Redmond had treated as an Act, was rendered still-born. From then a chain of events, beginning at Gallipoli, and including the stimulus of Easter 1916, put paid to Redmondism, the Irish Parliamentary Party and Home Rule Ireland.

After the defeat at Gallipoli Irish soldiers helped in the Salonika expedition which was primarily aimed at ending Greek neutrality. This had the effect of setting off the conflict between Greece and Turkey which was to prove so disastrous for the Greek population of Anatolia. Irish soldiers of the British Army also played a

part in adding Iraq to the British Empire and putting into operation the Balfour Declaration in Palestine.

Ireland remained at war with Turkey until 1924 when the Irish Free State ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and finally made peace with the Turks, along with the rest of the British Empire.

As the Dail debate shows, it came as something of a surprise to the Free State Government that Ireland was still at war with Turkey in 1924. Cumann nGaedheal did not realise, when they had signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, that they had inherited Redmond's war, by remaining part of the Empire. The Lausanne Treaty, which was a triumph for the Turkish leader Ataturk, committed the members of the British Empire to defend the settlement in the event of a new war, perhaps with Bolshevik Russia.

It is improbable that those who gather at Gallipoli to hear President McAleese's oration will fully understand the significance of this terrible and costly battle.

## **Ireland and the Great War— Collins Barracks Event**

The present writer was in attendance at a Conference given at Collins Barracks, Dublin, on Saturday 13th November [2010] entitled '*Ireland and World War One*'.

The Turkish Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Altay Cengizer, gave a talk at the conference entitled '*Diplomacy of the Choiceless: Turkey's entry into the First World War*' which was about how the Ottoman Government found itself with little alternative but to fight in the Great War when it had initially attempted to stay out of it.

The Ambassador, who has an MA in International History from the London School of Economics and is a keen historian, started by saying that Turkey's entry into the war should be the subject of "*revisionist thinking*" giving credit to the idea that the Ottoman Empire was not simply waiting for the opportunity to join the Germans and Austro-Hungarians. The Ambassador emphasised that the triumvirate at the head of the Ottoman State was not pro-German, as depicted in British propaganda, and the idea that statesman could be turned into mere puppets of a foreign power was ridiculous.

Turkey had no choice in getting involved in the war, stated the Ambassador, because it knew it was going to be partitioned by the Entente Powers. Turkey had wanted to become allied with the Entente Powers, but the Ottoman Government at

the time was rebuffed, at least on four occasions, because of the desire, mainly of Britain, to keep Russia on its side, he said. When the Liberal Imperialist government of Asquith and Grey was in place they continually turned down Turkish offers and did not come up with anything meaningful in relation to Turkish neutral status to keep the Ottomans out of war. All the Turks asked for from the Entente powers was a guarantee of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Entente refused because they wished to dismember it instead and divide it amongst themselves.

He suggested that Constantinople was the great prize of the war for the Russians, who were not just fighting Germany for "*a strip of land around Posen*".

The Ottomans had attempted to remain neutral in the war but neutrality became "*out of the question*" for the Ottoman government because of the "need for money, ammunition and allies"—in order to defend such a neutrality against hostile states determined to carve up the Ottoman State, said the Ambassador.

The Ambassador also pointed out that it was often forgotten that for Turkey the Great War lasted for more than a decade. It had begun in June 1911 with the Italian assault on Libya. It took in the Balkan wars and did not end until October 1922, or even February 1923.

Next, the Ambassador turned to the events that led to Turkey's involvement in the war. He revealed that both the Russians and Greeks had asked Churchill to confiscate the two ships being prepared in Royal Navy dockyards for the Turkish Navy, in order to deplete the defensive capability of the Ottoman State. These had been paid for by popular subscription by ordinary Turks and had been part of the naval alliance which Britain operated with the Ottoman government. When Churchill seized these ships (prior to even the start of the Great War on Germany, let alone the war on Turkey), the British added insult to injury by offering the Turks £1000 per week in 'compensation'. This would have meant Britain not completing the 'compensation' for 20 years! And all the while the Turks would have been without the ships, leaving their capital defenceless, and vulnerable to Russian and Greek naval attacks in the Black Sea and Aegean.

The Ambassador also told the audience that the Black Sea incident which the Entente used as a pretext for war against the Ottoman Empire began when the Russians started laying mines at the approaches

to the Dardanelles in the Black Sea. This would have had the effect of preventing the Ottoman navy supplying their army in the Eastern provinces due to the lack of roads and railways. It would have meant the end of the Ottoman Empire if this route was not kept open to supply the Eastern armies of the Ottoman State who faced accumulating Russian invasion forces in the Caucasus.

The Ambassador noted that the British Imperialists underestimated Turkey's strengths because they had portrayed the Ottoman Empire for generations as the 'sick man of Europe' and ripe for the taking. However, the fighting ability of the Turkish people escaped their notice and they paid the price for their over-confidence.

At this point in the talk a presentation of rare photographs of the Gallipoli and Turkish fronts was presented by Dr. Nesime Ceyhan. One of the first photographs was an example of a Turkish propaganda poster. It was of the crude German type, lacking the sophistication of the masters of the art, in England.

The Ambassador explained that the Turks had no idea about propaganda and had to be taught by the Germans how to produce it. He said that to this day Turks were no good at the art of propaganda.

The next series of pictures were from the battle at Gallipoli. The Ambassador described a number of things that are not generally known in the West. The Turkish trenches, which were often cut by women, as one photograph showed, were bombarded by the British with up to 6000 shells per hour. The British also aimed their shelling at the minarets of local mosques—which had to be subsequently camouflaged by the Turks. The British intention in aiming at the minarets seems to have been to demoralise the local Moslem population.

To the present writer this was a very significant fact because of the use of propaganda in Ireland about the supposed German destruction of Reims Cathedral and other Catholic churches to get Irishmen in British uniform. This had been the staple diet of the Home Rule propagandists for the Imperial war writing in the Liberal Press.

Finally, the Ambassador pointed to the links between Republican Ireland and the Turkish Assembly at Ankara established by Atatürk. The Turkish democracy had been one of the first recipients of Ireland's 'address to the free nations of the world' proclaiming its independence from Britain.

At the end of the Ambassador's talk a couple of people from the audience pointed to the fact that the Irish who went to Gallipoli had no notion that they were going to fight the Turks until the last minute. They had been recruited on the basis of war propaganda against Germans and when Britain had taken on a new enemy in Turkey they found themselves on the way to Gallipoli, much to the surprise of many in Ireland.

Another speaker asked the Ambassador about how Gallipoli (or Canakkale) was commemorated in Turkey. The Ambassador pointed out that the Gallipoli front was only one of four or five fronts that the Turks had to defend against invasion. Some Turks even died fighting in Galicia in central Europe. This was not because the Ottomans had any territorial pretensions there but because the German/Austrian front was so important in relation to Istanbul. If this front capitulated to the Russians the Ottoman capital was in dire danger and the war would be lost.

In relation to this aspect the Ambassador pointed to the "*loneliness of the Turks*" during the Great War and offered the example of how the Turkish military attaché was astonished to hear the bells ringing in Vienna in celebration for the British capture of Jerusalem. He was dumbfounded at this and said to the Austrians: "*Why are you celebrating the victory of your enemies?*"

At the end of the question session there was a rather poignant moment when the Ambassador was audibly affected in describing the great loss that the Turkish people had suffered at Gallipoli. The majority of the young, first generation of highly educated Turkish youth, died in defending their homeland at Gallipoli and were lost forever to the country. This rather put into perspective for the audience the lesser extent of sacrifice suffered by Irish, Australian and New Zealanders in the invasion—the main commemorators of the battle.

The next talk was given by **Mr. Philip Orr**, the author of '*Field of Bones*', a recent book about the battle of Gallipoli. Mr. Orr described himself as coming from an Ulster Unionist background. His talk was entitled '*Gallipoli Ireland's forgotten battle*'. He noted that there had been a "rediscovery of the story in the last 25 years" in the Irish Republic. However, he contrasted this new discovery with the attitude in the Unionist community in the north where the Somme had always been a marker for identity. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Orr did not elaborate on the reasons for this, which might have been interesting.

He noted that the 10th Division, which was often called an Irish division, left for Gallipoli from this very building of Collins barracks (it being subsequently renamed when the British handed it over to the Free Staters).

He asked the question *why Gallipoli?* His answer included the reasons that the Gallipoli operation was to get around the "*quagmire of the Western front*". It was also aimed to breach the Straits and resupply the Russians. He noted that Turkey was felt by Britain to be the "*sick man of Europe*" and an easy touch for her navy.

The main objective was to knock out the artillery on the side of the Straits in order that the Royal Navy could penetrate the Dardanelles and bombard Istanbul into surrender. An earlier naval attempt by Churchill to storm the Straits had been unsuccessful due to this artillery and the mines laid by the Turks, and that led to the sinking of the Queen Elizabeth, the world's greatest battleship.

Mr. Orr noted that the 29th Division, which contained many Irish veterans of the British Army, old professional soldiers rather than recent volunteers, was brought in from Madras in India for the operation. He also noted that there was a large French contingent at Gallipoli but the French like the British tended to use their colonials in the operation. He revealed that it was sad that the French Senegalese Moslem troops who died were buried under crosses at Gallipoli. Furthermore, the British used many Moslems in their forces who became disconcerted when they heard the call for prayer coming from the enemy trenches. They did not realise and were not told that they were being used to destroy the great Islamic state in the region.

Mr. Orr argued that after about six months of the Gallipoli operation it was found that "*the old quagmire of the Western front had reappeared at Gallipoli*". There was half a million casualties on both sides and about a third of these were deaths. An estimated 4000 Irishmen were killed during the battle.

He talked about the Hellas, the operation where a large ship, the River Clyde, was used as a Trojan horse by the British, adjacent to the site of Troy. The idea seemed to be to beach this ship and to unleash the troops hidden within it on the unsuspecting Turks. However, the Turks were wise to this Trojan horse, and felt (according to the Ambassador) that they were avenging the Trojans. 850 of the 1000 men contained within the ship became casualties as a result.

The Royal Dublin and Munster Fusiliers were so devastated by casualties at

Hellas Bay that their remnants were subsequently formed into what was known as the 'Dubsters'.

Mr. Orr also explained that the British recruitment in the North of Ireland was based on a "*cunning plan to get both communities involved in fighting*" for Britain, even though they were fighting for diametrically opposed objectives—Union and Home Rule.

He noted also that the men hadn't a clue where they were going or who they were fighting until they neared the beaches at Gallipoli. Some of the officers who were aware and had had classical educations about Troy and Achilles romanticised the mission and tended to fall into an imperial complacency about its prospects.

Mr. Orr also revealed that one of the most serious miscalculations of the British plan concerned the water supply to its troops. Soldiers were given a one day water supply and after that were forced to use local wells. 70% of these wells had water that was not drinkable and which caused disease. Only the Turks knew which wells were drinkable, so this became a major cause of death with dehydration accounting for many casualties. He also spoke of the "sniper madness" that developed amongst Imperial troops, an early form of post-traumatic stress that accounted for many subsequent suicides.

Mr. Orr also valuably pointed out that the 10th Division was afterwards sent to Macedonia against the Bulgarians (and to subvert Greek neutrality) after its evacuation from Gallipoli.

Finally, Mr. Orr tried to answer the question of why Gallipoli had been "placed in the shadows" in the Irish Republic. He noted that the battle was associated with "*rejuvenation in Turkey and formed the founding myths of the Australian and New Zealand States*". His reasoning seemed to be that Gallipoli had no such use for Ireland where it was seen simply as a disaster. It is a pity that this aspect was not further explored.

Mr. Orr also argued that commemorating Gallipoli and the operations in the Middle East was a far more complicated business than the Western Front commemorations that had been established. This was because the British Empire had attempted to capture the great cities of Islam, like Istanbul and Jerusalem. This had much more of a serious consequence in the world today and was therefore very problematic as a harmless commemoration. He argued that it was important that commemoration go beyond mere

"celebrating of bravery" to deal with the important issues connected to imperialist conquest in the area.

This view was backed up by a questioner at the end who felt that remembrance commemoration should be merely a stage in the process of remembering and that the next stage should be to examine the wider implications of the British Empire's activities in the region. Whilst commemorating the dead was fine commemorating the cause was another, more dangerous, thing entirely, he said.

On the whole, the present writer felt that this meeting was very worthwhile. It was obvious from a glance at the 200-strong audience, and the nature of some of the questions, that many were mainly there with an interest in remembrance. A sizable section of the audience seemed to have been on the recent Mary McAleese led 'pilgrimage' to Gallipoli.

However, the presence of the Turkish Ambassador and his insightful talk was a valuable intrusion into what might otherwise have been another remembrance event. It forced the audience to confront the fact that there was another view of the Great War, and that this event at Gallipoli was not merely a sad event for Ireland in terms of loss of life but also a disastrous event for the region that was subject to the British invasion and further military conquests.

**Dr. Patrick Walsh**

**Forgotten Aspects Of Britain's Great War On Turkey. 1914-24 by Dr. Pat Walsh. 540pp. €36, £30 postfree**

**The Politics Of Pre-War Europe: The Catholic Bulletin on Peace, War And Neutrality, 1937-1939. Introduction: Pat Walsh. 92pp. €6, £5 postfree**

## Roy Jenkins:

### *The Very Model For A Modern British Liberal?*

It has occurred to me that a good book might be written on the strange lives of liberal Britons to rival the excellent *Strange Death Of Liberal England* by George Dangerfield. I'm not the person to do it. But I could furnish a few ideas to anyone equal to that task.

It's over sixty years since I read that William Gladstone's family coat of arms featured the severed head of a black man. It was in a book by a fellow-traveller of mine, indeed a fellow Dalcassian\* on the Hill of Howth tram, a scholar with an impeccable liberal record named Donal Conor Cruise O'Brien.

Gladstone had long been a Tory before converting to Liberalism. And Conor Cruise O'Brien, a liberal scourge of imperialism, colonialism, police brutality and censorship was in his fifties before he jettisoned his long-held principles, winning the plaudits of the CIA and the hero-worship of Michael Gove.

British Liberalism was long in thrall to a prim, puritan and smug Non-Conformism. Gladstone, whose father was a murderous slave-owner, and who had, as Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, supported the Confederate Slave-holders of the American Civil War could not, as a Liberal leader, in conscience deal with an Irish party whose leader was living in a faithful and fruitful relationship with a woman deserted by her husband.

The *Manchester Guardian* (founded 1821) was long the conscience of Liberal England during its prim and puritan prime, and C.P. Scott, its Editor from 1872 to 1929, and a Liberal MP from 1895 to 1906, looked and posed as an Old Testament prophet. In its more secular guise, renamed *The Guardian*, it has advocated causes its forebears would have damned as Libertine, with the zeal that those forebears brought to their campaigns.

The old *Manchester Guardian* did not cover horse-racing so that it could not be seen to encourage betting. But what it lost on the swings it recouped on the roundabouts as *The Manchester Evening News*, which covered racing, and was a better earner than its high-minded and prim stablemate.

The political diaries of C.P. reveal discussions with Lloyd George covering many topics. When Ireland resisted conscription, Lloyd George fully intended to use on unarmed men the barbarities inflicted by Marshal MacMahon on the Paris Commune in 1871. Scott sought to restrain Lloyd George. He was pro-Home Rule, then pro-Dominion Home Rule but, when the Irish set up a Republic following the General Election mandate of 1918 and sustained it with the support of local governments—Municipal, County Council, down to District Councils in

1920—and a further General Election in 1921, Scott remained an Imperialist opponent of national self-determination.

Lloyd George explained to Scott exactly how he tricked Arthur Griffith into signing the *Articles of Agreement*, miscalled a “Treaty” to Scott’s admiration. As described by Frank Pakenham (the later Lord Longford) in *Peace By Ordeal*, Lloyd George, Birkenhead and Churchill played politics as Big Julie shot Crap in *Guys ‘n’ Dolls*... The Irish delegates were given an offer they couldn’t refuse — “*Sign now, or it’s immediate and terrible war*”.

Whatever merits Scott had he was never a democrat.

After the *Strange Death Of Liberal England*, largely the work of Lloyd George, many former members of the party, their sons and daughters gravitated to the Labour Party. For a great many of them Oliver Cromwell was their greatest hero and John Milton their most inspirational writer and they took them as their guides to Irish matters.

I don’t know if Roy Jenkins had a Liberal party legacy, but he struck me as long ago as the early 1960s as a very old-fashioned Whig with ducal manner.

As Home Secretary he was responsible for the so-called *Prevention of Terrorism Act*. Even without Cromwellian sentiments, Home Secretaries all come to resemble Ministers of the Interior in the most repressive states.

But Roy Jenkins is remembered by *Guardian*-esque commentators as a liberal Home Secretary (high case or low case as you like)

He decriminalised buggery and relaxed the criteria for legal abortions. Whatever your views on these provisions, it would be nice to believe that Jenkins behaved in an altruistic, disinterested manner.

But he was not entirely unselfish.

For Roy Jenkins, the son of a Welsh coal-miner, who had been a Union Leader and Labour MP, belonged to a gilded circle of swingers who swapped wives shamelessly. Wikipedia lists some of them from very prominent political families. Some, including Jenkins, swung both ways. In his youth he had been the lover of Anthony Crosland, who later served in Cabinet with him as Foreign Secretary.

His 'liberal' measures were doing favours for himself and his chums.

Perhaps the very model for a modern British Liberal?

**Donal Kennedy**

## Kilmichael Ambush: The false surrender: Another piece of evidence from 1924.

### KEY POINTS:

- **Military Service Pensions Collection document shows false surrender was in general circulation within Irish Army in 1924.**
- **Tom Barry did not invent false surrender in *Guerrilla Days in Ireland* to deflect potential criticism**
- **Document in Michael McCarthy (killed at Kilmichael) claim previously overlooked.**
- **Should force historians to revise their view of Kilmichael AGAIN.**
- **May further delay upcoming books and articles on the ambush due this year.**
- **An end to the Kilmichael controversy? The bubble finally bursts?**

In 1998, the late Peter Hart claimed that General Tom Barry, IRA commander at the Kilmichael ambush, invented a false surrender by members of the Auxiliary police to justify the fact that the remaining British forces were ‘simply exterminated’ at the end of the ambush. Hart suggested that the false surrender only appeared in Barry’s 1949 *Guerrilla Days in Ireland* to deflect potential criticism. Hart’s claim that Barry’s version of events was riddled with ‘lies and evasions’ provoked shock and outrage.[1: Notes are at bottom of page 16] The controversy continues 23 years later.

The controversy began in the letters page of the *Irish Times*. On 1, September, 1998 Hart responded to Fr. Brian Murphy who had criticised his use of an unsigned after-ambush report, which Hart claimed was authentic [written by Barry] and made no mention of the false surrender.[2] Having dismissed early versions of the false surrender story by Piaras Beaslai (1924) and former Auxiliary commander General Frank Crozier (1932), he continued,

‘Why is the ‘false surrender’ so important? Because from Barry’s point of view it justified the ‘extermination’ of unarmed and wounded prisoners. We know this happened: Barry and his biographer admit it, and many witnesses have described it in detail. These same witnesses deny Barry’s claims - as do, implicitly, his earliest accounts. I would invite readers to ignore Barry’s self-constructed reputation, weigh these facts and draw their own conclusions.’

According to Hart, IRA veterans denied that the false surrender had occurred at all and he suggested that Barry ‘by implication’ also did. This surprising claim was supported by anonymised interviews, which Hart did not make available to other researchers to be confirmed.

Much has been written about the Kilmichael ambush since and I do not intend to revisit the ‘Peter Hart war’ here. My reconstruction of the ambush is included in *Cork’s Revolutionary Dead* published by Mercier Press in 2017.[3]

However, one previously unpublished document, which was included by the Military Archives of Ireland in its recent collation of refer-

ences about Kilmichael to mark its centenary, is significant. A letter in a Military Service Pensions file for Michael McCarthy, one of the three IRA veterans killed during the ambush, discusses the circumstances of his death.[4] For scholars involved in the Kilmichael debate it merits close examination and analysis.[5]

On 3 June 1924, the Southern Command of the Irish Army wrote to GHQ in Dublin strongly recommending Michael McCarthy’s father’s (Daniel) claim. In support of this it stated,

‘It appears that when the ‘Black & Tans’ agreed to surrender, Vice-Commandant McCarthy rose from the ambush to take their surrender and was shot through the head and killed instantly.’

It appears from this that the false surrender was in general circulation within the Southern Command at this date. Tom Barry was both anti-treaty and had been imprisoned in the Free State in 1922 after his capture in the Four Courts. He had ‘retired’ after the civil war so would have had no input to a letter within the Free State Army.[6]

Does this leave Hart’s thesis in tatters? It may. It may not. But there are now three ‘early’ pieces of evidence in support of the false surrender. The first in *Round Table* appeared in 1921, this document is the second and the third is Frank Crozier’s 1932 autobiography where he states he investigated the ambush after he resigned in February 1921 and was told of the false surrender then.[7] The significance of this document is that it comes from inside the Irish Army so it is logical to conclude that the false surrender was in general circulation in 1924.[8] Therefore, Barry did not need to invent it in 1949.

While it was decided that Daniel McCarthy was not dependent on his son and the claim dismissed on 8 August, this was appealed to President Cosgrave by Sean Collins TD and T. J. Murphy TD in person on 10 October. Cosgrave’s secretary wrote the same day and suggested the maximum gratuity of £150 be paid. On 9 December 1924, this was agreed by the Army Pension Board.

## Kilmichael Ambush: Notes

[1] For this and other comments about Barry see Hart, P. (1998), *The IRA and its Enemies*, pp. : 37, 32, 100, 36

[2] Atlas of the Irish Revolution, (2021), *The Irish War of Independence*, Resources for Schools: Senior Cycle, <https://www.rte.ie/documents/history/2021/01/u7.-1c-worksheets-woi-p.3.pdf> accessed 03/02/2021.

[3] Keane, Barry, (2017) *Cork’s Revolutionary Dead*, Mercier, Cork <https://www.mercierpress.ie/irish-books/cork-s-revolutionary-dead/> accessed 03/02/2021

[4] Military Archives of Ireland, Military Service Pensions Collection, Michael McCarthy, 1D295, P.69; <https://www.rte.ie/documents/history/2021/01/u7.-1c-worksheets-woi-p.3.pdf> accessed 03/02/2021; Many historians have accessed the McCarthy file (including me) but as the letter is ‘buried’ among administrative documents about his father Daniel’s request for a pension it was overlooked by all except the

## The Gaelic Tongue.

“It is fading – it is fading – like the leaves upon the trees!  
It is dying – dying – dying – like the wailing ocean breeze!  
It is swiftly disappearing, as the footprints on the shore,  
Where the Barrow, and the Erne, and Loch Swilly’s waters pour,  
Where the parting sunbeam kisses Loch Corrib in the west,  
And the ocean, like a mother, clasps the Shannon to her breast!  
The language of old Erin, of her history and name,  
Of her monarchs and her heroes, of her glory and her fame!  
The sacred shrine where rested, through sunshine and through gloom,  
The spirit of her martyrs – as their bodies in the tomb!  
The time-wrought shell where murmured, ‘mid centuries of wrong,  
The secret voice of Freedom, in annal and in song!  
It is surely, surely, sinking into silent death at last –  
To live but ‘mid the memories and relics of the Past.

Rev. Michael Mullin. *Gill’s Irish Reciter: A Selection of Gems from Ireland’s Modern Literature*. Ed. by J.J. O’Kelly.HB. M. H. Gill & Son, Ltd. Dublin. 1907.

*Bowen’s Court, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1955.*

### Beloved.

I think I wrote to you on the eve of our Hunt Ball. It really was **great fun** ... It was such fun here, starting off for the party – fires and flowers in every room, and a sort of hum of excitement as we all got dressed. We then dined with the Blacks: a party of 10 of us in all, all very in the mood and gay. The ball itself was in Mallow – rather like those old ‘Assembly Balls’ must have been. I looked handsome (I was told) and certainly enjoyed myself very much.

Oh, how I **love** pleasure.

I think Ireland’s rather a place for pleasure. I mean, the real kind – slightly dashing, more than a bit ramshackle, but totally without **calcul** and **unsnob**-bish. New Year, with the Vernons in Bruree, was fun, too. The inevitable champagne, very glamorous (sic) crackers, enjoyable sentimental tears and kisses.”

Letter to Charles Ritchie. ‘Love’s Civil War: Elizabeth Bowen and Charles Ritchie’. Ed. by Victoria Glendinning with Judith Robertson. Simon & Shuster. London. 2008. (The underlinings are by Bowen herself – JH).

(The Blacks were very monied English people who had fled the Labour Government’s high taxes and who had bought Creagh Castle in Doneraile and the Vernons were Lady Ursula and Stephen – the former was the daughter of the premier aristocrat of Britain – the Duke of Westminster whose descendents even today own nearly all of London.)

## Elizabeth Bowen

### A Review of Patricia Laurence’s biography.

Part 11.

There are three men who had a lot of contact with Elizabeth Bowen before and during the Second World War and these were Sean O’Faolain, Nicholas Mansergh and Charles Ritchie, the last was her lover and *confidante* of some thirty years. But just to look very briefly at Sean O’Faolain, and a comment made privately to me by one of my colleagues in this magazine—*Irish Political Review*—last month. I had written about a meeting arranged by

O’Faolain for Elizabeth Bowen with W.B. Yeats which had proved very successful to the point that an agreement was made with the old man that Bowen would be approved for membership to the Irish Academy of Letters. The latter was very much an idea of Oliver Gogarty and W. B. Yeats

She was delighted with this honour, because that is what it manifestly was, and so she was duly inducted in 1937. But, looking at these dates, it dawned on me that Bowen was already out and

about in Ireland long before that infamous letter to Virginia Woolf alerting us to her ‘Activities’. According to Victoria Glendinning, she had written in 1940—

"to the Ministry of Information to ask if she could be of any help with regard to Ireland: briefed by Harold Nicolson, she made her first ‘intelligence mission’ that July."

When writing to Virginia Woolf, she had this to say:

"... If there’s to be an invasion of Ireland, I hope it may be while I’m there — which I don’t mean frivolously, but if anything happens to England while I’m in Ireland I shall wish I’d never left, even for this short time. I suppose the Ministry will give me a come-and-go permit."

The context of the above sentence suggests that ‘*the invasion*’ would be from Britain and not Germany and after a couple of “*further Activities visits, by January 1941*”, she wrote again to Woolf:

"In Dublin I get engaged in deep and rather futile talks; it is hard to remember the drift afterwards though I remember the words. I suppose that (smokescreen use of words) is a trick of the Irish mind. They are very religious. It is the political people that I see mostly: it seems a craggy dangerous miniature world."

Further to the above, she told Virginia that “*she couldn’t write about it all*” but would like to talk “*very much*” (Italics – Bowen’s). But isn’t it interesting that she talks of the Irish as the other—“*they*”, and “*the Irish*”!

Going back to O’Faolain, what a *land* he got when he saw the evidence of her spying. He downplayed the issue saying that:

"All of this is now over forty years ago but I can still wince a little at us all—at Elizabeth, at myself... at Harold Nicolson, at the British Ministry of Information; or else I see the whole trivial incident as a tiny symbol of the sort of thing that war does to people. It puts an end to that civilised balance of values that normally encourages us to see everybody’s dilemma from other angles besides our own."

Some might see the above reaction as ‘denial’ at being so duped. He did get in his cruel kick by calling Bowen “*barren*”, which he could not know because of the writer’s well-known reticence about her inner life’s workings. But might there be another reason that he sees off the whole things as “*trivial*”?

Might Sean have been up to something himself? At one stage, after all, he had received a Commonwealth scholarship to

America, where he “*had been a student at Harvard University*”; he then came to teach in London in a teacher-training college in Twickenham and came back to Ireland in 1933. But the Professorship of English that he thought was his—went instead to Daniel Corkery and O’Faolain was left raging.

As O’Faolain roared: “*Dan had never been to any university and had no degree whatever.*” (Neither had the mathematician Boole!) But a raging O’Faolain now heard that Dan “*whose only previous teaching experience had been with small boys in a primary school*”, had been conferred with an Honorary Degree but, to Sean’s relief, it was “*only an honorary B.A.*” Then Dan wrote a book *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature*, “*not, to put it mildly, a very good book and was given the degree of M.A. on the head of it*”.

And, if all the foregoing wasn’t enough to practically kill O’Faolain, didn’t UCC “*remedy Dan’s lack of experience by inviting him to deliver a series of lectures there*”? Which brought Sean O’Faolain flying back to Cork to begin canvassing for the job that really was his—or so he thought.

Honestly, the part where our hero went uphill and down dale had me falling down with laughter and anyone should read it for the sheer scale of come-uppance that O’Faolain experienced and richly deserved. Even when O’Faolain finally realised that: “*I was an innocent abroad in my own land*”, he was bitter to the core and the final result was that:

“In the event I got two votes and Dan Corkery got all the rest.”

So it was back to London and to trying to finish his “*handful of stories which I had begun while at Harvard, in the spring of 1927, and was not to complete until the winter of 1932*”. He was still raging, raging he was at his home city—but now he thought he had a lucky escape. Ha! O’Faolain arrived back in Dublin at the outset of the war and ‘*The Bell*’ magazine editorship followed and then, after some years, he left that magazine, and he got a job at a publisher for the princely sum of £1,000 per year. The owner asked him for an “*accomplished linguist*” and O’Faolain went immediately to a very strange source – or so it seemed to me at first.

He sought the help—

“of the British Embassy and the Ministry of Information in London, and if these chances had not coincided smoothly I would never have met Miss Honor Tracy”.

He met this

“thirty-five-ish or so English woman off the Holyhead-Dunlaoire mail-boat one fine morning in 1946... She was British and had come to us straight from the Ministry of Information where she had been secretary to that distinguished sinologist Arthur Waley. It also helped that she had been recommended to all who deserved the honour by John Betjeman and Reggie Ross-Williamson of Dublin’s British Embassy.” (The latter was definitely a British spook.)

I cannot understand why, with all the many university linguistic graduates of the various Irish universities around Dublin—that O’Faolain went to the British to furnish him with one. Unless, he still used the guidance of Britain because that was a *quid pro quo* that suited both their interests. And any person who comes across that kind of information all these years after the war has to have a sense of how things were. After O’Faolain’s Commonwealth scholarship, surely there had to be a debt payable as these things are never free—especially from the British.

So, as Sean O’Faolain squired Elizabeth Bowen around Ireland—particularly Dublin and Cork, was it *war-work* for the two, either knowingly in the latter’s case and unknowingly in the former’s case? I think that was the situation, but have yet to firm up enough evidence to present a convincing case.

Of course, O’Faolain was soon a lover of his English linguist and again untastefully noted in his autobiography ‘*Vive Moi*’ (1993) that she was known in Dublin pubs as “*Hot Pants Tracy*”. Honor spent two years in Dublin and then travelled the world as a journalist for ‘*The Observer*’, ‘*The Times*’, and *the BBC*. She wrote novels and travel books and converted to Catholicism.

Martin Mansergh has often castigated the Aubane Historical Society for their work in exposing Elizabeth Bowen as a spy. He can get quite emotional and I remember him quivering in outrage in a letter to the *Irish Examiner* accusing Jack Lane of an:

“offensive campaign over many years ... to blacken the memory of Elizabeth Bowen”.

Mansergh then went on to state in his letter 26th September 2007, that of all things:

“Elizabeth Bowen declared herself as an Irish national.”

She did not.

In ‘*The Bell*’ interview that I have in front of me with its faded green cover, Vol. 4, September No.6, 1942: ‘*Meet Elizabeth Bowen*’ by ‘*The Bellman*’ (Larry Morrow), there is the meeting between Bowen and the journalist on a landing in ‘*The Shelbourne*’. While Morrow longs for the Long Room at Bowen’s Court:

“Instead, we met only the other day in one of those palm-embowered landings of the Shelbourne Hotel which suggests a skilful *collage* of a waiting-room on the Trans-Siberian Railway (Next stop, Omsk!) and a scene from the original production of ‘*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*’.”

Morrow irritates one immediately with his obsequiousness and, while given space to convince us that she is Irish, she does not bite. She does allow that:

“‘I’m *frightfully* proud of Cork’, she will tell you screwing up her eyes... Ever since I saw Cork, as a small girl, I have regarded it as my capital city.”

But she knows with ‘Bowen’s Court’ her family history, she needs to give some crumbs to those people like Martin Mansergh that she is that thing which they want her so badly to be. After much probing from Morrow she finally allows that:

“I regard myself as an Irish novelist... As long as I can remember I’ve been extremely conscious of being Irish... it is not – *I must* emphasise – sentimentality...”

Everything is qualified, even here as she tries to demonstrate her credentials; she can’t bring herself to say simply ‘I am Irish’. She is just too true to herself and her “*race*” as she names it in her final autobiography, ‘*Pictures and Conversations*’, Allen Lane, London, 1975.

Mansergh has tried to influence how Bowen is seen and not through the prism of Aubane/Lane/Clifford. He has urged us again and again to read her article on ‘*neutrality*’, which we examined in the *Irish Political Review*, January 2021 issue, under the title of ‘*Eire*’, as it was published by the *New Statesman* in 12th April 1941.

It was as — we thought — a thoroughly examined article by Bowen on our country as it was then in the Second World War. That neutrality, as she noted, was not for trading, even as Churchill telegraphed Taoiseach Eamon de Valera in the middle of the night offering up the Six Counties. The Taoiseach knew the bogus nature of the gambit and refused to deal with the British Prime Minister. Obviously, the English censor had been at the article

'Eire' because it differed hugely from its beginnings to its final conclusions, thereby weakening its intent. But Bowen (or Mrs Cameron, as she liked to use her married name) had done good war-work in relation to Ireland.

In one of her reports that Aubane unearthed, she is quite scathing about the nature of the way history is thought about in the two islands. She wrote that she wished England thought more of (Ireland's history) and that Ireland/Eire thought less – our *canáinig* about the wrongs done to us by Britain must have got to her. This brought a smile to my face as I remembered that in Kevin Rafter's biography of *Martin Mansergh* (New Island, Dublin, 2002) where, in one of the footnotes, there is this following observation from Martin:

"Many years later, Mansergh said he was "very disappointed" to hear a former teacher from Canterbury, "from whom I would have expected better" express the view that there was too much history in Ireland".

You see, Bowen has a lot to answer for really. Canterbury is the (minor) public school that Martin Mansergh went to prior Oxford but I would warn the good Dr. Mansergh not to throw around insults as they have a bad habit in Ireland of backfiring.

I would not state as he does that his father Nicholas Mansergh was "*anti-imperialist*" as apparently the latter told *The Irish Times* in 1984. After all, this is the man who was *Smuts Professor* in Cambridge University at St. John's College before eventually becoming its Master.

Field Marshal The Right Honourable Jan Smuts was the second Prime Minister of South Africa and totally in charge of its apartheid regime. He was, like Milner and Rhodes, an out and out racist. In these changed times about racism, with talks of Rhodes's statue being taken out of Oxford, who will give Smuts the same treatment?

After all, Smuts ended up being Chancellor of Cambridge University in 1948 until his death in 1950. And the money that these three racists brought into Oxford and Cambridge will have questions that newer generations will want answered.

Already in Trinity College, Dublin, Bishop Berkley's legacy is now causing ugly tensions and rightly so. When will Ireland's robbers/planters/settlers' score be settled?

**Julianne Herlihy. ©**

**To be continued.**

## A History of a Protestant Business

In last month's *Irish Political Review* the involvement of the Walker family with Bethany Home and *The Irish Times* was described, but there was only a brief account of the Walkers' business. The history of the family firm is interesting in itself but also as a microcosm of general historical developments in Irish commercial life.

Walkers Ltd was founded by Joseph Walker, who was formerly a dentist from Roscommon. He retired from dentistry due to ill health and went into business. However, the family was not exactly on its uppers. It owned a mansion in Orwell Road, Rathgar which, as discussed in last month's *Irish Political Review*, it sold to the Bethany charity in 1935. In the 1940s the company bought *R Marks Ltd*, a manufacturer of prams, and continued that business under the Walker brand. The premises was at Upper Liffey street.

By 1949 the Hely Group had a controlling interest in Walkers Ltd, but did not own it outright. This group was one of the largest companies on the Irish Stock Exchange.

In the early 1950s the Walkers' pram business was flourishing and it even diversified into electronic equipment.

In 1953 a factory in Shanowen road, Santry, was officially opened by the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs Erskine Childers (*The Irish Times*, 24.9.53). The report says:

"Bush (Ireland) Limited ... was formed last year to take over the manufacturing activities carried on by the distributors - Walkers, Limited."

Bush (Ireland) was a joint venture between the Hely group and the British electronics company. The Hely Group had a majority stake in the new company and, as part of the deal, Walkers Ltd ceased to manufacture electronic equipment. It is reasonable to assume that it was compensated quite handsomely for allowing the new company to "*take over its manufacturing activities*" relating to this market sector.

Walkers Ltd was still manufacturing

prams and also continued with its business as a wholesaler of electrical appliances. But another Hely subsidiary, Kilroy Brothers, handled the distribution of Bush televisions and radios.

A rather amusing report in *The Irish Times* (16.3.56) describes the ambitious expansion plans of Walkers' pram business which included investing in a new factory in Shanowen Road, Santry. But, of course, the factory already existed. It was just piggybacking on to the Bush Ireland facility.

The report also says that it began exporting in 1955. It is unclear how successful it was but it can be said with reasonable certainty that, prior to 1955, 100% of its turnover was for the domestic market. Its product range included "*prams, pramettes, folders... and nursery furniture embracing cots, carry-cribs, high chairs and play-pens*" (*The Irish Times*, 29.1.1957).

It is not known who its customers were. Did it sell to retail outlets who sold to the general public or did it sell to institutions such as the Mother and Baby Homes? The fact that there doesn't seem to be much evidence of advertising for the products suggests (but doesn't prove) that its customers were institutions rather than the general public.

In April 1960 the Hely Group bought out the minority stake in Walkers Ltd held by the family. From then on Walkers was a 100% subsidiary of the Group. It is likely that the Walker family did well. When Smurfits bought the Hely Group in early 1970, there was still an amount of £100,000 in purchased goodwill (note 1), relating to the Walker purchase, on the books of Hely (*The Irish Times*, 3.8.1970). Also, Walkers Ltd was given representation on the Board of Hely. It seems that at least part of the purchase was in the form of Hely shares.

A new company was formed in 1963 called *Lines Bros Dublin* which had implications for Walkers Ltd. This was along similar lines (excuse the pun) to Bush Ireland. Lines Bros Dublin was a joint venture between the Hely Group and

Lines Brothers in the UK. But in this case the Hely Group was only to own 49% of the new entity. 51% was owned by the British multinational.

At the time Lines Brothers was one of the largest toy manufacturers in the world, with such well-known brands as Meccano, Dinky, Hornby trains, scalextric etc. It also manufactured prams under the “Pedigree” brand. The deal involved the Shanowen factory continuing to manufacture prams, but under the “Pedigree” brand.

So, just as with the Bush Ireland deal eleven years previously, the Walker brand was taken out of the relevant market sector. Again, it is reasonable to assume that, although at this stage Walkers Ltd was wholly owned by the Hely Group, Philip Walker as Managing Director was handsomely compensated for signing a non-compete clause. Again, Kilroy Brothers Ltd was tasked with distributing the product range (the prams and the toys) of the multinational. So, by 1963, Walkers Ltd was just a wholesaler for various electronic brands.

In the 1960s the parent company of Walkers, the Hely Group, was profitable but was seen as a conservative Protestant company with no strategic direction. Its core business of printing and packaging was giving a lower return than its competitors. This state of affairs might have continued indefinitely if it had not made a disastrous investment in a greeting card company, resulting in the enormous loss of £649,000 in 1969. There is no doubt that the Hely Group had the financial resources to absorb this loss, but the shareholders began to lose confidence in the management.

Meanwhile, Smurfits was buying up shares in the Hely Group. This was quite a significant event in the commercial life of the country. A long-established Protestant firm whose Articles of Association had prohibited Catholic members on its Board was the target of a “Catholic” company which was about a quarter the size of the Hely Group. Of course, Smurfits was not a typical product of Catholic Ireland. The founder, John Jefferson Smurfit, was a tailor from Sunderland who converted to Catholicism before he married Ann Magee, a Catholic from Belfast. The Magee family had a stake in a box making company in Dublin and Smurfit was invited to run it.

The Directors of the Hely Group didn't

put up much of a fight. They recommended to their shareholders that they accept the Smurfit offer, which was above the current share price, but which was in the form of Smurfit ordinary shares and unsecured loan stock rather than cash.

In their recommendation to accept the offer, the Chairman of the Hely Group on behalf of the Directors, said there needed to be rationalisation in the paper and packaging industry (*The Irish Times*, 27.1.70). This reads like an admission that the Hely Management itself was incapable of doing it.

Interestingly, during the bid process, the Smurfit share price dropped. The view of the market was that the company had bitten off more than it could chew. If that was the concern, it was misplaced. In retrospect, Smurfit's acquisition of Hely was a significant step on the way to it becoming Ireland's first multinational.

Following the acquisition, Smurfits was magnanimous in victory. Philip Walker was offered a seat on the Board, but not apparently, George Hetherington, who had been joint Managing Director of the Hely Group and was also a Director of *The Irish Times*.

But in other respects Smurfits was ruthless. Following the acquisition, it quickly disposed of all the non-core assets, in order to finance its global expansion in the packaging industry. One of the first assets it sold was the Walker premises in Upper Liffey Street.

Philip Walker didn't remain long on the Board. He left to form a new distribution company called Sounds Systems Ltd which, with the help of his longstanding connections with the electronics industry, is likely to have been a nice little earner; not that he needed the money! In 1974 Philip and his brother had another big pay day when each of them received £325,000 following the restructuring of *The Irish Times*.

But, by 1970, the Walkers brand and its premises had disappeared. While they left no business legacy, it would be ridiculous to say that the Walkers were unsuccessful. They had amassed considerable wealth (see notes below). Their *modus operandi* was to engage with much larger organisations. They were prepared to cede control of their own business in exchange for some of the wealth — usually in the form of shares — that the larger entity could offer. This was the pattern in their dealings

with the Hely Group in the first instance; then Bush and Lines Brothers; and then indirectly through the Hely Group in their dealings with Smurfits. Indeed, it could be said that their final payoff from *The Irish Times* did not depart greatly from this pattern: their wealth increased following the ceding of control. However, in this case the control was ceded to an individual: Major Thomas McDowell. And what McDowell represented was never publicly acknowledged.

## Notes

### Note 1

When a company buys another company for an amount greater than the net book value of the latter company's assets, the excess is referred to as *purchased goodwill*. Another way of looking at it is that *purchased goodwill* represents the profit that the owners of the acquired company have made on the sale of their business.

In the past the acquiring company accounted for the goodwill by writing it off against reserves or by recording it as an asset to be written off against the profit and loss account over a period of, say, twenty years. Given that the purchased goodwill in the books of the Hely Group in 1970 was £100,000, it is very likely that it was £200,000 in 1960 when the Hely Group bought Walkers Ltd (assuming the goodwill was written off over a period of twenty years).

### Note 2

How can the value of money in the past be calculated in today's terms? A conventional method is by using inflation or cost of living data. So, for example, if it is assumed that the Walkers made a profit of £200,000 in 1960 from the sale of their business to the Hely Group, that would equal about 5.3 million euro in today's money.

Similarly, the £325,000 that each of the Walkers received in 1974 would be the equivalent of about 3.5 million euro in today's money.

But inflation data is a very conservative method of valuation since the cost of living has gone up by far less than the price of assets such as land, property or shares.

**John Martin**

## 'Just not that into you anymore' !

On 15th March the *Irish Times*, England's newspaper of record in its Irish province, relayed an article from the mothership's *Financial Times* concerning Depository institutions in Ireland. The piece, entitled '*Irish assets leave London in €100bn post-Brexit switch*' detailed how, over the previous weekend:

"Holdings for 50 companies listed on the Irish stock exchange moved from the securities depository of the London operation of Euroclear, one of the world's largest settlement houses, to its Belgium-based unit.

The two-year project to shift billions of euro of assets between depositories, which hold assets on behalf of investors and finalise transfers between customer accounts, is unusual. Companies and investors do not often move corporate securities from settlement houses, an unglamorous but vital part of the market where deals are finalised and assets transferred from seller to buyer. However, Brexit has changed the web of cross-border financial markets links in Europe" (<https://www.irish-times.com/business/financial-services/irish-assets-leave-london-in-100bn-post-brexit-switch-1.4510542>).

This much certainly is true. It was only to be expected that such moves would follow after Brexit, given that London put itself out of the running for '*equivalence*' in financial services, since such equivalence would have necessarily led to arbitration being governed by European law and the European Court of Justice, an intolerable affront to the Brexit project.

The article continues:

"Ireland, uniquely among EU countries, does not have its own securities depository, and its stock exchange has historically used the UK registration system, called Crest."

Well, yes and no. *Depository banks*, or *Custodian banks*, as they are sometimes called, serve as the intermediaries between investors and traders who buy and sell tradeable securities, i.e. stocks and bonds.

They actually hold the securities in question on behalf of the investors and trades are carried out by means of the depository changing the entries in its register to reflect the new ownership of securities buyers and transferring funds into the accounts of the sellers.

The buyers and sellers themselves are usually also intermediaries of a sort, brokers, asset managers, banks, etc., who are managing funds owned by their clients. The statement that "*Ireland, uniquely among EU countries, does not have its own securities depository*" is a reflection of the fact that the ownership and management by the Anglo-Irish ascendancy remnant of most of Ireland's largest business and financial institutions did not change after independence.

Even after it did begin to change from the sixties onwards, the draw of London, partly because of old habits, but also on account of the greater depth of its pool of liquidity, meant that large and growing Irish companies usually sought a listing on the London stock exchange after they had outgrown Dublin. As the article states:

"Around 90 per cent of all securities quoted on the Irish exchange also have a listing in London, and it has been easier for investors to settle deals using deposits held on account at the Bank of England. Only a third of transactions in Irish securities are settled in euro, with the majority settled in pounds and US dollars."

This might seem surprising as Ireland has been a member of the Eurozone for 20 years now, but it reflects at least the past fluidity of international investments, which London managed to make itself the centre of. Within the EU, the UK had a disproportionate influence in setting the rules for financial transactions and the role of the City was unsurpassed.

However, there is a new sheriff in town now, and the EU, ostensibly concerned about UK divergence from EU standards

and the risk of sanctions (a rod the Anglo Establishment in the US and UK has made for its own back), has decided that it wants more direct control over euro-denominated assets.

According to the FT, "*More than €8 bn s day of EU share trading has already moved from London to the EU, as has around 20% of the euro derivatives trading market*", a general business trend that will surely continue, given the increasingly petulant nature of relations on all levels.

There was always a certain degree of petulance and arrogance on the British side that before Brexit the Europeans indulged to the extent of appearing to suffer a kind of *Stockholm Syndrome* (in which hostages or abuse victims bond with their captors or abusers).

The nature of the exit negotiations has changed that and the ramifications of this are now becoming clear.

London used to have the EU's financial sector in its thrall. The financial crisis of 2008 tarnished its reputation considerably as it was considered more responsible even than the US, from whom nothing else could be expected, for the 'light touch' regulation that almost crashed the Euro system.

Ireland's reputation suffered due to its association with the light touch approach, but has since largely recovered, Brexit having provided a clear escape route from the perception that it is still fundamentally within the English orbit—to the great displeasure of the *Irish Times*.

As for Ireland's sad lack of its own depository institution, this is hardly of any importance today. There are literally dozens of such institutions based in Dublin now, subsidiaries of foreign corporations, from the US, Europe, Japan and, yes, even the UK.

It is still early days post-Brexit, and, while the Brits most certainly have yet to realise it: the rest of the world is just not that into them anymore!

Sean Owens

### Kilmichael Ambush: Notes

(see page 11)

excellent archivists in the MAI who published it to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

[5] If this delays work in progress so be it.  
[6] *Irish Independent*, Tuesday, July 01, 1924, P.8, Col. 5

[7] A fact Hart acknowledges in Fn. 21 21 on P.27 of '*The IRA and its enemies*' before rubbishing it in Fn. 71 on P.37. This is

another unresolved contradiction in Hart's analysis.

[8] *Round Table*, June 1921, p. 500; Beaslai, Piaras, (1926) *Michael Collins and the making of the Modern Ireland*, Vol. 2, p.97; Crozier F.P. (1932), *Ireland Forever*, p. 128

## Through Mid-Twentieth Century Eyes

At nine years old, in 1941, during WW2, I had a rope, hanging from the branch of a tree, and around my neck, ready to hang myself. It seemed like play-acting at the time, but my younger sisters were screaming. This alerted the attention of a cyclist, who got off his bike to shout that he was going to tell my parents.

The ironic thing was that this man was one of the worse sectarian bigots in Carryduff and would have wished us all dead as a mainly Catholic family. Here was hostility and compassion in one person. But then he maybe realised: this is what death could look like. It was then I realised the seriousness of the situation.

At nine I had a constant memory of a beating I had been given at six years old by my good working-class Presbyterian father, in unison with my good middle-class Catholic mother. I had been sent to the shop with a shilling, the last of the money the family had, and I had lost it. Afraid to go home, I had stayed out until darkness. Returning, my parents had a mixture of relief and anger. Relief that I hadn't been killed on the road by a car or bus, anger that I had lost the shilling. I thought then, at six, I was going to die from the beating, and spent a week in bed with trauma.

According to my father, children today were lucky: for in his day, as a youngster, a beating would only end when blood was running. But I couldn't understand my mother being involved in the beating when she often quoted her father's mantra: *Don't beat but inspire.*

Now, at nine years old, history had caught up with me and all I could see was the enemy within and the enemy without, with nowhere to go but the grave.

The cyclist didn't tell my parents, nor did my sisters. Child suicide then could have you in a Home. You'd be seen as a young and upcoming criminal causing anxiety for your parents. Your treatment under the name of rehabilitation would be harsh. So, double points to the cyclist.

I recall this incident in remembering the harshness of Northern Ireland society—in common with what was then the Irish Free State, and not forgetting English, Welsh, and Scottish society.

From Kilburn Street in Belfast we had fled, in 1938, to Clontonacally, Carryduff, to a rocky street of old WW1 former army wooden huts. Surrounded by green fields and grazing cattle, it was called Fairview Gardens but known to its residents as Fuck-You Gardens. We were all refugees from the Tick-Man, all from Belfast, all sixteen families sharing one water tap in the street, dry lavatories, and gardens that grew nothing but nettles. We were Catholic and Protestant, and it was *let sectarianism be bygones.*

Among this community were two unmarried mothers still living with their parents. It was an odd oasis away from the harshness of the moralising outside world. The only person keeping up the sectarianism was a Protestant from County Cavan. It was wireless sets at dawn, until the batteries and accumulators gave out—my father tuned to Athlone, with *A Soldier's Song* and the Cavan man to the BBC, with *God Save the King*. Two Protestants standing up for their families.

At the local elementary school two girls would become young teenage mothers and suffer different fates. The US had come into the war and up to 300,000 US troops would pass through NI after training. The local British Army camp had been evacuated to make way for the Americans. The British camp didn't have wire or security fences around it. The main feature was a well-tended cricket pitch. I remember the strange sight of a German reconnaissance plane darting through the sky during an army cricket match and only one soldier bothering to look upwards, but only after batting the ball from the wicket.

Then the US Army 608th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company moved in to prepare for D-Day. They churned up the cricket pitch with their heavy trucks and armoured vehicles, wired off the camp and set up sentry posts, aimed anti-aircraft guns at the sky, and dug machine-gun bunkers.

A priest from Belfast met their commanding officer, a Catholic priest himself, and got permission for the few Catholics in Carryduff, maybe 60 including children, to attend Mass in the army chapel, as the nearest Catholic Church was in Belfast, and few could afford the bus fares. That went off okay until one Sunday, with the Belfast priest and his two army altar boys saying

Mass, there was the crackle of gunfire. The Mass continued despite this interruption.

Outside the sentries were picking up spent rounds from their carbines. A local group of the most militant Protestants had been demonstrating outside the camp against the US Army allowing local Catholics into their chapel. The sentries had fired over their heads to disperse them.

Every faith was represented within this US camp. There were bearded imams and rabbis with locks. But they were all soldiers and armed. Some had been the sentries who fired over the heads of the demonstrators. They attracted the local girls who could have seen this US personnel as irreligious. Can an American Catholic be really a *taig*? The hastily departed demonstrators did designate this US camp as a nest of *taigs*, though a Muslim Imam could have been firing one of the carbines.

Local boys hung around the camp. The young soldiers seemed too bashful to approach the passing girls themselves, so they would write a note and ask a boy to run after the girl and give it to her. Sixpence was the charge. We didn't know it at the time but pimping was the name of the game.

On the way to school I started to notice condoms (what was known as French Letters then) on the hedgerows, as if purposely displayed for boastful purposes. My younger sister picked one off the thorns, thinking it was a balloon, and was about to blow it up until I knocked it out of her hand. In my parents' eyes I wouldn't know anything about condoms, birth, or reproduction. I worked hard to keep them in their ignorance of my knowledge. To know too much and vocalise it was sure to get you a slap on the back of the head. You were not to even think about those subjects. So, it was back to storks and babies found under gooseberry bushes.

My sister, trying to explain what I had done, had my mother telling her that she could get scabies from blowing up other people's balloons. I didn't enlarge on that! The secret life of school children meant you could know most things about sexual life by the age of seven. In Belfast, from an early age, you knew what those bloody rags were that were tossed over the yard wall into the entry because you were told very specifically by a mother never to touch them: "*They were women's things.*" Sanitary towels cost money, in the hungry Thirties, if they even existed?

Outside the environs of Fuck-You Gardens there was a girl at school with whom I clashed a lot. Maybe it was on

sectarian grounds. I know my mother always said: if I was attacked as a Catholic, I was not to attack back on religious grounds. But I could answer in some other way. This girl had quite a ruddy red country-girl complexion so I would ask her if she washed her face with Persil, and thus she became known as *Persil-Face*.

I was name-calling with her one day—her name for me was *Haire-Hitler*—when a passing adult said: “*Ah, leave the poor girl alone, she’s only trying to click with you.*”

At 12 years old I was socially inadequate. As Catholic children, we were isolated in not being able to play with the Protestant children. My father even wired us into the garden like POWs. What filled the void was guilt at my cruel name for her. After leaving school at 14, she was soon pregnant, after been seen with a member of the US 608th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company. The usual rumour was that a priest, a Taig in uniform, was the father.

The 608th were all very young and the clergy in it were, maybe, in their early Twenties. The girl was blamed, of course, and she disappeared. I thought maybe she was in Belfast now. But it turned out she was in London—with the help of the father of her baby who had given her the fare money to disappear.

I was re-reading Ludovic Kennedy’s book, *10 Rillington Place*, about the serial killer John Christie, a former WW2 policeman, and looked at the names of his victims again. One name was very familiar, that of the girl from my school, who had become pregnant in her early teens, by a US soldier. They gave her home city as Belfast, whereas I thought, if she was the same person, that should be Carryduff. Then I remembered Carryduff was now part of Outer Belfast with a Belfast post-code. Making a few inquiries, I found it was the same girl I had nicknamed Persil-Face. She had become a prostitute around the Notting Hill Gate area in London, and was a late 1940s victim of Christie.

They sure knocked the self-esteem out of you back then. Had I contributed to this poor girl’s demise?

I had had my share of name-calling. The nickname *Haire-Hitler* didn’t bother me. I even felt my self-esteem rise on being called that. The whole school had added that to the derogatory *mickey* (for Catholic) or *fenian*—which my mother said I should be proud to be called. My answer to *Haire-Hitler* was: *One day I might be him so you better look out!*

Later I learned that another girl from my school had become pregnant, and she scarcely more than 14 years old. She was

the daughter of a quarry owner and lived in a beautiful house. The father had to be the holy joes of the US 608 Quartermaster Graves Registration Company again. But she didn’t flee. First of all she had understanding parents; and second of all, they had the money to hire a full-time nanny for the child. She had planned to go to College, after elementary school, and then to University, but instead became a Secretary in her father’s business. She held her head up high during her pregnancy and eventually gained admiration from the community.

She had a good sense of humour. Being very attractive, the males couldn’t keep their eyes off her. Her comment was usually: “*No thanks, I’m already pregnant*”, or: “*If you think you are the father bring a bunch of roses to maternity.*” The males couldn’t handle that and avoided her.

Arlene Foster’s acknowledgement of what happened to unmarried mothers generally throughout NI has to be helpful in treating it as a two-nations problem, and resisting points-scoring.

A boy, a neighbour, of my own age, twelve years old, I was told by my mother to keep away from. I did keep away from him for other reasons than my mother was about to tell me. Playing with him only lasted an hour or two: his sectarianism was so gross. He chalked “*No Pope Here*” slogans everywhere. My father advised me to chalk under the slogans: “*Lucky Pope*”, which I did.

But what my mother was on about was completely different: “*He pulled another boy’s Charlie (penis) until it was black and blue.*” We knew nothing about gays and the broad term, “*Cissie*”, was used to describe what was thought to be effeminate boys. There was one such boy at our school of 82 pupils. He got on so well with the girls we were jealous. And they seemed to like him as he tied ribbons in their hair and called them *Hollywood stars*. So we stopped at the word *Cissie*, and could never imagine anything beyond what that word meant.

When my mother told me to avoid the boy next door, I still couldn’t understand what she meant. It was only when she said he could end up in an Industrial School for two years that I felt something was seriously wrong with him.

Being threatened with the Industrial School was a common enough threat for rebellious boys. I expect the female version of that was a Home for Unmarried Young Mothers. Or you could be threatened with being put into the Royal Navy at 14 years

old. I wanted to be put in there but never managed to persuade my parents that I had had enough of them.

Then there was being led by the ear to the British Army Recruitment Office in Donegall Street, Belfast. I never could manage that either.

A farm nearby, (at the top of the lane) employed a boy who had come out of an Industrial School for stealing a horse’s harness. He might have been 16. He was completely illiterate and asked my father how much five Woodbine cigarettes (the cheapest brand) cost. My father told him. He said that was his wages for a day’s work and was that the right amount. The farmer had him living in a rough corrugated iron hut. Breakfast was bread and margarine. Dinner a heap of boiled potatoes with the skins on.

The farmer wanted us out of his cottage. He said the other farmers were accusing him of giving refuge to Catholics and added he wasn’t one of them, but we had to go. We didn’t, and the well-water was poisoned with us all becoming very ill, my 9 month old sister almost dying.

My father kept a frog, swollen to twice the size, that had died from the poisoning, as evidence. The RUC was informed but they never came. Instead, the head of the Industrial School in Downpatrick turned up. My father was sure it was the farmer who had poisoned the well-water with blue-stone, a sheep-dip used then. The farmer blamed the boy from the Industrial School. The next day the RUC called for the boy and led him away. We never knew his name because he refused to tell us nor did we know what religion he was. The farmer called to him like a dog: “*Com-mere, Hey you!*”

Industrial schools? That boy’s experience put the fear of hell into me.

At the age of 12, I was sent shopping for the groceries in Belfast because I could go half-price on the bus. Along the Ormeau Road, on the way back to Carryduff, there was the Good Shepherd Convent. On the upper deck of the bus you could see over the brick wall into the playground of the convent. There up to a hundred very young girls from maybe the age of five to ten would be playing. Each wore an identical blue dress. I was told they were orphans. I felt the dread of it all and guessed they were just not wanted. I wondered what had become of all those mothers. Now all they had were these heavily-hooded nuns to look after them. The family had been the key to their future but that family, whether through poverty or moralistic anger, had rejected them. They couldn’t express their distress and maybe receive comfort and advice.

During the 1960s a member of my extended family in NI suddenly appeared on my doorstep. She said she had come over for a job interview but didn't get it. I told her there were a lot of office jobs in London and why not apply for them. I couldn't understand why she didn't. She just remained silent after that. She stayed with us overnight but the next morning she was still silent and left to go back to Belfast without another word.

It took a few years to find out why she had suddenly decided to come to London. She was pregnant. She and her boyfriend belonged to a born-again Protestant sect. She had been engaged to him for maybe five years and there was still no sign of marriage. It was a ruse – buy the girl an engagement ring and anything goes after that. They didn't live together but each were still living with their parents, though now in their early 20s.

Then she found out her boyfriend had been seeing someone behind her back and had married her. I could now understand her silence. It was too painful a story. But I just wished she had told me. There was also the cultural betrayal of a deeply religious woman. She also felt like a *simmer* in not being able to tell her parents about her pregnancy. I just wish she had stayed with us.

A few years on someone for the US contacted me, looking for her mother. “*Did someone in my extended family adopt a child back in the 1960s?*” The inquirer had seen my name on the Internet. I could only guess who that might be but she was now married with three children, still deeply religious, but now a member of Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church. I had letters which contained anguish and threats of exposure — she would advertise in the *Belfast Telegraph* for her mother to come forward.

My task now was to go to Belfast and give her these letters secretly, which was quite difficult with her husband constantly in the room. Eventually I succeeded. When her husband left to go out somewhere we were able to discuss what to do about it. This was barely ten years ago. She would tell her now adult children her background and inform them of their new sister. The husband was not to know. Quite a strain on a religious person: but the husband was definitely not to know. Secret meetings then took place when their sister came to Belfast. Her children were of a new generation and accepted the situation without question but their mother was now left with more guilt when her husband died without knowing of her background.

Her husband I knew quite well. He was both a very generous man and a very

sectarian man. He once apologised for his sectarianism, saying he couldn't help himself because he was tied to a madman.

She insisted he wasn't to be told about her secret daughter. She felt she was in danger of being left on her own. She had already experienced rejection and disappointment. In a way she is alone but in another way her understanding children have been a great comfort.

The treatment of unmarried mothers still resounds through the generations. The situation was only beginning to change ten years ago. Before that it was starvation social benefits, rough examinations by

angry maternity staff, accusations that the pregnancy was only to get higher points on the housing waiting list, and so on. And that was England. Escape to where?

In a NHS hospital I worked in, an agency clerk was hired. She had a ten-year old son. She couldn't afford a nursery and now it was the long school holidays. So, she had her son hanging around the waiting room and then drifting into the canteen from time to time to break the monotony. Sometimes she went over to see if he was all right. When the office manager discovered this going on he sacked her. That was 1997.

**Wilson John Haire.**  
28.1.2021

## JAMES CONNOLLY - a poem by Bob Cooney

### INTRODUCTION BY MANUS O'RIORDAN:

The last commander of the 15th International Brigade's British Battalion in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War was Sam Wild, a Manchester-Irishman with Fenian family connections. The Battalion's political commissar, Bob Cooney from Aberdeen, had no Irish connections, but was no less a supporter of Irish freedom.

In June 1938, a month prior to the battle of the Ebro, the Catalan town of Marçà saw a commemoration and celebration of Theobald Wolfe Tone by the British Battalion as a whole, coinciding with the Republican commemoration of Bodinstown Sunday back in Ireland itself. As my Cork Brigadista father Micheál O'Riordan recounted in his 1979 book, *Connolly Column—The Story of the Irishmen who fought for Spanish Republic 1936-1939*:

“The celebration was opened by a speech from Bob Cooney (Scotland), the Battalion Political Commissar. He emphasised the national and internationalist aspects of Tone's life and teachings, and proposed the toast to ‘The Father of Irish Republicanism’... Another (Brigadista) sang about the ‘Boys of the County Cork’ who ‘Beat the Black and Tans’...”

My father did not here reveal that he himself had been the singer in question!

On the commencement of the battle of the Ebro on July 25th, with the crossing of that river to seize Fascist occupied territory, each of the British Battalions carried both the flag of the Spanish Republic and the flag of Catalunya, with Sam Wild saying to my father that it was important that, as an Irishman, he should carry the Catalan flag. In 1944, Bob Cooney was to recall in *Proud*

### *Journey—a Spanish Civil War memoir:*

“We crossed the river on the morning of 25 July. On the eve of our great adventure we held a battalion meeting at which every man present pledged himself to give his life if necessary for the honour and glory of the battalion and the victory of the Republic. Revolutionary songs and old-time choruses were sung, and in each song could be sensed the feeling that the singers were on the eve of a great adventure and were bound together by a great hope and a great comradeship. Our men were lifted out of themselves... Half of our battalion crossed in small boats. The remainder crossed by the first pontoon to bridge the river. In front of us went the battalion colours borne proudly aloft by Frank Bush, alongside the Spanish and Catalan flags. Striking across country, we made for the Corbera highway. As we moved up a sunken dirt road an old peasant ran to meet us. He knelt down and with tears in his eyes kissed the Catalan flag. We were deeply moved by the incident, which brought home to us what the crossing must mean to the men, women and children who had lived for three months under the yoke of fascist tyranny. How proud and happy we felt as we pushed on in our mission of liberation.”

See the website of the International Brigade Memorial Trust for a free download of its magazine for September 2018, containing - on pages 16 and 17 - Bob Cooney's Ebro account, “*Across the river and into the fire*”.

This April 24th marks the 105th anniversary of the Easter Rising, while May 12th marks the 105th anniversary of the execution of James Connolly. Thanks to Aberdeen Trade Unionist Tommy Campbell for providing me with this poem by Bob Cooney, Scottish Communist and a true internationalist and anti-Imperialist.

## JAMES CONNOLLY - a poem by Bob Cooney

In windy Edinburgh town - so history does relate  
A lad was born on June the fifth of 1868  
'Gainst poverty and sickness long, his parents did engage  
So young James Connolly — at ten — was earning his first wage.

He learned to read by firelight — made pencils from charred wood  
What would have been his parents' thoughts had they but understood  
That millions would yet read his words — and he would win renown  
As poet — scholar — rebel — and would win a martyr's crown.

Already by young manhood, in the union he was strong  
In labour's cause he travelled wide — inspiring many a throng  
He crossed the sea to USA — where he's remembered still  
He helped organise the 'Wobblies' — with Bill Haywood and  
Joe Hill.

But his dearest love was Ireland — from whence his fathers came  
Resolved was he to set her free from dark colonial shame  
When 1914 war-drums beat, he gave this clarion call —  
"Neither Georganor Kaisers shall we serve, we men of Liberty Hall."

No German foot stands on her soil — the only alien feet  
Belong to those who stole our land — 'tis them we must defeat

Since Ireland is our country — 'tis for Ireland we must fight  
Our Irish Citizen Army soon will test the Saxon might.

And so there dawned that Easter week — which ne'er shall be forgot  
For six great days 'gainst fearful odds, the gallant army fought  
Artillery and gunboat too their heavy salvos fired  
Still Connolly — though wounded twice — his gallant band inspired.

And when it was all over — to the castle he was led  
To face his mock court martial, soldiers propped him up in bed  
With gangrened wound and fever wracked, he still found  
strength to say  
"You have seen how Irishmen can fight, thank God I saw that day."

They tied him — wounded — in his chair, and said "Prepare to die"  
He calmly faced the firing squad — his head held proudly high  
The surgeon — Doctor Tobin — who attended him did own  
"In all my life — so brave a man I'll swear I've never known."

Although he died on that May morn, don't say he fought in vain  
For from that day the alien rule was ne'er secure again  
So long as there's a man alive who'll fight for liberty  
They won't have killed the spirit of the brave James Connolly.

## In Defence Of Dorothy Macardle

### Biographical Sketch Continued

A famous protest that disrupted a performance of Sean O'Casey's play, *The Plough and the Stars*, on its fourth night in the Abbey Theatre (11 February 1926) sheds light on Dorothy Macardle's place in Irish intellectual history. A playwright herself, and criticised for her participation for that reason, she was among the leaders of the protest. Other participants were Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Kathleen Clarke, Margaret Pearse, and Kathleen Moloney, all of whom had lost close relatives in the Independence struggle and all of whom had supported the Republican side in the Civil War.

In a letter published in the *Irish Independent* (15 February 1926), Sheehy Skeffington slammed the play as making a mockery of the revolutionary movement from which the State that funded the Abbey had arisen. On the other side of the argument, harking back to the riots against J.M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* fifteen years earlier, W.B. Yeats, the Director of the Abbey, famously declared to the protestors and their support-

ers in the audience: *"You have disgraced yourselves again!"*

In being deliberately irreverent regarding the Easter Rising, O'Casey might be described as a revisionist before his time: and the same can be said of Yeats, and the then Editor of the *Irish Times*, R.M. Smylie, who actively backed Yeats in the controversy. Indeed, the leading light of Irish historical revisionism, Roy Foster, in describing the protest in his biography of Yeats, sides with O'Casey, Yeats and Smylie (*W.B. Yeats – A Life, II: The Arch-Poet*, p.304-306).

Looking back on the controversy as Drama Critic of the *Irish Press* in 1931, Macardle referred dismissively to *The Plough and the Stars* as a cynical disparagement of the Irish struggle, orientated towards the English rather than the Irish viewpoint. In taking that stance and thereby pitting herself against Yeats, a figure she had admired while learning the basics of her craft after 1917, she showed her independence as a thinker. Much like

### Part 4

O'Casey, only on the opposite side, she was a critic of revisionism before its time. (For a discussion of Yeats's defence of O'Casey see *Sir Bob Geldof on Yeats* by Brendan Clifford in *Church and State* No 143, First Quarter 2021.)

### DRAMA CRITIC

Although she occasionally wrote on social and political subjects, Macardle's main job at the *Irish Press* from its launch on 5th September 1931 was as the paper's Drama Critic. Nadia Clare Smith describes her having a *"deep knowledge of modern European drama and the drama of the Irish Revival"* (*Dorothy Macardle – A Life*, p. 66). The following by Macardle on the Czech playwright, Karel Capek, gives a flavour of her interest in European plays:

"After the war [1914-18] he began to write plays. Cynical disillusionment darkened the soul of Europe in those days, but Capek, with the dry white light of intellect, penetrated the chaos, and with the shaping power of an artist brought order out of it into his own thought and into his work. His is 'the gift of mirth', a compatriot wrote of him, 'with which the young Republic desires to greet the old, morose and disheartened world—'; and he wrote plays which, while questioning not modern civilisation only but the very laws of life, were yet as fanciful in their

structure as the patterns on a butterfly's wings..." (*The Irish Press, Fianna Fail And The Decline Of The Free State*, Aubane Historical Society, 2007, p. 137) and (*Irish Press*, 11 September 1931).

In an early piece entitled, "*What Is Wrong With The Abbey*", she argued that Abbey actors were performing serious plays in an exaggerated and farcical style, encouraging excessive laughter from the audience; as a serious theatre-goer she was intolerant of the "gigglers" (*Irish Press*, 15 September 1931, p. 5).

In 1928 a new Dublin theatre, the Gate, had been formed and Macardle quickly became one of its supporters and a friend of its leading lights, Micheal MacLiammoir, Hilton Edwards and Betty Chancellor. Nadia Smith states that she was "*particularly impressed by the Shakespearian productions staged by the Gate*" (p. 64).

There were occasions when her political views impinged on her theatrical reviews but this is misrepresented by Smith. Macardle did not side with nationalists against playwrights perceived to be satirists of nationalism; rather she sought to mediate between the two sides. The following is from an article by her, entitled, "*Dramatists And Movements For National Freedom*", about *Peer Gynt* by the Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen. Noting that Norwegian nationalists were critical of the depiction in the play of their cause, she says:

"Ibsen's experience is one that has come to many great writers in times of national crisis in countries struggling to be free. It came, in Russia, to Turgenev; in Ireland, to Synge.

Inevitably, at such a time, those who are labouring, unselfishly and sincerely, against immense difficulties, for their nation, feel that their talented countrymen should help them—should, at least, encourage and sympathise. But the men of talent, sometimes, look on at the struggle with a cool detachment, acutely aware of the excesses and weaknesses which it generates, strangely blind to its grander aspect, its necessity and its truth" (*Irish Press*, 29 September 1932, p. 6).

Referring to writers who draw their characters from Irish history, she says:

"The literary exploiters of the national struggle are legion. They provide clever books and plays, and they do the national movement no harm" (*Irish Press*, 29 September 1932, p. 6).

However, in the same article, she draws a line at a play by Denis Johnstone, *The Old Lady Says No*, which in the way that it characterises Robert Emmet as "*a pitiful object of warnings and execration*", she

finds repellent. But she still praises Johnstone's technique as an innovative experiment with plenty of dramatic potential.

A play by Macardle herself, one that is considered her best, *Dark Waters*, was performed to acclaim at the Gate in September 1932. Criticism from a friend, Rosamond Jacob, however, testifies that her literary abilities were not always highly rated.

"... the conventional characterisation, the sweet dewy rosebud girl with a lot of devoted chivalrous men (father, lover and friend) all saving her from suffering, and all perfectly white and un-complex romance. No psychology or subtle surprises" (*Jacob's Diary*, NLI MS 32,582 (71), 13 September 1932).

#### WRITINGS ON SOCIAL ISSUES

A week after its launch on 5th September 1931, the *Irish Press* published an article by Macardle headed, "*Irish Mothers And Their Children*". The piece, in which the living conditions of five typical families of the Dublin poor are described in detail—dilapidated rented rooms, meagre sources of income, inadequate Relief allowances, high living costs, insufficient diets and precarious tenures—was not the sort of article normally published in the Dublin papers of the time. Macardle concludes it as follows:

"To keep the home together, if it is only a cellar, to "make out somehow", keep out of the union [the Union of districts established under the Poor Law to provide Poor Relief]—that is the resolve that sends men every day for years to the Labour Exchanges and sends women searching for the shop where a loaf costs a farthing less. For, if once the home is broken up, never, they know well—never in a lifetime, will they get a home together again. But while there is a home, and children growing up, and Ireland's history still in the making, there is hope" (*Irish Press*, 14 September 1931).

Five days after the publication of *Irish Mothers*, she followed it with an article on the same theme, "*The Newsboy as Bread-Winner*". On this occasion she interviewed a number of boys at the Belvedere College Club under the protective supervision of a Fr. Ryan, marvelling at the boys' solidarity and dedication to earning pittances for their families. In the article she places the exploits of the newsboys in the context of the overall picture in Dublin by relating that the 150 newsboys then working were a small fraction of between six and seven thousand boys aged between 14 and 19 at the time living in single room tenements (*Irish Press*, 19 September 1931).

Another article by her, "*Children and*

*the Law*", shows how she was pushing out the boundaries of acceptable commentary in 1930s Ireland while being careful not to expose her paper to disapproval from the then all-powerful religious lobby. The following excerpts give a flavour of her angle:

"A boy or girl between fourteen and sixteen years of age may be sent to a reformatory, and in the case of boys this is a severe punishment, for the reformatory is poverty-stricken and comfortless and life is prison-like there."

"To industrial schools are sent the more incorrigible delinquents between seven and fourteen years of age whom the judge does not see fit, for one reason or another, to leave in their homes. Here they are given education, taught a trade, and fitted to make their way in the world. There are few trades that a boy cannot learn at Artane. But no institution, however good, is the best place for a child. For homeless children, except those boarded out from the union, there is no resort at present but these industrial schools" (*Irish Press*, 14th April 1932, p. 6).

In her biography Nadia Smith recognises the importance of Macardle's attempt to draw attention to the Industrial Schools and highlights the critical role played by Maud Gonne:

"Dorothy had observed and written about the treatment of child offenders in the Dublin Children's Court, and knew that many were committed to institutions. Moreover, her friend Maud Gonne MacBride had written an exposé of the poor conditions in an industrial school in Glencree, Co. Wicklow, which was later shut down by the Fianna Fail government, an incident mentioned in *Fantastic Summer* [a novel by Macardle published in 1946 and now known by its US title *The Unforeseen*]. Dorothy later argued for legal adoption in Ireland so that children would not have to spend their lives in orphanages and industrial schools" (p. 114).

The treatment of the Industrial Schools question in *The Unforeseen* is revealing as to Macardle's thinking about how Republican ideals were being compromised by the existence of such institutions. As in her journalism she takes great care not to be too explicit, but her disappointment is palpable and undeniable. The closed Industrial School in Glencree is described as follows:

"Down on the right, stark and ugly stood the old reformatory. Built to keep insurgents in awe, its subsequent history as a boys' reformatory, was grim. Perry said, 'Dev did a good day's work when he came up and closed it down'. Tilled fields surrounded it now" (*The Unforeseen*, no page numbers as Kindle version consulted).

At a certain point in the narrative, the central character, Virgilia, a character modelled on the author, worries about the future of a boy who has escaped from an Industrial School.

“ ‘Perhaps’, she said, ‘if I asked the priest?’

‘He’ll tell you the industrial school is the place for him’, was the reply.

Virgilia reminded herself as she went away defeated and sore at heart. Yes, this tragedy would happen, and there was nothing she could do” (*The Unforeseen*, no page numbers as Kindle version consulted)

As things turn out in the story, the boy finds a home in a farming family, but the expression, “*defeated and sore at heart*” seems a good summary of Macardle’s feelings regarding some aspects of the Republic she devoted, without regret, her career in politics to defending.

Maud Gonne’s contribution to getting Glencree closed consisted of an article, “*The Industrial School Scandal*” (4 September 1934), published in *An Phoblacht*, which unfortunately is not available online, and a submission to the *Cussen Commission* in which she emphasised the point that institutional care is unsuitable for children. Her submission was reported briefly in the *Irish Press* (Irish Press, 23 October 1934, p. 3), but not in any other paper.

A point not mentioned by Nadia Smith is that, while Glencree Industrial School was closed under Government instructions, its institutional service was simply transported to a new premises, the old Workhouse in Daingean, County Offaly.

#### FEMINISM

Throughout her life, Macardle passionately believed in the right of women to full participation in social and public life. She chose to express those beliefs mainly by the way she lived rather than by expounding them in contributions to feminist theory, although in her fiction she frequently used supernatural themes to grapple with gender roles in a way that would have been unacceptable in straight political writing. As a prisoner during the Treaty War, at times in circumstances where she was unpopular, she maintained solidarity with her female fellow inmates as a matter of principle. In her subsequent career, while defensive of her mental independence and while making no secret of her admiration for certain male colleagues—Erskine Childers and de Valera primarily, but also Frank Gallagher and Robert Brennan—she continued to stand in solidarity with female fellow-activists and she advocated for gender equality in a number of high-profile political campaigns.

The lectureship she was appointed to at Alexandra College was important to Macardle because, among other reasons, it afforded her an opportunity to expand the horizons of young women, like hers had been, through the exploration of literature. Denied that career, she still managed to be a mentor, to some degree, to women like the novelist, Mary Manning; the French author, Etienne Beuque, who wrote about Terence MacSwiney; and the daughter of Robert and Una Brennan, Maeve Brennan, who went on to become a respected short story writer in the US and a member of staff at the *New Yorker*.

One of Dorothy’s stories, written while in prison, “*The Portrait of Roisin Dhu*”, provides an example of how she used fiction to make the case for equality. As Leanne Lane summarises it, a portrait painter persuades a peasant girl to pose “*as his model of Roisin Dhu, a female representation of Ireland*” (Dorothy Macardle, p. 230). Similar to the plot of Oscar Wilde’s *The Portrait Of Dorian Gray*, as the artist paints, the girl’s life force seeps into the picture until she eventually dies. Macardle is here protesting against the idealisation of women. Instead of depicting women as exalted symbols of Ireland, a common trope in the writings of the Celtic Twilight School—especially associated with W.B. Yeats—see them, she is saying, as the flesh and blood people that they are.

The political campaign pertaining to women’s rights in which Macardle was most active was the debate on Section 16 of the *Conditions of Employment Act 1936* which took place in 1935. In the early years of the independent State, in line with international trends, restrictions were imposed on female access to employment: from 1924 women civil servants were required to resign on marriage; and in 1932 that ban was extended to female National School teachers.

Because of the scale of unemployment in the 1930s, and because female workers were paid less than their male counterparts and were thus seen as a threat to male employment, the Trade Union movement backed restrictions on women workers. The campaign against Section 16 was spearheaded by the Irish Women Workers’ Union (IWWU), but Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and the historian, Mary Haydon, were also involved, as were Senators Kathleen Clarke and Jenny Wyse Power. Clarke, arguably the woman who played the most prominent role in the independence struggle as she led the re-organisation of the IRB in the

aftermath of the Rising, while stating that she was sympathetic to feminism, argued that she was not opposing the Bill on feminist grounds but in defence of the ideals of the Proclamation.

The highpoints of Macardle’s participation in the campaign were a letter she submitted to the *Irish Press* and a speech she gave at a Mansion House meeting. The letter, published on 13th May 1935, can’t be reproduced here in full for reasons of space, but deserves to be published along with her political writings. She begins by acknowledging the bitter competition for jobs then existing and the practice whereby women enjoyed preference in employment because they were paid lower wages. She then proceeds to propose a solution and express disappointment at the actual proposal under discussion:

“The fair way, the way which would be approved and welcomed by every reasonable woman, would be to institute the rule of equal pay for equal work, permitting no discrimination against any person in the matter of payment *on the sole ground of sex*. It is a grievous disappointment that Irish legislators have preferred to adopt a system which discriminates against women, militates against them in the struggle for employment and attempts to reduce thousands who are able and willing to be self-supporting to a position of dependency.”

Later in the letter she argues a point which Leanne Lane describes as her unique contribution of the debate:

“The right to work—not only to earn a livelihood, but work for work’s own sake, is surely the inalienable right of every human being. It is not men only who, denied work, become restless, unhappy, unbalanced, unhealthy in body and mind.”

At the Mansion House on 20th November 1935 she spoke on a platform with Sheehy Skeffington, Hayden and probably Louie Bennet of the IWWU. Her main point as described by Lane was that their campaign “*was only part of a necessary world-wide campaign for women’s independence*” (Lane, p. 222). That international perspective was important to Macardle who had by that time developed an interest in the League of Nations. It is worth noting that the fears expressed regarding female employment during the *Conditions of Employment* debate, justifiable fears given the status of women then obtaining, were vindicated in the way that some types of shift work for women were curtailed. But otherwise limits on their working never materialised to any serious extent.

In what is considered the last feminist campaign before the 1970s, a second round, so to speak, of the debate about women in employment occurred over the 1937 Constitution. On this occasion, while a wider network of women's organisations campaigned against the Articles relating to the position of women, Macardle kept a lower profile and struck a more moderate note in some of her public statements. In a letter (17 May 1937 according to both Smith and Lane) to the Editor of the *Irish Press* (this may have been to the *Sunday Press* which is not available online) she supported the position of the President of the IWWU, Louie Bennet. In her letter Macardle stated:

“A Constitution should provide safeguards against the invasion of the rights of every section of the community. This draft lacks a clause safeguarding women's rights, and even seems to invite such an invasion” (Lane, p.223).

She also held out an olive branch to de Valera by saying that the offending Articles “were no doubt framed with excellent intentions”. In a private letter to the then Taoiseach dated 21st May 1937 she emphasised the question of female access to employment and concluded that no one holding advanced views on the rights of women could support the Constitution as it was drafted.

Public opinion in the 1930s was not sympathetic to the somewhat abstract case being argued by the women's lobby and, while eroding the majority that voted for the Constitution and putting down a marker for the future, the campaign ultimately failed and represented a setback for activist women like Macardle. It is possible that she coped with the defeat by adding extra edge to her explorations of concepts like motherhood and the role of women in society in her fiction writing. During the 1940s and 50s she produced four commercially successful novels covering that ground.

Belonging in the same genre as the fiction of the English novelist, Daphne du Maurier, Macardle's novels invariably tell a good story, often with paranormal overtones and always with unexpected plot twists. They can be read as escapist literature as much as for their insights into human relationships or their questioning of traditional gender roles. *Tramp Press*, an Irish publisher, began re-publishing them in 2015 and has issued three to date.

In the first novel, *The Uninvited* (originally published as *Uneasy Freehold*), a depressed young woman, Stella, decorates her room as a shrine to the woman she thinks was her mother, Mary Meredith. In the novel, Meredith symbolises the ideal mother to the extent that the narrator

imagines her “pictured so in a stained glass window with a halo about her head” (p. 15). It transpires that Stella is actually the daughter of a Spanish servant girl, Carmel, who had a relationship with Meredith's artist husband and modelled for him. The ghostly chill that haunts the house where the narrator and his sister, Pamela, are living, emanates from the coldness of Mary Meredith. Having deduced the real history of the house, Pamela states:

“‘Roddy, we have been as blind as bats! Carmel was a simple, warm-hearted, loving girl and Mary’ – her voice took on an edge of detestation – ‘Mary was a cold, hard, self-righteous prig!’...” (p, 287).

The ideal mother figure is depicted as self-righteous and the unmarried mother as having the natural feelings of a real mother. Not a comparison likely to sit well with the arbiters of morality in the 1940s.

Yet Macardle is not always the ideological purist. In *The Unforeseen*, her second novel, the mother character, Virgilia, that is based on Macardle, acts, through a mistaken interpretation of her power to foresee events, to break up her daughter Nan's relationship with a young doctor. Subliminally, she is disappointed that her daughter is putting her desire for a conventional relationship before her ambition as a creative artist. So, the well-meaning progressive Virgilia thinks she knows the right choice that Nan should make in her adult life. Here the predisposition of the feminist mother is wrong: the daughter's individual freedom is primary.

Overall, Macardle's fiction, having a strong feminist tinge, is of the same quality as her feminist activism and other political writings.

Dave Alvey

To be continued

## Book Review: Part Two

# A Definitive Political, Military And Cultural History Of Irish International Brigaders

Part One of my review of *In Spanish Trenches* by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor (*Irish Political Review*, March issue) concluded with praise for an imaginative cover that combined a photo of anti-Fascist prisoner Frank Ryan with a photo of Leslie Daiken and other London-based Irish Republicans demonstrating their solidarity with Spanish Republicans. Barry McLoughlin has clarified for me the sequence of dates relating to that Ryan photo. Ryan, together with Dubliners Maurice Levitas and Bob Doyle, was among the International Brigaders taken prisoner by Italian Fascist troops on 30th March 1938. Ryan was afterwards interrogated and photographed by Spanish Fascist personnel in Zaragoza on April 4th and 5th, before being imprisoned in the San Pedro concentration camp on April 8th.

Leslie Daiken and Charlie Donnelly had co-edited *Irish Front* as the organ of the Irish Republican Congress's London Branch, the editorial of its final issue in January 1937 proclaiming “*Long Live the Spanish Revolution!*”. By the time of its publication, Donnelly was already an International Brigade volunteer in Spain, initially with the British Battalion, and soon to be joined by his Republican Congress comrade, Peter O'Connor. A month later Donnelly would be killed in action at Jarama, while fighting in the ranks

of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, his body being retrieved from the battlefield for burial by O'Connor and two fellow Waterford volunteers, brothers Johnny and Paddy Power. The co-author of *In Spanish Trenches*, Emmet O'Connor, is Peter's son, but the author of *Even the Olives are Bleeding: The Life and Times of Charles Donnelly* (1992). The novelist, Joseph O'Connor, is not a relative.

In *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association—An Emerald Jubilee Pamphlet 1938-1978*, the *Irish Democrat* editor, C. Desmond Greaves, was to doubly misrepresent Donnelly as being akin to “one of the 57 varieties of Trotskyism”, but “whose innate nationalism came out when a military decision had to be taken” to join the Lincolns in January 1937. In a letter to the Editor, carried in the December 1978 issue of the *Irish Democrat*, and quoted by Joseph O'Connor, Donnelly's comrade-in-arms Peter O'Connor proceeded to contradict Greaves with the actual facts:

“At that meeting, Charlie Donnelly, Johnny Power and myself fought very hard to go to the British Battalion. The main reason given by those who were for going to the Americans was because of the wrongs done to the Irish nation by the English in the past. They claimed that, though they were anti-fascist, they still looked on the English as the enemy.

Those of us—and here I mention Charlie Donnelly in particular—pleaded passionately for a distinction to be made between anti-fascist working class comrades from England, and British Imperialism. It was an understandable historical but political mistake that the vote went against us.”

In his diary entry for 12th January 1937, Peter O’Connor had referred to it as *“a meeting which should never have been called”*. In fact, *In Spanish Trenches* definitively establishes that the culprit was the British Battalion’s decidedly anti-Irish political commissar Dave Springhall. Writing to Gerald O’Reilly of the New York Branch of the Irish Republican Congress, on 5th March 1937, Frank Ryan charged that *“the representatives of the British CP wrecked the Irish unit”*. Springhall was subsequently reprimanded and replaced as Battalion commissar by the Scottish communist, George Aitken, who would later castigate him for *“his grave political mistake in helping the Irish section of the British Battalion to transfer to the American Battalion.”* Lessons had been learned, and the British Battalion was thereafter sensitive to the national principles of its Irish members. Indeed, the Battalion was to be commanded by two Irishmen in succession, IRA veteran Peter Daly, and Free State Army veteran Paddy O’Daire.

At Jarama, on February 27th, the unsupported Lincolns were ordered to undertake a senseless assault. The authors describe how Lincoln Commander Robert Merriman pleaded in vain with Brigade commander Vladimir Čopić to call off the attack. Brigade HQ dispatched British Lieutenant Clifford Wattis and Springhall *“to ensure that the Americans went ‘over the top’ just before noon”*. It was a slaughter, with both Merriman and Springhall wounded at the very outset. 127 Lincolns were killed, including Irish platoon political commissar Charlie Donnelly, and three other Irishmen. As the authors relate: *“The special ire of the Americans was directed against Lieutenant Clifford James Watts, who, it was alleged, had forced the not-so-eager out of the trench into the murderous fire on 27 February under gunpoint”*.

This is but one example from *In Spanish Trenches’* superbly detailed military chapters. Their narrative of successive battles complements that of Giles Tremlett’s history, *The International Brigades*. Both books are excellent in that respect, although in respect of the final battle of the Ebro, July-September 1938, *In Spanish Trenches* provides a fuller narrative.

But, back to an earlier battle. McLoughlin and O’Connor point out that in July 1937 *“only the propagandists could believe that*

*Brunete was a decisive Republican victory”*, and they detail the cost. Almost 800 had been killed. The fatalities were highest in the 15th Brigade (293). The British Battalion lost 85 per cent of its strength. At 167, the number of missing, including deserters, was highest in the American and British Battalions. Eight Irishmen were killed and at least 13 were posted as wounded. Among those killed in action during that battle were the Abraham Lincoln Battalion’s African-American commander, Oliver Law, with Steve Nelson now taking over as its commander. In the wake of the near obliteration of the British Battalion, both Frank Ryan and Steve Nelson were tasked by Brigade HQ with working together to re-build that Battalion’s strength, and they proposed Wexford Republican Peter Daly as its new commander.

During the battle of Quinto in August 1937, the Lincoln Battalion’s Robert Merriman was the 15th Brigade’s Chief of Staff who tasked the British Battalion with taking Purburell Hill. As McLoughlin and O’Connor relate:

“Daly was told it was lightly held by Merriman who ordered the assault. Contrary to this unfounded supposition, typical of Čopić, the mound was topped by concrete bunkers, trenches and machine-gun nests, but no artillery support was summoned.”

Daly was fatally wounded in the stomach. When darkness fell, Paddy O’Daire, Daly’s successor as British Battalion commander, withdrew his troops. When artillery support was finally forthcoming, O’Daire launched an attack at dawn. The authors continue:

“The trenches were taken in a classic charge at 6 pm. Čopić, obtuse and as careless of men’s lives as ever, criticised O’Daire for pulling back his troops after the first failed assault. The wily Donegal captain took a copy of British Army Field Regulations from his pocket, proving that he was correct in taking the decision to await artillery.”

With Quinto fully conquered, *“there were spontaneous killings of fascist snipers by Americans and some officers were shot after being questioned by Merriman”*. The many other Lincolns who expressed concern at such revenge killings, including the Irish syndicalist Pat Read, were told, as justification, that *“the fascists killed all Internationals after capture”*. This would indeed be the fate of Merriman himself during the Aragon retreats, when he was murdered on 2nd April 1938, together with his Brigade commissar Dave Doran, following their capture by Spanish Fascists troops.

In contrast, Frank Ryan and the British Battalion troops captured by Italian Fascists on March 30th, were not, shot out of hand, but held for the purpose of future prisoner exchanges for Mussolini troops captured by Republican troops. The completed question-

naire from Ryan’s initial interrogation at Zaragoza was accessed by Burgos researcher Nacho García in the Spanish Military Archives at El Ferrol, and thanks to him, I was able to reproduce its text in the September 2016 magazine of the International Brigade Memorial Trust:

#### **“Nationality and work**

Frank Ryan. Irish nationality. Born in Limerick. Residing in Dublin since 1924. 35 years of age. B. A. of the National University of Ireland. Formerly a teacher. Since 1927 journalist. Editor of various Republican papers, including “The Republic”. Catholic. Participated in the Irish War of Independence 1919-21 and in the Irish Civil War of 1922-23, in the Irish Republican Army in which held the rank of Commandant (= Major).

#### **Political history and ideas**

Belonged to the “Sinn Féin” (Republican) party of which Mr. de Valera was President. Subsequently belonged to the Irish Republican Congress—a left-wing Republican Party which aims at the unifying of Ireland and at complete independence from England. I am still a member of this party, and one of its leaders.

#### **Why did you come to Spain?**

Two reasons. (1) In October 1936, ex-General O’Duffy, who had been dismissed by the Irish Free State Government, led a party of Irishmen to Spain “to fight for the Catholic faith” with General Franco. Believing that religion was not at stake in the Spanish war, and in order to show that O’Duffy did not represent the Irish people, I came to Spain. (2) I also came because I believed that General Franco was getting aid from Germany & Italy, while the other side was denied aid by the “Non-Intervention Pact”. My sympathies were with the Madrid government, which I regarded as a democratic government.

**And what do you think now?** My views are still the same.

*Frank Ryan, April 4, 1938”*.

Following his initial interrogation, Ryan was incarcerated in San Pedro de Cardeña concentration camp. He would later be transferred to Burgos Prison. Franco decided to put Ryan on trial for his life. The pioneering research by the authors in Spanish Government and Military Archives provided McLoughlin and O’Connor with the full transcript of both the detailed June 1938 interrogation of Ryan and his subsequent trial, which resulted in a death sentence, later commuted. From those Archives they also provide details of correspondence from Ryan’s enemies in Ireland calling for the maximum punishment to be given him, supplementing the campaign of his bitterest enemy, the thoroughgoing Fascist, Thomas Gunning. Another enemy working with the Francoists and against Ryan was the *New York Times* correspondent, Walter P. Carney.

We already knew from reports sent to the Department of External Affairs by the Irish Minister to Spain, Leopold Kerney, that Sir Robert Hodgson, Britain's Honorary Attaché at Franco's HQ in Burgos, had also been briefing the Fascists against Ryan, including false accusations of assassination in Ireland. But the authors have further sourced more damning evidence concerning the 15th International Brigade's Chief of Supplies, Captain Clifford Wattis, whom they describe as "the most prominent British deserter". That desertion was a particular embarrassment to the anti-Fascist cause. As they point out, on 9th April 1938, the *Daily Worker* had lionised Wattis as the hero of the British Battalion's retreat across the Ebro. (They might have added that then *Daily Worker* editor was Dave Springhall). They continue:

"Once in Britain, Wattis made his agenda clear: to discredit the Republican forces by exaggerating Soviet influence in the Brigades. He gave an interview to the *Daily Express* and contacted Sir Henry Page Croft MP, a leading figure in the pro-Franco pressure group Friends of Nationalist Spain. On 24 May, Captain Wattis addressed a gathering of right-wing MPs in the House of Commons, overstating the importance of the Internationals in the Republican war effort... Wattis was the kind of Briton that appealed to many ex-officers in the Commons, an apparently doughty fighter with traditionalist view of Britain's place in the world. Page Croft arranged a second meeting in the House for 31 May and this time invited all MPs to attend. Wattis was introduced to his listeners as having "long service as commanding a division of the International Brigade", a point that was challenged in the debate (by Communist MP Willie Gallagher) and later corrected by the speaker."

How Wattis was behaving in public has, of course, been widely known since May 1938 itself, and the authors note:

"Wattis had definitely 'gone over to the other side' and everything he said or wrote was transmitted by the Duke of Alba, Franco's agent in London, to Burgos and shared with the Italian and Portuguese ambassadors to Britain."

But it is only now, by virtue of the authors' researches in the Spanish Archives, that we learn how Wattis was simultaneously behaving even more treacherously in private:

"His betrayal of former comrades was compounded by what he said in private to one of the Duke of Alba's informants (letter to Alba, 30 May 1938), namely that Frank Ryan ('a leader in the Irish revolt and a political commissar'), should 'under no circumstances... be repatriated or allowed to get away'."

Following the establishment of diplo-

matic relations with the victorious Franco regime, Juan García Ontiveros was appointed as its Minister to Ireland.

"The diplomat had unwanted visitors to his home, when on the evening of 1 June 1939, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington (for him the 'soul and leader' of the CPI) and (Frank's sister) Eilís Ryan ('an insipid Miss') stood on his doorstep... According to Sheehy Skeffington ... the Minister seemed to take notice when he was told that Frank Ryan's three (other) sisters were nuns."

The following year:

"The release of the American Internationals was used by the Irish Government to

impress upon Ontiveros that Ryan, the only English speaker still in a Franco prison, should now be freed. (Irish Minister to Spain Leopold Kerney to Spanish Foreign Minister Beigbeder, 26 March 1940.) And Ontiveros to Foreign Affairs, Madrid, 11 April 1940: 'It might be convenient to review what had been done in the Ryan case up to now following the recent letter from the widow of the famous Lord Mayor of Cork.' Franco's officers would have been less impressed had they known that the writer, Muriel MacSwiney, was an avowed secularist and member of the CPGB. (Muriel MacSwiney, *Letters to Angela Clifford*, Belfast, 1996)."

**Manus O'Riordan**

To be continued

## Best Catholics!

Derek Scally, the Berlin correspondent of the *Irish Times*, has written a book/An extract from it was published in the *Irish Times* on March 20th. The title of the book is *The Best Catholics In The World*. The extract begins with a Cross that hangs on the inside of the door of his Berlin apartment. The Cross, he says, was of the kind the Crucifixes were made of during the Penal Laws at the time "when Ireland's Catholic majority was subjugated by the London-backed Protestant minority". Scally's Cross was made by Imogen Stuart, who was a designer of "penal crosses". Scally "felt awkward accepting the cross as a gift", but he has become attached to it.

About thirty years ago I visited Freising in Southern Germany and came across a Crucifixion Museum there. My reason for going to Freising was that, in the course of trying to form an idea of the growth of Europe, I had come across Otto, the Bishop of Freising, who had written a book about it in the 12th century. Freising, as far as I recall, was the Cathedral city of the diocese that included Munich.

Otto was born into the upper nobility of the time. The Emperor who was humiliated by the Pope at Canossa was his grandfather. He was a nephew of the Emperor who negotiated the Concordat of Worms. And he was uncle of the famous Emperor called Barbarossa.

He was a politician as well as a historian at the time when then central conflict was between the Papacy and the Empire. As a historian he wrote in *The Two Cities* about the relationship of Church and State—about how the Church developed under the protection of the State, and how

it became engaged with the State, and how, when the Empire went into decline, a dimension of it was continued by the Church. He saw himself as continuing as a historian where Augustine had left off seven or eight centuries earlier.

He wrote narrative history of the kind now rejected by Irish academics (none of whom are historians)—the kind summed up by 19th century German historian Leopold von Ranke as describing each situation as it actually was.

I had never thought of such a thing as a Crucifixion Museum until I saw the one in Freising. But, by the time I arrived in Freising, I had become accustomed to seeing Crucifixes all over the place, and hearing people say *Grüß Gott* in place of *Guten Tag*.

Germany was economically prosperous and religious. It was economically prosperous despite being defeated and plundered in two destructive Wars launched on it by England within a period of thirty years. And it was not prosperous despite being religious. It was economically successful and religious together.

After Freising we drove up to Berlin on a day that happened to be *Corpus Christi*. I was vaguely aware that there was a Church Holy Day called *Corpus Christi*, but experience in north Cork in the 1940s and 50s did not prepare me for the idea that it might be a holiday devoted to prayer and pleasure. On the journey north we kept on coming across substantial industrial towns I had never heard of. In each of them the centre of the town was blocked off. In the morning there were processions, and altars,

and Masses said in the open air. Then the altars were cleared away and great tables laden with food were set up for the feasting. And, no doubt, in the course of the evening other sins were committed.

Britain had propagated the idea in Ireland that Catholicism was anti-economic. A priest around 1900 had published a big book refuting this idea with ample evidence from Europe (*Catholicity And Progress* by Fr. Michael O'Riordan). But the English propaganda stuck and revisionist professors retailed the notion that Ireland was poor because it was Catholic.

Germany shrugged off the defeat, humiliation and plunder of 1919 much less quickly than it shrugged off the defeat and plunder of 1945.

The 1919 regime was Enlightened—it was Social Democratic. The post-1945 regime was Obscurantist—it was Christian Democratic, essentially Roman Catholic. And the Christian Democratic leader, Adenauer, was particularly concerned to defeat the Social Democracy in the construction of the new regime because he saw it, in the light of the post-1918 experience, as an avenue of English influence.

Christian Democracy baffled the English mind and made possible a German national development from the start. The Social Democracy in 1919 had been anti-nationalist in principle, and it was left to others to bring about the necessary nationalist restoration.

Diarmaid Ferriter, *Irish Times* columnist and Professor, reviewing Scally's book in the *Irish Times* (March 21), says that he "has built a layered picture of the evolution of the Irish Catholic Church as an institution and the society it sought to control". If that is so, there is no trace of it in the substantial extract from the book given in the paper.

The title of the review is "Grappling With The Church". In my experience since the 1960s there was no *grappling* with the Church by those who should have been the intelligentsia of society. I recall Gene Kerrigan writing that there was no need to grapple with it because the irresistible spread of monopoly capitalism would at a certain point cause it to collapse. Something like that is what was happened.

The Church was certainly a substantial element in the national culture. And, because there was no interaction with it by elements that considered themselves enlightened, the

collapse of the Church was close to being a collapse of national culture. There was no evolution. Evolution conserves the elements involved in it. There was only a collapse. And the collapse of the Church brought down other things with it.

Ferriter writes:

"He explores early Irish Christianity, the historic wealth and power alliances and the bogus holy tapestry that has been woven around accounts of religion in that era: 'there is no uncontaminated past'. He also finds more nuance in relation to the penal law era than the traditional narrative of exclusive persecution suggests, and he excavates the 'Cullenisation' of the church in the second half of the 19th century... when Cardinal Paul Cullen sought to build a disciplined, centralised dominant church but which in many respects was about outward devotion rather than deep thinking..."

I wonder what an "uncontaminated" past might be? A past that was merely ideal and not actual?

And what about "exclusive persecution"? Does it mean that the Penal Laws were not designed to suppress the Catholicism of the Irish populace and replace it with State Protestantism? Or does it just mean that they were not comprehensively and effectively enforced (which is a pretty obvious fact)?

The Laws were genocidal in intention and in practice, in the sense in which the word is used in British propaganda against others today. But they were not comprehensively exterminationist in effect as many other British genocidal efforts were.

The Tasmanians, for example, do not complain about what the British did to them, as the Irish do. They have no culture of victimhood that needs *nuancing*, because they were wiped out. And that is how it goes with genocide.

The relevant question is not whether the Penal Laws were exterminationist in design, but why they were not more energetically pressed home. The reason could not have been squeamishness. The extermination of inferior races in the cause of bettering the world was seen as a moral obligation by progressive circles in England into the 20th century. In the late 19th century the second in command of the Liberal Party, Sir Charles Dilke, boasted in a runaway best seller that went into multiple editions over many years that:

"The Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race on earth. Up to the commencement of the now inevitable destruction of the Red Indians of Central North America, of the

Maoiries, and the Australians by the English colonists, no numerous race has ever been blotted out by the invader".

The Spanish, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French:

"have conquered but not killed off the native peoples. Hitherto it has been nature's rule, that the race that peopled a country in the earliest historic days should people it to the end of time..."

That was published in *Greater Britain* in 1869. Twenty years later Sir Charles continued the story of the progress of the Anglo-Saxon race in the world with "*The Problems Of Greater Britain* (1890). Dilke was a mainstream writer and politician. Nobody disputed what he said on this matter, and nobody was disturbed by it.

By 1890 the Irish had not only survived but were pressing hard to disentangle themselves from Britain.

An Ulster Unionist intellectual—there are not many of them—Frank Frankfort Moore—reflected realistically on the matter. He said that, if the Colonists do not exterminate the natives when they have the upper hand, then the natives will get back at them. That was the Irish problem.

So the problem with the Penal Laws is why the greatest exterminating race in the world did not make a better effort to press them home. Could it be that the Irish, being white and Christian, were seen as a potential resource for the great Anglo-Saxon project in the world?

With regard to *Cullenisation* etc: the Catholic Church in Ireland was once of a kind with Churches on the Continent. It was not a direct dependency on Rome, as a Mission Church in pagan lands might be. It had a national structure. The abolition of that national structure was not the work of the Hierarchy or of Rome. It was brought about by the new middle class asserting itself in Dublin and other cities as the Penal Laws began to be eroded by British pressure on the Protestant Parliament, and then by the British Parliament itself under the *Act of Union*.

There was a lay middle class revolt against agreements made between the Irish Hierarchy and the Union Government, which Rome had accepted. The Hierarchy was obliged to tear up the Agreement and subordinate itself to Rome following a great dispute on the issue. That "*layer*" of the historical picture will not be found in Ferriter's so-called histories. It will be a welcome surprise if Scally deals with it. (The book is not available to us at present, Ed.)

Cullen came from Rome *a quarter of a century later* to give order to the Church for which Rome had been given entire responsibility by the laity.

His task was unprecedented. Rome had experience only of dealing with the various Churches through national intermediaries—hereditary monarchs for the most part. This brought national modifications within the general Catholic model. This was the case even where the national state was Protestant. So what could Rome do with Ireland except put Doctrine in command?

Whatever about the Irish being “*The Best Catholics In The World*”, they undoubtedly had the most Romanised Church structure in Europe.

In Otto’s Germany, nobility and clerical Hierarchy existed as a continuum. The Church was not a body detached from the laity.

There was no Irish nobility in Ireland. The Williamite conquest and settlement had seen to that. The Williamite nobility was not only Protestant but English. And the middle class laity were prevented in the 18th and most of the 19th centuries from developing a bourgeois public life by the Penal Laws, which were effective in that respect at least.

The Dublin middle class, urged on by a former United Irishman, Walter Cox, rejected Grattan’s scheme for Emancipation with a degree of State influence on the appointment of Bishops. O’Connell, who seems to have been weaned of Ascendancy Repeal by Cox, became the demagogic organiser of the Catholic masses, and he issued the slogan, *A free Church in a free State*. He should have known better from his European origins! A politically isolated Church! A Church without national entanglements! A Catholic sect!

Thus Cullen came from Rome with a free hand. There was no national body for him to negotiate with. So he applied pure doctrine, and swept away numerous anomalies.

But there must have been effective peasant resistance to reform, because the Church in which I was a busy altar boy in the forties still had the practice of what was called *Stations*. Twice a year, in every townland in the Parish, Mass was said in a private house on what was a townland holiday. For one season I went around with the priest in the Parish of Kiskeam, set up

## Ceta trade deal requires scrutiny

I would like to respond to the issues raised by David O’Sullivan concerning non-ratification of the Canada-EU trade agreement (Ceta) in his piece “Causing EU crisis over Canada trade deal would be mistake for Ireland” (Opinion & Analysis, March 1st).

Mr O’Sullivan is correct in identifying the proposed investor court system (ICS) as one of the main sources of concern arising from Ceta ratification. It is interesting to note that the trade benefits that he refers to since the provisional application of Ceta have been achieved without an ICS system in place.

It is true that the proposed ICS marks an improvement on previous investor-state models but, when all is said and done, it will still be a system outside of national and EU law which gives, depending on which side of the Atlantic Ocean the claim arises, Canadian and EU investors their own special tribunals – misleadingly referred to as “courts”. While the European Court of Justice concluded that the chapter on investment disputes was compatible with EU primary law, it was not making any judgment on the desirability or risks arising from such a system.

In the chapter on investment and regulatory measures, Ceta reaffirms the right of states to regulate for legitimate policy objectives, such as public health, safety, environment, etc, and further states that the mere fact that a party regulates in a manner that negatively affects investors’ expectations does not amount to a breach of that section. However, in the same chapter when it comes to compensation claims, ICS can take into account the investors’ profit expectations arising from its interactions with a state or its statutory bodies. In short, the right to regulate does not protect a state from potentially very expensive claims that might arise from non-regulatory actions taken to promote a public interest.

Moving to the final section of the opinion piece, it should be said that opposition to the ICS part of Ceta has nothing to do with obstructing better working relationships with Canada. Irrespective of the merits of the Canadian state as set out in his article, when it comes to a claim against an Irish authority by a Canadian investor, the above-mentioned merits will be irrelevant. Sean O’Shea’s letter (“A Canadian view on Ceta trade deal”, March 4th) is a reminder that many sections of Canadian civil society do not welcome Ceta.

Would Ireland saying “no” to Ceta cause an EU crisis? It is possible for the provisional application to remain in place until suitable amendments are agreed. This should not be difficult as Canada itself has chosen to exclude itself from the investor-state dispute settlement provisions (ISDS, known as ICS in Ceta) in the recent United States-Mexico-Canada agreement.

Finally, the information provided about David O’Sullivan describes him as a former EU ambassador to the US; however, it should also have included the fact that he works as a senior counsellor with the legal firm of Steptoe and Johnson, a company that offers services in the field of investor-state arbitration.

**Tom O’Connor**, Comhlámh Trade Justice Group, Dublin 2  
(*Irish Times*, 6.3.21).

an altar on the kitchen table, did the Mass, dismantled the altar and packed it away, and had breakfast with the priest and the elders of the townland.

At the time I thought all this was just part of general Catholic routine. Much later I realised that it was an anomaly from Penal Law times which it was Cullen’s job to abolish.

I was away from Slieve Luacra for a considerable period, during which the 2nd Vatican Council happened. I read in the *Times* about how the Council was abolishing Irish saints by the thousand. And, when I went back to Slieve Luacra, I found that the Stations had gone—abolished, I assume by

the modernising, rationalising puritanising obsessions of the Council, under pressure from the Yankee Catholic paymasters who, puritanised themselves by their Anglo-Saxon surroundings, were shocked and scandalised by the conduct they saw in Catholic Italy when they went there for the Council.

It seems that Scally records an interview he had with Cardinal Sean Brady. Ferriter comments:

“The interviews are somewhat tense. Brady asserts defensively that ‘the lord didn’t entrust the Church to angels’, but Scally does not let him get away with such humbug...

## Seanad By – Election

The procedure being adopted by Fianna Fáil and by Fine Gael certainly does not stand up to democratic scrutiny. The two parties are trading in Public Offices by agreeing between themselves to vote for one particular Fianna Fáil candidate and for one particular Fine Gael candidate so as to fill the two vacancies with their chosen candidates to the exclusion of all others. There are many other candidates but, if the inter-party agreement succeeds, the other candidates have no chance of election. This is certainly not democracy in action. It surely is criminal behaviour or if it isn't, it should be made a criminal offence.

We've met this before in the inter-party combinations to elect Mayors and Lord-Mayors in Local Authorities. The tenuous democratic validity of Party Politics can itself be successfully debated, for and against, but, whatever about Party Politics, it is certainly not a valid extension of the democratic mandate for the duly elected Party candidates to exercise their votes so as to get members of other Parties into Public Offices such as Mayoralties, Seanad seats and Health Board seats and Port Authority seats, and many other offices paid for out of the public purse. It is **Political Simony**, i.e. **Corruption**.

(*Simony* is the selling and buying and dealing in Religious Offices, as is widely practised among the English.)

The politicians in Ireland were very decent for perhaps the first half of their century in Public Office. Maybe this was because there was not much money in the Irish economy or maybe our politicians were genuinely virtuous. They certainly had apparently genuine pretensions to religiosity. Of recent decades there are scarcely any evidences of religiosity among politicians and most of them would shrink back from any accusations of being virtuous or even honest, and not out of humility but because of a fear of becoming unelectable if regarded as virtuous.

Because the electorate has become

cynical and quite dishonest. As the English poet John Dryden wrote:—

"So easy still it proves in factious times,  
With public zeal to cancel private crimes,  
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,  
Where none can sin against the people's will!  
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,  
Since in another's guilt they find their own! "

And, of course, there is a cohort of voters who do not like to think and who:

"Like a sheep that is taken to be slaughtered,  
Like a lamb that makes no sound when its wool is cut off  
He does not say a word.  
He was humiliated and justice was denied him."

*Prophet Isaiah.*

There are many people in the population who look around quickly and surreptitiously to find out where are the other lemmings headed for and these people then hastily follow the crowd.

And then, as the shrewd businessman and wise politician Peter Barry one time reprimanded me, when I criticised the intelligence of a certain TD, saying:

"You must make allowances — after all we vote by Proportional Representation and one half of the people are above-average intelligence and the other half are below average intelligence and so if we have fools among the people, we'll have fools in the Dáil."

Unfortunately, it also applies to crooks in the population . . . meditate on that!

As a society, we must wholeheartedly decide on whether crookedness is acceptable or not. And what level of crookedness is to be tolerated. Do we require a Government Minister to resign if she/he lies to the Dáil? Is a T.D. expected to be truthful when speaking in the Dáil? Is it alright that a very experienced hard-working European Commissioner is effectively removed from office because he attended a Golf Dinner during Covid-19 Lockdown and at the same time a newly appointed judge was given preferential treatment and was not removed from office when he attended the same dinner?

And what about all the other persons who attended the same dinner, the holding of which, we were told, was illegal under

Covid-19 Regulations? Was it a case of *Ah! Shur it could happen to any of us!* In this matter, we as a people showed no regard for standards in Public Office. If we do not call stop now, then like the lemmings we as a society will come to a cliff and go over it — be carried over it — and then it will be too late.

So, what are we to do with three Party Leaders who have had, in the past year, and continue to have, dealings in Public Offices? One is said to hold six Ministries (somewhat along the lines of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Mikado*) and the other two half-Taoisigh and two half-Tánaistes, by agreement between the Green Party, Fianna Fáil, and Fine Gael. Is it any wonder that people are saying Tony Holohan of the Health Service Executive (HSE) is the real Government of Ireland?

It is said that a people gets the Government it deserves and if that is true and we have got this very divided Government today, then we must be a very divided people in Ireland just now. Hopefully we will sort ourselves out before the next election.

### An Identity Crisis of Another Sort

The *Irish University Review* was founded by UCD Professor Maurice Harmon in 1970 and now is published for some reason not explained, as a *Journal of Irish Studies* by Edinburgh University Press. The Editor and Assistant Editor are, it seems, at UCD.

The Special Issue, Spring/Summer 2020, has a most interesting article by Matt Kennedy entitled:

"Some things are Worth Losing to Become/? Trans Masculinity/Queer Autoethnography/Where Theory and the Body Collide."

Matt Kennedy, in his own words "*was born female and was a confused straight young woman, a lesbian, a stone butch, and a gender-non-conforming person before arriving, rooted, in trans masculinity.*" He describes the passing in stark terms — the top surgery, the testosterone injections and his intense feelings and self examination along the way. Each of his many tattoos is part of a meaningful archive — part of what he is studying in Dublin for a *Gender Studies Masters*. An engagement, he says, with autoethnography and particularly queer autoethnography.

He explains how he felt out of place in rural Ireland — "*I left bogland and green fields in favour of being a legible trans man in an urban centre.*"

There is much more in this most interesting essay, including twenty five references to other works down to: “*You only live twice: Death, Sex and Translation*” by Mark Hoolboom and Chase Joynt.

I learned a lot of stuff which I had never known before and it increased my understanding of what it means to be trans. Reading it has made me very grateful to be comfortable with being in my own skin.

Michael Stack ©

## Public Service Pay Agreement

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions “overwhelmingly” voted to endorse the new Public Service Pay Agreement on 23rd February 2021.

The Agreement, known as *Building Momentum*, was agreed in something of a stopgap fashion last December after the Covid-19 pandemic greatly curtailed the negotiating process.

The new Agreement will come into force with immediate effect and will run until the end of next year. Some 13 out of the 17 Public Service Unions involved voted to ratify the new deal, with the notable exception of the Irish Medical Organisation, which voted overwhelmingly against it on 19th February.

The deal will see “*modest pay increases skewed towards those on lower incomes*”, ICTU said, while a new sectoral bargaining arrangement has been introduced for the first time in order to alleviate pressure from certain professions less content with the blanket nature of the pay provisions.

Kevin Callinan, General Secretary of *Forsa*, Ireland's largest public service union, said that the ICTU-affiliated unions are “*fully committed*” to the implementation of the agreement which would “*bring tangible benefits to those who use and provide public services*” (Irish Examiner, 24.2.2021).

The main terms of the new deal are: a general wage increase worth 1% of gross pay or €500 per year, whichever is greater; a second such increase for the same percentage or €500 on 1st October 2022; and a 1% increase in basic salaries through a ‘sectoral bargaining fund’ on 1st February 2022.

“SIPTU deputy general secretary John King said that the shorter agreement “*can deliver on these objectives while providing security in times of great uncertainty for all workers across public service*” (Irish Examiner, 24.2.2021)

## European Works Councils In Ireland

A Brussels-based employee relations group that represents workers in large multinational companies has warned the Government about gaps in Irish legislation governing *European Works Councils* used by the world’s largest companies has called for an urgent review of the relevant domestic law to ensure it provides ‘a robust dispute procedure’ on labour issues

BEERG, the Brussels European Employee Relations Group, has called on Tánaiste Leo Varadkar to carry out an urgent review of the relevant domestic law to ensure it provides “*a robust dispute procedure*” on labour issues.

The group has expressed concern that there is a “*lacuna*” in the *Transnational Information and Consultation of Employees Act 1996* that provides for the establishment of **European Works Councils**.

Berg told Employment Minister Varadkar there was “*an absence of a clear statutory dispute resolution process*” in the legislation. “*This is deficient and out of line with processes available elsewhere in Europe*”, the group said.

Under EU legislation, member states are to provide for the right to establish Works Councils in companies or groups of companies with at least 1,000 employees in the EU, and at least 150 staff in each of two member states.

They are used by management to inform and consult with workers on any significant decision.

“*A spokesperson for Mr Varadkar said officials were examining the current legislation to ensure it was robust in light of the expected increase in applications to locate European work councils in the Republic*” (Irish Examiner, 18.2.2021).

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## Best Catholics!

continued

“Brady is accurate in maintaining that the Catholics of his generation ‘were saying prayers rather than praying’, and this illuminates a consistent theme: the emphasis on conformity rather than inner spirituality, and a concomitant compulsion to look away and hide perceived transgressions. But Scally wonders ‘what kind of society, people, allowed—wanted—this’...?”

I have had no experience of praying. At the age of seven—which used to be The Age Of Reason—I became an altar boy. Thereafter I was a performer in religious ceremonies in Latin and was never obliged to pray, though I became familiar with prayers of many kinds. The populace, as far as I could observe, said prayers on particular occasions as a kind of incantation. But incantation is not without some internal effect.

Praying, as distinct from saying prayers, must mean meditating on the words being said and generating intense feeling. The only time I observed that was when a new curate, from a rich family in Castleisland, was sent from Killarney to Boherbue Parish and, when conducting the October Devotions was overcome with feeling while meditating on the *Sorrowful Mysteries*. The few people who attended October Devotions thought he overdid it.

Roman Catholicism proved itself to be a functional religion over a great many centuries by making wide provision for the practicalities of actual life. The Protestant Reformation undertook to purge it of the idolatry with which Constantine combined it, and reduce it to a religion only fit for saints. The saints became dominant in English life in 1641. By 1900 they had exhausted themselves and a few years later they plunged the world into chaos.

In the 18th century they tried to make saints out of the Irish. Or maybe, as James Connolly suggested, they did not really try at all, and the Penal Laws were only a device for securing titles to properties recently acquired by force.

The *nuancers* of the Penal Laws would have credibility if they had begun by attempting to ascertain the extent and

nature of the damage actually done by the Laws to Irish life. But that is not how they proceed.

They have therefore acted only as British/West British/*Shoneen* apologists. As historians their efforts merit only intellectual contempt.

Brendan Clifford

## MORRISSEY continued

who was the union's local organiser. Morrissey triumphed but Gleeson did enough damage to see Delaney fail to win the seventh seat in the constituency by a mere 136 votes.

"Morrissey was re-elected in 1927 with 10,307 first preferences and brought in William O'Brien [Gen. Sec. ITGWU] as the seventh deputy" (*No Workers' Republic! Reflections on Labour and Ireland, 1913-1967*-Barry Desmond, Watchword, Dublin, 2009).

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Ironically, the present leader of the Labour Party Alan Kelly is a Portroe man, just a short distance from Nenagh, where his constituency office is based.

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### BRITAIN MANIPULATES 1922 'TREATY' ELECTION

Barry Desmond lays great store on the democratic outcome of the 'Treaty' Election (26th June 1922), however the background is very different.

First of all, the 'Treaty' was granted on the condition of disestablishing the Republic of 1919-21 and replacing it with a new State under the authority of the Crown.

Britain interfered directly in the election campaign. Collins and de Valera agreed a programme to put to the electorate. That did not suit the British purpose in imposing the Treaty. So Collins was ordered summarily to Whitehall and the Election Pact was vetoed. Collins returned on the eve of the election and ended the Pact—in a fluffed manner—so that what was to be voted on was far from clear. And then, before the elected representatives could meet, he was given the ultimatum to make war on the Republicans—or if not, immediate and terrible war on the Irish nation.

### CON DESMOND

Barry Desmond's father, Con Desmond, was an IRA man, a volunteer in the 4th Brigade in North Cork.

"My father had been a founder member of Fianna Fail in 1926... my mother was a south Cork admirer of Collins whereas my father was more in the North Cork anti-

Treaty tradition of Sean Moylan and Con Meaney. However, they had enormous regard for Florrie O'Donoghue, whose sister Lizzy, from Rathmore, Co. Kerry, had married Con's brother, Dan Desmond. Blood, even at that remove, was thicker than the Treaty" (*ibid.* p.59/60).

With that particular background in politics, he must surely have been aware of the endeavours the Republican volunteers made to avoid conflict with their Republican comrades.

"[In Cork the military leader was] Sean O'Hegarty. O'Hegarty was closely associated in war and politics with Florrie O'Donoghue, who handled Intelligence during the War of Independence. O'Hegarty and O'Donoghue, who both rejected the 'Treaty', tried during the first half of 1922 to negotiate a compromise with the Treatyites by which the Republican Army would remain intact under a political arrangement which left the Treatyites free to go ahead with the amendment of the Dail Eireann Government into a Government which acknowledged the sovereignty of the Crown.

"The Treatyite Defence Minister, Richard Mulcahy, also said that it was his intention to maintain the unity of the IRA as the 'Treaty' was implemented, but at critical points he did not follow through on agreements.

"O'Hegarty said he did not care what name the state had, as long as the substance of independence was maintained. He worked industriously and imaginatively on arrangements which enabled the Treatyites to go ahead with implementation of the 'Treaty', while preserving the Army whose proven fighting power was the only reason why Britain had offered the 'Treaty' terms.

"When it became evident that the Treatyite leadership was driven by a will to war, and that no political expedient would divert it from the object of crushing the Republican Army, O'Hegarty and O'Donoghue resigned from the IRA. The replacement leadership then offered no effective resistance to the Treatyite invasion of early August, 1922" (*Irish Political Review*, December, 2011-p.14).

The Republicans tried their best to "secure a compromise with their pro-Treaty opponents that satisfied their principles". And their pro-Treaty opponents tried their best to arrange that compromise. But every compromise initiative was thwarted by the inflexible will to war in Whitehall, which at every critical juncture determined the action of the Treatyites in Dublin. And when Collins fired the first shot, it was under threat that, if he did

not do so, the British Army — which had not gone away — would take command of Dublin immediately. Such was our 'Civil War'.

In no way was Britain going to have in the Irish State, however Oath-bound, the Army that had fought it and driven it to the negotiating table.

The present writer has always had a 'begrudging' admiration and comradely affection for Barry Desmond, in a way, Barry possessed the right ammunition but in the case of the Republicans, the wrong targets.

### A TREATY PARTY

Labour has been handicapped by its Treatyism and "anti-nationalism". For decades it has obsessed over "keeping Fianna Fail out", with a bizarre narrative about Fianna Fail as uniquely "evil", needing to be excluded from power (a term actually used by the Conor Cruise O'Brien, and the Democratic Left element). They just couldn't see the wood for the trees.

Currently, a similar attitude is being taken towards Sinn Fein, as the media attempt to create the Labour Party as the nemesis of Sinn Fein.

In a nutshell, Labour is a Treaty party and never got fully over that mentality.

*No Workers' Republic! Reflections on Labour and Ireland, 1913-1967* is, in the words of a good Nemo Rangers supporter: a *Boot, Bite and Bollocks* book — a veritable *Biographical Dictionary of Labour men and women*, plus a few others, with no holds barred, a rare trait in Irish political auto-biography. Aye, and Barry is still not finished: "It is to be hoped that he will compile a similar companion volume covering the years after 1963" (*No Workers' Republic! Reflections on Labour and Ireland, 1913-1967*, Barry Desmond, Watchword, Dublin, 2009, p.6).

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*Seán O'Hegarty, O/C First Cork Brigade, Irish Republican Army* by Kevin Girvin. 248pp. €20, £15.

On-line sales of books, pamphlets and magazines:  
<https://www.athol-books-sales.org>

## MORRISSEY continued

Tipperary. Rapidly advancing in the Trade Union movement, he was soon on the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union executive, a delegate to the Irish Trades Union Congress and fraternal delegate to the Scottish Trades Union Congress. Morrissey opposed the TUC decision not to contest the 1918 General Election.

### POLITICAL CAREER

Morrissey was a successful candidate for the Labour Party at the 1920 local elections. In 1922, he was nominated as a Dáil candidate for the Tipperary Mid, North and South constituency and won his first election easily. Though Anti-Treaty Sinn Féin TDs abstained, Morrissey and his 16 Labour Party colleagues attended and became the official Opposition.

In 1923, he became Labour Party Chief Whip and served as *Leas-Cheann Comhairle* of Dáil Éireann between 1928 and 1932.

In 1931, Morrissey went against his own party and supported the Cosgrave Government's measures against the Irish Republican Army. Cumann na nGaedhail wanted to establish military courts that were empowered to impose sentences — including capital punishment, without appeal, in response to IRA violence. Motivated by two recent murders in his constituency, Morrissey broke ranks with Labour, who thought the measures too authoritarian and voted for the Bill, resulting in him being expelled from the party alongside Richard Anthony (Cork Borough).

In spite of this, he was re-elected as an Independent in 1932 before joining Cumann na nGaedhail and later Fine Gael.

Following the 1948 General Election, Fine Gael leader Richard Mulcahy proposed the idea of forming a Coalition Government and ousting Fianna Fáil after 16 years in government. Morrissey was instrumental in securing the support of his former colleagues in the Labour Party and the breakaway National Labour Party.

After successful negotiations, Morrissey became the first Minister to be appointed in the First Inter-Party Government, when he took the Industry and Commerce brief.

Following the 1954 General Election, Morrissey was a member of the negotiating team which created the Second Inter-Party Government. He declined a cabinet position due to his age.

Dan Morrissey retired from the Dáil on health grounds at the 1957 General Election.

In retirement from politics, Morrissey returned to his auctioneering business where he worked until 1965. He died at his home in Stillorgan, Dublin, on 4th November 1981.

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“Elected as a Labour TD for Tipperary in 1922 and re-elected in every election until 1957 when he retired (Tipperary North 1948-57). A conservative and strong Catholic figure he grew steadily closer to Cumann na nGaedhail. He became a partner in an auctioneering firm in Nenagh and later established his own auctioneering firm in Dublin; retaining business connections with the trade unions” (*The Magill Book of Irish Politics*, 1981)

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### BARRY DESMOND'S THOUGHTS:

“I first met Dan Morrissey when I went to work in 1960 as the Education Officer of the ICTU in the Congress offices over the Morrissey auctioneering firm in Lower Merrion Street, Dublin. The Congress rented the top floor from this firm. He was a quiet conservative man who knew my father from their ITGWU organising days of the 1920s. I asked him why he had supported the draconian Public Safety Act. He explained with great force that two issues had made an indelible impact on him. Captain Ernie O'Malley who was attached to the Third Tipperary Brigade of the IRA during the War of Independence, and who was the first divisional commander to reject the Treaty, had threatened to shoot him if he lodged his Labour nomination during 'the Pact Election'. Secondly, he was a deputy when Kevin O'Higgins was assassinated in July 1927. He resolved to give the men of violence no quarter whatsoever, even when the Act provided for the death penalty or life imprisonment for the unlawful possession of arms” (*No Workers' Republic! Reflections on Labour and Ireland, 1913-1967*, Barry Desmond, Watchword, Dublin, 2009, p.80).

“In his early trade union work Morrissey was radical and passionate. Tipperary North Riding County Council employed over 500 men. Morrissey organised them together with the employees of the towns' merchants and large estates. He successfully secured increases in their wages and

faced down the Sinn Fein County Council in 1921 and the attack made on him from the pulpit in Nenagh” (*ibid.* p.80).

### First Fianna Fail Government 1932

“When it came to the vote the result was eighty-one for de Valera and sixty-eight against. Two 'independent Labour' deputies, Dick Anthony and Dan Morrissey, still smarting from their expulsion from the party following their support for Cosgrave's military tribunal, voted for Cosgrave. If the Labour Party had decided to support Cosgrave he would have remained President with a slim majority, but a majority none the less” (*ibid.* p.109).

### The 'Treaty' Election

“The election held on 16 June, 1922 returned seventeen of the eighteen Labour candidates... No anti-Treaty candidate headed the poll in any constituency. There were 58 pro-Treaty deputies and 36 anti-Treaty deputies” (*ibid.* p.79).

“There was great pressure brought to bear by some republicans, notably Dan Breen on Dan Morrissey in Tipperary, not to contest the election. The labour movement had now become directly involved in the parliamentary process. It now had the union membership, the resources and some candidates to campaign. The clash between Morrissey and Sinn Fein-IRA in Tipperary encapsulated the contest between Labourism and Republicanism for parliamentary representation in rural Ireland. Dan Morrissey was Vice-President of the ITGWU in Nenagh in 1920 and a member of the Urban District Council. He was a very effective union organiser in the county. In April, 1920, he led a demonstration in support of the hunger strikes in Mountjoy. He was detained and severely intimidated by Sinn Fein-IRA supporters at Hayes Hotel in Thurles not to contest the 1922 general election for Labour. He refused to back down and was elected, exceeding the quota by 2,000 votes” (p.79).

### W.U.I. v I.T.G.W.U.

“But Dan Morrissey, in his success, faced a new obstacle. The union split in Dublin reached Nenagh and William Gleeson, the local branch secretary, sided with Larkin. Deputy Morrissey went to Larkin in 1923 in an effort to conciliate the parties. He reported to the Nenagh Branch of the Union that Larkin 'had laid down conditions or reservations that no one with any sense of honour or decency could accept'... The Larkinite candidate, Gleeson, then stood in the August 1923 General Election in opposition to Morrissey and his 'running mate' Pat Delaney,

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**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## Labour's 'Lost' Leader?

### DAN MORRISSEY TD, 1895-1981

#### BID FOR POWER

"Labour's New Move: Cumann na nGaedheal and Labour are mobilising their forces in preparation for the General Election. Both parties held meetings in the Fethard area this week, the principal speakers being Messrs. Seumas Bourke, TD; J. Hassett, TD, and Daniel Morrissey, TD. A further Labour demonstration will be held in Fethard shortly.

That the Labour Party intends to make a bid for complete power at the next General Election was the statement of Mr. D. Morrissey, TD, at a meeting in the Fethard district.

"Labour has been criticised in the past on the grounds that if all the candidates put up by them were elected they would not be able to form a Government, but I wish to inform you publicly, that after the next General Election if you have not a Labour Government in office, it will not be our fault, as the party has definitely decided to put up sufficient candidates, sixty per cent at least. If a sufficient number is elected we will show our critics that we are quite capable and competent to take up the reins of office."

#### "LIKE TWO OLD CATS"

The Fianna Fail and Cumann na nGaedheal Parties, said Mr. Morrissey, were more interested in slinging mud at each other than in making serious attempts to solve social and economic problems. They are like two old cats at each side of the fire growling at each other.

Mr. T. Nagle, National Organiser of the

Irish Labour Party, said that neither the workers nor the Labour Party would stand by the system of whole hog Protection as it would be detrimental to working-class people, and would give manufacturers an opportunity of fleecing them" (*The Irish Press*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Saturday, September 5, 1931).

Yes, Dan Morrissey must have been dead chuffed to awake that Saturday morning and see his call for a Labour mobilisation of power on the front page of de Valera's new daily, *The Irish Press*, better still, not even a mention of a Fianna Fail celebrity.

Yet, in a matter of months, following the launch of *The Irish Press*, Dan Morrissey, one-time Labour Chief Whip, 1923-27 and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party,

1927-31, was expelled from the party for supporting the *Public Safety Bill, 1931*, became a Front-Bench spokesman for Fine Gael in the 1930s and 1940s, and ended up a key figure in bringing about the first inter-party coalition in 1948.

It didn't end there: Minister for Industry & Commerce, 1948-51. Minister for Justice, March-June 1951.

As Minister, Morrissey established the *Industrial Development Authority* and *Coras Trachtála, the Irish Export Board*. Was responsible for the *Nationalisation of CIE* and the negotiations leading to the *Erne Drainage Bill 1950*. Took part in the negotiations for the *1948 Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement* and was the first Minister to visit the Six Counties on official business (in relation to cross-border railway issues).

#### UPBRINGING

Morrissey was born in Nenagh, County Tipperary, the son of William Morrissey, a small carter-contractor, and his wife Bridget (née Gleeson). He was educated locally and, although he left school against his mother's wishes at the age of 12, he continued his own reading and studies.

Morrissey's interest in Trade Unionism began when he was working as a labourer with Great Southern Railways. He left after a dispute with his foreman in 1915 and joined the staff of a National Insurance society. Almost at once he began organising the ITGWU Trade Union in South

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