

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

December 2021

Vol.36, No.12 ISSN 0790-7672

and **Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.35 No.12 ISSN 954-5891

The Era Of Uniformity!

What is democracy?

Is it what America does? Or is it what America tells others to do? There is at present nothing else for it to be.

Democracy is possibly the most powerful force in the world just now. Or, to put it another way: America is.

America is a democracy.

Outside the sphere of American approval there can be no democracy.

And the problem facing democracy is China. In order for the entire world to be democratic, Chinese civilisation must be broken up.

The most striking thing about President Biden's "Summit for Democracy" is that it lists Taiwan as a democratic and sovereign state. This can only be understood as a move towards the breaking up of China.

For a generation after the change of regime in Peking in 1948, and the retreat of Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang Army to Formosa, Washington recognised the Kuomintang regime in Formosa as the Government of China, and used its UN Veto to prevent the actual Chinese Government in Peking from taking the Chinese seat in the UN. So certain was America then that Formosa was an integral part of the Chinese state, that it held mainland China to be in rebellion against its legitimate Government in Formosa.

But the corrupt, reactionary Nixon sold the pass and allowed the Government of the Chinese billion to join the UN and depose the Kuomintang.

continued on page 2

Ideology and the Budget

Budget 2022 was reviewed in the November Irish Political Review, but what are the ideological influences at the back of the Government's economic policy-making? The matter is important because the Crash and its aftermath disabled the main party of State.

An article by business journalist Eoin Burke Kennedy, which appeared during the run-up to the Budget, will serve as a starting point. Headed, "The truth about Ireland's monster €240 billion debt – it wasn't the banks", the article blames the the Fianna Fail/Green Party Government then in power for the huge debt inherited from the Crash. He writes:

"Most of the debt – more than €100 billion – arose from a sequence of budget deficits run up in the wake of the 2008 financial crash and linked to the then government's mismanagement of the public

continued on page 4

Germany 1914

China 20—

??

Although there are real similarities between the predicament of Germany in 1914 and that of China in 2021, there are also real differences that are inevitable when comparing two situations over a hundred years apart.

SIMILARITIES OF PREDICAMENT

In seeking similarities we don't have to look far.

- If we look at Germany in 1914 we can see that, in Britain, it was confronted by the most powerful nation on the planet and to a great extent that remains the predicament of China today faced as it is by a hostile United States.

- We can also identify the basis of the hostility of Britain to Germany in 1914 and the hostility of the United States to

China today as fundamentally that of a hegemonic power feeling threatened by a rising economic and more vibrant adversary.

- There is also the fact that in the case of Germany and China the threat they posed to their enemies was/is based on a quiet form of economic expansion rather than any form of military expansion.

In the case of Germany one example of its peaceful mode of expansion was its relationship with Morocco. Of all

continued on page 7

CONTENTS

Page

The Era Of Uniformity. Editorial	1
Ideology And The Budget. Dave Alvey	1
Germany 1914 . . . China 20— — ?? Eamon Dyas	
Readers' Letters: France Terror Attacks: Probable Cause ? Cathy Winch	3
The Atom Bomb. Wilson John Haire	10
The O'Connor Column: <i>An Ominous German Course?</i>	11
Es Ahora. Elizabeth Bowen: Towards A Final Reading. Julianne Herlihy	14
What Is Communism? John Martin	16
Remembering Joe Keenan. Dave Alvey; Peter Brooke; Gwydion M. Williams Pat Walsh	18
The Half-Forgotten Casement Discourse Of Dr. Herbert Mackey. Tim O'Sullivan	19
Civil War ? ? ? Brendan Clifford	21
Political Economy: C O P, Methane And Climate. Eamon Dyas Methane: <i>Misinformation.</i> Fergus O Rahallaigh Biden's 15% Tax Rate. Report	26
China Today. Donal Kennedy	27
Biteback: The Church And The Republic. Pat Maloney <i>Eve, Echo, 23.10.21</i> Our President And NI Centenary. Pat Maloney <i>Eve, Echo, 2.10.21</i>	27
Does It Stack Up? Michael Stack (Climate Change And COP 26; Wind Farms)	28

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

Mussolini *Signor Cosgrave's Commiserations*
(back page)

Organised Labour!

ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference

**Due to pressure of space, the Index to *Irish Political Review* for 2021,
an obituary of Austin Currie, and other items have been held over.**

Formosa changed its name to Taiwan, but its Government did not revoke its claim to be the legitimate Government of China. President Biden excludes China from his Summit while including Taiwan.

This is not a matter of recognising a Taiwan declaration of independence. Taiwan has not declared independence. It still considers itself the Government of China.

The actual Government of China says it will regard any American move in alliance with Taiwan against China as an act of war. President Biden is feeling his way towards such a move.

If Biden makes the move we will find out—those of us who survive—if Democracy/USA is till the most powerful force in the world.

In a bygone era "democracy" had an objective meaning. It meant a particular way of forming a government. Political parties contested elections in which all adult citizens had the vote, and the party that won formed the Government and

governed in accordance with their election policies. In those days it was not required that all Governments should implement the same policies. It was taken for granted that different peoples favoured different ways of life, and that these differences would influence government policies. But those days have passed away. Uniformity of outcome regardless of which party wins is now a democratic requirement.

President Biden has excluded Hungary from the democratic world. Its Government was elected fairly. Nobody disputes that. It is doing what it was elected to do. But the EU has condemned it for being in breach of the current values, or fashions, of most EU states. Hungary says that it holds the values that were EU values a generation ago, when it joined and it is content with them.

But the EU imagines that its changes of fashion are changes of law, and finds that Hungary is in breach of law—without being able to specify the law.

There was once something that could be called "*European civilisation*". It was destroyed in the two Total Wars launched by Britain. Present-day Europe is an American creation out of the post-1945 shambles, and it is therefore what one would have expected it to be.

Ireland was not part of that shambles. It kept itself out of the 1939 War by its willingness to fight against whichever side tried to bring it in. It had its own view of the War. It might have asserted that view in the post-War world, but did not.

For the past forty years it has been acting as if it had been defeated in the War and had therefore no right to think its own thoughts!

Colonialism In Ireland

Unionist Ulster derives from a British colony planted in Ulster four centuries ago.

An Ulster Unionist intellectual, Frank Frankfort Moore, observed around the time of the second *Home Rule Bill*, that it is the business of colonies to exterminate the natives because, if they fail to do so, the natives will later begin to dispute tenure with them. He saw that as being the case in the Home Rule conflict.

About a century after the Ulster Plantation there was another colonial imposition on Ireland. An Anglican colony was put in command of the whole island, which was called the *Kingdom of Ireland*. It was different in kind from the Ulster Plantation. It was a ruling Protestant caste. It did not have the makings of a complete society, as the Ulster colony did.

It enacted the system of Penal Laws against the native population while at the same time drawing rents from it.

Its Parliament was subject to the British Parliament, and British business interests were determined to prevent it from becoming a commercial rival.

The colonial Parliament protested against the curbs placed on it. That protest was called *Patriotism*.

In the 1780s the Colonial Parliament took the opportunity of Britain's difficulty in America to declare its independence, and Britain had no choice but to concede. Irish colonial independence was won in 1782.

The native population, which was many times the size of the colonial ruling stratum,

remained subject to the Penal Laws—which were laws of the Irish Parliament, restrained in some degree by the British Parliament.

The ruling colony became “*the Protestant nation*”, and undertook grandiose building developments on revenue drawn from the rack-rented natives.

A group within the colony suggested that it should become a nation in reality, and not just in name, by hegemonising the native population instead of just oppressing and exploiting it. Grattan proposed that the natives should be drawn gradually into the affairs of the colony.

The Ulster Plantation, which was itself excluded from the business of governing the country, supported Grattan’s project enthusiastically.

But the Parliament held firm against it, passed laws against the Volunteers and the United Irish movement, and reasserted the principle of Protestant [meaning solely Church of Ireland] Ascendancy. This led to the 1798 Rebellion, followed by the decision of the British Government to abolish the Irish Parliament.

The *Act of Union* set in motion a process of revival in the native population, which completely undermined the Anglican colonial stratum in the course of the 19th century.

The Ulster colony had little involvement in all of this development—which has been called *The Rise And Fall Of The Irish Nation*. It supported Grattan’s attempt to make the Irish Parliament representative of the various populations. When that failed, it settled down immediately under the Act of Union, and took part in British politics when they were opened up by the 1832 reform.

At the end of the 19th century it organised itself against Home Rule and asserted its right to remain within the British system.

In 1920 it was allowed to remain within the UK, but only on the condition of political semi-detachment from the UK. It undertook to conduct a Six-County government under impossible conditions.

The Ulster Unionist leader of the time, Edward Carson, opposed the setting up of separate Six County Government. There was no popular demand for it, and there were very good reasons against it. But Whitehall needed it as a manoeuvre against Sinn Féin.

An Ulster Unionist who was serving

Terror Attacks: *Probable Cause* ?

Was the terrorist attack in France (Bataclan, 13 November 2015) due to French interventions in Iraq and Syria? Amazingly, this question is being debated at a trial which is taking place at the moment in Paris. It is debated because the one survivor makes it one of his defence arguments. And also because the terrorists are heard saying as much in an accidental recording made during the shooting.

Le Monde discusses this in the article translated in part below. The paper unsurprisingly concludes that the attacks were not a response to French bombings!]

EXTRACTS:

“Were the attacks of November 13 a response to French bombings? [...]

Was France attacked for what it is or for what it does? This question has been at the heart of the trial for two months now. Over the weeks, several factual elements have been brought to the debates.

Was France attacked for what it stands for, or because of its military interventions in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State organization (IS)? This question has been present in the trial of the 13 November attacks since its beginning. It was raised on September 15, on the sixth day of the hearing, by the main defendant, Salah Abdeslam:

“François Hollande says that we are fighting France because of your values and to divide you. This is an obvious lie. When François Hollande made the decision to attack the Islamic State, he knew very well that his decision carried risks.”

Two months later, the testimony of the former president of the Republic, heard as a witness on November 10, sounded like a response to these words from the box : “*This terrorist group has struck us not for our modes of action abroad, but for our ways of life right here.*”

It was not always easy, during the hearings, to decide between these two explanations. The complexity of the facts, the sometimes floating chronology of some of the participants and the very length of the trial have rarely made it possible to grasp this question in its entirety. However, over the weeks, the debates have provided many elements of an answer.

Were the attacks a response to the intervention in Syria?

On October 28, an audio excerpt from a Dictaphone left behind by a spectator, which recorded the two and a half hours of the Bataclan massacre, was played at the hearing. In it, between two rounds of shooting, a terrorist was heard justifying the attacks:

“Why are we doing this? You are bombing our brothers in Syria, in Iraq. (...) You can only blame your president, François Hollande.”

Asked by a lawyer for civil parties about the fact that his name is mentioned three times in this recording, François Hollande replied:

“It was a learned formula, a sort of refrain saying that it was my fault if there had been this attack. What was the intention? It was twofold: the first was to make us give up our intervention in Iraq and Syria. The second was to divide us, to make sure that even within our country there could be doubt.”

Contributed by
Cathy Winch

in the UK Government at the time, James Craig, agreed to operate the scheme. And historians in recent years have begun to say, in defiance of historical fact, that self-government was “*conceded*”. But Carson retired rather than lead it. And Ulster Unionism has become habituated to it.

(The Ulster colony over a couple of centuries had tended to its own affairs by informal arrangements outside of official structures and, as a result, was unpolitical in State terms.)

Newton Emerson, an Ulster loyalist

with an *Irish Times* column, complains about hearing “*the North referred to as a colony with little care for what it implies*”, particularly from the President (Sept. 23). He says that “*Sinn Fein ceased defining the Troubles as a ‘colonial conflict’*”, and that this—

“cleared the way for John Hume’s framing of Northern Ireland as a modern European dispute of competing nationalisms and contested sovereignty, such as Saarland or the Tyrol to be resolved through treaty, devolution and plebiscite... Peter Robinson favoured a comparison with Schleswig-Holstein...”

He says that—

“...there is a considerable difference between saying Northern Ireland was a colonial creation a century ago and saying it remains so today...”

But it was not a colonial creation in 1920, in the sense of being created on the insistence of the 17th century colony. The colony became part of the political system of the British state when given the opportunity to do so in 1801. And it was not in response to a demand of the Ulster Protestant community that it was semi-detached from the political system of the state in 1921 by being reconstructed into Northern Ireland.

Whitehall invented Northern Ireland for a purpose which had nothing to do with the provision of good government in the Six Counties as part of the UK when the rest of Ireland was taking off on its own.

The creation of Northern Ireland was a device for influencing Irish-American opinion by appearing to concede all-Ireland Home Rule, but doing so in two parts and leaving “*the Irish*” to sort the rest out for themselves. It was a move to disable the Sinn Fein Government of the time.

There is no valid comparison with Saarland, Schleswig Holstein, or anywhere else. Northern Ireland was an integral part of the British state in everything except its political institutions, which marked it off as something else. And it was the separate political institutions forced on it by the State that produced the War.

The Party-structure of the state was being re-made in that period. The great Liberal Party was destroying itself. And the merger of social-reform Liberals and Tories, that called itself the *Unionist Party*, was in the process of becoming simply the *Tory Party*. And the Ulster Unionists, who had in effect a wing of the British Unionist Party, guided by it, was left behind as a

detached Six County party—a party which was lumbered, against Carson’s opposition, with a pseudo-state to govern.

Emerson somehow seems to be unable to see the distinction between simple Partition—which would have left the Six Counties as an integral part of British political life—and the creation of Northern Ireland. But of course, if he did see it, he could not express it in the *Irish Times*.

He asks: “*If it is too simplistic to consider the Belfast Agreement as marking an expiry date on post-colonialism*”. It is.

Protestant Ulster did not want separate government, but it accepted it as “*the supreme sacrifice*” to the Empire in its handling of the Sinn Fein problem. Then, having accepted it, it came to like it, imagining it to be a surer safeguard of its position in the British state than participation in the party-political life of the state.

And, by operating the detached system, it gave itself a colonial mindset, and alienated itself from the party-political opinion of the state.

And, when it looked around the world, its spontaneous sense of affinity was with settler-state: South Africa as it used to be, and Israel as it is.

The Northern Ireland system was undemocratic by anybody’s standard. The large Nationalist minority suffered from it, and were greatly aggravated by it, but neither the minority nor the Dublin Government ever made an issue of the fact that it was undemocratically-governed, even by the standards of the British state—or, most of all, by the standards of the British state.

But nationalist Ireland, much though it complained about the Stormont system, preferred it to its practical alternative—the fearsome prospect of *Integration*. Stormont, excluded from the ameliorative influence of the democratic political life of the state, and with no real state business to transact, preserved communal antagonism—‘sectarian’ antagonism—as its norm, and shielded the Ctholic population from the temptations of British politics.

The 1998 Agreement changed nothing essential in that respect. Its novel arrangement only confirmed to the general public of the state that Northern Ireland was something else.

The colonial factor is not thrust on the Unionist Party by the President or anybody itself. It has its source in what Craig agreed to do in 1921 after Carson refused to do it.

Ideology and the Budget

continued from page 1

finances, a government that was voted into office three times in succession” (IT, 19 September 2021).

Burke Kennedy’s argument here highlights the way that many liberal pundits and policy makers remain in denial about the damage caused to Irish society by the application of liberal economics. It is surprising how many of them continue to define the role of the State as being the facilitation of market operators. And that thinking—albeit in a subdued and less extreme form—continues to inform the Government’s Budgetary policy, especially in the areas of housing and health.

The idea that most of the debt resulting from the Crash can be attributed to political mismanagement is not new—it was a mantra of the business community in its aftermath—yet it radically distorts what actually happened. The mistake made by Governments prior to 2008 was that they abided by the prevailing national and international consensus. They listened to liberal pundits like Burke Kennedy who counselled that all was well, that the competition between the banks was healthy, and that the operation of the markets needed only the lightest of regulation.

The reason that the public finances fell into disarray in those years was because the large revenue streams coming into the Exchequer from Stamp Duty and VAT completely dried up. Being dependent on a booming property market, they evaporated when the property market crashed. And, alongside that collapse in tax revenue, a dramatic increase in unemployment caused social welfare spending to scale up. Then the banks needed large injections of public money so that the financial system could be saved.

In an effort to build a case about bad political decision making, Burke Kennedy says there was lavish public spending during the boom years—but the increased public spending in those years was designed to spread the gains of the boom to social welfare recipients and public servants, along with programmes aimed at improving public services and a running down of the national debt. Such spending made sense at the time and was not

opposed by the parties in opposition, au contraire! The increased public expenditure of those years can only be described as political mismanagement with the benefit of hindsight. At the time, the international bodies (the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development), as well as local economic experts, all gave the Irish economy a clean bill of health because almost everyone subscribed to the liberal consensus.

By the nature of governmental politics, it is inevitable that Governments will make mistakes and the three Fianna Fail Governments before the Crash certainly did things that contributed in a minor way to the property crisis, but their only major error was that of choosing to follow the international liberal consensus. The Budget deficits run up by the Fianna Fail/Green Government immediately after the Crash, the ones that Burke Kennedy is critical of, were necessary to coping with the crisis. To describe what happened in a nutshell, it was left to politics, ably represented by successive Ministers for Finance (Lenihan of Fianna Fail, followed by Noonan of Fine Gael with assistance from Howlin of Labour, along with their officials), to clean up a mess created by the application of liberal policies to the Irish economy.

Since this is a key point, I will cite two authorities to bolster it. The first is “The Fall of the Celtic Tiger – Ireland and the Euro Debt Crisis” by Donal Donovan and Antoin Murphy (Oxford University Press, 2013), a book covering developments till the end of 2010 and produced after four official investigations into the Crash had been concluded. While some of the book’s conclusion are debatable, overall, it provides a fair treatment of its subject and is refreshingly honest regarding the manner in which economics fell under the influence of neo-liberal ideology. The following is from a review of *The Fall of the Celtic Tiger* which I wrote for the March 2018 edition of *Irish Political Review*:

“Murphy clearly implies that the triumph of Friedmanism in the economics departments of the major North American universities from the 1970s onwards laid the foundations for the financial catastrophe that unfolded nearly forty years later. As Friedman’s ideas gained in support, his followers developed liberal economics in ever more extreme forms. Robert Lucas and Thomas Sargent (both Nobel laureates) inspired the creation of New Classical Economics (NCE) which postulated that macroeconomic policy was ineffective even in the short term,

the so-called macroeconomic policy impotence rule (p. 38). Another extremist view emanating from NCE contended that, since the money supply responds endogenously to economic needs, finance does not need to be supervised. This theory had the practical side effect that economics departments were kept separate from finance departments in the universities. Students of finance learned sophisticated mathematical algorithms to minimise risk and maximise the returns on investments without being educated about the effects that financial activity has on the real economy. According to Murphy many of these students “ended up making a great deal of money working for financial institutions” (p. 39)” (*Lessons of the Irish Crash*, Irish Political Review, volume 33, issue 3).

Murphy and Donovan summarise the effects that these developments in economics had on economic policy making in Western countries in the following six points.

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

Five of the above features were present in the Irish boom (2-6), and four (1, 3, 4, 5) came courtesy of Ireland’s membership of the Eurozone. The operation of the Eurozone prior to the Crash was itself guided by the doctrinaire liberalism described in *The Fall of the Celtic Tiger*.

A second and more recent source, which I think answers Burke Kennedy at an academic level, is the following statement from the 2021 Autumn Quarterly Report of the Economic and Social Research Institute:

“A final point to note in discussing the current Irish fiscal position is to understand why the Irish fiscal position was in such an elevated position back in 2011. The deterioration in the ratio of debt-to-taxation receipts between 2008 and 2011 was of course mainly due to a

macroprudential or banking crisis where Irish taxation revenues and financial institutions became over-reliant on an overvalued residential and commercial property market. While elements of fiscal policy in the run-up to the GFC of 2007/2008 could be criticised, it was not fiscal policy itself which led to the difficulties which were subsequently endured. This is in stark contrast to the fiscal difficulties experienced in the Irish State in the 1980s which, as discussed by McQuinn (2021), were very much due to poor policy decisions in a fiscal context” (Autumn Quarterly Report 2021, Economic and Social Research Institute, p. 64)

What is noteworthy about this comment in a research journal is how different it is from the accepted media narrative. One reason why such a view is rarely expressed is that the Leader of Fianna Fail in the period after the Crash ordained that his party’s record during the boom should not be defended. Presumably, Micheál Martin had some public relations reason for taking that stance, but his decision on that subject has caused the public discourse about the financial crisis to be side-tracked into bombast about political incompetence.

OTHER CATASTROPHES FROM LIBERAL POLICY FAILURES

Ireland has not had a happy experience with economic liberalism, the two stand-out events being the Great Famine of the 1840s and the Banking Crash of 2008. Other disasters were the privatisation of Telecom Eireann in 1999, the outsourcing of the analysis of Irish smear tests to US laboratories from 2008 onwards, and the recently publicised mica and pyrite scandals stemming from shoddy house construction practices during the property boom.

When the Irish Government of the time sold Telecom Eireann as a State enterprise by allowing shares of the company to be publicly purchased, its timing was unfortunate. The bursting of the dot.com bubble in the US meant that shares in telecommunications companies worldwide lost value. Approximately 500,000 Irish citizens bought shares in Telecom Eireann, being encouraged to do so by subtle Government advertising. Many who could ill afford it, borrowed to invest in what was considered a safe bet. In the event the shares quickly lost value and the company was bought and sold by a number of different buyers over a period of years. With each purchase the company became saddled with ever increasing amounts of debt.

But the losses incurred by very high

numbers of ordinary citizens, bad enough as they were, was not the worst consequence. The Telecom debacle meant that the Irish State was unable to influence the installation of a digital infrastructure at a time when most companies began to need access to Internet communications. The quality of digital connectivity in Ireland was slow by international standards even for companies in urban areas catered for by private service providers. It was only in 2019 that an expensive National Broadband Plan aimed at bringing digital connection to rural Ireland was signed off. And in 2021 only 27,000 connections have been installed against the 2021 target of 115,000. Twenty years of wrangling with various private companies could have been avoided, and a lot of public money saved, if Telecom Eireann had been retained in public ownership.

As of September 2021, 310 claims (including 38 from women who have already died) against the State have been made by women who were given false all-clear results for cervical tests. Had they been given the correct results in the required time, they could have availed of life saving treatment. Outsourcing to the private sector of a foreign country, an initiative opposed by medical experts when it was proposed, resulted in unnecessary deaths, mostly of women with young families. Certainly, an unnecessary financial cost has been placed on the public purse as a result of the out-sourcing, but the ultimate price for pursuing a pro-market policy in that instance is the loss of life.

The pyrite and mica scandals provide an example of what can go wrong when the State concedes to pressure from the private sector for less stringent regulation. During the building boom several quarries supplied large amounts of hardcore contaminated with pyrite to builders, who then used it in laying house foundations. When used in large quantities and in contact with oxygen and water, pyrite expands, causing structural damage to buildings resting on such foundations.

The most up-to-date information on the pyrite issue is that 74 housing estates are affected, with 1,890 dwellings needing to be re-constructed. So far €166 million has been paid out by the State in remedial works.

The consequences for the public purse of the mica scandal are of a much higher order. Mica is a mineral found in rocks. When concrete blocks containing mica come in contact with water they begin to slowly disintegrate. Whereas pyrite problems have mainly been located in estates in

Dublin and adjoining Counties, problems with mica are known to affect 5,000 houses in Donegal, 1,000 in Mayo and smaller numbers in Clare, Limerick, Tipperary and Sligo. As the scandal has unfolded, insurance companies, the Construction Industry Federation, and the Irish Concrete Federation have all denied liability. The current estimate of the eventual cost to the State is €1.5 billion.

Some idea as to the causes of these building scandals was given in the following short letter to the Irish Times, a letter that was not disputed:

“For those with an interest in history, I would like to point out that in the past there was a system in place to ensure the quality of all concrete blocks used in the State. Prior to its abolition in 1993, the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards operated a concrete cube testing service whereby all concrete blocks used by builders had to undergo a quality test. Such a system would have detected any problems such as those caused by mica or pyrite. Naturally such a system was not loved by the construction industry and this may have been one of the reasons for the decision of the government to abolish the institute. – Michael Fitzgibbon (IT, 11 October 2021).

This letter has not been disputed, nevertheless the facts it reveals remain opaque. An Internet search about the abolition of building control does not throw up the information supplied. Actually, the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards, which came into being in 1946 when de Valera was Taoiseach, wasn't exactly abolished; rather it had its name changed a number of times. First it was incorporated into Eolas, then the Irish Science and Technology Agency, then Forfas, and finally into the National Standards Association of Ireland. Despite those changes, Mr Fitzgibbon's statement that it was abolished in 1993 in response to pressure from the industry probably cuts to the reality. What grief could have been avoided if the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards had been allowed to continue its work!

LIBERAL IDEOLOGY IN CONTEXT

The continuing influence of liberal ideology in Irish fiscal policy-making needs to be placed in context. Ideas can be important but so can the lobbying power of companies and industry federations, as can the connections between such vested interests and some of the political parties. There have even been suggestions in recent years that some sections of the Irish State have been captured by powerful lobbies like the North American culture funds.

Whatever about that, the ideological predispositions of Government leaders and senior officials must be acknowledged as a factor in policy-making.

Another point that needs to be made is that simply opposing doctrinaire liberalism with doctrinaire anti-liberalism is unlikely to count for much, either in the centres of power, or in public discourse. Being a critic of economic liberalism, ideally, should not be the same as being a critic of all market activity. History shows that some variant of the mixed economy is as much as anyone can hope for. But, to borrow a phrase from Christian Lindner, current leader of the economic liberals in Germany, the key modern challenge is to get right “the balance between state and private”. In recent decades it has been the ideology that Lindner subscribes to that has got that balance catastrophically wrong.

So what should be done to sort out the problem of excessive dependency on the ideology of market fundamentalism? Should we await the election of parties like Sinn Féin, Labour, the Social Democrats and perhaps a reconfigured Fianna Fáil? Judging by present opinion polls, a scenario along those lines is on the cards, though not until the next General Election, which is likely to be some years in the future. But the problem here is that society could end up sharply divided along ideological lines, with all the brain power and institutional power of the moneyed classes ranged against a Left-leaning Government.

An alternative scenario might bear scrutiny. If a paradigm shift were to occur, in which the entire political system moved away from the doctrinaire policies of recent decades, a destructive division might be avoided. The new approach would have to learn from the experiences of the past, and, while being imperfect, The Decline of the Celtic Tiger, might offer a starting point. Arguably, consensus suits Irish society better than rigid confrontation.

For all its faults, Budget 2022 represents a small step in the right direction. But other major changes are necessary. A culture change in the civil service, if it is not underway already, needs to be initiated. Reforms such as banning senior officials from taking up positions in the private sector when they retire, should be seriously considered. As to what a government unencumbered by free market ideology would look like, a suitable subject for study would be the purposeful Government that came to power in 1987 under Charles Haughey.

THE PROBLEM OF PRO-MARKET OFFICIALS

A story that caught the headlines in the days when Budget 2022 was being discussed will illustrate the problem of State officials who continue to hold to free market ideology. In the course of an exchange of letters between the Chief Executive of Dublin City Council, Owen Keegan, and the President of the Student Union at University College Dublin, Ruairí Power, Keegan showed that his basic allegiance lay with the market operators.

Power was aghast that an accommodation provider, Uninest, had been granted permission by the Council to rent student flats to tourists in the coming academic year. While students were forced to drop out or defer taking up places for lack of accommodation, flats complexes specifically designed for their use were to be let at high rents to tourists. The controversial paragraph in Keegan's letter to the Student Union reads:

"If you genuinely believe that excess profits are being made in the PBSA [purpose built student accommodation] market I am surprised the Student Union has not entered the market itself and provided lower cost student accommodation for its members." (IT, 13.10.2021)

Leader of the Sinn Féin group on the Council, Daithí Doolan demanded Keegan's resignation, saying:

"His comments in his letter to UCD Students Union were not only sarcastic and inappropriate but reveal an ideological position at variance with the policy of the City Council and with the housing needs of Dublin. We need a Chief Executive who will work with our citizens, making housing an absolute priority. Under Owen Keegan's stewardship, and despite the best efforts of councillors, the City has become a place where corporate greed is shaping housing and planning as never before. This must end" (The Journal, 12 October 2021).

At a protest meeting, Labour Senator Rebecca Moynihan stated that the building of the student accommodation had been a scam from the start:

"It was clear to me that student accommodation being built was not for students, but to avoid Part V [the provision that private developers must allocate 20 per cent of their projects to social housing DA]. his was about a change of use" (IT, 13.10.2021)

An indication that the world of politics has moved on from the position taken by Keegan could be seen in the way that three Government Ministers, O'Brien (FF, Housing), Harris (FG, Higher Educa-

tion) and Collins (FF, Skills and Further Education) all condemned his statement, while holding back from demanding his resignation.

Owen Keegan, who has had a long career in Local Government and has something of a reputation as a liberal ideologue, is no stranger to controversy. The wider problem, however, is that a whole section of the managerial stratum of the public service holds similar views. Working in a subservient relationship with the private sector may still be considered good practice in some quarters. Without clear political guidance, the ideological legacy of the liberal era will continue to sabotage the functioning of the State.

Dave Alvey

Germany 1914 China 20??

continued from page 1

the European Powers, Germany was the only one whose commercial expansion into that country took place without any military threat or without threatening that country's sovereignty. This was in marked contrast to the way in which French commercial ambitions in that country were underpinned by the destabilising and military tactics exercised by that country's Imperialist component.

We see a similar peaceful Chinese commercial expansion in Africa today—an area of the world where Western Powers continue to interfere militarily in ways designed to bolster or underpin their commercial presence.

Again, like Germany in 1914, the Chinese economy remains heavily dependent on its maritime trade. It is, therefore, like Germany in 1914, vulnerable to any disruption to its sea-borne trading routes. This is something that has increasingly preoccupied the Chinese State, confronted as it is by a hostile West.

That hostility has compelled China to assert its particular interests in the South China Sea—a defence measure that has been systematically and maliciously misinterpreted by the West as aggression in order to justify further provocations.

These provocations have in turn compelled China to expand its naval capability. However, the defensive character of that expansion is underscored by the character of its navy. Despite a significant increase in its size in recent years, the Chinese navy remains much smaller than that

of the United States and, aside from its two aircraft carriers—the US has 20 by the way—, its navy is more designed to operate in home waters than on the other side of the planet.

Also, with the United States able to call upon the Japanese and the Australian navies, as well as others in the region, the Chinese navy could not be considered a serious threat to these combined navies by any stretch of the imagination.

TRIPWIRE DIPLOMACY

But, in comparing the situation leading up to 1914 with present-day relations between the United States and China, probably the most significant similarity is that neither Britain in 1914, nor the United States in the immediate future can rely upon its perceived adversary to initiate the aggression necessary to justify an outright war.

Thus an incident is required, which could be escalated to justify the aggressor's response and, as history shows, once conflict is opened, even those who were previously advising caution quickly fall into line.

This is where what could be seen as "tripwire diplomacy" comes into play.

In the pre-First World War period, Britain's first tripwire was around the issue of Morocco and the inevitable conflict between the ambitions of the French colonialists and Germany's commercial interests in the region. That thinking constituted an important component of the 1904 *Entente Cordiale* arrangements between Britain and France.

However, although this did produce the anticipated crisis, Germany's skillful diplomacy—as well as the instability of French domestic politics, long with the preoccupations of France's ally, Russia—ensured that it did not escalate. Instead, Germany and Morocco, with the help of the influence of the United States, managed to ensure that the Algiceras Conference of 1906 placed a limit on French ambitions in the country and thereby left less room for Britain to create mischief between Germany and France in this arena.

Morocco was subsequently replaced by Belgium as the tripwire, after Britain formed an alliance with Russia in 1907.

Once Russia was brought into Britain's equation, it meant that the volatility of Central Europe could be exploited: with Germany seeking to end the War in the West before the Great Russian military steamroller could reach its eastern borders.

Once that happened, Britain could

portray itself to its domestic and American audience as merely defending “*poor defenceless Belgium*”.

TAIWAN – A TRIPWIRE FOR CHINA?

The disinclination of China to engage in military adventures remains the problem for the United States, as it moves to an increasingly hostile position towards its rival. The Brookings Institution understands the requirements of US strategy and published a paper in January 2021, articulating the problem this way:

“China is unlikely to provoke a unified threat perception, so the U.S. and its allies will need to think about how to generate cooperation within alliance-centric, interest-based coalitions. Still, the unifying feature of these alliances is that they are built on members states’ commitment to democracy and the rule of law. This common alliance foundation is now being tested by the authoritarian turn that allies such as Turkey, Hungary, and the Philippines, and Thailand have taken in recent years. A renewed commitment to democratic principles will be necessary to more effectively utilize alliance relationships in the competition with China, which will continue to seek to undermine a liberal international order it views as a threat to internal political control...” (From: *Re-tooling America’s Alliances to Manage the China Challenge*, by Lindsey W. Ford and James Goldgeier, Monday 25 January 2021. Published by the Brookings Institution).

(Lindsay W. Ford has written extensively on China and has played a variety of roles in the U.S. Defence Department, most recently as the senior advisor to the assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific security affairs. She is a contributor to *Foreign Affairs*.

James Goldgeier is an academic who has been an advisor on the US State Department and National Security Council. Like Ford he is a contributor to *Foreign Affairs*.)

The Brookings Institution is based in Washington, DC, and, when it was founded in 1916, it was called the *Institute for Government Research*. It continues to perform its original role over a hundred years later, albeit under a less obvious name.

Its paper recommends that the United States build its anti-China alliance on the basis of “*A renewed commitment to democratic principles*”, in order to use its alliance relationships more effectively in its hostile relationship with China.

Just as the Anglo-American alliance after April 1917 sought to depict its war on Germany as a war between Anglo-American democratic values and Prussian authoritarianism, the Brookings Institution today charges China with continuing “*to seek to undermine a liberal international*

order it views as a threat to internal political control.”

A PERENNIAL CONFLICT OF VALUES

There is no doubt that the United States wishes to remove, or at least neutralise, the threat to its commercial hegemony which the Chinese economy represents. But there is more at stake than the simple economic aspects of its struggle with China. It also views China as a threat to its political hegemony; and views the social philosophy on which the Chinese success has been based as a direct counterpoint to its own individualistic mode of existence. This also chimes with the approach to Germany during the First World War.

The man who more than any other articulated this aspect of the American struggle with Germany was the American Christian Socialist, George Davis Herron. He had been a founder member of the Socialist Party of America in 1901 and went on to become an influential figure in Europe during the War, working behind the scenes for the American Government in neutral Zurich, as well as for British Intelligence.

He acted as the unofficial assessor of the worth of the many tentative overtures for peace that emerged from Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1917 and 1918. Herron was ideal for this role as the religious zeal he brought to his belief in Anglo-American democracy meant that any peace overtures, unless they meant an absolute surrender, were not considered worthy enough for him to recommend. Thus such peace overtures were diverted or obstructed at a time when they were deemed inconvenient or embarrassing to the Allied leaders in their drive for an absolute victory over the Axis Powers.

What makes Herron historically interesting is the manner in which he justified the US war on Germany on the basis of American individualism and its inevitable conflict with other modes of social existence. It’s from his book appropriately called “*Germanism and the American Crusade*”, published in 1918 that his views are quoted below.

“America and Germany stand over against each other as respective champions of two opposing conceptions of man, two irreconcilable reasons for being. . .

“In this [the German] conception, man is but an efficient instrument at best, and a servile creature always, owned by the State and existing for its expansion and dominion: as an individual, having dignity and destiny of his own, he does not exist. Indeed, not in German thought, much less in German institutions, does individuality or its candid recognition have

place. The German State is the negation of individuality: it exists and expands, it conquers and compels, by virtue of its conscription of the individual’s mental and moral being.

“... The German does not understand, the international apostles of German efficiency do not see, and least of all is it discerned by that masquerade of Germanism which terms itself Marxian and socialist, that the authoritarian order which they admire is built upon the soul’s ordained but disguised degradation.

“In contradistinction to Germanism, American ideals and institutions have their birth and being in a sincere faith in democracy. . . To this democracy, and in the debates and events which have determined America’s evolution as a nation, the right of each man to completely be, the affirmation of his worth in and to himself, is fundamental; and equally fundamental is the responsibility of political and social institutions for furnishing him the freedom and opportunity that make [his] complete being possible. It is what he is in himself, it is the fullness and effectiveness of his individuality, that constitutes his political and social value; . . . States and governments exist, according to American or democratic theory, for no other purpose than the making of man, and are judged according to their success or failure in the fulfilment of this purpose. It was in this purpose the American Revolution was conceived, as were the French and English Revolutions; and it is in the fulfilment of this purpose that the American people have gone, however blindly and unworthily betimes, upon their political way” (*Germanism and the American Crusade*, by George D. Herron. Published by Michael Kennerley, New York, 1918, pp.33-36).

For Herron, the democratic mode of existence, as exercised in the United States, represented the closest political expression of the work of God that was possible on earth.

Thus, it was in the First World War with Germany, and so it remains today for the United States with regards to China.

WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED?

While seeing the similarities between Germany in 1914 and China in 2021, it is important also to acknowledge the existence of significant differences. The obvious one, and the one which prevented the United States going to war with a similarly state-organised society in the form of the USSR, is the existence of the nuclear weapon deterrent.

The fact that China has such weapons and the means of delivering them is probably the most important guarantee that the US won’t get involved in any conflict which has the potential to develop into all-out war.

Then there is the extent to which the Chinese economy has managed to insert itself into the economies of the natural allies of the US. The associated disruption to their economies makes them hesitant to get too deeply involved in any strategy which they see could lead to a serious armed conflict. While this in itself would not necessarily be a deciding factor in any decision to go to war it does mean that the US would find it difficult to get Europe on board for such a war.

Yet, in my opinion, the fact remains that the US cannot continue indefinitely without some effort to clip the wings of China by diminishing the capacity of its economy to grow. Peaceful co-existence was something that may have had a relevance during the Cold War, but the Soviet Block did not pose such a potential threat to American commercial hegemony as China does.

In June 2021, the Royal United Services Institute described the evolving situation as follows:

“The US has recognized China as a near-peer competitor, labelled it a threat to the liberal international order and shifted to open competition across security, economic, technological and ideological domains. As President Biden remarked, ‘we’re in a competition with China and other countries to win the 21st century’. The Biden administration has continued the Trump administration’s tough stance on China and called on partners and allies to push back against Beijing.” (<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/china-policy-and-five-eyes>)

In July, Britain indicated its support for the US policy by sailing its newest aircraft carrier into the South China Sea.

Then in September 2021 an article in Foreign Affairs revealed that the US State Department was planning to establish a “*China House*”, which involved the addition of between 20 and 30 experts to the numbers of officials dedicated to China watching. It also involves boosting regional China watchers to track Beijing’s activities around the world, via State Department Regional Bureaus and through its Embassies.

On top of that, we have had the recent AUKUS agreement between the UK, US and Australia as a specific anti-China pact involving an actual military alliance that has permitted Australia to have nuclear-powered submarines for the first time and which has a direct bearing on China’s immediate geographical area of interest, the South China Sea.

These are all provocative indications of the growing assertiveness of the United States. But what is it all meant to achieve? Such activities are not overtly designed as a direct attack on Chinese trade. In that sense they differ from the Huawei and the 5G affairs, which were designed to do that—as was the tariff war initiated by Trump and continued by Biden. Unlike those actions, these recent ones have a more precise and military purpose.

What the purpose could be was hinted at in an article in the *Guardian* earlier this month by Daniel L. Davis, an ex-US Lieutenant-Colonel of the US Army.

The piece is premised on a possible attack by China on Taiwan, and it argues against any response from the US that might involve it in a direct military confrontation with China. He argues that:

“The most likely outcome [of such an outcome] would be a conventional defeat of our forces in which China ultimately succeeds, despite our intervention—at the cost of large numbers of our jets being shot down, ships being sunk, and thousands of our service personnel killed. But the worst case is a conventional war spirals out of control and escalates into a nuclear exchange.”

According to Davis this leaves the best option but one which most Americans would find unsatisfactory, which is to:

“refuse to engage in direct combat against China on behalf of Taiwan. Doing so will allow the United States to emerge on the other side of a China/Taiwan war with our global military and economic power intact.”

This would also enable the US to:

“lead a global movement that will enact crippling sanctions against Beijing, and make them an international pariah. China’s pain would be limited to economics, however.

“It would take Beijing decades to overcome the losses incurred from a war to take Taiwan, even if Beijing triumphs. The United States and our western allies, on the other hand, would remain at full military power, dominate the international business markets, and have the moral high ground to keep China hemmed in like nothing that presently exists. Xi would be seen as an unquestioned aggressor, even by other Asian regimes, and the fallout against China could knock them back decades. Our security would be vastly improved from what it is today—and incalculably higher than if we foolishly tried to fight a war with China” (*The US Must Avoid War with China over Taiwan at All Costs*, by Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis (ret.), *Guardian* 5 October 2021).

In the meantime Davis advocates that Washington continues to pursue what he

calls “*strategic ambiguity*”, by which he means keeping China guessing as to Washington’s actual intentions.

In my opinion it is in that context that the current US strategy makes most sense and it is one which has a resonance with Britain’s deliberate ambiguity when it kept Germany guessing as to its likely response to the German invasion of Belgium in 1914. The difference being that a Chinese attack on Taiwan would not necessarily lead to the opening of a serious military conflict with the US. Rather, in such a case the advantage to the US of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be that it created the conditions whereby extensive global sanctions could be brought to bear on China.

This would then meet the US objective of significantly damaging the Chinese economy in ways that prevent it assuming a position where it endangers US global hegemony without any significant military sacrifice on the part of the US.

Of course, the existence of the military gung-ho lobby in the US means that the actual outcome of a Chinese attack on Taiwan could prove too powerful an excuse for going to war, irrespective of the inherent danger that it might escalate into a nuclear conflict.

AND THEN THERE IS CLIMATE CHANGE

A regular theme in the western media for the past few years has been China’s culpability in the ongoing climate crisis. The finger is constantly pointed at China as the world’s worst polluting country. It has been placed in that position because it produces the most greenhouse gases (30% of the world’s greenhouse gases, as compared to the second worst polluter, the United States on 15%). This is the message that hardly fails to find a mention in the popular media whenever the question of climate change crops up.

Yet, this is another example of a malicious distortion of the facts. Tables that rely purely on the output of greenhouse gases of individual countries cannot provide any real insights into the extent to which each country’s economy can be held culpable. A reliance on such a method of measurement performs no other function than a political one, *as it fails to consider the size of the population of each country*.

A more reliable indicator of the extent to which a country could be held responsible would be one that took into account the size of the population—in other words, a measurement based on a *per capita* output. The institution charged by the United Nations with assessing climate change

science is the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC). A report published by that body on 9th August 2021 provided a list of the top 10 polluting countries:

Tonnes of CO2 Per Capita		
• Qatar	-	37.05
• Kuwait	-	23.49
• Saudi Arabia	-	19.39
• Canada	-	16.85
• United States	-	15.74
• Germany	-	9.7
• China	-	7.72
• Spain	-	6.09
• France	-	5.02
• Thailand	-	4.05

Here we see that the United States (at 15.74 tonnes) produces double the CO2 of China (at 7.72 tonnes), based on population. Yet, when do we ever hear of this fact? We rarely do because it does not suit the prevailing purpose of castigating China as the world's polluting bogeyman who doesn't really care about maintaining a responsible economy when it comes to the planet.

The United States, on the other hand, is more often than not portrayed as the most responsible country in this regard – at least it has since the poster-boy of American/western democracy, Joe Biden, took over the presidency of the country. The media looks to him as the arbiter of all that is decent when it comes to climate change. So, it was that his attendance at the COP26 Summit Conference on Climate Change in Glasgow was contrasted to the refusal of China's President Xi Jinping to attend.

Of course, Xi Jinping's gesture is not provided with any context by the media in a way in which it could be rationally understood. Those seeking that context can only find it through a reading of what has been treated as a completely separate story in the media. That separate story relates to the outrageous British behaviour towards China in the context of its own policies to reduce its reliance on carbon energy. *The Guardian* online carried a story on Saturday, 25th September 2021 headed "*Ministers close to deal that would end China's role in UK nuclear station*", in which it reported that:

"The government could announce plans to take a stake in Sizewell C power station, alongside the French state-backed power giant EDF, as early as next month, ahead of the Cop26 summit. That would be likely to result in China General Nuclear (CGN), which currently has a 20% stake in Sizewell, being removed from the project."

The report went on to say that the proposed deal:

"risks inflaming political tensions, which are running high after Britain's decision

to join the AUKUS nuclear submarine pact with the US and Australia – a move designed to counteract China's military expansion. CGN, the power giant backed by the communist state, is also bankrolling EDF's Hinkley Point C power station in Somerset."

It further states that:

"Washington has been leaning heavily on Westminster to remove China from Britain's nuclear power plans, blacklisting CGN, citing fears over national security and accusing it of stealing military technology – claims it denies. The former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo last year urged Britain to choose sides in the battle to develop nuclear technology, saying it "stands ready to assist our friends in the UK with any needs they have"..."

The deal in which the Chinese nuclear energy firm CGN agreed to fund Hinkley and Sizewell, and then install its own reactors at a third site at Bradwell in Essex, was agreed with the British Government in 2015, at a time when British attitudes towards China were less hostile. That hostility comes in the wake of the policies pursued by Trump but, according to the *Guardian* online report, "*Pressure to remove China has ratcheted up under Joe Biden's administration.*"

Then, two weeks before the opening of the COP26 summit, the *Guardian* online reported that the UK Government was continuing to look into ways of removing the Chinese from its nuclear programme to reduce the country's reliance on carbon-based energy. It went on to report that CGN's role was "*now highly unlikely to go ahead*" (UK poised to confirm funding for mini nuclear reactors for carbon-free energy. *Guardian*, 15 October 2021)

One would have thought that this arbitrary abandonment of previous agreements involving a Chinese company in Britain's energy policy would be seen as having some relevance to how the leader of China would view a Conference held in the UK on, of all things, climate change.

But it appears that the British media do not see any connection between the two things, because it does not suit its agenda of castigating China. By treating the two things as separate it helps to portray China as both a country that threatens world security and a country led by a capricious leader.

It is difficult not to see this as a part of a policy by which climate change is being used as another diplomatic tripwire against China, with Xi Jinping's absence from COP26 being used to portray China as frustrating Western efforts to control climate change.

Eamon Dyas

The Atom Bomb

The Japanese scientist would know that, especially in time of war, that other Powers would be developing the bomb.

When the two bombs dropped on Japan, the country was, more or less, already defeated. The Red Army was in the Kuril Islands, Northern Japan (which they still hold today).

The Soviets had already defeated the Japanese in Manchuria without any remarkable loss of life.

While the US claimed they dropped the bombs to save thousands of US lives, the fact is that it was taking no prisoners, except a few for the cameras, and that made the Japanese Army fight to the end. They had nothing to lose. The Japanese were then labelled fanatical.

Civilians threw themselves off cliffs in some of the islands because of the fear of the coming massacres.

The Soviets, on the other hand, converted their Japanese prisoners en-masse to Communism. Watching news reel films in 1946, I remember the ship-loads of prisoners returning to Japan, with them giving the clenched-fist salute. There was alarm in US-controlled Japan and a lot of haste to mirror Communism in Japanese society – jobs for life was one policy, with the companies paying the health bills of its employees.

When the Soviet Union was given away by naive Gorbachev, this mirror was smashed, and mass redundancies occurred, with no health or social welfare to fall back on.

The dropping of the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki still stands as a war crime against the civilian population. The US claim at the time was that these two cities were chosen because of their large Catholic populations, that they were showing the world they had no racist prejudices, by not dropping them on Shinto/Buddhist cities.

The US has come up with more justifications since: alleging that these two cities were military targets. Their excuse was that the cities were militarised, but all cities in time of war have certain military characteristics, like air-raid defences and barracks.

You could have atom-bombed Belfast on those grounds.

Wilson John Haire

The O'Connor Column

An Ominous German Course?

The recent German election bodes ill for Europe. The press here in Ireland, and elsewhere, to the extent that it has noted the event, is largely joyous at the outcome, for mostly liberal anti-Catholic reasons (e.g. Derek Scally in *The Irish Times*). The seemingly likely emergence of a “Traffic Light Coalition” of the red-yellow-green party colours of the SPD, the Liberals (FDP) and the Green Party – imminent at the time of writing – is universally applauded. But what does it signify?

Like the *Skibbereen Eagle*, this Column has always liked to “keep an eye” on Germany. It is the lion in the geopolitical room that dare not speak its name. Singled out for destruction by its chief rival a hundred and fifteen years ago, as the alternative was a Britain that would otherwise necessarily lose its primacy in the world, it has crawled its way back to respectability since WW2 on a promise to focus purely on making things, and otherwise to nudge Europe towards “unity” within and under an overall American umbrella.

During that War, the Western Allies, on the urging of Churchill, initially planned to turn Germany, or what would remain of it, into what US Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau called a “potato field”. But, by the end of the war, Stalin, whose Red Army had finally broken and torn the guts out of Hitler’s once magnificent army, caused a sensation by declaring that “the Hitlers come and go, but the German people remain”. This quotation was liberally displayed on ruined gable walls throughout Soviet-occupied Germany, or by surviving communists in the Western Occupation Zones.

In the joint Allied “Control Council”, overseeing occupied Germany, Soviet diplomats alarmed their recent Western Allies by demanding that Germany be treated as a single state and economy, and that its industry be revived.

There were also other changes. Britain had bankrupted itself in its first “Great War” on Germany. Its replacement as the dominant global power by the USA had been underway since then. By WW2, Britain could only function as a highly subsidised and subservient outpost of the Alliance. The final humiliating nail in the coffin for the British Empire was the *Bretton Woods Agreement*, establishing the US dollar as the supreme and ultimate reserve currency of the Western World, based on a gold proxy to which only it would relate.

With the positive Soviet policy finding resonance among the democratic-style groups beginning to emerge in Germany, the US abandoned the “potato field” idea,

linked up with the British and moved to restore the bits of the country it controlled into an entity first called “Bizonia” and then “Trizonia”, when the French were ‘induced’ to accede to the project.

US Foreign Secretary James Byrnes unveiled the project as early as 1946 and, within a year, US policy was firmly oriented towards reviving “Europe” through incorporation into a US-managed economy (the *Marshall Plan*) to face the Soviet challenge.

Massive aid—usable solely for the purchase of US imports—was restricted to countries with western-style election systems and governments without communist participation. Such a system was hastily organised in Trizonia. But the US *diktat* led to major crises in France and Italy, until means were found to restructure their Governments into an acceptable form.

The Soviets reacted in kind and, throughout their sphere in Eastern Europe, bourgeois and fascist nationalists were similarly hounded from Coalition Governments.

Before this, Isaac Deutscher had written in *The Observer* that he expected the new East European states, if left to develop under their own steam, to generate governments of a decidedly nasty 1930s-variety.

From the start, the US proposed that “Europe” form itself into a “United States” into which Trizonia—soon renamed to the less humiliating-sounding “Federal Republic of Germany”—should be absorbed. But it was to be a mainly economic entity and supply the industrial ‘motor’ for a project which would be managed by Britain and France. But it soon changed its mind on this formula, once it shook off Britain’s demands. The formation of NATO followed in 1949 so as, in the words of its first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, “to keep the Americans in, the Russians out and the Germans down”. The plan generally worked out swimmingly.

There were of course obstacles on the

road and flies in the ointment. Dispensing with the electorally-strong communist parties in France and Italy, after excluding them from government proved a bit of a challenge, with alternative US-sponsored “socialist” parties being created and subsidised to erode their popular base. The result was a legacy of anti-US resentment that would persist in both countries for thirty years.

A more direct approach was taken with Greece, where the British Labour Government sent in its Army, augmented by war-time Greek fascist militias it re-mobilised and re-armed, to crush the Greek communists militarily and install militia-derivative politicians in power.

In Germany the British sought to socially engineer the re-emerging Social Democrats (SPD) along British Labour lines (though excluding the Trade Unions) as their main instrument, rigorously suppressing and purging 1920s-era leaders who had re-emerged in 1945—such as Severing and Braun—as “Prussians”, and replacing them with retrained liberal-left cadres they brought with them in their baggage. The SPD, after it got rid of Kurt Schumacher and a few others, would evolve into Germany’s main Britain-friendly party.

Among the flies in the ointment were de Gaulle in France, who emerged as not quite what had been hoped, and Adenauer in Germany, who built a Christian Democratic Party that resolutely refused British (though not American) patronage.

Adenauer’s CDU would link up with de Gaulle, and with the Italian Christian Democrat de Gasperi, to create an autonomous Catholic-European substance for the American economic creation.

The British had not supported this development and, for once, were quite baffled by it and stayed out of it. They initially agitated for the Western Powers to continue to jointly control the German economy, but America, which had decided on the course it intended, ignored them. The European Economic Community followed under Adenauer-de Gaulle leadership, after they had decided in conclave to conclude

the *Treaty of Rome* and, along with Italy and the Benelux Group, gradually unite through that instrument.

As a spoiling measure—what Irish government officials behind the scenes described as an attempt to “*sabotage the EEC*”—Britain formed what was initially a rival trade group, the *European Free Trade Association*, EFTA, composed of various leftover bits and pieces—such as some Scandinavian countries, Switzerland etc.

Austria, occupied and controlled on a four-Power basis as Germany had been, was allowed to be de-occupied in 1955 on a Soviet proposal, whose conditions included the maintenance of a democratic Constitution and a strict neutrality in not joining either NATO (or, later, the EEC), and with only a defensive army, prohibited from offensive action.

The Soviets had actually offered the same formula for a re-united, but neutral Germany in 1952, but the US—with Christian Democrat backing—ensured that it was not accepted. The Allied “occupation” of Germany would continue, both *de jure* and *de facto*, until 1991—as did Austria’s independent neutral status—with both only being abolished in the Great Power Agreements with Mikhail Gorbachev: before the latter went on to collapse the Soviet Union itself a year later.

Disregarding assurances given to the hapless “Gorby” in 1990, the West exploited the chaos into which Russia descended after 1992 to push out the NATO frontier—and in its wake, as ever, the range of the EU—up to Russia’s front door.

Much now changed. NATO ‘modified’ its charter, dumping both its very self-definition as a US-supported defensive alliance for Western Europe and the territorial restriction of its field of operations to that sphere.

Within less than a decade, NATO would be fighting up the Hindu Kush, and the EU lost all sense of what it was supposed to be.

In Germany, Italy and France, the Christian-Democratic alliance that had been its foundation became incoherent in substance and form. The Italian party was the first casualty, destroyed in a bewildering series of ‘corruption’ scandals and far-left extreme violence whose sources have never been clarified. In France, Republicanism finally collapsed into incoherence under Nicholas Sarkozy’s attempt to remould it as an Atlanticist force.

A similar incoherence overtook Adenauer’s once mighty CDU, as Angela Merkel recreated it by abandoning progres-

sive Rhenish traditionalism for a liberal-left Californian identity politics.

Merkel’s retirement is seen as the end of an era. What that era has been is another of those vague concepts. Under her leadership Germany has continued as the largely unpolitical chief maker of things for the West. Her main achievement as a statesperson was, together with Sarkozy and the European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi, to save the Euro and its monetary-policy infrastructure from the wreckage of the Great US Financial-Property Crash of 2008-12 and from manipulation by a predacious Sterling.

A discreet veil is now drawn over the success or otherwise of Merkel’s other statesperson-like initiative, the admittance of a million Middle Eastern refugees to Germany in 2015. This has resulted in much woe and social unrest in the country. The propaganda of the media had promoted a heart-rending picture of the plight of refugees, always presented as families, with reports invariably illustrated with pictures of photogenic young women and girls. The reality, of course, was that the majority of refugees arriving were young men in their twenties.

Another Merkel achievement was enabling the EU to abandon the hitherto ‘sacrosanct’ debt ratio criteria of the Fiscal Compact in favour of a massive EU-wide post-Covid stimulus programme. This pre-dated the Biden departure in the US, but its key aspect is its provision for massive bond-buying by the ECB, a measure previously opposed by Germany.

Merkel could only proceed with this policy once the German Federal Courts gave the green light that it was compatible with the German Constitution, which it did (imagine a Polish Government doing that: holding up an EU project until it was shown compatible with its Constitution!).

The bond-buying and debt-sharing programme was not an EU initiative, but essentially promoted by France and Italy and then achieving the buy-in of a majority of states, once Merkel brought Germany onside. It is, essentially, an inter-Governmental arrangement that will be managed through the Council and the ECB, with the Commission having a bit role.

Other Developments

In France, Sarkozy’s party has gone the way of the Italian Christian Democrats, being replaced by a vacuous showman, Emmanuel Macron, whose main claim on power is that he is not Marie Le Pen.

There are signs of a political revival of more substance in the emergence of Michel Barnier—who had orchestrated a magnificent negotiating of Brexit for the Commission—as

a candidate for the old *Républicains*. He is an old-school French Christian Democrat and European in the tradition of Delors and de Gaulle. He has also, to the worried alarm of globalists, re-positioned that tradition to the Gaullist default preference for a Europe of the *patries*, an alliance of independent nations with EU-wide regulation or law restricted to areas of practical cooperation.

It is increasingly likely that he will give Macron a good run for his money in next April’s French presidential election, though if he were to pull off a return of this vital French force it would be very much against the *Zeitgeist*.

What has been Merkel’s role at EU level? Her success on the Euro was deliberately engineered to the exclusion of the once powerful European Commission. The Commission has continued its degeneration into a tower of babel of 27 squabbling, attention-seeking non-entities, especially since Phil Hogan was sacked by von der Leyen for political correctness reasons—unfortunately supported by the Irish government—and Barnier went home on his mission to revive Christian Democracy in France.

The Commission is headed by von der Leyen, a non-entity installed by Merkel herself, and busies itself with dramatic court cases against member states on tax law that it usually loses, and in inventing an ever wider range of European “values” with which to berate errant member states but which have no legal substance.

Countries are no longer represented on the Commission by their actual appointee, as the non-entity unilaterally introduced a condition requiring each state to present two candidates for her to choose their Commissioner from on the basis of engineering “gender equality”.

In place of Hogan, Ireland has been landed with Máiréad McGuinness, a worthy and sincere, but lightweight, figure. Von der Leyen’s arbitrarily-imposed gender rule, for which there is no basis in the Treaties, seems as yet only to refer to “men” and “women”, but that will doubtless be challenged by more radical gender activists.

Throughout the dramatic politics of arranging the Covid recovery programme, the Commission was very much on the sidelines, awaiting instructions on what it was to proceed with. Europe is again an alliance of weighted Powers. The “*European project*”, to which the Commission had been central, has, on Merkel’s watch, become as incoherent as the Christian Democratic forces that once created it.

The notion of the EU evolving through “*ever-deeper integration*” towards a proto-

federal future, as had been its vision and was the primary reason for Brexit, lies in ruins.

However, neither Adenauer nor de Gaulle ever shared that vision, promoting instead a Europe of sovereign nations in close economic and possibly security alliance.

It is even being questioned now whether the Commission can save the Single Market, particularly after capitulating to the demands of the City of London's money markets for a base in European affairs, even after Brexit.

All eyes have turned to Germany to see if the last man standing, so to speak, the CDU, has anything ahead of it, other than an oblivion similar to its soulmates in France and Italy. The last time this Column turned its eye on Germany was last February when, against all odds, and most predictions, Armin Laschet narrowly won a party vote to become leader of the CDU. This would mean he would succeed Merkel, and neither the German nor the wider Western Establishment was at all pleased.

The Column at the time described what Laschet was and what he stood for in some well-referenced detail, highlighting the elements causing extreme alarm to that establishment. It predicted that there would be a major attempt to delegitimise him as CDU leader and especially as a prospective German Chancellor.

Originally a mining engineer, he was regarded as a product of the Catholic working class wing of the CDU. A successful politician, first as Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia—which contains the industries of the Ruhr—and before that as a very well-connected MEP with close ties to senior traditional French politicians, his only foreign trip since Covid began was for a meeting in Rome with Pope Francis.

He is married into a Luxembourgish steel and coal dynasty and is related through marriage with similar circles in the French-speaking heavy industrial area of Belgium. He speaks both German and French. He makes no excuses for his Catholic beliefs and old-EU orientation, opened a new coal mine last year, espouses dialogue with Russia—such as in the Navalny affair—and supports the *Nordstream 2* pipeline.

The liberal and business elites were openly hostile to this “*Rhineland Provincial*” and had hoped for a victory by the Bavarian Atlantist, Söder, or one of Laschet's other liberal challengers. There was relentless commentary to the effect that the CDU leader would not necessarily have to be the Chancellor if that party again emerged as the largest in an election. Laschet personally

advocated continuing with the Christian-Social Democrat coalition.

As polls continued to show the CDU as the strongest party, the SPD languishing and surges in favour of the Greens proving transitory, the talk crystallised around two alternative coalitions—“*Jamaica*”, with the black/red/green party colours of the CDU, SPD and Greens—versus the “*Traffic Light*” option of the red/yellow/green of the SPD/FDP/Greens.

While poll numbers still favoured the former, the preference of the media was ever more strongly towards the latter. Throughout the campaign, Laschet was the target of unending media negativity, both in Germany and abroad, including in the *New York Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Economist*, and hence also in our very own *Irish Times*, which derives its fashions from these.

The media finally had its “gotcha” moment with an unfortunate photograph—which they endlessly aired (google “*laschet laughing*”)—showing him seeming to be laugh at something someone said to him while on a sombre visit to the site of a flooding tragedy in western Germany. It proved a *coup de grace*. The CDU collapsed in the polls, the SPD rose and the Greens consolidated.

The election confirmed the “*Traffic Light*” as the dominant outcome. The SPD, having slid in successive elections and polls since 2005 down to just 12 per cent at one stage, recovered to secure 25.7 per cent. The CDU had its worst ever result, winning just 24.1 per cent of the vote, a massive fall from the 32.9 per cent achieved in 2017. The Greens got their best result ever with 14.8 per cent, while the Liberal FDP returned with 11.5 per cent.

Of other parties, the right-populist AfD fell from third to fifth place, gaining just 10.3 per cent; while the Left Party were close to being wiped out. They failed by just 0.1 per cent to achieve the 5 per cent necessary for parliamentary seats, but the necessities of the German PR system means that the three directly-elected constituencies they won will entitle them to full proportional representation of 4.9 per cent of seats in the Bundestag. With over 53 per cent, the Traffic Light will have a comfortable majority if they can stick together.

What a “Traffic Light” government might involve has never been clear, beyond being a Laschet- and CDU-free alternative. The SPD leader, Olaf Scholz, is a dull and nondescript career politician who had served as Finance Minister in Merkel's last CDU-SPD coalition. He was touted, not as a leader intent on any great new social democratic departure, but rather as “*continuity Merkel*”, committed

to steering a course much as before.

To emphasise this he was widely noticed mimicking mannerisms of the old Chancellor, down to how he held his hands, dressed, and said little. The Greens had the climate change agenda giving them a fair wind—though all parties now share this.

The surprise and most dynamic component in the mix is the FDP, the small liberal party traditionally regarded as the mouthpiece of the business class. Its rising popularity as an alternative choice to the Greens for young middle-class voters, centres on scepticism of a return to major spending, or any weakening of traditional “*Ordoliberal*” economics.

It criticises the “*irresponsible*” aspects of the EU Covid recovery programme. How this will be squared with Scholz's continuity Merkelism is unclear. But the leader of the FDP has insisted that in any coalition he would get the Finance Ministry. This demand has been largely supported by the press.

On other issues, the Greens, who, like the FDP, adopted a militant atlanticist pose with an interventionist 'human rights' foreign policy, want a “*tougher*” stance against China and are against the Nordstream 2 pipeline, as handing the “*Russian autocrat*” Putin a lever of influence over Germany. The media has largely supported this kind of Nordstream 2 scepticism. The US opposes the project and Biden made clear this position hadn't changed, even while suspending the sanctions against German, Swiss and other Western firms involved in its construction.

The German regulatory authority has deferred final approval for the pipeline commencing operation until technicalities requiring Gazprom to re-structure a German subsidiary to manage it have been fulfilled. This is obviously a holding operation until Scholz and his merry partners confer with Biden.

All of this means that Germany is entering uncharted waters with a government headed by very weak personalities succeeding the steady hand of Merkel. The strongest forces ideologically in the “Traffic Light” are the human-rights-driven foreign policy of the Greens and the economic conservatism of the Liberals opposed to ECB bond-buying. All of this will play into the hands of the US in furthering the of Russia/China and weakening European counter-tendencies. Beyond some reform of the pensions system it's difficult to see what the SPD under Scholz is likely to bring to the table. This Column would have preferred a Laschet-led CDU-SPD coalition, as it would also like to see Barnier win in France.

Elizabeth Bowen: Towards A Final Reading

There are two aspects of the writer Elizabeth Bowen that make her in today's Ireland a flash point in the culture wars that have been ongoing—her 'nationality' and her espionage during the Second World War. Now that the latter has been exposed so thoroughly, some remnants of Irish academia still attempt to downplay her very serious and brilliant role for the British Empire during that perilous period. But, however much they—the academics and journalists—protest and bluster, they are overcome by the sheer volume of her exposed former secret memos to her London handlers. As the Empire State has never acknowledged, even to this day, she acted as one of their diplomats. However, they have allowed access (however limited) to those of us researchers, to look at her work for them; and here the Aubane Historical Society has been to the fore, showcasing her spying role in a neutral country.

With regards to her 'nationality', she herself wrote in her last book, the poignant '*Pictures and Conversations: Chapters of An Autobiography*', published posthumously, that her "race" was the Anglo-Irish. And let there be no doubt but that the accent fell on the former word of that term—the hyphen so loved by 'our' academics is a wishy-washy affair. And when I call the latter group by that pronoun, it is not out of respect, or even mild attachment, but because we Irish tax-payers pay them their over-generous salaries/bursaries and other inflated hand-outs—most especially for their published works. They very seldom avail of the commercial publishing world because quite rightly they would never get published.

I recall only very vaguely some Dublin intellectual—was it Raymond Crotty who wrote a letter to the English '*Times*' asking the English to take us—the Irish—in hand and keep us from self-destruction—was this before our entry into the EEC (European Economic Council)?

The contention seemed to be that we Irish were acting with "sovereignty" and veering off course from our nearest neighbour, with whom "our shared history" might be heading for a final break. Everything since then involving our political/journalistic elite has been in support of that thinking—except the Charles J. Haughey era and we know how that went down, with that shameful Arms Trial period, before Haughey arose Phoenix-like out of the ashes and became one of our finest leaders since Eamon de Valera himself.

I remember writing a letter to *The Irish Times*, attacking those who threw coins at the ill and aging out-of-Office former Taoiseach as he left a Tribunal (the etymology of that word should tell us everything) and compared the incident to those who threw lime at Charles Stewart Parnell. That letter drew an angry response from a letter writer for daring to put the two politicians in the same sentence. I agreed of course—the latter—was never of the calibre of the great Haughey! But of course that response was never published! Long before 'cancel culture' became a thing—a fad of our now most illiberal times—'*The Irish Times*' has been at it for what seems forever.

And writers/readers of this magazine—the *Irish Political Review*—can amply attest to such editorial practice, as can so many others.

But, long before anyone wrote a letter to the English '*Times*' for political direction, there was the now infamous intervention by the one of the five owners of that very same paper '*The Irish Times*', which was documented in that brilliant history, '*The Irish Times: Past and Present*' by John Martin, published by the Belfast Historical and Educational Society in 2008.

And it was the British Ambassador to Ireland, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, no less, who wrote about the episode concerning Major Tom McDowell in a letter to his boss, Kelvin White in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London.

Major Tom wanted help with his "renegade and white nigger" Editor, Douglas Gageby, who, though "a Belfast born Protestant", needed a watching brief from

the real power and not the *ersatz* one in Dublin, especially with regards to matters relating to Northern Ireland.

In the last issue of the November 2021 *Irish Political Review*, I quoted from an article written for '*The Bell*' magazine, where the then Editor of '*The Irish Times*' R.M. Smyllie wrote, and it is worth repeating:

"...when the British left Ireland" (only after being militarily defeated in the War of Independence)... "The bottom fell out of our world in which 'The Irish Times' previously had existed. Quite frankly, we had been the organ of the British Government ... We had now to write for a totally different public" (All italics and underlinings – JH).

And as I commented:

"To give Smyllie his due, in that very clever statement, he never acknowledged what "organ" the paper was now writing for! And during the war, as we now know Smyllie was forever fighting for the war State, and against the neutral State in which he found himself in. But then he had the formidable Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera and his Government and people against him so he had to play ball with the foregoing powers. But like any predator, he was always ready to exploit any opportunity to betray our State but he had to be very careful if he wanted his paper to continue to operate in this new Ireland. So he made some concessions—the most famous, which so infuriated Elizabeth Bowen, was to publish an article written in Irish/Gaelic every week. And he employed some locals provided their colour/orientation was right. It is my opinion that is still the case!"

I was infuriated recently to read an article about '*The Irish Times*' by Felix M. Larkin which suggested a quite different analysis about 'The Bell' in 1945: one which was not correspond with what is quoted above.

Did Larkin not read what Editor Smyllie wrote? Or is he so tone deaf to the history that is out there that he came up with such fatuous nonsense? Of course, anyone looking to Sean O'Faolain (why all the *sláintes*—when Sean never used them, nor did his daughter Julia, who published her poisonous 'memoir', *Trespassers*, in London in 2013?)

I recall though how Sean in his revised autobiography, '*Vive Moi*' (in which he revealed his many affairs after his heroic wife Eileen's death), took Elizabeth Bowen to visit his daughter Julia on whom he doted, at her London house, for a dinner party.

"There were" he later wrote "other writers of our maturing generation, of whom I recall now only Johnny Betjeman with

whom I became friendly during the war when he was at the British Embassy in Dublin". (There was no Embassy but a Legation whose Representative was Sir John Maffey, later Lord Rugby).

If O'Faolain hoped to spark an old flame, he was out of luck. The next day, according to his recollections, he took Elizabeth to an upmarket restaurant, the Café Royal, and gave her a very expensive lunch. This is how he remembers the occasion:

"Our lunch over, I taxied her to Char-ring Cross where, gracious as always, she shook hands, thanked me for the lunch and said:

"I did enjoy it! But, then, the company was so good!" For a moment, I wished we were both in our warm thirties again".

Elsewhere he had stated that:

"passion-abated — Elizabeth rolled out of bed, as the telephone rang with" (her husband) "Alan on the other end saying the war had started. It was 1939."

So, as O'Faolain frolicked with Bowen, and became friendly with Betjeman — later Sir John Betjeman, and English Poet Laureate, isn't it surely more than a coincidence that these two were spies operating in neutral Ireland? Such were so lauded by Sean O'Faolain — the "*bomb-maker*", but not the gun-man, in our War of Independence?

Even Clair Wills in her book, *'That Neutral Island'*, allows that Sean — who learnt to speak Irish (where he met his wife Eileen) — could still translate with obvious hatred *Sinn Féin* as 'Ourselves Alone' (when it is plainly *We Ourselves*) which is how the English loved to see it so portrayed.

Clearly, the son of a RIC father and a hard-working landlady mother had eyes, as Wills attests, always on an English audience as the ultimate prize.

In Larkin's article, during the war, after O'Faolain commissioned a series of articles on papers and periodicals of the day for *'The Bell'*,

"he recruited two recent graduates of Trinity College, Dublin who were Vivian Mercier and Conor Cruise O'Brien".

The latter was a civil servant in the Irish Department of External Affairs, so he had to hide his hand under the *nom de plume*, Donat O'Donnell. Larkin states:

"Both seemed to have shared O'Faolain's disappointment with "this new Ireland".

Needless to say the paper that comes out with great distinction is *The Irish Times*.

Vivian Mercier describes the paper as "*this mirror of a changing Ireland ... as it adapted to the new Ireland*", emerging "*out of the maelstrom*" of revolution.

Indeed, as Larkin goes on: "*Mercier's concludes with the Latin adage*", which, he says, *The Irish Times*

"is never tired of saying. *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*, meaning the times are changing, and we change in them."

Larkin uses Declan Kiberd, who suggests —

"that one of the reasons 'The Bell' was so influential — and why it survived in the difficult circumstances of the period of O'Faolain's editorship, 1940-1946, was that "he was one of the 'risen people' himself, the son of humble parents in Cork, and therefore not perceived as greatly 'above' the people to whom he addressed his journal."

(If O'Faolain was alive and saw what Kiberd had written, he would have been so furious as no one upperwardly socially climbed as he did!)

Kiberd goes on to write that, after O'Faolain's sojourns in America on a Commonwealth Scholarship, followed by a period teaching in the UK:

"The Ireland to which he returned was not much to his liking ...

"Having said 'revolution or death' in 1921, he was by 1940 confronted by the death of the revolution."

"In June 1943, he expressed his disillusionment in what was probably his own most searing piece in *The Bell* entitled 'The Stuffed Shirts', as follows:

"The final stage of the Revolution was — and is to this day — a middle-class putsch. It was not a society that came out of the maelstrom. It was a class."

"That was the '*face of the new Ireland*' that *The Bell* saw reflected in the newspapers and periodicals — not bright, but dirty"..."

There is real rage in that final O'Faolain sentence and that is because he never got the Profership in UCC — Daniel Corkery did. And what really did for O'Faolain was that the former was "*never educated in a university*".

But there is another aspect here that I find interesting. Did O'Faolain, and now Kiberd, expect the 'revolution' never to settle down to a stable and successful democracy?

Is it that which so frustrates them?

Mercier concludes his laudatory analysis of *'The Irish Times'* by saying:

"that it may be that one of its attractions is that it alone presents the public with

the spectacle, in its own reincarnation of the protean nature of modern Irish life — subject, of course, to the limitations which a heritage is said to present to rebirth."

Mercier

"judges that its journalism, like its politics, is "ten times more alive than its rivals in the newspaper world... always ready with a campaign, a controversy, or an appeal."

It had a freedom that its rivals, being closely identified with political parties and/or business interests, did not have.

I had to look up both Vivian Mercier, and indeed Felix M. Larkin, and both have *form*, as they say in certain circles. The former had huge ties to Trinity College, Dublin — having been elected a "*Scholar of the College in 1938*". He also did a lot of literary criticism for *'The Irish Times'* and ended up as "*Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara*". (Not Berkley!)

Larkin, according to the blurb at the end of the article, is a "*'non-stipendiary' historian*" (?) "*and former public servant*".

But, back to Clair Wills, who summed up Conor Cruise O'Brien's analysis with remarks which are really more of a "*critique*" of *The Bell* in 1946:

"In its caution, its realism, its profound but ambivalent nationalism, its seizures of stodginess and its bad paper, it reflects the class who write it and read it — teachers, librarians, junior civil servants, the lettered section of the Irish petty bourgeoisie."

So no great influencer of Irish society — according to the *dictats* of the latter Ulster Unionist politician O'Brien.

And, after reading a history of the *Bell* magazine, I would have to concur. But let there be no doubt that the funding of *'The Bell'* was not as benign as suggested by poor Peadar O'Donnell travelling through American cities and asking for donations from prosperous Irish Americans to keep the periodical going!

Behind the scenes, there was a very successful Irish businessman of a Fine Gael orientation who made sure the money got to its source — maybe with the help of a close neighbour who needed all the Irish help it could source.

The Bowens as indeed the Betjemans of this world needed shoring up and they got it from this unexpected quarter — and a whole lot more.

Julianne Herlihy ©

To be continued.

What is Communism?

In a previous article it was suggested that up until the 1980s there was a consensus throughout the left as to what socialism meant: - the social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Disagreements within the broad left related to how this object would be achieved and in what time frame.

While socialists tended to see social ownership as an end in itself, communists believed that it was a stage in a process leading to a more advanced end point. Socialists were of the opinion that social ownership could be achieved by a democratic evolution and were prepared to accept something less than full social ownership in the hope that society would evolve in that direction.

Communists, by contrast believed that society was heading in a certain direction. Social ownership would eliminate classes. Their elimination would result in the ending of conflict. This in turn would lead to the “*withering away of the State*” since, in the absence of conflict, there would be no need for the coercive application of the law.

It could be said that this is a Utopian vision. Everyone would act in the social interest. On the other hand, it has the elements of a dystopia. The members of society would lose their individual identity.

In some ways the communist vision appears less far-fetched than before. The capacity to engineer a social consensus or ideological conformity has been enhanced by the internet. By means of mobile phones children can receive a view of the world without it being mediated through family, local, or national institutions. Needless to say, the values acquired may not be communist.

Whatever one might think of the communist vision, it is clear that democracy is irrelevant to it. Under communism the individual acts by instinct in the interests of society. The objective is to create a new socialist man. Since the communist party 'knows' how society will develop, there is no need to involve representative groups in the decision-making, except perhaps as a means to disseminate the party line. The Communist Party acts on

the State to hasten the achievement of a communist society.

Arguably, these distinctions have no implications for practical politics. In the 1970s, the Italian Communist Party accepted that it did not have the capacity to eliminate the bourgeoisie and create a classless society. This admission—known as the historic compromise—made it hardly distinguishable from the socialists.

In the 1980s there was a retreat from socialist values, never mind the aspiration for a communist society. Thatcherism and Reaganism were on the ascendant. And the trend was exacerbated with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The response of the left was to either water down or abandon its core principles.

In some cases, people from a Marxist background led the retreat. The British magazine *Marxism Today* was influential in undermining the class struggle. Other struggles such as feminism and gay rights were given precedence. We had arrived at a *post-“Fordist”* phase of development which had made old concepts redundant.

Interestingly, the writers deployed Marxist terminology in their move away from core Marxist principles. The objective was to achieve “*hegemony*” in the cultural wars to come.

The new politics now looks like a dead end which has only succeeded in detaching the left from the working class.

Perhaps it is now time for communists to return to first principles?

John Martin

Remembering *Joe Keenan*

It is with great regret that this magazine has to report the death of Joe Keenan.

**He was a close comrade for many years,
taught himself Computer Coding
and did the groundwork in giving
Athol Street an Internet presence.**

He was always there for us when a knotty problem had to be sorted out.

**He did this not just for friendship,
but as his contribution to developing working class politics.**

Editorial Team

A Note about Joe

I became a friend of Joe's over twenty years ago when he had given up both alcohol and tobacco. At the time he was editing *The Heresiarch*, “*a journal of anti-theology*”, and developing the Athol Books website. He introduced me to subjects I knew nothing about: US crime fiction, French cinema, Bob Dylan, the art of Amedeo Modigliani. Interesting as these topics were, our most animated conversations happened, invariably, when we got to talking about our experiences in the British and Irish Communist Organisation.

Once, when he was staying in Dublin, he came with me to my mother's house in Clontarf. She had a paying guest at the time, a French academic. As the evening wore on Joe and the guest fell into conver-

sation about French poetry. I remember being surprised at the reverence with which the Frenchman began treating Joe. He told me he had never encountered anyone with such knowledge, even in France.

Joe was a thorough Francophile and could recite the poetry of Apollinaire in very passable French, even if it had a strong Belfast twang. He was also familiar with Rimbaud, Verlaine, Baudelaire and other figures in French literature whose names I don't recall, although the artistic milieu inhabited by Apollinaire in the Quartier Latin district of Paris in the early nineteenth-hundreds remained the chief focus of his Francophilia. In any case he talked about it a lot.

On another occasion Joe and I went for

a walk to Bullock Harbour in Dalkey in south Dublin. At the time the small harbour was presided over by Peter O'Halloran, then Chairman of the Bullock Harbour Association—whenever Peter was there the tricolour flew from a flagstaff. I knew Peter from having made videos of the “*blessing of the boats*” celebrations, the previous year, and he invited us in to his quarters for tea and a chat. It started to rain hard, so a few of the fishermen joined us, and a sing-song ensued. What surprised me that day was the number of old ballads Joe had and how good a singer he was. He had a poet's appreciation for the traditional songs.

There are many other stories I could tell of times spent in Joe's company: he had that sort of character. In endless variations, he and I engaged in the same conversation over about twenty years. He thought me delusional because I tend to be optimistic about the influence that Athol Books literature is having, and I made no bones about telling him he had lost his way politically. He could knock a lot of fun out of those arguments.

Being, in his own words, a “*respiratory cripple*”, the pandemic represented an occasion of dread for Joe. It is very sad that a series of malign infections prevented him from coming out the other side of it.

Dave Alvey

Remembering Joe Keenan

The last time I met Joe Keenan he was in hospital. This would have been around 1990. I was living in France at the time and I can't remember why I was visiting Belfast. I do remember having some malicious pleasure at the thought that Joe would be surprised to see me and probably wouldn't be pleased. We were quarrelling at the time.

Joe had started his paper *The Heresiarch* with the idea, as I understood it, of launching a theological attack on theology. Instead of attacking the corruptions of the Church(es), which could be corruptions of something in itself noble and good, he would go for the jugular—the intellectual nullity of Christian theology and in particular the old problem of ‘*theodicy*’—how can a God who is a) omniscient, b) omnipotent and c) created the world *ex nihilo* not be guiltily responsible for evil and for the eternal suffering of the damned? A problem that in all honesty Christians

have never been able to solve.

The Russian Christian philosopher, Nicolas Berdyaev, following a lead given by Jacob Böhme, proposes that it can only be resolved by dropping the *ex nihilo* and presupposing that God created the world from a material—he calls it ‘*freedom*’—that is refractory to His will.

I shared Joe's interest in theology but was headed in the opposite direction, towards engagement with the Church. I can't remember what stage I was at. I think I was drifting out of the Baha'i World Faith but hadn't yet committed myself to Orthodox Christianity. I had thought Joe might welcome contributions from me as a foil to his own ideas and for a while it looked as if that might work. But we fell out over Augustine of Hippo and it started to get quite heated.

Then Joe used as a motto Blake's phrase (from Jerusalem): ‘*I care not whether a man is good or evil; all that I care / Is whether he is a wise man or a fool. Go! put off holiness, / And put on intellect.*’

I expressed outrage at using Blake in a defence of atheism and wrote on Blake's religious belief (particularly evident in the passage from which the quotation is taken). Joe had got fed with me (understandably under the circumstances) and declined to publish it and I was feeling aggrieved.

Perhaps, had I been living in Belfast and we had been able to meet more often, things might have improved but, as it was, that was it. Which I regret very much because I always liked him.

We worked closely in Belfast branch of the British and Irish Communist Organisation through the 1970s and 1980s, mainly on the *Workers Weekly* with Joe often manning the printing machine. He wasn't very good at it but he was a lot better than I was and his contributions to the—I think very entertaining—*Weekly* were undoubtedly the funniest. He was the most mischievous member of the branch. When we read in an English paper a journalist describing in shocked tones his encounter in Robinsons' bar with a ‘Stalinist’ who spent his Summer holidays liquidating kulaks we knew exactly who he was referring to!

I remember sharing accommodation in London with Joe and Madawc Williams at a time when there was quite a lot of IRA activity going on. We were watching the TV, which was telling us how to spot a possible IRA suspect. He (gender neutrality hadn't yet caught on) would have arrived recently, have a Belfast accent, no visible form of livelihood, spend a lot of time in betting shops and pubs, and play a lot of pool. The description half-fitted me but it

fitted Joe to a ‘t’!

While in London I found that Joe was writing poetry—very simple straightforward accounts of his infatuations with various girls and his love of the horses. He had a particular liking for the American poet, Gary Snyder. The poems were, I thought, lovely, and I still have a small collection of them. I don't know if he kept that up, I hope so.

I tried to interest the poet Michael Longley in them. He dismissed them with contempt—one of the moments when I realised just how far removed I was from the world of what might be called mainstream Belfast poetry—even though, socially, I was quite close to it.

I should stress that Joe's commitment to politics was very serious, not just Northern Ireland politics, but British politics in general. He was particularly active with Conor Lynch in exposing the incompetence and irresponsibility of Arthur Scargill's miners' strike and—also with Conor—he did what he could to keep the idea of workers' control alive after the Trade Union movement as a whole and the panoply of left-wing organisations failed to support the Bullock Report on industrial democracy.

He was what was needed—an intelligent class warrior, doing what he could with very limited means. I regret losing touch with him, but I still feel very lucky that I knew him when I did.

Peter Brooke

Joe Keenan, Communist

Joe and I were comrades in the Lost Struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. The years in which the current political mess-up was made.

I met Joe during my years in London. He was one of the comrades in what was then the British and Irish Communist Organisation, and which is now, in its British aspect, the Ernest Bevin Society.

How could we still be communists in the 1970s?, people will ask. Or why don't we now apologise?

I will use the sad occasion of Joe's death to explain—mostly in the hope of being heard by the new young generation, who genuinely do not understand, but who are aware that things have gone badly wrong. They may be open to new answers, and may recognise that the bulk of the left missed a grand opportunity back then.

I compare us to others who thought that

Stalin had betrayed Leninism, rather than accepting that he made it a success when it could easily have failed. His detractors were people whose own post-Communist history has been a disaster for the left. Brendan Clifford summed it up much better than I could in *The headlong flight of Labour furthered: Eric Hobsbawm and the triumph of Thatcherism*. And then, as *Good Riddance to Bad Rubbish*, when the magazine 'Marxism Today' smugly wound itself up amidst the ruins of left-wing politics.

Hobsbawm's books before *The Age of Extremes* are *The Age of Revolution*, *The Age of Capital* and *The Age of Empire*. Europe's global aggression is viewed much more softly than the predictable break-up of that system.

I sum up those failed exiles as *Cloaca Est*: it is sewage. And not just because some of them joined New Right circles. Those renegades managed to do far more damage to the Western system in their attempt to serve it, than they ever had when they postured as Global Revolutionaries. And I recently had the idea of expanding a phrase I first devised as a comment on English law and its pretentious Latin tags. I made it *Cloaca Est, Pro Patria Mori*. Nothing glorious about war.

Cloaca Est is my summary. It's the sort of thing Joe would have liked. Though like me, he saw some wars as necessary and justified by a bad overall situation.

We supported the Falklands War, despite evidence that Thatcher's incompetence in handling Argentine claims made it necessary. There were no original inhabitants, and rival Spanish, Argentine and British claims ended with British dominance and British settlement. There was none of the violence and slaughter and cultural genocide done in Australia, New Zealand and the rest of The Americas.

Recent evidence suggests that some Native Americans visited the islands, but chose not to stay. They had plenty of other land, and perhaps found them too isolated.

The rights of Falkland Islanders did not vanish if you called it Imperialism. But most of the British Left ignored this. And the leaders of the Labour Party were weak, sitting back and assuming that a British defeat would finish Thatcher.

The war humiliated the Argentine junta. It exposed most of them as being only good for oppressing their own people. Only the air force did respectably, and they were the least involved in the torture and repression of the years of military dictatorship.

*

We were communists in the 1970s, because communism was the main force that had ended the extremism of Europe's global values. And had spread modern ideas everywhere, which I've detailed in an article called *Reinventing Normality in the 20th Century*.

We didn't know it at the time, but there was to be a massive rolling-back of welfare and human concern when Global Leninism declined. When the millionaire elite stopped fearing it. When they realised that they could use trickery and fear to get ordinary people to vote against their own best interests.

As Marx and Engels saw so clearly in *The Communist Manifesto*, the economic changes undermined conventional middle-class values: what they called *bourgeois*. What they didn't expect was a regrowth of capitalism with conventional middle-class values mostly discarded. But I've said elsewhere that this fitted with a neglected remark in the *Manifesto*: that workers are an even purer product of capitalism than the bourgeois.

I've never watched the TV soap opera *Mad Men*. But a documentary I saw says that it showed how in the 1970s, elements of 1960s radicalism were co-opted by smart advertising executives. Including extending adverts to target non-whites and independent-minded women, since they had vast spending power.

It matched my own memories. Including the way in which right-wingers co-opted rebelliousness in the service of the rich.

Without strong and independent Trade Unionism, workers can easily be led to see capitalism as a Natural Order that they should accept.

But Trade Unionism needed to change. In the 1970s, a minority wanted to do just that. Accept Incomes Policy, and push for an extension of Workers' Control. Joe and I were among many who tried to make it happen.

And, sadly, we were defeated by a mix of Far Left and Centre-Left. The Centre-Left wanted to carry on as before. And the Far Left believed that, if they prevented moderate reforms, the result would be a glorious revolution, with them leading it.

We also said that the Miners' Strike as led by Scargill would end in disaster unless he was pushed into regularising it by calling a proper National Ballot. That was mostly me, Joe, and the late Conor Lynch.

We lost. But republishing more of what we said then would be a fine memorial to Joe.

*

Leninism or Global Communism was based on the dream of a Socialist World State. It was not entirely a lost cause in the 1970s, despite Moscow failing in its duty as a possible centre.

Calling the Soviet Union a failure is flatly wrong. It failed as the core of a World State – the sort of thing many had imagined and which H G Wells popularised in his books. But every other attempt also failed.

On the positive side, the world as it is in 2021 is much closer to what the Bolsheviks were seeking in 1921 than what any other government wanted in 1921. Rights for women had advanced, but an inherent right to equality was widely denied. Likewise racial equality, and Woodrow Wilson had actually strengthened separation in the Federal Government during his time in government. Empires that combined several European nationalities had been broken up, but Imperialism of Europeans over non-white peoples actually expanded with the break-up of the Ottoman Empire.

There was plenty to fight for, with Global Leninism as the main progressive force. That some of these fight have since been won does not mean that the fight was not needed.

A socialist world state might have happened. Might have been good or bad: arguing about that nowadays is pointless. By the 1980s, it was clear the world would go some other way.

The Western notion of Globalisation as Sub-Americanisation has also failed. The New Right are increasingly mistrusted and despised.

A belief in the 1970s that the 1920s dream might be revived was why Joe and I were in the same movement. And I'd say we were closer to truth than the alternatives. We never apologised for it: we just looked for new solutions that did not demonise Stalin or the Leninist past.

We also viewed the entire Trotskyist movement as useless. Globally and in nearly ten decades since they emerged as a Disloyal Opposition in Global Leninism, no Trotskyist movement has ever been even a weak threat to the Capitalist World Order. All they managed to be, was a Permanent Opposition to useful reforms within the existing system. I've noted that their rise was matched very nicely by a global decline in the power and reputation of socialism. And as far as I know, this was also Joe's view.

Without Moscow, a Socialist World State was not going to happen. China has no such ambition, and for most of the world its culture is much less familiar than

that of the Anglosphere. So we adjusted to the new reality, in which socialism might advance in many separate sovereign states. When serious reform was the grand opportunity.

*

I can't say a lot about Joe's background. He never told me much, and I'm sure others can say a lot more.

I had to leave London, because the only

decent job I could get was in Peterborough.

Joe went back to Belfast, and we had largely lost touch even before he quit our organisation.

I also can't say why he left us.

I just remember all the things we tried in the 1970s and 1980s.

Regret what was lost, but retain hope for the future.

Gwydion M. Williams ©

Remembering Joe!

Joe was an unreconstructed Fenian bastard — and I mean that in the most complimentary way! I am sure he would smile at this description: as he was awkward and intensely political. I once remember a meeting of Belfast Branch which was attended by myself, the late Conor Lynch and David Morrison, in which he kept interrupting with the question, "But what is the State?" Joe would not let discussion go on without an answer to this pertinent question relating to NI. The meeting broke up.

Joe persuaded me not to throw in the towel in my conflict with Queens University, Paul Bew and John A. Murphy, who wanted me to amend my PhD. He suggested I confront them with a 10-year closure on my thesis, while Athol Street published it straight away.

This academic device, used by academics to get their work published before it was raided by other academics, could be used to subvert the changes academia demanded and to obtain the PhD. This was really a masterstroke by Joe and I will always be grateful to him from persuading me away from an intransigent self-defeating position of withdrawing the thesis.

Many people are too good for this world to be politically useful. Joe was the opposite. He was an awkward customer and all the better for it.

Pat Walsh, PhD

The half-forgotten Casement discourse of Dr Herbert Mackey

Looking through *Irish Political Review* for November 2021, I was intrigued to read: "*Anatomy of a lie* is only the third book to present extensive arguments that the diaries are forged" (*Roger Casement: Two Caveats*, Paul R Hyde, page 18).

The writer went on to refer to *The Forged Casement Diaries* (1936) by William J. Maloney and *The Accusing Ghost* (1957) by Alfred Noyes which, with *Anatomy Of A Lie* (2019) by Hyde himself, made up the three books in question.

When the writer referred to a book providing *extensive arguments* what did he mean? It is to be presumed he meant a book concerned primarily with presenting significant pro-forgery arguments which are developed and followed through in detail. In other words he meant a book devoted to the detailed presentation of arguments that the controversial diaries were forged in whole or in part, such that the picture of Casement presented was profoundly distorted.

PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

The Maloney book recorded that there was an intense and dishonest propaganda campaign against Casement being conducted before and during the time the diary material was put to use. It recorded the evasiveness and self protectiveness of the authorities in the manner in which they put the diaries to use. It set out the general context of contrived deceit with which, during the First World War, the Intelligence services conducted their manipulation of the public mind. The book took a particular interest in how the diaries were allegedly 'found' and in the various mutually contradictory accounts of that finding. The book linked the various threads together to conclude that it was sensible to assume the Diaries were best considered as part of a larger campaign of negative propagandistic vilification.

It needs to be remembered that, at that time, the existence of the diaries was neither acknowledged nor denied by the Home Office and neither typed texts nor original bound volumes were available for

scrutiny by researchers. Given the lack of available material at the time, what Maloney and his assisting researchers achieved was quite impressive. The book, notes included, ranged over an impressive 275 pages. Only about 1,000 copies were printed and it was never republished. It was serialised in 1937 in *The Irish Press* daily newspaper, then the press organ of the Fianna Fáil party.

INTERNATIONAL READERSHIP

The Accusing Ghost by Alfred Noyes is the most widely read pro-forgery book and the most easily enjoyed and readable. There is a lot of biographical information on Casement. The book is not all focussed on arguments in favour of forgery. The author is open to the criticism that he filled out what he had to say on the forgery question with informative and fluent padding. Much of what he had to say had been said by Maloney two decades earlier.

Noyes further developed and refined the discussion around the various accounts of the alleged discovery of the diaries. His book disseminated pro-forgery argumentation among a wide international readership. Including notes and appendices, the book amounted to 191 pages.

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Anatomy of a Lie by Paul R. Hyde needs no introduction to contemporary readers who interest themselves in the forgery question. The great strength of the book is that archival material from a variety of sources, access to most of which had been denied to investigators until the 1990s, is examined and analysed. Material which might have provided comfort to believers in authenticity turns out, on inspection, to be an array of the shabby, the dubious and the contradictory.

In his conceptualisation of what happened when the diaries were employed against Casement in 1916, and how the bound volumes known as the *Black Diaries* were produced, Hyde deviates from what had been the usual approach of forgery proponents (with some exceptions) up to that point. He claims in the book that typescripts were shown to people so as to convince them that Casement had flouted accepted sexual norms. The handwritten bound volumes, he claims, were written up only after the execution had been carried out.

Such forgery proponents as Prof Roger McHugh, Dr Herbert Mackey, Mairead Wilson and Kevin Mannering, all now deceased, held strongly to the view that the handwritten originals were initially the property of Casement and that compro-

missing material had been interpolated into them by hands unknown under orders from British intelligence chiefs, before Casement went to trial for treason.

Anatomy of a lie weighs in at an impressive 200 pages and, no matter what your opinion of its contents, *extensive arguments that the diaries are forged* define this book. Published in 2019 the book was later withdrawn due to a threat of legal challenge. This challenge never materialised. It is expected it will be reissued in the near future.

WIDE INTERESTS

The Dublin-based Dermatologist, Dr. Herbert Owen Mackey, in 1952 brought out *A Handbook of Diseases of the Skin*. His interests ranged wider than the medical field. He founded a society devoted to the poet and arranger Thomas Moore: *The Thomas Moore Society*. In 1951 he published a pamphlet, *The Life of Thomas Moore, Ireland's national poet*. He also took an interest in Irish traditional music and its promotion.

During the 1950s Mackey developed a fascination with the life of Roger Casement. He became Chairman of the *Roger Casement Repatriation Committee* which lobbied for Casement's remains to be returned to Ireland. A biography of Casement appeared in 1954: *The Life and Times of Roger Casement*. In 1958 he brought out *The Crime against Europe*, a selection of Casement's articles and poetry edited by himself. When the handwritten diaries were put on limited release in 1959 he was not found wanting.

Over six days, in August and September 1959, he scrutinised the page surfaces closely, using hand-held magnifying equipment. He believed he had uncovered evidence confirming that the incriminating writings had been introduced by hands other than Casement's. Matter had been written in at the end or beginning of entries.



Herbert Mackey

Sometimes inked writing had been erased using bleach, and into the gaps so created different words had been introduced. His close examination was reported in the press in Ireland. Soon afterwards in 1959 he self-published a pamphlet based on his findings; *I Accuse*.

In 1962 Mackey published an expanded treatment of the diaries controversy: *The Secret History of the Forged Diaries*. This was later republished the same year with a different publisher and was then titled *A Guide to the Forged Diaries*.

The differing accounts of the alleged finding of the diaries are described. He relates his experience of examining the handwritten volumes. The Trial is described and commented on. Various matters in relation to the diaries and how they were employed are examined in detail. There are testimonies from various individuals, such as the priest Fr McCarrroll, who accompanied the prisoner to the execution shed. There are pen portraits of various people concerned with the case, such as Sir Basil Thomson and Admiral Sir Reginald Hall.

The work in total comes to 183 pages. It looks very much like a book that presents *extensive arguments that the diaries are forged*.

LIST OF DIARY ENTRY DATES

At the beginning of 1966, the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising, Mackey published *The Truth about the Forged Diaries*. This work is less concerned with the context of the diaries and the use they were put to, but rather with the content of the handwritten pages and how he envisaged an ambitious act of forgery was carried out.

A list of diary entry dates is given where he believed there was ascertainable evidence on the handwritten page of matter having been interpolated. Various examples are given of innocent words and sentences having been changed so as to produce a scandalous meaning. Examples are given where he believed a forger had made a revealing mistake.

In hindsight it can be seen that Mackey made mistakes himself. Not all he wrote can be relied upon. Nonetheless, *The Truth about the Forged Diaries* is provocative and challenging. Authenticity proponents have picked off errors he made here and there in the study, but have shied away from a full scale debunking.

The Truth about the Forged Diaries comes to 95 pages in total. Given its length, it has been suggested it is a "booklet" or

a "pamphlet" rather than a book. In *The Catholic Herald* of 28th January 1966, a review by H. Montgomery Hyde appears under the headline, *A new book on the Roger Casement controversy*. A letter to *The Irish Times* of 18th May 1973 from Criostoir O Floinn refers to "*Dr Mackey's book of 1966*".

Because the booklet contains more actual pertinent substance related to the forgery question than the longer and better known *The Accusing Ghost* by Noyes, it surely deserves the respect of being referred to as a book.

BROADCAST SOUND TAPERED OFF

On the evening following the State Funeral for Casement's remains on 1st March 1965, Mackey was interviewed on the *Newsbeat* programme of what was then known as *Telefís Éireann*. As it happened, in the five minutes or so of the interview the matter of the diaries was not brought up. Strangely (or perhaps not), the broadcast sound tapered off and disappeared during the interview. After the interview finished, the sound just as mysteriously re-emerged.

That same month Mackey was invited to meet with President de Valera at his residence. De Valera attempted, according to reports, to dissuade him from pursuing the diaries matter. The point the President made was that, without the availability of absolute cast-iron proof of forgery, it was counter-productive to pursue the matter.

At a wreath laying ceremony at Casement's birthplace in Dun Laoghaire in May 1966, Mackey alleged that conditions had been laid down by the British Government prior to the agreement for the repatriation of Casement's remains.

These conditions were that the exhumation and removal of the remains be done in secret, that the state broadcasting media were not to refer to the diaries controversy, and that the state would in the future make no request for the transfer of the Diaries to Dublin, or call for an investigation of their authenticity (*Irish Times*, May 10, 1966).

A few days after this report Mackey took ill while out on a walk near his Dun Laoghaire home and he died a short time later. He was 72 years of age.

That Dr. Mackey's two books from the 1960s could be ignored in a list of books which *present extensive arguments that the diaries were forged* this writer finds extraordinary.

Tim O'Sullivan

Civil War ???

The Irish 'Civil War' was the strangest of all the Civil Wars that were ever fought. Both Armies wanted the same thing: an independent Irish Republic.

All other Civil Wars in the world were fought because there was strong disagreement in the population about what kind of government there should be.

The English Civil War was fought between Parliament and the Crown in the first instance over which should rule. When the Crown was defeated, it was continued between Parliamentary forces on the issue of religion, which had also been a component of the war between a united Parliament and the Crown.

It had all begun with a Scottish Presbyterian resistance to an attempt by the Crown to Establish the religion made up by Henry the Eighth as the uniform State religion of the two joined-up Kingdoms. Presbyterianism was very much to the fore in that phase of the war, and many Parliamentary documents were drawn up under its influence.

When the Crown was defeated and Parliament killed the King (Charles I) and searched for his son to kill him too, the son made terms with the Presbyterians and was recognised by them as a Constitutional Monarch (Charles II), rather than as a direct appointment by the Almighty. This led to war between the Presbyterian scheme of government and the free-ranging Biblicalist Protestantism of Cromwell's Army, which set up a form of direct Parliamentary government, on the understanding that the Almighty would guide it by inspiration and smooth the way for it.

The first public act of the Protestant colony in Ulster seems to have been the declaration of support of the Belfast Presbytery for Charles II as constitutional monarch, and the fierce denunciation of it by Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Milton.

Cromwell intended to pay back the Ulster Presbyterians by uprooting them and transporting them, but he never got round to it when he came to Ireland because his time was taken up with the Irish.

The theocratic Parliamentary Republic set up to rule the three Kingdoms did not

work out. It became a theocratic military dictatorship within a few years. When the dictator [Cromwell] died, the system became a shambles. The King returned without a shot being fired, and there was no serious discontent when he executed the Parliamentary executioners of his father, leaving poor John Milton bewildered.

I don't know if the Belfast Presbytery commented on this turn of events. It would have been entitled to gloat.

The Constitutional Monarchy evolved easily and naturally into an Aristocracy. The Aristocracy, learning from the experience of the Parliamentary Republic, retained the form of Monarchy as a governing device. Its parties, which ruled for two centuries, carried Civil War names: Tories and Whigs, or Cavaliers and Puritans (or Roundheads).

In 1918 the Whigs (which had taken to calling themselves Liberals) collapsed and their place was taken by Labour. But Labour, during the past 40 years, has had difficulties being anything but the Liberal Party under an assumed name.

The American Civil War had the object of forging the Colonies that had become independent of Britain into a Continental Super-state. The formal abolition of slavery was incidental to this endeavour. The only issue was the establishment of the Federation as a State from which particular Colonies could not secede, even though they were called *States*. When slavery was abolished by the Union, as a tactic against the Confederacy, it was not intended that the freed slaves should become citizens. Lincoln's policy was to send them 'home'. And there was no attempt made by the Union for a hundred years after victory in the Civil War to prevent the informal subjugation of emancipated slaves in the Confederate States. Indeed, half a century after Emancipation, the Democratic President, Woodrow Wilson, hailed the Ku Klux Klan as the saviour of the Union after Emancipation because it prevented the establishment of Black governments in the defeated Confederate States.

The Confederacy, after its defeat, became the Democratic Party. It had stood for state rights against the authoritarian Republicans.

In Spain the Civil War developed within

an unstable democracy between a social revolutionary movement which gave high priority to the destruction of the Catholic Church as a stronghold of feudalism, and a movement to restore effective state authority on traditional ground, but with a fascist element which made provision for working class rights within a national state system.

The first time I saw Spain, it was still fascist, and was usually described as *clerical-fascist* by prevailing liberal ideology, which held that the Catholic Church was a major source of fascism. The first thing that struck me was the timid demeanour of the few priests that I saw. They were nothing like the Irish priests of those times, who certainly regarded themselves as figures of authority.

When I looked into it, I found that the Church in Spain had been accorded a prominent place within the regime, but a subordinate place. The secular regime had supremacy over it, and this was by agreement with the Vatican. The State was the saviour of the Church, and the authority of the Church derived from the authority of the State. But Catholic symbolism and Catholic occasions seemed to be genuinely popular. (And there was pornography on sale in ordinary shops!)

The Catholic Church in Ireland had no official status whatever, apart from an observation in the 1937 Constitution that it was the main religion in the society. The State conferred no power on it. The relationship of the two was a realisation of O'Connell's ideal of "*a free church in a free state*". The Church had no authority but its own. And its own authority was subject to continuous renewal. It had no position in the structure of the State. And it was not a great landowner which exerted control through property. It had been reduced to nothing in property terms by the Protestant State system that held Ireland through the 17th and 18th centuries and well into the 19th.

The property-owning Church in Ireland was the State Church, the Anglican Protestant Church, which was both a great landowner, and a collector of Ecclesiastic taxes from the populace regardless of whether they were members of it. (That system continued until landlordism was severely curtailed, as a result of the Land War.)

The Catholic Church had no means of support, other than the will of the populace to maintain it. And its financial maintenance was secured twice a year by contributions that were voluntarily, and directly, paid to it, Parish by Parish. I

observed this all through my teens as an entirely irreligious Catholic.

The Russian Civil War began as a war between the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks over the social system and the mode of government, but was transformed by Britain into a war of intervention to overthrow the Bolshevik Government and restore a kind of Tsarist landlordism.

The Finnish Civil War was a dispute over social systems. It was fought with ferocity. Its outcome was a strong authoritarian Government, which co-operated with Nazi Germany when it came along, and joined Germany in invading Russia.

But the Irish 'Civil War' was a war without an internal cause. It was as much an anomaly amongst Civil Wars, as was the position of the Catholic Church in the Irish state in the general sphere of Church-State relations.

The cause of this 'Civil War' lay entirely outside the body politic within which it was fought. It was the British Government.

The British Army did not fire a shot in the Irish 'Civil War'. But the British Government said that its Army would take over Ireland again if the Irish did not fight against each other. And it armed a mercenary Army in Ireland—a paid Army—to make war on the Volunteer Army which had defended the Irish Government against it for three years.

It is usually said that the 'Civil War' resulted from the 'Treaty'. But it did not begin until seven months after the 'Treaty' was signed, and six months after it was accepted by the Dail by a small majority.

What the signing of the 'Treaty' did was split Sinn Fein into two parties.

Sinn Fein contested the Election of June 1921 as a united party, within which there were no discernable cracks. It won all the seats in the relevant part of the country, offering no point of leverage into which Britain could insert a lever. All Sinn Fein candidates were committed to the independent Government established in January 1919 on the foundation of the Election of 1918, and there did not exist in the country enough opposition to Sinn Fein to enable a single candidate to be nominated against it.

Britain did not recognise the elected Irish Government as a legitimate Government, and, since Britain dominated post-War Europe diplomatically, no other Government would recognise it

either. The Irish Government was "self-recognised".

Self-recognition accorded with the principle of "*national self-determination*", for which Britain had purportedly fought the War. But Britain explained, belatedly, in 1921 that *self-determination* only applied to nationalist movements in the states on which it was making war.

In July 1921 the Prime Minister, having failed to break the Sinn Fein Government by intimidation, undertook to negotiate a settlement in Ireland which it would recognise. The Irish Government sent a negotiating team to London. The Prime Minister sat them at the negotiating table, but did not recognise them as representatives of the Irish Government. It was left unclear who they were negotiating for, because Britain, still asserting that it was the legitimate sovereign authority in Ireland though it did not even contest elections in three-quarters of the country, could not recognise an Irish Government.

But the Irish delegates, right up to the last moment, saw themselves as representatives of the Dail Government, bound by its instructions, and forbidden to sign any Agreement without its express authority. But, at the last moment, under threat of immediate war if they did not instantly sign the document presented to by the Prime Minister, the plenipotentiaries signed on their own authority, and presented their Government with an accomplished fact—which it had to learn of from the British newspapers.

Both the terms of the document, and the way the delegates usurped the authority of their Government, divided the Sinn Fein party, and therefore the Dail.

*

The result of the split was not war.

It was the division of Sinn Fein into two parties: a Treaty Party and an Anti-Treaty Party.

The Treaty Party, in order to be recognised as a legitimate Government by Britain, had to meet as the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the British 1920 *Government of Ireland Act*, which had been rejected by the Dail. It did so in January 1922. The Treatyite leaders were then installed as the Provisional Government of Southern Ireland until an Election was held later in the year.

Treatyite Sinn Fein was accompanied in the 'Parliament of Southern Ireland' by a few Unionists, elected by Trinity College. Having been installed as the Provisional

Government, it returned to the Dail—not accompanied by the Treaty Unionists—and, having a small Dail majority, became the Dail Government too.

The Treaty Party did its best to lose the distinction between the *Provisional Government* of the Parliament of Southern Ireland and the *Dail Government*, which had Six County representatives, but there were certain things it could only do as the Provisional Government. This gave rise to continuous dispute and clarification, which is the small change of Parliamentary life.

The Dail had been anomalous in Parliamentary terms until January 1922. It had only one Party in it, the governing Party. In January 1922 it became a two-party assembly.

Party division is considered necessary to democracy in the medium of representative government. Rousseau denied that representative government could be democratic and he made his case. But representative government, conducted through party conflict with the parties being elected for a period of years by the adult population is what we call democracy. And it is possibly the closest thing to democracy that is functional in large states—in states where assemblies of the whole population are not possible.

So the Dail became a multi-party democracy in January 1922, and continued as such until June. There was a Governing Party, and an Opposition Party of almost equal size that was capable of becoming the Government.

The fact that the governing party had two conflicting sources of authority was coped with in practice on the Irish side of its authority. The Dail overlooked the fact that the administration had been installed as a Provisional Government under the British 1920 Act which the Dail had rejected. It allowed it to come back from the Parliament of Southern Ireland and act as the Dail Government.

The only reason that this arrangement did not continue was that the British Government asserted what it took to be its continuing authority in Southern Ireland, despite the 'Treaty' it had made with Southern Ireland, and ordered it to break the arrangement, or else be set aside itself by British action.

The matter came to a head over the Election required by the Treaty, which was held in June.

The two parties decided that it would not be in the national interest to contest the election against each other, and bring

disputes over the 'Treaty' to the fore. They had found a way of working the 'Treaty' that was tolerable to both sides.

They dealt with the Treaty as an accomplished fact, by treating the purpose of the Election as being to elect a Government, rather than to be a plebiscite on the Treaty. And the two Parties contested the Election on a Coalition programme, as the Unionists and the Lloyd George Liberals had done in the "*Coupon-Election*" of 1918.

The two Sinn Féin parties did not reunite for the Election. What they did was share out the Constituencies and urge their supporters to vote for whichever one of them was standing in each constituency. And they agreed further that, if they won the Election—and it was certain that they would win it—they would form a Coalition Government in which there would be a majority of Treatyites but the Anti-Treatyites would take on a number of Ministries.

The purpose was to reproduce the Dail division on the Treaty as a functional Party system which would maintain national unity, while accommodating the Treaty.

This Party agreement, including the provision for a Treaty/Anti-Treaty Coalition, which was known as the *Collins/De Valera Pact*, was formally ratified by the Dail.

What was the Dail at that juncture?

It was two different things at the same time.

It was whatever either side wanted it to be.

And the purpose of the Pact was to leave its nature unclarified while it got on with the business of governing.

*

The distinction between the Treaty Dail and the pre-Treaty Dail was not merely speculative, or "*abstractly ideological*", as Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin has suggested recently.

After the signing of the Treaty, Arthur Griffith replaced De Valera as President of the Dail. The President of the Dail was, by decision of the Dail, also President of the Republic. It was as President of the Republic that De Valera insisted that the negotiators sent to London should sign nothing without approval by the Government. Griffith decided to sign without the approval of the Government. He got a majority of one in the Government after the event, but that one had only signed the Treaty when it was put to him forcefully, around midnight on the night of December 5/6 that he would be responsible for Britain

waging all-out war on Ireland if he did not sign immediately. And he had only voted for the Treaty in the Government because he felt bound by his signature on the Treaty, even though it was extracted by intimidation. Having done that, he felt free to become an anti-Treatyite.

Then Griffith got a small majority in the Dail, and he replaced De Valera as President of the Dail. And President of the Republic? Well, Yes, and No!

There were things that he could do in the Dail only because he was also Chairman of the Provisional Government of the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the British 1920 *Government of Ireland Act*, which the Dail had condemned.

The Treatyite Government preferred to operate in the Dail, along with the Anti-Treatyites, rather than with slightly more than half of the Dail, meeting as the Parliament of Southern Ireland.

It preferred to do so, but it was also necessary for it to do so. It is unlikely that the Treatyite position would have held its majority if it had not done so.

It would have liked to gloss over the difference between the two, but Anti-Treaty Opposition did not allow it, and obliged it to admit that the difference was real.

Arthur Griffith on 28th February 1922:

"The Provisional Government has taken over the various Departments and amongst other things it must take over police. That is the policy to be pursued—to take over and form a police force. We cannot, as Dail Éireann, form a police force. We have not enough money to form a police force that would run for three weeks, but the Provisional Government can do it and has the money" (Dail Report, p124).

Mme. Markievicz questioned the Ministers about what they were doing for the Republic. Collins replied:

"The Deputy for College Green accused me of denying that this was the sovereign assembly of the Irish people. I did not deny that... this is the Parliament of the Irish nation... Now I am responsible as Minister of Finance to Dail Éireann for everything I put before Dail Éireann..., but I am not responsible to Dail Éireann for things I do in another capacity. I am responsible to the electorate..." (Ibid, 28 Feb, p101).

Kevin O'Higgins on March 1st:

"The country needs settled Government, and a Parliament that can legislate. And if the country is drifting into anarchy now owing to the concerning lack of jurisdiction of Dail Éireann, the British Gov-

ernment and the Provisional Government, those who shirked asking the country for a straight vote are responsible.

De Valera: Dail Éireann is supreme.

Michael Collins: The people are supreme"

(p147).

The Provisional Government did not act under the Constitutional authority of the Dail, and it had a source of actual power, military and economic, that did not come to it through the Dail. The Parliament of Southern Ireland, though it met only once as far as I know, was a powerful institution of Irish political life in 1922, and the post-Treaty Dail was an actual governing institution only because the British-appointed Provisional Government had a majority in it and acted through it as far as possible.

Collins's curious remark that "*The people are supreme*", even though the Dail wasn't, which he often repeated, seemed to have the meaning for him of justifying the dual capacity in which he operated—sometimes as a Dail Minister and at other times "*in another capacity*".

His attribution of responsibility for the condition of things in 1922 to those who "*shirked asking the country for a direct vote*" (i.e., a vote on the Treaty) is a curious shifting of responsibility to the non-governing minority.

It was by the will of the Treatyite Government that a vote of the electorate on the specific issue of the Treaty kept on being deferred for six months. The reason for deferring it was the condition of the country. The condition of the country was the result of the way the delegates, depending of Griffith and Collins, had made the Treaty. It is therefore hard to see how the holding of an election on the issue of the Treaty could have remedied the condition of the country.

The delegates sent to London by the Dail to negotiate a Treaty with the British Government were called *Plenipotentiaries*. The meaning of the word was that they had full power to act on behalf of their Government. This was an arrangement dating from Mediaeval times, when rapid communication over long distances was not possible, and when monarchical and aristocratic government was the norm. It was out of place in the political and technological circumstances of the 20th century, when the telephone and the telegraph were in use.

The reason it was adopted by the Dail seems to be that the British Government

would not negotiate with representatives of the Irish Government, and that calling the delegates "*Plenipotentiaries*" blurred the situation sufficiently for negotiations to take place.

*

The British Government saw that Black & Tan methods were achieving nothing for it, *au contraire*. It hesitated about launching an all-out war of re-conquest because its wars on Germany and Turkey, though victorious, had damaged it severely both in its internal make-up and its international standing.

Before the War it was a free agent. It was the dominant Power amongst the many Powers in the world, and would not have been doubtful about exerting its full force against an Irish rebellion. After the War it was a nervous remnant of its 1914 self, militarily beholden to the USA for saving it from defeat in its war on Germany, and heavily indebted to it financially. And the many Powers which in 1914 had created a confusion of international opinion which it could manipulate, had by 1921 been boiled down to one by the War, and that one had an influential strain of Irish nationalist opinion within it.

In 1921 the USA began to exert its dominance over Britain at the Washington Naval Conference. And in 1922 its war on Turkey (in which the USA had declined to participate) was resulting in a strong Turkish rebellion against the Treaty which Britain had imposed on it in 1919. Lloyd George in 1922 called on the Empire to come and teach the Turks a lesson. The Empire did not respond. The Turks won. The Lloyd George Coalition fell. And purposeful British Imperial action in the world came to an end.

That was the situation in which Lloyd George hesitated about launching all out war on the Irish, and searched for a kind of victory through negotiation with a group of people who had a following in Ireland. But that group of people, though called *Plenipotentiaries*, were delegates of an Irish Government, and were under instruction from their Government to sign no agreement with Britain without its authority.

The last meeting of the delegates with the Government was on 3rd December 1921. After that meeting, at which they gave no hint of an intention to act against their instructions, they returned to London and, during the night of December 5th/6th, they signed the 'Treaty' on their own authority without telling the Government

that they intended to do it, or informing it that they had done.

News of the signing came to Dublin from the London papers. The terms of the document were the terms which the Government had rejected on December 3rd.

At that meeting Griffith had said that he found the terms acceptable, but undertook to go back to London and try to improve them. He also promised he would not sign without the Government's approval.

Collins said nothing definite at this meeting.

The terms which the British insisted upon were not the only issue, nor were they the most important issue. The most important issue was holding the Sinn Fein Party together, if it came to making a substantial compromise with Imperial demands. That was De Valera's primary concern. Griffith agreed that the document, as it stood on December 3rd, would split the country, but did not seem greatly concerned about it. De Valera had brought some strong Republicans onside for a degree of compromise with the Empire with his *Document No. 2*. This would have recognised the Crown as the head of an association of states of which Ireland would be a part, but awarded it no place within the Irish Constitution. His intention was to put Britain, if it was intent on war, in the position of having to declare it on a fine point of distinction between two ways of recognising the Crown. Griffith and Collins apparently did not see any sense in this and, by signing in London, they prevented De Valera from making it the make or break issue.

When Griffith and Collins decided that further negotiation with the British would be futile, the normal thing for them to have done would have been to refer the matter back to the Government for decision. The understanding was that De Valera, as President, should take over when the delegates were convinced that they had achieved all that they could achieve. It appears that he would have taken over on December 3rd if Griffith had not agreed to return to London, and given an assurance that he would not sign without coming back to the Government.

What could De Valera have achieved beyond what the delegates had achieved?

That can never be known because Griffith and Collins decided not to transfer the matter back to the Government. But

the fact that he intended to take over the negotiations at the critical point knocks the bottom out of the idea that he was using the delegates as scapegoats for his failure.

Also, if the delegates had told the Government that they could take the matter no further, and that in their opinion war would result if they refused to sign the British document, decision of what to do would lie with the Government—and consideration of it would have been different in kind from what it was after the delegates came back after pre-empting decision by the Government.

The possibility of a split would have been minimised.

Griffith and Collins, however, decided, apparently on the spur of the moment, that the vital meeting should be held in London between themselves—acting as free agents—and the British Government, with the Irish Government finding out about it from the British newspapers. That course of action maximised the split.

It was proposed within the Irish Government that, after the delegates signed without its authority, that they should be arrested and charged with treason when they returned. But de Valera, with his concern for unity, did not want to go that way.

I cannot guess at what Griffith was thinking, when he took the lead in signing. He seemed to live in a world of political abstraction, with no aptitude for practical politics.

After signing, and getting his majority of one in the Government—with the support of the anti-Treatyite who had signed under duress—and despite his small majority in the Dail—he seemed to be eager to get on with carrying the split to the population at large.

Collins is reported to have said, when signing the 'Treaty', that he was putting his life at stake. That might have been no more than a bit of one-upmanship against Lord Birkenhead, who said he was putting his political life at stake.

If Collins meant it in earnest, then he knew that he was engaged in a *coup d'état*; that he was taking the game into his own hands—as Napoleon did in the chaos of the French Revolution—with the intention of imposing an authoritative system of order which would preserve the essence of things and enable him to get from Britain the power by which he would bring the Ulster Protestants to a sense that a new force of destiny had arrived and that they

must make terms with it.

As the strong man of the Provisional/Dail Government, he restrained the impulsive Griffith, delayed while building up his new Army, and cooperated with De Valera in allowing the evolution of a new system which had the Treaty behind it in more senses than one, and finally in calling an Election in accordance with Treaty requirements to form a post-Treaty Government—but an Election in which the Treaty would not be the issue put to the electorate.

Collins had indignantly denied signing the Treaty under any kind of duress, except “*the duress of facts*”, by which he seemed to mean the general circumstances in which an Ireland worn down by British government over centuries stood with relation to Britain.

But an ultimatum had been issued by the British Government to the Irish delegates—Lloyd George himself described it as an *ultimatum*—with the threat of immediate war if they failed to comply. And they gave the appearance of giving way to an ultimatum.

It might be that signing the Treaty warded off a war of reconquest in December 1921. There are reasons for thinking that it did not, and that—by complying in December in the way that they did—the delegates only made way for a more pressing ultimatum in July 1922—an ultimatum directed at Collins: to attack the anti-Treatyites.

Whitehall was very angry over the Collins/De Valera Pact. It was not just an electoral agreement made between parties, but was an act of survival of the pre-Treaty Dail, which threatened to make the Treaty innocuous. And it was an act of disobedience by the Treatyites—and by Collins against Griffith. And it was an act of sovereignty by a subordinate.

It seems that Whitehall understood that the Treatyites, even though they duly assembled as the Parliament of Southern Ireland—and got established in Provisional authority under British law—needed to operate through the illegal Assembly, the Dail, in order to secure their position.

They were, in a sense, entryists in the Dail, using it for an ulterior purpose.

But the Dail was, after all, their native habitat, and they were influenced by it, rather than influencing it.

Under anti-Treaty influence they arranged, in the interest of maintaining

national cohesion, to hold the Treaty Election, with the Treaty relegated to the background, to return a Coalition Government in which anti-Treatyites would hold a substantial minority of the Ministries.

That was rebellion in British eyes.

The Treatyites had been put in Office to break the national cohesion that obliged Britain to negotiate, not to reinforce it.

Collins had got his majority for the Treaty with his idea of “*freedom to achieve freedom*”, and his image of a *stepping stone* on the way to the Republic.

He undertook, during the six months of Provisional authority, to draw up a Constitution for the Free State which would lead it back towards the Republican position. The new Constitution was being finalised around the time of the Election.

If the Election had been held as agreed by the Dail, and a Coalition Government installed, the British purpose in making the ‘Treaty’ would have been largely negated. And, if Britain then decided to recover the situation by going to war, the war would have been more nakedly an act of aggression (being against a Government that it had itself put into power, armed, and financed), than in December.

Collins was called to Whitehall to account for his actions. I once came across a letter in the British archives from him to Whitehall, complaining about the obvious way they were pulling his strings. But I assumed that they did this deliberately to aggravate the situation.

Peaceful acceptance of the ‘Treaty’ in a way that left the national movement intact, and strengthened, would not have been in its interest—and, as one great British statesman explained; Britain has no friends in the world, only *interests*.

Collins returned from London on the eve of the Election and made a speech which has been said to have ended the Pact. What he actually said does not

warrant that description, and, in any case, it was not in the paper until the morning of the Election. Nevertheless, Collins is usually said to have ended the Pact and turned the Election into a plebiscite on the Treaty.

The Election was held on 16th June 1922. The new Dail did not meet until September. What it did meet, it did not quite know what it was.

Griffith had been prevented by Collins from calling the Election as a ‘Treaty Election’. And Collins certainly did not call it as a Free State election. It had the appearance of being a series of By-Elections held in the 26 Counties within a continuing Dail, leaving the Six County TDs in place.

The ‘Civil War’ was launched on 28th June, 12 days after the Election, while the Dail was in abeyance. It was launched by Collins with borrowed British guns, after he had been given an ultimatum by Whitehall that the British Army would act if he did not. Whatever was the case on December 6th, there is no doubt that on the 28th, when Collins fired on republicans occupying the Four Courts, he acted in response to a British threat.

The point is that the ‘Civil War’ was not caused by opposition to the Treaty.

The Anti-Treaty Party had made an agreement with the Treaty Party to operate a Coalition National Government with it, leaving ideological concerns over the Treaty aside.

This did not suit the British interest and, amidst the accidents that are always happening in politics, Whitehall found one which gave it leverage on Collins.

By making the Election Pact, Collins took his first step along the Stepping Stones back to the Republic—and he fell off.

Brendan Clifford

IRISH FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DECEMBER 2021

The Treaty that never was
Jack Lane
Armenians on the New Reality in the Southern Caucasus
Pat Walsh
Economics and the European Union (Part five)
Peter Brooke
A narrative of the Anglo-Irish negotiations in 1921
(Part four) *Irish Bulletin*
Putin speaks at Valdai Discussion Club meeting
Transcript

C O P, Methane And Climate

One of the great successes claimed by COP26 [the 26th Conference Of the Parties: significantly no mention of Climate or Environment, Ed.] was the pledge, led by the US and the EU, to significantly cut methane emissions by 30% by the end of the decade.

Methane is 80 times more dangerous than carbon dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere and more than 100 countries, including six of the ten largest emitters of methane, have signed up to the target set by the US and the EU.

While agriculture is seen a significant source of methane emissions, oil and gas drilling operations as well as some manufacturing processes are also responsible for producing significant amounts of the gas. However, Methane produced in agriculture dissipates more readily than industrially produced methane.

According to the *Guardian* newspaper Biden backed his pledge with new regulations issued by the US Environment Protection Agency designed to cut the methane emissions by about 75% from the hundreds of thousands of oil and gas wells in the US

This in turn reduces the obligation on the huge US agriculture sector to meet a 30% national reduction as its real obligation to meet that national target will be reduced by the amount the country saves from the reductions in these activities.

But what of countries that don't have the luxury of economies that operate to such alternative sources of methane? Will those countries find the obligation of meeting the 30% target falling exclusively on the shoulders of their agriculture sectors?

An arbitrary cross-the-board cut in methane emissions that fails to take account of the overall polluting profile of a country will inevitably discriminate against the agricultural sector of those economies which do not, or never have had, a significant mining, drilling or manufacturing base.

Surely, a more equitable way of handling the issue is to ensure that any reduction in methane takes account of the relative balance of any economy between polluting manufacture and agriculture.

Ireland's contribution to the world's carbon pollution problem has been almost non-existent as it doesn't have a significant manufacturing sector. By the same token it doesn't, and never has had, a methane producing oil and gas drilling sector that it can offset the 30% target against. Consequently, there is no alternative to the agricultural sector bearing the full brunt of the proposed 30% cut as its contribution to the so-called solution to global warming.

By the same token the replacement technologies that help other countries to maintain a more significant manufacturing sector cannot play the same role when it comes to Ireland as it doesn't operate to an economy that has such sectors.

What is significant to the Irish economy isn't mining, drilling or manufacturing but agriculture. But where is the alternative technology that can help sustain it in the same way that methane or carbon emitting drilling or manufacturing can be sustained in countries where it occupies a similar importance as agriculture to the Irish economy?

Eamon Dyas

Biden's 15% Tax Rate

"...So now that our tax rates will go from 12.5 per cent to 15 per cent, what are we going to do with the new 2.5 per cent that the State will get?

Here's where we can be inventive and treat that extra 2.5 per cent as the basis for a sovereign wealth fund... One of the impediments to starting up a company is finance. Banks won't lend to start-ups because start-ups are too risky. Too many companies fail, putting investors' money

at risk. The key, therefore, is to "de-risk" early investments.

... extra revenue ... could be invested on behalf of the people of this country in the form of an Ireland start-up fund.

...In 2020, Ireland collected net corporation tax revenues of around €11.8 billion at a 12.5 per cent rate (though effective rates may be lower). Assuming no leakage and that all those 2020 profits were booked at the higher 15 per cent rate being suggested among OECD members, with a total haul of €14.2 billion, revenue would jump by €2.4 billion.

...

Methane: Misinformation

The most pleasant animal on earth, the poor cow, is being blamed for ruining the world. This is part of a new wheeze—which is to move the Climate Change agenda at the Glasgow Environmental Conference away from CO2 emissions. This is a ruse organised by the US in cahoots with the EU and the UK. With the environmentalists in tow (for their own reasons), the trio is attempting to move away from CO2 because of the difficulties which restriction of CO2 emissions pose for a lot of countries (including big countries with lots of big, heavy industry), and onto a headliner (methane) that mostly hits farming and food, especially pastoral farming. Here is Rod Oram, a New Zealand commentator, on the methane ruse and implications from a Kiwi perspective:

"Until this year, most of the climate debate revolved around carbon dioxide, given vast long-lived emissions from fossil fuel use. While methane is a far more potent greenhouse gas than CO2, its short life in the atmosphere made it seem a less pressing problem.

But the escalating climate crisis, and the failure of countries to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions, is now intensifying the focus on methane..." (See: <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/the-harsh-climate-truth-on-methane>).

Here are some further random links on the methane ruse—

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/20092021/global-methane-pledge-glasgow-cop-26/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/30/cutting-methane-should-be-a-key-cop26-aim-research-suggests>

<https://www.systemiq.earth/etc-pathway/>

The methane ruse is a political smoke and mirrors diversion aimed by big fossil fuel producers and users to get the publicity focus onto a new baddie and away from smog and oil. While methane is an issue, this move is a ruse and intended as such, and utterly cynical in its design by the US, the UK and the EU.

Fergus O Rahallaigh

Why not create a sovereign wealth fund, as Norway has done, but use it for a seed capital fund to finance people's innovative business ideas? In this way we could nudge the country towards being a hub for enterprise, turning Ireland into a start-up nation, where innovation is fostered...

David McWilliams (*Irish Times*, 9.10.21)

OR

the Government could create large-scale State Enterprises for the benefit of all, in the areas where private capital has been loath to tread!

China Today

The Chinese Communist Party celebrates its Centenary this year and it has a lot to remember with pride. The country has recovered territory which was under the heel of murderous thieving Britain (Shanghai and Hong Kong) and Portugal (Macau) and survived the unspeakable atrocities of Imperial Japan. In the 1940s after the defeat of Nazism, primarily by the Soviet Union, and the surrender of Japan, public parks in Shanghai, during the Premiership of Clement Attlee had notices saying "No Dogs- No Chinese."

In Hong Kong the British established an armed Police Force patterned on the Royal Irish Constabulary. It was there that rubber bullets were first used. The RUC later used them to attack Pro-Democracy demonstrators in Belfast and "Londonderry". I really love British allusions to a "Pro-Democracy" Billionaire Media Mogul in Hong Kong.

China has much to thank its Communist Party for. And those who wish its people well should acknowledge that.

In claiming sovereignty over Taiwan, the Communist Party follows the policy of Sun Yat Sen in 1912 and Chang Kai Chek. So far as I know there is no analogy with Britain's impertinent claim to rule in Ireland. An Irish Priest in Taiwan, in a letter in the Irish Times recently, asserted that the Government in Taiwan was popular there. But he did not even suggest that Taiwan was a nation, with a nation's right to self-determination. I hope that the Chinese island can come to an accommodation with their fellow Chinese on the mainland without the help of an altruistic Uncle Sam.

I do not believe that the Chinese wish to make war with their near neighbours, nor their remote ones. They have been incredibly successful in establishing a prosperous, self-confident country.

What they do have to fear is the fate of Germany, whose progress after its unification in 1871 so alarmed the British that they determined that the country should be destroyed by a Russian steamroller, and a vengeful France by land, whilst the British Navy swept German merchant and naval vessels off the oceans. Virtually all wars plaguing the world to this day arise from what Roger Casement described as a Crime against Europe. That crime was preceded by decades of false propaganda like that currently being waged against China.

Donal Kennedy

The Church And The Republic

John Dolan writes (Echo, 16.10. 2021) that "Dev is squarely blamed for turning the new republic into a Church state, and many of the religious scandals of the past 50 years have been laid at his door". This is a strange accusation against someone who led the 'excommunicated party' in the 1920s when the state was clearly set on its 'church state' direction by the Free State parties and which set the tone for decades.

De Valera can hardly be held responsible as he was not in power during that formative decade and not being superhuman he and his party could not redirect the state in another direction immediately on coming to power. That had to wait for the Party to do so in the 1960s.

John Dolan goes on "Furthermore, his decision to turn inwards economically was disastrous for generations, and completely at odds with the outward-looking, EU-loving [sic!] modern Ireland". De Valera's policies in the 1930s created the basic industrialisation and housing structure of the state when the rest of the world was in the Great Depression. Our economy boomed.

John Maynard Keynes came to Dublin to support de Valera's economic policies (19 April, 1933). The simple reason being that it was the most sensible economic policy of the time. The UK itself had broken with free trade and introduced tariffs for the first time. De Valera did what the world was then doing. And he and his party changed when the world situation changed and joined the EU in 1973.

John Dolan does not seem to appreciate political context and some basic historical facts when commenting on de Valera.

Pat Maloney (Editor, Labour Comment, CORK)
Evening Echo, 23.10.21

Our President And NI Centenary

John Dolan (The Echo, 25.9.21) castigates our President for not attending the centenary event on Northern Ireland. The President's action is quite understandable. What is Northern Ireland, and what is there to commemorate?

Nobody wanted a 'Northern Ireland' entity. Edward Carson, leader of the Unionists did not want it because he explained that he did not want to rule over Catholics.

Britain, when conceding separate statehood to the greater part of Ireland, retained six counties within the British state. But, unlike Scotland and Wales, Britain did not allow these counties to function within the actual democratic, party-political life of the state they were retained in.

Britain set up a subordinate system of government in those counties and insisted for its own purposes that they must have a separate political system of their own, apart from the state system.

This arrangement put Unionists in charge of local policing which meant essentially Protestants policing Catholics for decades. This began with Catholics being driven from jobs they worked at, homes they lived in and businesses they owned. This attempt at ethnic cleansing affected thousands and resulted in the death of 498 people. Victims also included "Rotten Prods", mainly socialists and trade unionists.

Think of it! The UVF, or their successors, were deliberately placed in control of Catholic streets, villages and townlands for fifty years!

Northern Ireland was therefore based on a permanent sectarian conflict which eventually led to a 28 year war and that has proved to be the only way of ameliorating the situation.

The system put in place satisfied nobody. It was deliberately designed to foster discontent in both parts of Ireland. And it was completely successful in this, leading to the deaths of thousands over 28 years.

The President could not in all conscience be seen to commemorate such a history and has had the moral courage to say so and act accordingly.

Pat Maloney (Editor), Labour Comment,
Evening Echo, 2.10.21

Climate Change and COP 26

The Climate Change Conference held in November 2021 in Glasgow showed up the absolutely appalling hypocrisy among the politicians of the world in the matter of climate change.

Over one hundred jet-engined aeroplanes transported them to Glasgow. And many of the planes were not small – one African country sent over one hundred people with their President.

And, after their arrival, their first call seems to have been an off-licence—they were pictured in a newspaper with a trolley-load of alcoholic drinks. They made no apology for it; they told a journalist it was their national custom to have a party on occasions such as COP 26.

Indeed, in the media coverage it looked like one huge party, in spite of the current wave of Covid 19, which most of the attendees ignored.

Greta Thunberg of Sweden was there and she spoke a lot of good sense about protecting the environment. However, she was not speaking in the principal venues but in an “off campus” hall on the other side of the River Clyde.

The enormous numbers of those attending overwhelmed the hotels in and around Glasgow. To help cater for the crowds of party-goers there were two enormous Cruise ships moored on the Clyde, which is Glasgow’s harbour. Each ship was reported to have room for 5,000. The quality of the waste water and CO2 generated must have been huge – all carefully concealed from the public.

Greta Thunberg called out the politicians’ hypocrisy and lack of action on ‘climate change’ using as her best slogan “*blah, blah, blah, and blah!*”

Not all the politicians were happy, however, because COP 26 did not really achieve anything and indeed some of the CO2 reduction targets set up by the *Paris Agreement* were watered down and modified.

Amongst those who were unhappy, when leaving the Conference, were inhabitants of low-lying coral atolls in the western Pacific Ocean. They believe their island homes will be inundated by rising levels of the sea if global warming is not stopped. Sea-levels everywhere have risen in the past 10,000 years since the ice melted after the last ice age. Further sea-level rises may happen if the Polar ice caps were to melt.

But no human activity can help here, because we cannot stop volcanoes from erupting, nor forest wild-fires from spewing up ash and CO2 and other gases into our atmosphere—as has been happening for 10,000 years or more.

It is important to note that neither President Putin of the Russian Federation, nor President Xi Jinping of China attended.

WIND FARMS

Wind Farms are presently the in-thing in Ireland and throughout Europe. However, even though many wind farms have been developed, many have failed to win Planning Permission because of valid objections to the buzzing noise they create, and the perception of flashing sunlight from the windmill blades which disturbs people, their livestock and wild birds etc. And so wind farms are being proposed for sea areas. Denmark probably had the most windmills at sea. In Ireland along the east coast there is a large wind farm offshore.

The wind-farms, both onshore and offshore, are not economically viable and they make a profit for the developers only because the State pays them a massive subsidy. Much of this subsidy is collected from energy supply companies, who in turn collect it from their customers by way of what is called in Ireland the *Public Service Obligation (PSO) Charge*. Orwellian: it has nothing to do with *Public Service*; it is to financially help out the developers. And of course, the electricity generated is very useful to balance the energy needs of Ireland. But most of the electricity is still generated from coal, oil, gas and hydro-electric generators.

It does not stack up for the State, i.e. us, to finance by subsidy any more wind farms when they are not economically viable. There is another way and that is to have a multiplicity of small hydro-electric generating stations: instead of the multiplicity of wind-farms, have a multiplicity of water-mills.

There was a time when every river in Ireland was harnessed with water-mills to generate power for grinding corn, and for driving woollen mills, and flax mills, along with brewing and distiller’s mills, as well as flour mills. In William E. Hogg’s book, *‘The Millers and the Mills of Ireland’* of about 1850, he lists about 3,700 mills. Every river and every stream of any size had one or two or three mills. Several towns and villages in Ireland are named Millstreet or Milltown.

The old style millwheel has been replaced by the Water Turbine, which was invented in the mid-1830s by French engineer Benot Fourneman, and which is small in comparison to waterwheels. It can be installed in every accessible location. Even a small water turbine can generate hundreds of horsepower.

I well remember in the 1980s being shown around the famous Dripsey Woollen Mills by the owner, who proudly showed me his electricity meter which went forwards when his factory used electricity from the National Grid—and went backwards when his own Water Turbine produced a surplus of electricity, which he supplied to the National Grid!

And, he pointed out, when the factory was closed at night and at weekends: the river kept producing electricity, which he sold into the National Grid. The Dripsey River is a small river which is a tributary of the River Lee.

Switzerland generates nearly all its electricity from small generating stations all around the country. They are located both on mountain streams and on big rivers like the Rhine.

Ireland should encourage the building of very many small generating stations on all the streams and rivers and, at the same time, reduce consumption by not providing power for the “internet clouds”.

We have more than enough “cloud” already.

Let the “cloud” move to Greenland where, supposedly, the ice-cap is melting. If the ice-cap is melting, the melt-water will be able to generate power for the “cloud” in a very environmentally friendly way.

Michael Stack ©

Look Up the
Athol Books
archive on the Internet
www.atholbooks.org

[We introduce a new monthly feature.

Readers are invited
to send in their Trade Union news]

Organised Labour!

The incoming president of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (I.C.T.U.), Kevin Callinan (FORSA* Trade Union) has said that the time is right to push for a four-day working week in the public and private sectors.

"In his address to delegates attending the I.C.T.U. biennial delegate conference, which was held in Belfast on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, Kevin Callinan said he wanted to see trade unions "secure support from business and government North and South for private and public sector four-day week pilot programmes". (Irish Times, 26.10.21)

Mr. Callinan, also said the Trade Union movement should "*lead advocacy efforts for expanded access to remote, blended and hybrid working post-pandemic, alongside greater remote working protections*".

He said I.C.T.U. should also "*work with affiliate unions to drive campaigns for legislation on the right to disconnect and the right to flexible working, with strong enforcement mechanisms*".

President Callinan said the Trade Unions should produce and launch a research paper which would set out a new vision for the role of the Irish State post-Covid, and develop a single, common narrative to communicate this new vision.

BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT RACKET

In an address to delegates, Siptu Manufacturing Division organiser, Greg Ennis said the Government is continuing to turn a blind eye to the "*theft*" of hundreds of millions of Euro from State coffers as a result of bogus self-employment arrangements in place in a number of sectors.

Mr. Ennis said the misclassification of workers as self-employed was "*a scourge not only in the construction and the electrical trades*", but one that was also occurring with alarming regularity in the low paid food industries such as meat processing.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Much of the first day of the conference dealt with Northern Ireland, with political party leaders and representatives setting out their views on workers' rights.

"A private session on an I.C.T.U. executive report dealing with its internal disputes over the past two years, took place on Tuesday, to address a row involving the second-level teaching union A.S.T.I. (Association of Secondary Teachers- Ireland) over "spheres of influence" and the right to represent teachers in particular schools.

"While A.S.T.I. is an affiliate of I.C.T.U. in recent months, it has issued legal correspondence and warned of a threat of court action over a dispute and subsequent appeal process dealing with the "spheres of influence" issue in schools.

"The move by an affiliate to warn of potential legal action against Congress, the umbrella organisation for the movement, is understood to be unprecedented. (Irish Times-26.10.2021)

WEALTH TAX /PUBLIC SERVICE

The Government should introduce a wealth tax and require employers to pay more to fund better public services, Congress President urged.

Kevin Callinan called for an expansion of employer PRSI contributions as well as "*meaningful financial deterrence for environmentally-damaging activities*". He said this would generate adequate funding to provide "*decent public services worthy of a wealthy European nation*".

Mr. Callinan said employer social contributions in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland were way below the norm in other advanced European nations.

He said this accounted for the shortfall in investment in public services. He maintained that the tax burden fell too heavily on incomes, rather than wealth.

"Right now we spend far less on public services and infrastructure than similar European countries. Almost €3,500 less per person each year in the Republic, a total of over €17 billion in 2019 alone. The entire public spending gap between Ireland and its nearest EU neighbours matches, almost exactly, the shortfall in employer social contributions.

"That's why our vision of decent public services, worthy of a wealthy European nation, would be funded by an expansion

of employer contributions, increased tax on wealth rather than just incomes, and meaningful financial deterrence for environmentally-damaging activities." (Irish Examiner, 27.10.21)

Delegates backed a new programme put forward by the trade union movement called "*No Going Back*" which sets out a vision for a "*high skills, high productivity*" post-Covid economy.

President Callinan:

"The 'No Going Back' (programme) outlines how we can recover and rebuild an economy based on decent, secure well-paid work. A high-productivity, high-skills economy, supported by investment in education, childcare and infrastructure.

"An economy where all workers earn at least a living wage, and enjoy a European-standard social wage with robust social solidarity based on decent pensions and a strong safety net for those unable to work."

Michael Taft of Siptu told the Conference that Ireland had one of the highest rates of low pay in Europe.

He said the abolition of low pay must be one of the first goals. He said public services like housing, caring, teaching and healing were not commodities to be bought and sold like a piece of furniture.

Mark Walshe of the teaching union ASTI said "No Going Back" was a great slogan but asked how the aspirations in the programme would be implemented. He said industrial muscle was required. He called for reforms to the 1990 industrial relations legislation which ruled out political strikes.

Separately, *Financial Services Union* chief John O'Connell urged I.C.T.U. to officially endorse the application of an employee share option scheme in Bank of Ireland, AIB, Permanent TSB and Ulster Bank/NatWest which are either owned or part owned by the Irish or British government. The union also sought to have more worker directors on the board of the main retail banks.

* *Fórsa* is the Gaelic word meaning a 'force' or body of people, as well as meaning 'leverage'. With over 80,000 members, FORSA is the largest public service union in Ireland, and second largest Trade Union in the state.

MUSSOLINI concluded

and it cultivated the appearance of Fascism. If there is some profound depth to Fascism which it lacked, I do not know what it is and Professor has not told me. It seems to me that what it lacked was the opportunity to put its Fascist ideology into practice in the conduct of the state. It was thwarted by Fianna Fail, which dominated Irish political life until the end of the Fascist era in Europe, and held it within the sphere of Parliamentary democracy. State power was the missing element, and that was not something that Fine Gael rejected, but something which it failed to achieve.

“(Professor Garvin does not strengthen his case by asserting that the “more truly” Fascist tendency in Ireland was the Republican movement, on the ground that it sought armaments from Germany in 1939. If a military connection with a stronger power is held to be a determinant of political character, then we must Churchill to have been a Bolshevik in 1941-44.

“The IRA looked to Germany for armaments on the traditional basis that it was at war with England, not because it was Fascist. By that time, Republicanism had retreated to the margins of Irish political life.” (ibid.)

“In 1922: *The Birth of Irish Democracy*, Garvin suggests “. . . that the Blueshirt movement was “parochial”. . . (by which I assume he means ‘backwoods’). This is very misleading indeed. Two of the leading academics of the time, Michael Tierney and James Hogan, were among the active leaders of the Irish Fascist movement” (*Union Jackery: the pre-history of Fascism in Britain*, Athol Books 2005).

“In the mid-thirties, when there was a more active Republican presence in Irish politics, and when the issue of Fascism was being vigorously contested between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the Republicans were on the anti-Fascist side. A Republican contingent went to Spain to fight against Franco. A contingent raised by General O’Duffy, the first leader of Fine Gael, went to Spain to support Franco.)

“The Fine Gael literature of that era was well worth reading—much more so in a way than the Fianna Fail literature, which was relentlessly liberal and progressive. What Fianna Fail did in the practical art of politics was what counted most of all. But I

do not think it was conducive to vigorous, historically-grounded intellectual endeavour that the influential writings of Fascist Fine Gael intellectuals, such as Professor James Hogan should be disregarded.

Hogan, in his critique of Parliamentarism, held that Fascism was a functional form of democracy. (James Murphy, *On Hitler and Mussolini*, Athol Books-2002)

On August 14, 1995, the London Times illustrated an article on Fascism, with a large photo of De Valera and Mussolini in 1939, and the caption was:

“Irish premier Eamon de Valera (in silk hat, third from left) with Fascists in Rome in 1939; under his 1937 constitution he styled himself Taoiseach in imitation of Duce”.

Thus the leader of the Anti-Fascist Party is conjured into the leader of Irish Fascism. And there was no protest from the History Departments of the Irish Universities.

(In fact De Valera was in Rome for the Coronation of Pope Pius XII and spent most of his time at the Vatican. He had a brief formal meeting with Mussolini as was customary for statesmen visiting the Vatican, and he gave the British Prime Minister a report of it on his way home.)

Dublin Plaque

“Insofar as there was a notion of Fascism as a distinct economic form, it was the Corporation (that is, a public body in which both sides of the class antagonism of Capital and Labour were represented).

In the Europe disrupted by the Great War, 1914-18, and by the catastrophic peace imposed at the end of it, capitalism was not sustainable on the basis of what was taken to be its characteristic ideology and political system: liberal democracy. Fascism borrowed heavily from Bolshevism in the work of saving Capitalism from Bolshevism.

One reason for the current use of the word appears to be that many of the Left-wing ideologues and spin doctors were either ex-Communist Party, or other fashionable Left-wing bodies at the start of their careers, or are the children of members of such outfits, and the term of

disapprobation which comes naturally to them, now that they have become leading members of the capitalist elite of the world, is Fascist.

Since 1990, the word “Fascism” has been thoroughly debased in its Anglo-American-Ameranglian-usage. Washington and Whitehall are now, I think, on their tenth Hitler. Iveagh House and RTE trail along behind.

In March, 2021, a plaque in honour of the Irish woman who shot the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini has been approved by Dublin City Council.

Her memorial plaque is to be erected at 12 Merrion Square, which was her childhood home. The original motion to construct it was proposed by Independent councillor Mannix Flynn, and was later passed by the council’s *Commemoration and Naming committee*.

The motion said:

“It is now time to bring Violet Gibson into the public eye and give her a rightful place in the history of Irish women and in the history of the Irish nation and its people.”

The motion was passed unanimously! Incredible!

Before long, Dublin Corporation will be placing a plaque in Hume Street to honour Mamie Caden in her fight to legalise abortion.

Union Jackery: The pre-history of Fascism in Britain: Brendan Clifford. ISBN 0 8534 112X. 84 pages. ABM No. 25, October 2005. €10 £10.

James Murphy: On Hitler and Mussolini. With *Who sent Rudolf Hess?* (1923, 1934). Appendix: *The Jewish Problem in Eastern Europe*. Introduction by Brendan Clifford. 200 pp. Index. ISBN 0 85034 087 10. AB, 2002. €20, £15.

WINSTON CHURCHILL:

He wrote lovingly to Mussolini:

“What a man! I have lost my heart! [...] Fascism has rendered a service to the entire world [...] If I were Italian, I am sure I would have been with you entirely.”

Follow Callum Alexander Scott on Twitter @CallumAScott.

continued on page 29

MUSSOLINI continued

emergency, and that by their application the situation was saved.

In this matter an ounce of practice proved much better than a pound of theory, and in the interval that has elapsed since October, 1922, strikes have completely disappeared in the peninsula, the currency has been placed upon a sound basis, the budget has been balanced, and Italy has even paid a first instalment of her war debt to Great Britain.

The application of Mussolini's policy of "thorough" to the political institutions of his country has almost inevitably had the effect of completely destroying the reality of Parliamentary government. To such an extent is this true that the aphorism attributed to Louis XIV . . . "*L'Etat, c'est moi*", applies to the present position of Mussolini in the Italian Kingdom.

Whether this state of things contains within itself any element of permanence in can only indulge in vague speculation. If, unfortunately, yesterday's attempt on the life of the Italian Premier had been successful, what would have been the effect on the future of Fascismo? Would it have any chance of surviving? That would certainly be seen as very problematical.

But it must be admitted that the Dictator's record of achievement so far is truly an amazing one. We may add also that in the existing circumstances in Italy there is no other party or combination of parties capable of taking the place of Fascismo.

(*Evening Herald* editorial, 8.4.1926)

[The *Evening Herald* was the largest selling evening newspaper on the island and part of the *Irish Independent* group which supported the Treaty of Surrender and the regime that ruled following the defeat of the Republic in all its actions and violations.

"Why did the English State not become Fascist in the period between the two World Wars, when so many European States did?

"Because it was Fascist enough already."

(**Union Jackery: the pre-history of Fascism in Britain**
Athol Books, 2005)

Mussolini's Italy

"We call for the separation of the Catholic Church from the State, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property and episcopal benefices" (Il Popolo d'Italia, May 11th, 1919).

"These assertions by Mussolini himself show what was the character and scope of Milanese Fascism. Pro-Fascist publicists abroad, who have little more than a hearsay acquaintance with Italian affairs are rather prone to dilate on Mussolini's conversion from Socialism on the outbreak of the war. They do little honour to their hero, for it has been his proud boast that he was one of the first Socialists in Italy to see that the war offered a golden opportunity for putting the Socialist revolution into effect. Mussolini found the Popolo d'Italia as a Socialist paper, calling on the Italian proletariat to take part in the war, because once the armed masses of the populace had learned solidarity and comradeship at the front they could return with the rifles in their hands and enforce the postulates of the Marxist revolution.

This was always Mussolini's thesis and his paper remained avowedly Socialistic after the war. Therefore he was perfectly consistent with his past when he organised Milanese Fascism on Bolshevik lines.

When the Socialist workers occupied the factories in 1920 the *Popolo D'Italia* cheered them on and supported their cause. Mussolini even went to the length of sending emissaries to the Labour Confederation to offer it the help of his Black Shirts.

The occupation of the factories was a miserable failure. It was the culminating fiasco of the Socialist attempt to create a revolution in Italy. A Bolshevik revolution necessarily presupposes a proletariat without or means on the one hand, and on the other a wealthy privileged caste. But no such conditions exist in Italy. There is no capitalism such as is known in countries like Germany or Great Britain or America.

The great mass of the proletariat are peasants who have some vested interest or other in the land they till, for throughout all Central and Northern Italy, which are the only sections of the country where there is a sense of political initiative, small proprietorship or partnership in the land is the rule. And there is scarcely a workman's family that has not a savings deposit at the bank.

There is no wealthy clergy, and the State has no rich benefices. Such as they were, they were already largely in the hands of the

Socialists . . . By the fall of 1920, the red cloud of Bolshevism had already dissolved from the horizon. But Mussolini's Fascists had no yet appeared as the vanguard of a national revanche*."

(James Murphy, *On Hitler and Mussolini*, Athol Books-2002)

- A policy or movement aimed at achieving the return of a nation's lost territory.

Fascism in Ireland!

"There was a major Fascist party in Ireland in the 1930s, the Fine Gael party. This was the wing of the Sinn Fein party of 1918-21 which submitted to the British threat of "immediate and terrible war" in December, 1921, gained a narrow majority in the Dail for jettisoning the Independent Republic established on the basis of a landslide electoral victory in 1918, made a Treaty with Britain to establish a subordinate state within the British Empire in a relationship of allegiance with the Crown, won the election of 1922 with the British threat of force hanging over the electorate, and lost the 1932 election to the Anti-Treaty party, Fianna Fail.

"From 1922 to 1932 the Treatyite party was called Cumann na nGaedheal. After its 1932 defeat it re-founded itself in alliance with a small group of Independents, whose orientation was Redmonite (Redmondism being the political tendency which took nationalist Ireland into the Great War as part of the militarism of the British Empire), re-named itself Fine Gael and adopted a Fascist orientation and programme.

"It was confronted and defeated both in the ballot box and on the streets by Fianna Fail all through the 1930s and was thus compelled to revert to the way of Parliamentary democracy. I do not know if it ever made a formal repudiation of its Fascist phase and "expressed remorse" over it—which is the kind of thing it demands from others these days. I only know that it has never produced a historical account of itself in which its Fascist phase is made intelligible. Forgetting rather than knowledge is its way of coping with its origins.

"Professor Tom Garvin has written that the Fine Gael/Blueshirt movement lacked a "genuine adherence to core Fascist values" (1922: *The Birth of Irish Democracy*, p.22-Gill & Macmillan-1996). I don't know what that means. It was apparently Fascist. It was Fascist to all appearances

continued on page 30



LABOUR

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 39 No. 12

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

Signor Cosgrave to Signor Mussolini

“AN ODISIOUS ATTEMPT.”

Congratulations from the Irish Government.

President Cosgrave has sent the following telegram of sympathy:—

“To his Excellency Benito Mussolini, President of the Council, Rome.

“On behalf of the Government of the Irish Free State I have the honour to congratulate your Excellency and the Italian people on the Providential escape of your Excellency from the odious attempt on your person. Sincerely hoping that the wound is not serious, I send you my most earnest wishes for your speedy recovery. The infamous attempt has caused much indignation here.

“(Signed)

COSGRAVE.

“President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State.”

(*Evening Herald*, Dublin, 8.4.1926)

THE would-be assassin was “The Hon. Violet Albina Gibson, who fired at the Italian Premier, had previously threatened to assassinate the Pope, according to a statement made at Compiègne by Lady Ashbourne, her sister in law, to French journalists.

“Lady Ashbourne says she has not seen her sister-in-law for 18 months. Miss Gibson is a Catholic, and her state of mind has been aggravated by the troubles in Ireland of a few years back.

“So far as Lady Ashbourne knew, her sister-in-law could herself be described as a Fascist, and yet she had fired at Mussolini.” (*Evening Herald*, 8.4.1926)

“Much regret was expressed at the British Embassy in Rome, says Reuter, when news of the attack upon Signor Mussolini was received, and especially when the nationality of his assailant was disclosed.

“Sir Austin Chamberlain telegraphed his horror to Signor Mussolini and congratulated him on his escape” (*ibid*).

Gibson was from Dalkey, South Dublin, the daughter of Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Edward Gibson, she was raised in the colonial environment of Merrion Square.

Irish Political Review is published by the IPR Group: write to—

**1 Sutton Villas, Lower Dargle Road
Bray, Co. Wicklow or**

**33 Athol Street, Belfast BT12 4GX or
2 Newington Green Mansions, London N16 9BT
or *Labour Comment*, TEL: 021-4676029
P. Maloney, 26 Church Avenue, Roman
Street, Cork City**

Subscription by Post:

12 issues: Euro-zone & World Surface: €40;
Sterling-zone: £25

Electronic Subscription:

€ 15 / £12 for 12 issues
(or € 1.30 / £1.10 per issue)

You can also order from:

<https://www.atholbooks-sales.org>

FASCISMO AND ITS LEADER

(*Evening Herald* editorial, 8.4.1926)

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI is to be congratulated on his escape with trifling injuries from the attempt made in Rome yesterday on his life. Before the details of the deplorable occurrence became generally known it was feared that the crime might bear a political complexion. Fortunately, however, that is not so, for the shot at the Capitol was fired by a lady who is not of Italian nationality, and whose antecedents show that her mind is unbalanced.

As the originator and driving force of the movement styled Fascismo Signor Mussolini stands out as the most picturesque and dominating personality of our time. It is no exaggeration to say that he has transformed the face of modern Italy and made his country a force to be reckoned with by all the other great nations to an extent never before realised since the days of ancient Rome. When he came upon the scene a few years ago the cause of civilisation in the Italian peninsula seemed to be tottering under the blows inflicted by Bolshevism, and in Northern Italy especially the Communist doctrine of production and the ownership of property seemed likely to prevail. But whatever our Parliamentary theorists may think of the Dictator's methods, it is impossible to deny that they were well adapted to the particular national

continued on page 31