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Brexit Tremors!

One of the curious effects of Brexit is the way it has made West British elements in Ireland hate Britain and become Irish nationalists out of resentment at being let down by Britain.

For a long generation Fintan O'Toole, *Irish Times* supplier of pretentious gush, saw Europe and the world through the British prism and imagined himself to be cosmopolitan in outlook. He made a fortune giving the British media a view of Ireland that contented them. And then, having the Irish gift of the gab, he voiced their feelings for them in their moment of desperation over Brexit with a rhetorical extremism which they were unable to summon up themselves. But it was all to no avail. The English masses had got an idea into their heads in the mysterious way that is customary with them. The flow of Irish eloquence was lost on them. And it is in any case a futile form of eloquence, to which the media-popular term "*narcissism*" might be accurately applied.

(James Stephens said that he dreaded coming back amongst the Dublin *literati* and encountering at every turn people with mouths full of vocabulary.)

"*Narcissism*" has been freely attributed to Trump and to Putin, both of whom had policies to change things which they had some success in putting into effect. Trump had the object of ending the American attempt to establish itself as the Government of the world. Putin's object is to call a halt to the process of erosion of the Russian State, and he responded to the EU-sponsored anti-Russian *coup d'état* in the Ukraine by agreeing to a return of the Crimea to the Russian state.

Narcissism is an exercise in fantasy in place of action. Narcissus fell in love with his reflection in a pool of water. Perhaps he disturbed the pool of water by trying to kiss

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EU: *That Spat in Istanbul!*

Decades ago Henry Kissinger is supposed to have asked "*Who do I call if I want to call Europe?*" After the diplomatic incident in Istanbul a few weeks ago it looks like only Recep Tayyip Erdogan could tell him.

The incident concerned seating arrangements for a high-level meeting. Two golden chairs were set out for the two Heads of State and two sofas were set out for the second dignitary on each side. Von der Leyen was visibly nonplussed when she found there was no chair for her, and she had to sit on the sofa.

Erdogan is a *head of state* and meeting somebody of equal status from another state is pretty elementary in diplomatic terms.

The complication arises when the other side is not a state. But, in this case, there was at least the political President: the

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Brexit: Michael Noonan's Contribution to the Irish Response

Michael Noonan is a former leader of the Fine Gael party who held the post of Minister for Finance at a difficult time from 2011 to 2017. In December 2016, against the background of Brexit, he acted to align the Irish State more fully with the EU by rejecting a British House of Lords Report on Ireland. That intervention, which had the effect of ending a state of

Irish neutrality as between the UK and the EU, has received little public attention in the intervening period. Yet Noonan's action in 2016 was the determining event of the Irish response to Brexit.

This article will examine the context in which the House of Lords Report was rejected, the implications of the rejection

and an attempted fight back against it. Understanding those matters is important for understanding post-Brexit Ireland—more accurately, for allowing post-Brexit Ireland to better understand itself.

Being a practical politician and loyal to his party and, no doubt, his party colleagues, Noonan has not engaged in public commentary on Brexit or his role in it—that is a job for others—but, as Minister for Finance, he saw to it that public funds

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

Trade Union Recognition

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himself in it. If so, that was the extent of his action on the world.

O'Toole, when Brexit was at issue, described it in terms of nationalist insanity—nationalism and insanity apparently being synonymous in his mind. But Brexit happened, and England is rather pleased with itself just now. The present leader of the Labour Party, who kept up a campaign for a second referendum to negate the first until that approach caused the Party to lose its most solid block of support in the General Election, does not even want to talk about it anymore.

Labour might have reduced Brexit to little more than a token if it had not opposed Teresa May's deal. But Starmer wants no discussion of that. He has now become a Jingoistic flag-waver for Brexit Britain. And O'Toole has apparently become an Irish nationalist supporter of squeezing Northern Ireland out of the UK.

He was a superficial extremist of the

British Europe illusion and now, in resentment at the loss of that illusion, has become a superficial extremist in support of an EU punitive/Irish nationalist extremist use of the Protocol to get the North out of the UK.

His article in the *Irish Times* of April 27th is headed *Johnson's Dangerous Gibberish Is Surreal But It Is Also Dangerous*. It begins: "*It's not when Boris Johnson is lying that you have to worry. If he's lying, that just means he's still breathing. No, the real danger is the gibbering. It's what he does when he can't be bothered to think of a lie...*" etc. But recently he took the trouble "*to make up two wild untruths*", and then "*gave up and let the stream of consciousness flow*".

Over the decades O'Toole idolised an England that had no actual existence, and so when he came to hate it he did not know what it was, and he sees its normality as an aberration.

The vast majority of what is said in Parliament consists of familiar clichés that are batted to and fro. It is dead language.

Virtually everything said in Parliament about Northern Ireland, whether in war or peace has been cliché. Cliché is the reassuring stuff of English political normality. That is its ballast. Some politicians say nothing at great length with considerable articulacy, others do it in other ways. The operative reasons why things are done are, according to Kipling, mumbled in obscure places in schoolboy slang in "*the argot of the Upper Fourth Remove*".

Johnson's first lie, according to O'Toole, is that the Northern Ireland Protocol was never intended "...to create any kind of barrier down the Irish Sea'..." As proof that it was intended to establish a barrier between Northern Ireland and the rest of Britain, he refers to *Regulation 2015/2446*, which is 557 pages long. The length of the regulation throws *prima facie* doubt about the possibility of its being a clear statement that there would be a Customs border cutting off Northern Ireland from the state which provides it with everything except its party politics.

Johnson's "*second fabrication*" is that it was the EU, and not the UK, that set the precedent of invoking the suspension of the Protocol rules allowed by Article 16. But then, in the second sentence following, O'Toole concedes that "*The EU Commission did very stupidly invoke article 16 ...on January 29th*".

Whether it was stupid or not, it is a fact that the EU did invoke it. And Johnson, in seizing on that fact as setting a precedent, did what any British statesman would have done.

The incompetent President of the Commission was compelled to cancel the implementation of what she had done. That did not mean that she had not done it. If she had been sacked for abusing her authority, the invoking might have been de-invoked. But that was not done.

As to what was "*intended*" by the Protocol: the different parties to it had different intentions. The EU Commission may have been intending to punish Britain for leaving by breaking up the UK. Fine Gael may have been thinking that it would succeed where Collins and De Valera failed, and would bring in the North—the North which it did not really want in! The British intention was to get the Brexit Referendum

result implemented against the will of the Parliamentary majority that was preventing it—and that was trying out the possibility of establishing *government* by Parliament (as opposed to the elected Prime Minister and his Ministers). This was a thing which was tried and failed around 1650. Parliament, facilitated by an innovating Speaker, was intent on preventing a Brexiteer Government from governing, and also from calling an election (a traditional prerogative of Government)—but Parliament did not itself have the coherence to unseat the Government and set up another one in its place.

Johnson made a deal with the EU with the intention of ironing out any defects when sovereignty was resumed, and he held out against Parliament until the Scottish Nationalists broke ranks by allowing the Government to call an election. Then he won a clear majority in the election, and set about putting things to order in the British interest.

It was perhaps fortunate for Johnson that Covid struck so soon after Brexit was accomplished. He acted decisively in pursuit of a vaccine while the EU dithered. And then the EU decreed that NHS medicines come under the Protocol, and that Britain should only supply Northern Ireland with medicines which were approved for use by the EU.

We said repeatedly during the Brexit campaign that the British purpose was not simply to restore its own independence but was also to restore Europe to the condition that would enable the traditional Balance of Power approach to become functional again: Divide and Rule. Unity in Europe is experienced as suffocation in Britain.

So far Europe has been playing into Britain's hands. Its founders kept Britain out for good reason. Their successors two generations on are disconcerted by the loss of Britain. And the Irish Government, especially through its Fianna Fail element, is doing itself no good by trying to play the part of intermediary between the EU and Britain, and by encouraging doctrinaire Liberal intransigence by the EU towards its new nation-states in the East.

* * *

Proinsias de Rossa, former leader of Official Sinn Féin/IRA, asks in a letter to the *Irish Times* on April 23rd, "*Why Is A United Ireland Necessary?*" It might have served some useful purpose if he had asked that question fifty years ago, before the War was fought. Maybe the

England's Secret!

Giovanni Sagredo, the Venetian ambassador to Elizabeth's court wrote 'No government on earth discloses its own acts less and knows those of others more precisely than that of England'.

Contributed by **Jack Lane**

cleaning women at Aldershot Barracks would still be alive. [They died in a botched operation conducted with the tendency with which de Rossa was affiliated, Ed.]

De Rossa now laments over "*the many thousands who died during the civil war that raged in Northern Ireland from 1970 to 1998, now euphemistically and callously called 'The Troubles'.*"

In what sense can it be called a *civil war*? Does he mean that it was a war that disturbed the unity of the British Isles?

It was certainly not a civil war within Northern Ireland. The Provisional movement did not declare war on the Stormont Government, or on the Unionist community. It declared war on the Government of the state which set up the Northern Ireland system and which was maintaining it.

The Government of the state tried, in 1974-5, to devolve the War, and change it into a local civil war. It tried to "*Ulsterise*" the War—to make it a war of Catholics versus Protestants—by circulating the rumour that Britain was preparing to withdraw from the Six Counties.

The Provisionals refused to play this game. They continued the War against the State, until the State undertook to restructure its Six County region.

The nature of the reconstruction was made crystal clear by the terms of the 1998 Agreement, but de Rossa, living out the Official fantasy of the 1970s, manages to misunderstand it:

"Surely community reconciliation in Northern Ireland is the urgent task we should be engaging with as a 'noble aspiration'. We need to reformulate our rhetoric, both nationalist and unionist, to reflect what we agreed to in the Belfast Agreement."

What was agreed in the Agreement was separation, not reconciliation. That is why it works.

Every attempt at a settlement based on

the principle of reconciliation acted as a form of aggravation. Garret FitzGerald did it repeatedly, always with the same result.

The Agreement assumes the existence of two irreconcilable national bodies. The structure it set up enables them to take up Departments in the devolved regime administration independently of each other and without forming a collective Cabinet.

De Rossa says that the task of political leadership in Belfast, London and Dublin is "*to harness it [the Agreement] to the task of reconciliation rather than trying to outflank each other*".

But "*trying to outflank each other*" is what political parties do. Enabling them to go about it by political manoeuvre was the condition on which peace was made. That was our analysis of the Agreement in 1998, and that is how it has worked out.

It is not clear how they might go about "*reconciling*" instead of trying to outflank each other as parties do in democracies. Northern Ireland is not, of course, a democracy. But, because of the separating and conflictual structure of the Agreement, it now bears more resemblance to democracy than it ever did in the past.

* * *

The Democratic Unionist Party leader, Arlene Foster, has been given notice to quit by elected members of the Party. One reason for the discontent seems to be that she shows a slight inclination towards reconciling. She is not sufficiently enthusiastic about fighting her corner. She came to the DUP from the middle class Ulster Unionist Party, after Lord Trimble had set it on a course of decline, and she does not have the Paisleyite stuff in her.

The Ulster Protestant community has been the most constant social body in Ireland during the past half century. In fact it is pretty well what it was on its first appearance in political affairs in

1649, when it condemned Cromwell for executing the King and was denounced by his Secretary of State, John Milton.

Northern Ireland has been in flux for two generations. It no longer stands by the values it held in 1970, but Unionist Ulster does. The idea of homosexual marriage, which seemed a mere absurdity to people in general fifty years ago, is now understood to be a universal human right in nationalist Ireland. Protestant Ulster continues to regard it as not merely absurd but as blasphemous.. Under the terms of the Agreement it is entitled to prevent it from being introduced in Northern Ireland. Nationalist Ireland, with Sinn Féin at its head, regards this as an appalling infringement of human rights, not to be tolerated in a civilised country, and it appealed to Westminster to overrule the Agreement by an assertion of state rights and impose it on the Unionists. And likewise with the freer abortion introduced in the South. And Arlene Foster seems inclined to be reconciled on

these matters.

Ms Foster has also come under pressure for tolerating the State Funeral given to Bobby Storey. She certainly objected strenuously, but the Executive continued to function.

Perhaps the most important factor in the DUP determination to elect a new leader is the opportunity this provides to extract some change in the way Brexit is operated. In particular, the determination is not to be divided from the UK market. It should be remembered that the Protocol was urged on the Ulster Unionists with the argument that it would place them in the unique position of having the best of both worlds. This was a position accepted and argued by Arlene Foster in the first instance. But, in the event, the EU has chosen to implement it so as to raise the greatest possible obstacles between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. The question now is whether the Protocol can survive the change of leadership.

to a 50/50 male/female rule. Where did this come from?

If gender is a criterion for membership why not religion, class, age, race, LGBT, the north/south divide in Europe etc.

Why is ability, and commitment to the EU project, no longer sufficient?

This changes the very nature of the Commission's relationship with Member States. The EU Constitution lays down that Member States decide who the membership of the Commission will be. This has hitherto been the sole prerogative of the Member States who naturally chose their most suitable candidate. Not any more.

Ursula von der Leyen unilaterally changed the existing constitutional arrangements.

The débâcle over Phil Hogan illustrated very well a result of this new arrangement. The state was entitled by law and all precedent to replace him as it chose after he resigned, and not have anyone else decide or interfere. But von der Leyen insisted on more than one candidate being submitted by the Irish Government, and declared that one of these had to be a woman. As a result, a nod being as good as a wink, the obvious candidate, Minister Simon Coveney, withdrew his candidature.

A similar situation had arisen with France. These insults to Member States do not go unnoticed. States have memories, even the Irish Government, despite its craven servility, has one!

The Belgian, Charles Michel, representing the Member States of the EU, may have quite deliberately acted as he did in Istanbul, in view of the power-grabbing moves of von Leyen. Faced with the two chairs, he stood his ground by sitting on the chair provided. He understood very well that the Chairman of the Council of Ministers is the effective Head of State of the European Union, insofar as there is one. And, indeed, his predecessor, Donald Tusk, very much behaved as the head of the Union during the Brexit negotiations.

The relationship between the Commission and Member States is the most crucial and delicate relationship in the EU structures. The Commission was the new kid on the block and the unique instrument in the whole Europe Project. It was a supranational body that was intended to be the instrument for creating an integrated Europe.

Naturally the existing nation states were not too enamoured with this structure and de Gaulle showed early on the problems that could ensue. He wanted a Europe of

Spat in Istanbul

continued

person elected by the Council of member states to be its head. That is the nearest thing the EU has to a head of state.

That is what *Charles Michel* is, as *President of the European Council*. And that is who Erdogan quite correctly treated as his equivalent.

It had nothing at all to do with gender!

The European Council is made up of all the heads of state or heads of government of the 27 member states. They, *inter alia*, appoint the *President of the Commission* who, in the nearest equivalent that can be made with a normal state, means the head of the Civil Service.

But in this case it was “*a revealing snub*” according to the *Irish Times* (10.4.21) and this is so, it claims, because “*Von der Leyen and European Council president Charles Michel are of equal rank in the EU hierarchy.*” This is nonsense.

In fact if the *Irish Times* looked at Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union, the Commission actually ranks fourth in the “*order of precedence among dignitaries of the European institutions*” — behind the Parliament, the European Council and the Council of the EU. If there was a snub involved, it was Von der Leyen who snubbed

the other EU institutions by being there in the first place without them — if protocol matters as much it seems to do.

A Commission spokesman, Mr. Marmer, went even further than the *Irish Times* claiming, when asked about the institutional order, that Von der Leyen and Michel “*are both presidents of European institutions, and therefore they have the same protocol rank.*” That means there should have been four more EU Presidents at Istanbul.

But protocol was not the issue and the *Irish Times*, like many others, saw it as a *male versus female* issue because —

“many others, knowing Erdogan's obsession with status and macho one-upmanship and the quasi-monarchical trappings with which he surrounds himself, struggle to believe that Erdogan, whose circle is male-dominated, was aware that at the meeting he would be scolded over Turkey's withdrawal from a landmark treaty on violence against women” (ibid).

Does this mean that Erdogan would have put Merkel, Thatcher, Elizabeth II on the sofa? Or Mary Robinson, Mary MacAleese or a host of other female heads of state?

If the issue is to be seen through a gender prism of male versus female then Von der Leyen has shown she has this obsession in reverse. She has, without any legal authority whatsoever decided that membership of the Commission should be according

the nations, not the integration envisaged in the Treaty of Rome and, coincidentally, made a chair the issue by leaving the French one empty for a while to make his point – creating the policy of the ‘empty chair’ later copied by John Major.

In other words, the Commission had to make a case for a Europe at the expense of the existing nation states, but it could not simply usurp the authority of the existing states. There was a need for a lot of constructive and creative ambiguity and tension to make it work. It would be a long haul to actually replace them.

Before the European Union process was started, when those states were at very low ebb following their demise after participating in two world wars launched by Britain—the crimes against Europe as Roger Casement would have described them—it was relatively easy to accept some element of supra-national authority plus American dollars.

And, of course, the process of union was started in the context of the competitive challenge provided by the Soviet Union with its alternative to a Europe with its whole social structure in ruins. The challenge was to make a drastic improvement or be superseded. Hang together or hang separately made sense to the states.

In this context, the Commission was very successful in a low key hardworking way that was making headway by the legislation and policies it proposed. Policies which nation states implemented if they wished, or which they could not block when the policies made sense across Europe.

It was a delicate relationship with the states and sometimes a very fraught relationship as de Gaulle showed. But the arrangement worked and was so successful that even one of the greatest enemies of the European project, the UK, joined—on the basis that, if you can’t beat them, you had better join them.

But the UK kept up an unrelenting attack on the Commission, regarding it quite rightly as the key instrument that made the European project a going concern.

Now the Commission, if left to Van der Leyen with her ideological hobnail boots, is into self-destruction by making unilateral rule changes undermining the prerogatives of Member States. It usurps the traditional tried and tested interaction between Member States and the Commission – it unhinges that relationship.

This will inevitably encourage the States to act more as an inter-Governmental body and not as a Union.

They may come to regard membership of the Commission as just an ornamental

prize for some of its redundant politicians – young, old, male, female or whatever.

It will be a Commission and an EU but not as we know it or as planned for.

Jack Lane

Brexit: Michael Noonan’s Contribution to the Irish Response

continued

were set aside for capital investment in the infrastructure of the ports and airports as part of his Government’s strategy for coping with Brexit.

Initiating those measures was nearly as important as rejecting the Lords’ Report. As adverted to in an editorial in the April *Irish Political Review*, the transport connections between Ireland and the Continent were cut off following the Williamite wars in the seventeenth century. Re-establishing those routes, in that sense, represents a welcome rebalancing of historical relationships as well as a vital component of the Irish response to Brexit.

Since the broadcast of *The Great Irish Sell-Off* on RTE television on the 9th of January 2017, a reflex has developed that, whenever Michael Noonan’s name is mentioned, the phrase “*who brought the vulture funds to Ireland*” is added. That damning association was aired on national radio as recently as 9th April 2021.

I recently watched the documentary on the RTE Player and found it to be a serious piece of television journalism. The application of the US method of resolving bad debt in Ireland and the news that €200 billion of Irish assets are owned by North American vulture funds are a real cause for concern.

While it presented compelling evidence, I’m not sure that the programme-makers— Ian Kehoe, the then editor of the *Sunday Business Post*, and RTE Producer Maire Kearney—placed the causes of the problem in their proper context.

In any case the operations of vulture funds are a large subject which I plan to examine at another time.

Since there is a long-standing division of opinion in Ireland on how close the Anglo-Irish relationship should be, it is reasonable that those on the Anglophile side should be facilitated in making their case. However, using the disproportionate influence that Anglophile commentators enjoy in the Irish media to impugn public figures deemed hostile or unsympathetic to the British worldview, is a different matter.

If newspaper editors and controllers of broadcasting are allowed to manipulate the coverage of current affairs so that someone like Michael Noonan is unfairly stigmatised, then we are dealing with an abuse of power. The mobilisation of public opinion in opposition to such malpractice can be a slow business but the Irish electorate appears to have a good nose for when it is being manipulated.

Reference to an event relevant to this article, the publication, at a critical time, of a letter from the *Irish Political Review Group* in the *Irish Times* of 5th December 2016, has been omitted. I will cover it briefly in a future article.

Noonan’s action regarding Brexit has not been much written about, although it is covered in a somewhat disparaging manner in a chapter of Tony Connelly’s book on Brexit (*Brexit & Ireland*, Chapter 4). Other evidence in the public domain of the significance of the rejection of the Lords’ Report includes a report of a major policy shift in the Irish civil service just before Christmas 2016, an expression of indignation from a security commentator well known for his Anglophile sympathies, and a failed media campaign, led by the *Sunday Business Post*, aimed at restoring the relationship with Britain.

The report of the shift in the civil service was made by Niamh Lyons on RTE Radio (Morning Ireland, 16 December 2016), when she reported that in the many Government Department that she had visited that week, the big talking point was: “*Distance from Britain!*”

The indignant response, from Declan Power during a panel discussion on RTE Radio in January 2017, was to the effect that Noonan’s rejection of the House of Lords Report, after all the effort and expense devoted to it, was an outrage.

The media campaign was based on a case argued over many months in 2017 by a former Irish Ambassador to Canada, Ray Basset.

**HOUSE OF LORDS
REPORT ON IRELAND**

The Referendum result in Britain on 23rd June 2016 disrupted a strategy supported by successive Irish Governments: close alignment with Britain in furtherance of the Good Friday Agreement in tandem with the revision of Irish history and other manifestations of an Irish return to the British orbit.

In a state of shock after the Referendum, Enda Kenny's Government attempted to strike a course midway between London and Brussels, keeping very active communication channels open with both sides. Standing in for Kenny in the Dail on one occasion, Simon Coveney stated that Ireland will be neutral as between the UK and the EU in the Brexit negotiations ('*State will not take sides in UK-EU Brexit talks, says Coveney*', Irish Times, 8th December 2016).

In practice, Kenny leaned to Britain more than Europe. Following his first meeting with Michel Barnier in October 2016, he informed the media of the Frenchman's "*strong appreciation of our close historical, political and economic ties with the UK*"—not a message that Barnier would have welcomed. A month later a Government memo that had been leaked to the press referred to "*the approach Ireland must take to building alliances to ensure that Britain maintains as close ties as possible to the EU*" (Irish Times, 14 November 2016). It seems that Government officials were being told to develop a position based on an exaggerated notion of what Irish diplomats could achieve.

In the fourth chapter of his book, dealing with the diplomatic exchanges between Dublin, London and Brussels in the latter months of 2016 and the first month of 2017, Tony Connelly treats the Kenny Government very leniently. He describes the close links that had developed between Irish and British civil servants, and how both groups shared a common antipathy to Brexit (p. 71).

Referring to the decision of the House of Lords Select Committee on the EU to produce its first Brexit report on Ireland, he says, "*There was, however, some hope from an unexpected quarter: the British House of Lords*" (p. 76).

Why view that initiative as a sign of hope? It was clearly in the national interest of the UK in those months to undermine the solidarity of the EU-27 and that was the goal being pursued by the highly competent politicians leading the Select Committee—Lord Jay of Ewelme, a former career diplomat, and Lord Boswell of Aynho, a former Conservative Agriculture

Minister. Their decision to focus on Ireland was a hopeful development only if you believe that helping the British to steal a march on the EU in the circumstances of Brexit was in Ireland's national interest, hardly a credible position.

Portraying the motivation of the Lords in altruistic terms Connelly sees the Select Committee, "*pushing against the time-honoured institutional neglect of Northern Ireland by the British body politic*" (p. 77). How noble of their lordships! Connelly's unjustifiably sympathetic account of the House of Lords initiative continues as follows:

"All told, the Committee took evidence from 42 stake-holders. They included professors of history, politics and immigration law, as well as politicians from Britain and both sides of the border, business leaders, union groups, community and cross-border organizations, the farming and tourism lobbies, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Ambassador Mulhall and many others. They were questioned in detailed and often sympathetic hearings in London, Dublin and Belfast. They painted a broad canvass of implications and anxieties. One particularly important session was the joint appearance of John Bruton and Bertie Ahern, two former Taoiseach who had never shared a platform before" (p. 78).

Regarding Bertie Ahern's presentation he states:

"He acknowledged that the new arrangements would have to be negotiated between the UK and the EU, but, he added, 'There is the small matter of an international agreement – the Good Friday Agreement – which says different ...' (p. 79).

And there we have the nub of the issue. Ahern is recommending a bilateral relationship between Ireland and the UK on the Good Friday Agreement that is outside of the UK-EU relationship. This played straight to the end result that Jay and Boswell were hoping for.

The Select Committee Report was duly published in December (2016) and duly contained a carefully worded proposal that the only way to prevent a hard Border from being introduced was: "*for the UK to remain in the customs union, or for EU partners to agree to a bilateral UK-Irish agreement on trade and customs*" (Report, Conclusion 7, p. 65).

In describing Michael Noonan's rejection of the Report, Connelly keeps with the tenor of his general approach. Reading between the lines, the following paragraph speaks volumes about how out-of-the-ordinary Noonan's action was.

"The rejection of the report's central findings was as swift as it was brutal. Although he acknowledged the Committee's work, Michael Noonan, the Minister for Finance, said Ireland and Britain could not do deals 'on the side'. Enda Kenny at an EU summit in Brussels four days later, said bluntly that a bilateral deal was 'not available in the context of Ireland being a member of the European Union negotiating team'. Dara Murphy, accompanying the Taoiseach to the summit, described the idea as 'nonsensical' ..." (p. 80).

Nothing is said about why Noonan was the Minister who responded to the publication of the Report. Previously, Enda Kenny and Charles Flanagan (the Minister for Foreign Affairs), both ardent supporters of the close relationship with Britain, had handled the Brexit issue. Why was the Minister for Finance suddenly the Brexit spokesman? And why was there no statement from either Kenny or Flanagan on the subject for several days afterwards? The input from Dara Murphy is also interesting; it suggests that Noonan had at least one ally in the Government.

WHY NOONAN INTERVENED

One possible interpretation is that Noonan's intervention was just normal business, that the Lords' proposal was impossible in the circumstances, that he was simply expressing a position that had already been agreed in Cabinet. If that was the case, why was a major shift rushed through in the following week in the main Government Departments under the slogan, *Distance from Britain?* Even Connelly acknowledges that the rejection of the House of Lords Report was a turning point. As he puts it: "*But Brexit had broken the status quo, and Ireland had declared for the EU-27*" (p. 80).

Something else that was bubbling in the background of the Fine Gael party in those days was speculation as to how much longer Kenny would remain as leader; he was viewed as having run a bad Election campaign earlier that year and had already promised to stand down before the next General Election. Holding the relatively minor position of Minister for Social Protection at the time, Leo Varadkar made a speech in Brussels that sounded like what a party leader might say:

"Brexit may present Ireland with the chance to seize the next phase in our development and maturity as a sovereign state. It will force us to forge relations and shape our destiny within the EU in the absence of our nearest neighbour and strongest ally" (Irish Times, "*Varadkar says EU could become 'museum' compared to US*", by Fiach Kelly, 8 December 2016).

The text of the speech as released on Varadkar's Facebook Page went somewhat further:

"Of course we need to protect our trading relationship with the UK and manage how Brexit impacts on the island as a whole. But we should not allow our relationship with Europe to be defined by our relationship with the United Kingdom" (Leo Varadkar Facebook Page, 8 December 2016).

The Fine Gael leadership election, a contest eventually won by Varadkar, did not take place until April 2017, but moves were already afoot before December 12th—as instanced by Varadkar's speech in Brussels—to replace Kenny, and the Noonan rebuff of the Lords certainly gave those moves added impetus. Whether there were communications between Noonan and Varadkar about these matters is a subject that can only be speculated on.

An obvious reason why Noonan would have wanted to rule out a bilateral agreement with Britain before the Brexit talks was that, having been Finance Minister for the six previous years, and having dealt with Brussels for much of that time, he was more aware than most of the interests at stake for Ireland and the EU.

Apart from that, he may have simply taken the straightforward view that Ireland, having a vital economic interest in membership of the EU, needed to line up fully with Europe in the crisis that was Brexit.

Connelly describes how the Commission was adamant that no Brexit negotiations should take place before the triggering of Article 50 (p. 63), and how, on one occasion, Barnier bluntly informed Irish diplomats that the Commission would be Ireland's negotiator (p. 73).

There may have been communications along these lines between Noonan and Phil Hogan, the Irish Commissioner. These points may be categorised as EU reasons behind the rejection of the House of Lords' Report.

In retrospect it may seem that the Irish Government had no choice but to follow the insistent messages coming from the Commission, but the circumstances were more complex than that. As I referred to earlier, the agreed position of Kenny's Government was that Ireland should remain neutral between the two camps. The House of Lords hearings had been viewed sympathetically in Ireland and many in the political class probably saw the final Select Committee proposal as being reasonable. The close ties between top civil servants in Dublin and London were also an asset

from the standpoint of the House of Lords and a factor pulling the Government towards agreeing an accommodation with London. Perhaps the strongest evidence of the pro-Britain predisposition of the Kenny administration is the chapter from Tony Connelly's book that I have been quoting from; in its second edition, published in 2018, it still describes the House of Lords initiative very favourably and barely mentions Noonan.

Morale inside the EU elite was low at that time; Martin Schultz had resigned as President of the European Parliament and there were rumours that Jean Claude Juncker intended to follow suit. There was also a precedent set in the Schengen arrangements of the late nineties whereby the close connection between Britain and Ireland had been accepted as justification for an Irish opt out.

It was certainly on the cards for the Irish Government to make a bilateral agreement with Britain on issues of mutual concern and pretend they had nothing to do with Brexit, as was hinted at by Bertie Ahern when he addressed the Lords' Committee. If such an agreement had been reached, it would not have caused a great deal of surprise in other European capitals or in Brussels.

Such an outcome presents an interesting "*might have been*". Conceivably, it might have prevented some of the difficulties that later presented in the wrangles over the Backstop and the Protocol, but probably not. It would have represented a severe blow for the European Commission and damaged EU solidarity.

Similar rows over the Irish Border might have taken place, only Ireland would have been aligned with London rather than Brussels. It would have pushed Ireland further down the road to becoming a satellite of Britain, a destination overflowing with potential unintended consequences for social cohesion and cultural identity.

What actually happened was determined by the action of a senior politician in the Irish Government whose standing was high from his having shouldered the burden of trying to sort out the mess left by international finance and the Irish banks, and who probably had powerful allies. Noonan cut against the existing policy of his Government and upended an Anglo-ophile predisposition in the upper reaches of the civil service that was preventing acceptance of a new reality. The episode demonstrates how politics can make a difference.

One other factor was at play which is

more national than European and easily forgotten: it relates to the Southern elite's attitude to the North and the national tradition. It is well known that, within Fine Gael, John Bruton espouses a Redmondite view of Irish history in which the 1916 Rising and the national development that flowed from it are seen as mistaken and unfortunate. That somewhat extreme viewpoint translates in current politics as a desire for a close Anglo-Irish relationship, the policy pursued by Kenny and Flanagan, and, in the latter end of his tenure, by Bertie Ahern.

Not so well known is that Michael Noonan was the figure in Fine Gael most strongly opposed to the Bruton position. Critical of the way his party was moving, Noonan led a successful heave against Bruton's leadership in 2001 and defeated Enda Kenny in the ensuing leadership contest. Some idea of the Noonan/Bruton division can be gleaned from the following extract from an article by Emily O'Reilly before she became EU Ombudsman.

"The questions from the media shifted to the north. In essence, Noonan, was cosyng up to the SDLP – insisting that, under him, Fine Gael would again become the party drawing allegiance from the north's "moderate nationalists". Bruton's northern policy was misunderstood, said Noonan kindly, although he knew as well as the casual observer that the problem with Bruton's northern policy was that it was understood very well indeed. [ie it was Redmondite/unionist].

Nonetheless, Noonan's old-style anti-republican slip still managed to make an appearance. Under no circumstances, he thundered proudly and to applause, would he sit down to participation in a future government while the party still had a standing army" (Sunday Business Post Online, *Limerick Bull replaces Celtic Snail*, 11 February 2001).

In short, Noonan was a mainstream member of Fine Gael, not averse to throwing a barb at Sinn Féin, but solid in his opposition to Bruton's position on the national tradition.

THE ANGLOPHILES STRIKE BACK

At the end of his fourth chapter, Tony Connelly quotes from an opinion editorial (Irish Times, 9 January 2017) by Phil Hogan in which Hogan exhorts the Dublin Government to change its Brexit strategy. "*Ireland would have to step away from the UK and turn more closely towards the Continental embrace*", is how Connelly summarises the piece (p. 82).

But the strategy had already been altered by the response to the Lords' Report; and press releases from both Hogan and his

boss, Jean Claude Juncker, along the lines expressed in the op-ed, had been issuing from the Commission since before the end of 2016, certainly in early January.

The Irish Government's shift in position was very welcome news in Brussels, probably the best news in a long time. It augured well for the solidarity of the EU-27 holding together in the Brexit process, as indeed came to pass during the protracted negotiations. A point made in a report about Commissioner Hogan in the *Irish Independent* catches a telling angle of the pitch that he was making.

"...I'm also confident that he [Nigel Farage] completely underestimates Irish people's deep and longstanding links with the peoples of mainland Europe. That was even cited in the 1916 Proclamation, which mentions 'gallant allies in Europe', Mr Hogan said" (*Farage hanging around Brussels acting like a juvenile delinquent—Hogan*, John Downey, 9 January 2017).

Whereas Hogan argued his case in different media organs, Michael Noonan had his job as Finance Minister to get on with, and he made no contribution to the developing debate that his action had precipitated. Apart from the indignant comment of Declan Power, mentioned above, there were no direct attacks on Noonan; any flak being thrown at Fine Gael for being too much on the side of the EU tended to be directed at Hogan.

Media pundits and former officials who had supported the close alignment with Britain as it was developed after the Good Friday Agreement, wasted no time in staging a backlash. Having lost out in the corridors of power, they brought the fight to the public sphere. The centre of operations, so to speak, became the *Sunday Business Post* (SBP) under the editorship of Ian Keogh, and the individual who became the public face of the campaign was Ray Bassett, a former official of the Department of Foreign Affairs who had been the Irish Ambassador to Canada.

The campaign was launched on the 1st of January 2017 in the SBP with a first article from Bassett and supporting articles from David McWilliams and Tom McGurk. What became the first round of a debate spread to other media outlets and lasted all of January. Bassett's position was that Ireland should be Britain's strongest ally in the EU, organising with other Member States to pressurise Brussels into giving London a good deal, and threatening an Irish exit if a good deal was not forthcoming. From his arguments it

often sounded as if he was actually working for the UK Government.

Early notable developments were that Noel Whelan, an *Irish Times* columnist known to be influential in Fianna Fail, endorsed Bassett in his column, and Marian Finucane invited him on her popular radio show on RTE, where he became a regular guest. (Tragically, both Whelan and Finucane have since died.)

Ray Bassett participated in numerous media discussions and was generally introduced in respectful terms as a veteran diplomat who had been part of the team that made the Good Friday Agreement. Eventually he encountered hard political arguments from the Government, however. Dara Murphy, the Minister for European Affairs, likened his position to "taking yourself hostage" (*Irish Times*, 25 January); and Eoghan Murphy, a Junior Minister working under Noonan at the Department of Finance, conveyed the information that IDA managers and other State officials were finding that foreign investors, especially in Asia, were requesting reassurance that Ireland would not be leaving the EU.

In a debate on *Drivetime* on RTE radio (23 January) former Minister for European Affairs Lucinda Creighton stated that Europe never responded to threats from the smaller Member States. In short, Bassett's case was easily refuted.

A second round of the SBP campaign occurred a few months later, when its edition of April 2nd contained an Editorial defending the paper's support for Bassett and a Feature in which short contributions from a range of mainly Anglophile commentators including Bassett were published. As in the first round, this initiative got nowhere; it only succeeded in exposing how very pro-British an influential section of the Irish political class had become. Ian Keogh resigned his position at the SBP in 2018 and David McWilliams and Michael MacDowell switched to the *Irish Times* at different times before then. The objective of pulling the Irish Government into the role of assisting Britain in its hour of need was not achieved.

As part of the *Irish Political Review's* coverage of Brexit, I documented a lot of the debate in 2017, quoting what people were saying, with commentary where needed; most of that material is in the April, May and June editions of that year. Reading back over those statements, it is striking how many members of the Anglophile lobby believed that public opinion was behind them; they mistook

media support for public support. What occurred during the Brexit process, as is well known, was that Irish support for membership of the EU, which has generally been high, jumped to its highest levels ever (from 70 per cent in 2016 to 90 per cent in 2019).

That 2017 material can be accessed at <https://davealvey.academia.edu/research#bassettdebate>, but my point here is that the campaign waged by the *Sunday Business Post* and Ray Bassett shows that a large section of the Irish political class had become unashamed supporters of Ireland being a satellite of Britain, a sentiment that was shared by Enda Kenny and Charlie Flanagan.

If Michael Noonan had not acted as he did, there was a real chance that Ireland would have remained neutral as between the EU and the UK, and neutrality in the circumstances of Brexit would have meant siding with Britain to the detriment of Irish interests.

In August 2001, speaking as the Leader of Fine Gael, Michael Noonan delivered to the party faithful the annual *Beal na mBlath* address commemorating the death of Michael Collins. His speech was standard fare for such an occasion although it was well crafted. He spoke about the contribution that Collins had made to the founding of the State and quoted from *The Path to Freedom*, a small book published in 1968 by Mercier Press, to show Collins's commitment to democracy as a system in which "differences of opinion could express themselves so as to promote, and not to destroy the national life".

Later he referred to the role played by Collins as Chairman of the *Committee on the Constitution* in forcing the British to concede on certain constitutional principles that "eventually dismembered the entire British Commonwealth and Empire peacefully". Making that point he referred to the work of the revisionist political scientist, Tom Garvin. Noonan concluded the speech as follows:

"Above all, Fine Gael is committed to working with everyone on this island, Nationalist and Republican, Loyalist and Unionist to achieve all that is best for this island and for those of us who live on it. We recognise and respect difference. We value diversity. We understand the pride which Unionists take in their position. We understand the pride that Republicans take in their position. We understand these things because we are Irish Nationalists and we are proud of it."

In the way that he contributed to the Irish response to Brexit, Noonan has shown that he was in earnest in the words

he used at Beal na mBlath that day. He wasn't mouthing party-political verbiage for the sake of form. Yes, he made use of a revisionist source, but only in so far as it assisted the expression of traditional Fine Gael thinking. Unlike others in the political class, Noonan, while he was in public life, maintained a connection with the traditions of the people.

A final point that should be made is that the former Finance Minister is not alone in being unmoved by the claims of the neo-Redmondites inside his own party or through the media. Forty years of such claims seem to have had little effect on Phil Hogan who was quick to invoke the full meaning of 'gallant allies' in the Proclamation by way of an answer to Nigel

Farage. And, turning away from Brexit for a moment, when President Higgins speaks on topics like the War of Independence, more often than not, he speaks with pride on how local communities resisted the violent suppression of their democratic rights, striking a jarring note against the apolitical sophistry of many academic revisionists.

Could it be that the tradition that arose from the ashes of 1916 is not the pushover its enemies imagine? Between them, Noonan, Hogan and Higgins represent large swathes of Irish society. In the light of the response to Brexit, the capacity of the mainstream to keep up the national tradition can no longer be written off.

Dave Alvey

who have had to recently protest that "*Black Lives Matter*". And it was Joe Biden's colleague Hilary Clinton who called black men "*super-predators*".

Joe Biden's Democrats – the original racist party of the racist South – encouraged *Black Lives Matter* mayhem to unseat President Trump. That is US politics. After all, Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery as a tactic to expand the continental super-state, intending the slaves to be sent back to Africa afterwards. When they weren't, Democrat President Woodrow Wilson celebrated the great service the *Ku Klux Klan* performed for the US in the White House as he unrolled maps and plotted an Armenian state in devastated Ottoman territory. The Armenians, as *God's Chosen People* in a sea of barbarism, were a *cause celebre* in White Supremacist America. If only they had a Ku Klux Klan to ride to the rescue.

Biden Plays Politics with Genocide

"Each year on this day, we remember the lives of all those who died in the Ottoman-era Armenian genocide and recommit ourselves to preventing such an atrocity from ever again occurring... Today, as we mourn what was lost, let us also turn our eyes to the future – toward the world that we wish to build for our children. A world unstained by the daily evils of bigotry and intolerance, where human rights are respected, and where all people are able to pursue their lives in dignity and security... Let us renew our shared resolve to prevent future atrocities from occurring anywhere in the world. And let us pursue healing and reconciliation for all the people of the world." President Joe Biden, 24th April 2021.

Biden did not mention any of the Turks and Kurds who died as a result of the general assault made by the Imperialist Powers on the Ottoman state in conjunction with the insurrection behind the lines by Armenian revolutionary groups, even though the death toll among these people was much higher than among those he chose to remember. *Moslem Lives Don't Matter*, it seems.

President Biden, recently accused Vladimir Putin of being "*a killer*". The Russian President delivered a fitting riposte [one which was generally misquoted]. Putin did not need to elaborate. The world knew that President Biden is the Head of State of the country that has killed by far the most people across the world in modern times. It is the only state in the world that has used nuclear weapons against civilian populations. Indeed it is the only country which has used nuclear weapons in war at all.

It is a fact that the United States is the most successful genocidal state on earth. No other country has exterminated people to such good effect as the USA, reaching global predominance in the process.

Having disembarked from the Mayflower, it wiped out the original inhabitants of America from Atlantic to Pacific over the course of 3 centuries, in a great

moralistic expansion known as *Manifest Destiny*. Subsequently, it has gone around the world killing people in millions, after completing its destiny on the continent it conquered. Beginning at the start of the 20th Century, it annihilated a few hundred thousand Filipinos in its first expansionary war outside the American continent and never stopped from there.

Much of the wealth of the US was accumulated through an industrial slaving system which it inherited from its Anglo-Saxon cousin and which brought millions of unwilling Africans across the oceans to do its work. Millions more Africans perished in the brutal process – perhaps the most inhuman act perpetrated in history.

The United States was White Supremacist in its origin, development and consolidation. An effective system of black subjugation without legal slavery lasted for a century after emancipation. *Lynch Law* was used to uphold the white supremacy by the Democratic Party. Apartheid was institutionalised by many States to segregate the races, in which race-mixing was illegal. And the US seems to still have a big problem with the descendants of the people it put in slave plantations and periodically lynched to keep in order, and

Being a Chosen People is a double-edged sword for the Armenians. Being Chosen does not mean being under God's special protection because the Biblical God has a special way of neglecting or reproaching his People. God periodically withdraws the protection of Providence for reasons unknown but to himself, perhaps from displeasure at his People. There can be chastisement for wrong doing and extra punishment is reserved for the Chosen People if they transgress. Perhaps that is what happened to the Armenians for living so long under the Turkish/Muslim yoke. God punished them in 1915 for their sins of collaboration, leading them out of service to the Ottomans to a promised land (California?). It can all be rationalised in Biblical Christianity and since the Armenians have decided to conform to this role they must play their part fully, in disaster after disaster.

It is a pity the USA has a universalistic *Manifest Destiny* to right the world of wrong, because that spells trouble for the rest of humanity.

The United States is the benchmark state in Genocide. Its very character is Genocide, since it would not exist without having exterminated so thoroughly and for such a long period through its demonic energy. The Nazis were a mere interlude in Germany's history compared to what Genocide is to the history of the United States. No people on earth are really safe from the "*only indispensable nation*" as Obama called it, unless they have the capability of destroying the world, to deter American attack. Many have been attacked and destroyed in a casual way just to prove a point – that you don't mess with the USA, unless you have nukes, of course. Perhaps only another

World War will finally free the many and rich varieties of humanity from the death-grip of the US.

The current President of the Genocidal state *par excellence* has now charged another state with Genocide in a rather casual way. The charge is casual because Genocide is actually a legal matter and no international court has ever found that state guilty of Genocide. Neither is there any historical evidence of Genocide in the case, despite the availability of all documentation on the matter. Historians have looked for a century for such evidence and found nothing.

Isn't it a rather tricky problem for the US to explain why it did not wage war on this Genocidal empire in 1917 when it joined the World War. Isn't it problematic that the US never saved the Armenians by taking a Mandate for them when the British requested Washington to do so? What were they thinking to have shirked such moral responsibility? Did they not know what Joe Biden knows? Apparently not.

President Biden has now casually made the accusation that Turkey committed Genocide against the Armenians in 1915 on the Armenian diaspora's Genocide Day.

The President of the United States' opinion has not altered the facts of the matter one iota: Turkey is as innocent (or guilty!) of the charge of Genocide on 24th April 2021 as it was on the 23rd April 2021. Not a single legal or historical fact has changed.

President Biden has decided to reject the statesmanship of his predecessors – Reagan, Clinton, Bush and Obama, who had made promises in the course of elections to the influential and wealthy Armenian lobby, and thought better of uttering the word when in the White House. Biden, for whatever reason has decided to honour his campaign pledge to “*recognise the Armenian Genocide and make universal human rights a top priority.*”

Perhaps it is chagrin at Turkey's decision to purchase a Russian air defence system to defend itself when the US refused it; perhaps it is “*Joe the Greek's*” anti-Turk mentality; perhaps it was frustration at his predecessor's squeamish reluctance to destroy states who are not in the USA's image and leave the world at peace for 4 years; perhaps Biden wants to destroy another “*authoritarian state*” to enhance his democratic credentials after agitating for the annihilation of Iraq a full 5 years before George W. Bush even thought about it: perhaps it is anger at Turkey's vital assistance to Azerbaijan during the war to restore its national territory, that the US even recognized; perhaps Turkey will just do when Russia and China are just too powerful for the bully. Who knows?

Joe Biden usually describes himself as Irish but he has a strong affinity to the Greeks. In 1974 the Turkish Army intervened to prevent an impending massacre of Turks on Cyprus, after the Government was overthrown by a military junta in an attempt to form a union with Greece by right-wing nationalists. Biden, who had served decades on the powerful Committee for Foreign Relations, met with Greek Cypriots asking for US help. Biden told the Greeks: “*You guys were completely right, and if someday the Greeks beat the Hell out of the Turks they'll be right.*” Over subsequent years Biden maintained close contacts with the Greek Cypriots and blocked many aid packages to Turkey on the basis of his antipathy to the Turks, which seems to have been ignited over the Cyprus issue.

Cyprus was an important spy base for the CIA where it kept a watchful eye on the Muslims of the Middle East and North Africa.

While Senator Biden blocked aid to Turkey he revealed himself as truly anti-Turk by supporting aid to the Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territory in Karabakh and surrounding areas, which had been ethnically cleansed by the Armenians of 800,000 Muslims, and whose Azerbaijani population had suffered fearsome massacres at the hands of terrorist gangs. Perhaps he was annoyed when this occupation was ended in 2020 by the Azerbaijani liberation forces, with assistance from President Erdogan of Turkey.

Biden's animosity to Turkish President Erdogan is no secret: “*I've spent a lot of time with him. He is an autocrat*”, Biden told the *New York Times* editorial board in 2020. “*He's the President of Turkey and a lot more. What I think we should be doing is taking a very different approach to him now, making it clear that we support opposition leadership.*” Even prior to Biden's election the Turks knew there was trouble in store for them. *Daily Sabah*, one of Turkey's major newspapers reported on August 19th 2020:

“With regard to Turkey, the Obama administration, which included Biden, wrote a new chapter in the book of American interventionism by attempting to overthrow the democratically elected government of an allied nation. Whatever happened between Erdogan and Obama during the former's May 2013 trip to Washington remains a mystery. Turkey, however, had to endure a period of turbulence, which began with the Gezi Park revolts and reached its climax around the July 15 coup attempt, following that meeting. The perpetrators intended to remove Erdogan from power. Back in 2013, the Western

media hardly ever charged Turkey with “*authoritarianism*”. Washington's attempt to topple the government of a democratic nation, as well as a NATO ally, ended up revealing America's true face... Erdogan, whose ouster, Washington thought, would have allowed the U.S. to rein in Turkey, overcame various challenges and stayed on his feet. The push to contain Turkey, however, remained in place, manifesting itself in the anti-Erdogan narrative of authoritarianism. In retrospect, Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election undermined that policy – which Biden, if elected, intends to adopt anew.”

It should be recalled that Biden and the Democrat Party accused Russia of stealing the 2016 election from Hilary Clinton, without any demonstrable evidence. It became an article of faith that this was so, even though it was entirely unsubstantiated. Biden, in his comments about President Erdogan, is signalling his intention of interfering in the electoral politics of a foreign state – as of course the US does as a matter of routine. Fascist dictators all over the world owe their position to the interference of the US. Some of them, like the former dictator of Indonesia, General Suharto, massacred millions of their own citizens. US diplomats even handed over lists of people for Suharto to kill.

Now that the Cold War is over, the US apparently stands for “*A world unstained by the daily evils of bigotry and intolerance, where human rights are respected, and where all people are able to pursue their lives in dignity and security...*” But that hasn't stopped the US still supporting authoritarian regimes and coup plotters, for instance, by backing General Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi in Egypt and the Crown Princes of the Gulf states during the Arab Spring. All of this under the Obama/Clinton/Biden axis of good.

In the opinion of the present writer, the most likely reason for Biden's recklessness with regard to Turkey is the new President's desire to “*return the US to a leadership role*” in the world – in other words, to resume America's bullying of the rest of humanity. He is conscious that the Trump Presidency gave the world outside America some space to develop without the US forcing its attentions upon it and Biden wants to end that state of affairs. It is really unacceptable that a US President should fail to launch any new wars and destroy any states!

In a recent *Foreign Affairs* article, Biden complained that America's “*credibility and influence ... in the world*” had diminished under the Trump administration.

It is very fortunate for Azerbaijan that President Aliyev moved when he did to smash the Armenian occupation of Kara-

bakh. President Trump saw it as quite natural that states settle outstanding business between each other through accommodation—or limited conflict, if that failed. He was not unduly concerned when the Azerbaijan army launched its liberation war. Tough on the Armenians: such is life!, he probably thought, none of our business. But for President Biden the world is America's business.

The rogue Trump Presidency which led to a restoration of a world of independent states, which relate to each other by the traditional means of accommodation and limited conflict, affronted those who like to throw America's weight around in the world. It has had the Liberal interventionists in the US, who comprise a large and powerful elite within the military-academic power complex, champing at the bit for 4 years. They have been used to power and prestige and making money out of being the cheer leaders of imposing US democracy on the world and have felt the loss of role keenly during the Trump interregnum. *Foreign Affairs* has been full of salivating liberal interventionists (Samantha Power etc.), straining at the leash to be White Knights confronting the forces of darkness in the world. All they needed was the go ahead from the new President: "*Hey Joe, where are we going with these guns in our hand?*"

Biden himself is conscious of physical weakness, stung by the taunts of being "*sleepy Joe*" who cannot rise to the occasion and perform America's duty in the world. He has so far been blacker than Barack Obama, with bigger balls than Hilary Clinton. America has a pill for everything it seems and it is a land where a man can be a woman if he/she so desires! Dogma has indeed replaced reality.

Many countries in the world have been at a loss to know what to do with themselves over the past four years. They have become used to taking their orders from Washington and, during the Trump interlude, they have begun to wonder what the point of their existence was at all. Europe seems to have been thoroughly disorientated by Trump's intention to stop ordering the world and tend to the US's own affairs instead. The election of a normal US President and the demise of the rogue President has been an immense relief to them. Life has got meaning again as they await direction from Washington.

Not so Turkey. It is an independent state and has got on with its life as usual. It does not need orders from the White House to do what it wants in the world. And it has done so in Syria, Libya and the

Southern Caucasus, to some effect with its wonder weapons. It puts its men on the ground where the cowardly Americans fear to tread.

And so it seems that the new US President has picked on Turkey, presumably in an attempt to intimidate it into conformity with the rest, to demonstrate America is back by a show of what the US can do, if the Turkish Government does not see and do things the American way.

(There was, after all, in the economic sanctions/warfare and attempted *coup* against Erdogan, in which many see an American hand, attempts to curtail the Turkish leader, who is seen as just too independent minded for Washington's liking).

It is not as if the US does not recognize the importance of Turkey to the West. As recently as 2008, Graham Fuller, the former Vice-Chairman of the National Intelligence Council at the CIA, wrote '*The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*'. This book's back cover noted that:

"Turkey's dynamic political scene and new search for independence in its foreign policy, however complicating or irritating for the United States today, will nonetheless ultimately serve the best interests of Turkey, the Middle East, and even the West."

The US, it seems, has had enough with statesmanship. While making a great show of its rainbow diversity of individual identities, America does not tolerate such things among the nations.

While Russia and China will brush off President Biden's blustering and wait for him to tire, and Iran will attempt to avail of a relief from pressure by humouring him, the slap in the face he has given to Turkey will have much more lasting effects. Russia, China and Iran are the enemy for America and they never will be anything else. All the US requires of them is weakness and chaos, if it can be achieved through Navalny or any other instrument that can be used.

However, Turkey is different. Biden is permanently damaging relations with a Western ally of nearly a century, with the second biggest army in NATO, and considerable real and recent combat experience. Perhaps he sees Erdogan as Saddam! If he does he is badly mistaken.

Whatever the case, there will be celebrations in Moscow, Beijing and Tehran after President Biden's reckless action.

As has been noted, the United States has a strong sense of destiny, or *Manifest Destiny*. A biblical view of history is

inescapably a belief in Providence. It got this when fundamentalist Protestants freed themselves from the shackles of Catholic Europe and established a pure democracy on a blank slate across the empty spaces cleared of human dross.

Catholic Europe had retained many quaint pre-Christian beliefs such as the observation that human life was a series of cycles with history being a comic or tragic opera, as events took it. But the belief that history was a directional and redemptive process was an article of faith among the Christian fundamentalists, and as much for the Godless East Coast and the Californian post-Christians, as it was for the Bible-thumpers. The idea that *Progress* is inevitable is universalistic in America and America tends to define the Universe as itself.

Progress demands redemption and redemption demands penance. But guilt must be admitted for penance to have meaning. Is it any wonder *Genocide* became a word at the moment in the 1940s when the American fundamentalist Christians took hold of the world, outside the part the Soviets saved from it?

The Sun is setting in the West for Turkey, and it is rising in the East. The only mistake the Turks ever made was putting their faith in *Progress*, not understanding that *Progress* would be defined by the United States and there can be no dissent over the direction it takes. When the Turkish Republic was established the world was dominated by a state, Britain, which believed it and its Empire existed for the rest of the world's benefit. However inadequate such a viewpoint proved in practice, it contrasts to the current master of the world's understanding that the world exists for America's benefit and humanity should be made to conform to the interests of the United States in all its aspects.

The events of 1915 and after (actually 1911-23 – from the war in Libya, to the Balkan Wars, to the Great War and the Imperialist war on Turkey) were an enormous tragedy for the various peoples who made up the Ottoman Empire. President Biden has contributed nothing to understanding this tragedy and has only made an accommodation between the Armenians and the Turkic world harder to achieve as a result of his foolish utterance. Biden's assertion requires that any factual investigation of historical events should be set aside and that dogmatic belief be put in its place.

Well, America is back! Let the war for the world recommence!

Pat Walsh

Cill Chais

"Cad a dhéanfaimid feasta gan adhmaid?
Tá deireadh no gcoillte ar lár..."

This great lament for the loss of our woods by Aogán O'Rathaille was learnt by every child when I was in National School and even today most people of my generation could recite it off by heart. Cill Chais (Kilcass) was the great house of the one of the branches of the Butlers near Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, and until well into the eighteenth century. A woman of the Butler family was married to Sir Valentine Browne at the time of O'Rathaille's bitter dispute with him over the former's inability to return the latter's lands and privileges to him. Sir Valentine was the son of Sir Nicholas Browne, O'Rathaille's old patron but the old order pre-1690 was gone and the poet had written another poem 'Valentine Browne' where he wailed about the wrongs done to him by the latter.

An Duanaire. 1600-1900. Poems of the Dispossessed.
By Séan O'Tuama with verse translations by Thomas Kinsella.
The Dolmen Press. Dublin. 1981.

"Even more than the 'Irish R.M.' stories, 'The Real Charlotte (1894) and Somerville's 'The Big House of Inver' (1925) bear strong resemblance to the Bowen family history in their treatment of the Ascendancy's fanatical commitment to property, their formidable matriarchs, decaying Big Houses, declining gentry and romantic ruins. That feeling for ruins (though noticeably not for Celtic ruins – Elizabeth Bowen was no Irish Revivalist and Bowen's Court is described as 'the negation of mystical Ireland) – suffuses Bowen's Court, and is found everywhere in Anglo-Irish writing, from Maria Edgeworth's 'The Absentee' to Lady Gregory's 1920s 'Journals', lamenting the wreck of demesnes 'all silent that had been so full of life and stir in my childhood, and never deserted until now'."

Hermione Lee, York, 1983. *Introduction to 'Bowen's Court'*
& 'Seven Winters'. Vintage. London, 1999.

Elizabeth Bowen.

A Review of Patricia Laurence's biography.

Part 12.

In a book 'Ancestral Voices: The Big House in Anglo-Irish Literature, A Collection of Interpretations', edited by Otto Rauchbauer. Lilliput Press, Dublin, 1992, there is a note struck particularly by Rauchbauer, from the University of Vienna, that the Big House was nothing more than "a imperial outpost" for a people who dispossessed the natives in such a savage manner that the end could ever have only one conclusion and that was the rout of those Big Houses and their occupants.

The use of the first quotation of the book is a sign that the Big House is about to meet a risen people and the man quoted is none other than that great Irish soldier/patriot Tom Barry in his 'Guerilla Days in Ireland', 1949, Mercier Press. Cork.

Anthony Coleman refers to Big House

social life in his essay, 'The Big House, Yeats, and the Irish Context', contemptuously using the words of the author of 'Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Esq. (2 Vols. London. 1820):

"The fashion has passed away of those desperately tiresome, long formal dinners which were given two or three times a year by each family in the country to their neighbours, where the company had more than they could eat, and twenty times more than they should drink; where the gentlemen could talk only of claret, horses or dogs; and the ladies only of dress and scandal."

But Elizabeth Bowen continued this "discredited tradition" (according to Edgeworth), and indeed made an ideal of it – see her 'Big House' essay in 'The Bell' which I have previously cited in former issues of the 'Irish Political Review'. Coleman has no time for that type

of thinking writing that: "family pietas", and "an indulgent estimate of her family and caste, underlies" Bowen's narrative in 'Bowen's Court'. Bowen's estimate was that her family "enjoyed their position through privilege – and on the whole they honoured it ..."

This assertion by Bowen draws a sharp rebuke from Coleman:

"There is abundant evidence to refute the claim that the Anglo-Irish "honoured their privilege".

"The Big House was set apart from the village, behind great granite walls which secured its physical isolation, itself a manifestation, in F.S.L. Lyons's words "of the intellectual and spiritual isolation, in which they were condemned to live" ...".

Coleman continues:

"That condemnation was, from their coming, self-imposed, a matter of choice and inclination. For the Irish the land was both historic and atavistic home, their condition... when examined by the nineteenth century novelists, exhibit both "subservience and contempt" and pre-eminently despair, a despair generated by "the huge unmanageable evil" in whose shadow their lives were lived."

"The lords of Ireland, Yeats's "no petty people", had failed to discharge the responsibilities of lordship; for AE their literature was "arid and empty of spiritual life". And even Louis MacNeice adds a negative kick writing about the Big House that they:

"in most cases ... maintained no culture worth speaking of – nothing but an obsolete bravado, an insidious bonhomie and a way with horses." But for W.B. Yeats rising to his feet in the Seanad in 1925 thundered:

"We against whom you have done this thing" (prohibiting divorce) "are no petty people. We are one of the great stocks of Europe. We are the people of Burke; we are the people of Grattan; we are the people of Swift" ..."

As Coleman remarked, he invoked –

"three names of the eighteenth century, that century which saw the consolidation of an alien aristocratic class in all its stony arrogance... It was Burke who at century's end provided the severest indictment of the Ascendancy, the "no petty people" whom Yeats was celebrating. "Ascendancy", wrote Burke was:

"a liberal distribution of places and pensions and other graces of government ... wide indeed of the significance of the word. New ascendancy is the old mastership. It is neither more nor less than the resolution of one set of people in Ireland to consider themselves as the sole citizens of the commonwealth and to keep a dominion over

the rest by reducing them to an absolute slavery under a military power, and thus fortified in their power, to divide the public estate ... as a military booty, solely among themselves... I cannot conceive what mode of oppression in civil life, or what mode of religious persecution may not come within the methods of preserving an ascendancy... it signifies pride and dominion in one part of the relation and on the other subservency and contempt ..." (*Writings and Speeches*, VI, 1792, Italics - author).

Coleman goes on to maintain that:

"The symbol of that "pride and dominion was the Big House, a symbol which could not be invested with those genial and humane values... Between the Anglo-Irish exploiters and the Gaelic exploited the line was drawn – the Penal Laws with their savage clauses were the instruments by which the power gained by Cromwell's ferocious sword was maintained....."

Going back to the first quotation above from Aogán O'Rathaille, where he upbraids Sir Valentine Browne whose father Sir Nicholas, "*descended of an Elizabethan planter family*", had been O'Rathaille's patron (assuming that role from the Mac Carthys whose lands he held). In one of the poet's latter poems he returned in loyalty to the Mac Carthys, ancestral patrons of his bardic family:

'In the grave with this cherished chief
I'll join those kings my people served
before the death of Christ.'

It does not take a Declan Kiberd to remind us that Yeats had no qualms about plagiarising lines from Gaelic Bards, as in this instance from O'Rathaille himself – I am remembering especially his ferocious lines about his people having served the "*aristocratic Anglo-Irish before the death of Christ*"..." In a recent sister magazine to the '*Irish Political Review*', '*Church & State*', Nick Folley recounts another example of Yeatsian plagiarism which now is beginning to seem to have an endemic quality to it!

Patricia Laurence in her biography of Elizabeth Bowen notes that the writer stated with much feeling:

"... the only thing I really loved in Ireland was Bowen's Court."

This letter, dated in 1962, was sent to her friend Derek Hill (Derek Hill Collection, to be found in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, otherwise known as PRONI).

And wasn't that the truth of it, she saw her home, her Big House as "*an island*" and when it came to her burial, she opted first if it was possible, as stated in her last

'Will and Testament', to be buried amongst her people:

"I express a wish to be buried at St. Colman's Church Yard at Farahy near Kildorrery, Co. Cork, and if possible to be interred in the grave of either my father or my husband or as near thereto as is possible but if, owing to the exigencies of the time it may be impracticable to have my remains removed to Ireland, then my Executors shall arrange for my burial beside my mother at Saltwood Church, Hythe, Kent." (Quoted from Elizabeth Bowen's Will – dated 5th day of January, 1973.)

She died on 22nd February, 1973 in London and her wishes were carried out as she was brought to Ireland and buried in the Bowen-built church at Farahy.

Elizabeth Bowen didn't leave her home at Hythe to any relative, as is stated by Patricia Laurence, but wanted it to be sold as soon as was practically possible and the proceeds given to her heirs. As I was reading the Laurence biography, I had a huge land as there, in the text of it, is something that should not be there and even more oddly – the source cited turned out to be incorrect. I think this was intentional as she had to know that she was revealing something that up to now has been kept secret and to my knowledge is legally still in force.

Patricia Laurence states that the price Bowen got for selling Bowen's Court was the sum of £12,000: this was in 1959 to Cornelius O'Keefe, a neighbour of hers – through her lawyer, John Carroll. She states that in today's money, the sum would be £360,000. But the solicitors noted in Bowen's Will are "*Edmund Carroll, Solicitor, Fermoy, and Brian Anthony Carroll, Solicitor, Fermoy, to be general Executors and Trustees of my Will*". And not one of Bowen's many biographers have used this legal information or indeed tried to access it, as it is in the hands of a professional and the buyers of the estate. But the Will is a public document and therefore not under any embargo, legal or otherwise.

Laurence even errs further when she states that "*when her cousin Noreen and her husband, Gilbert, heard, they went to Kildorrery to consider purchasing the house*". It was reported that they went to the lawyer's office and "*he showed them the door*": it was already sold to O'Keefe." This is an explosive allegation and whatever the source – Laurence has erred fatally, in my opinion, in writing about it. It is true that Elizabeth Bowen was totally distressed about the very thought

of selling Bowen's Court.

She did offer it to her nephew Charles (then in Africa) who refused the offer and her dearest relative would have been Noreen Butler, Gerald's wife and one of her Colley cousins. Gerald was the brother of Hubert Butler and I have always had the sense that there was an estrangement between them over their own inheritance. Gilbert, the younger brother got the farm while Hubert got Maidenhall and some 5-7 acres which was a productive gardening enterprise. But Gilbert was one of the trustees of Elizabeth's Will and there was never any talk of being done out of Bowen's Court. Only O'Keefe was wealthy enough to buy it – none of the others could have paid for it. Yet, even with that price which she received, it seems Bowen still had bills left unpaid as rumour has it.

But it is what Laurence claims next that had me literally fuming. But that is for another article in the next issue of the *Irish Political Review* with an analysis of the claims Martin Mansergh has made publicly about Aubane/Lane and Clifford and a rebuttal of same.

Julianne Herlihy ©

SERIOUS ABOUT SYRIA?

The *Irish Times* (March 18) in a portentous and pretentious IRISH TIMES VIEW appears to want to dismember Syria. Perhaps its reasons are locked under oathbound secrecy in its Trustees, established by the untrustworthy British Fixer, the late Arnold Goodman.

If *The Times* of London favours the dismemberment of Syria, it may have a more obvious motive. Most of what I write below has been culled from *SYRIA – A Recent History*, by John McHugo, published in 2015. Which I came upon a few days ago.

"In 2013, Israel granted a company in which Rupert Murdoch and a member of the Rothschild family are shareholders a licence to explore for hydrocarbons on the Golan Heights."

The Golan Heights and any hydrocarbons there belong to Syria. And according to International Law they are illegally occupied by Israel.

Rupert Murdoch's papers are heavily involved in the lying campaign to tar

Jeremy Corbyn with anti-Semitism. I suppose robbing a country of its territory and assets and robbing a man of his good name are equally ethical.

The victors of the First World War, which they themselves had long planned for, inflicted misery on the world. They humiliated Germany, and through enforced starvation extracted a false confession of blame for it. They established 'nations' which had neither a past nor a future, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

And they refused a hearing to one of Europe's oldest nations, Ireland, which had just, in an election "*recognised on all sides as a Plebiscite*", according to *The Times*, exercised the right to self-determination, which the Allies had professed to have adopted.

The winners set up the League of Nations with a solemn Covenant, supposedly equally binding on all members. But some, in Orwell's phrase, were more equal than others.

France and Britain awarded themselves Mandates in territories wrested from the Ottomans. Under Article 22 of the League Covenant, they accepted "*a sacred trust for civilisation*" for the "*well-being and development*" of peoples under a Mandate. The borders of the mandates were not established by the peoples living under them, nor were they consulted.

The tutelage of what was deemed to be Syria (after an arbitrary line was drawn on a map by Mark Sykes and Francois Picot) and of what was deemed Lebanon were entrusted to France. And both territories were deemed –

"to have reached a stage of development where their existence as nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone."

The League of Nations had a Mandate's Commission, but it had little power to hold the Mandated Power to account. The wishes of the people under a Mandate were meant to be "*a principal consideration*" been disregarded.

The French did nothing for those they were meant to help. Most of the money they spent in the mandated territories were used for the upkeep of French Imperial troops from Senegal, Algeria and Morocco. The French exploited sectarian divisions, unaware that Arabic speaking peoples, Christian and Moslem, prided themselves in common culture and generally got on

with each others and with long established Jews in their midst.

Conservative French Governments and ultra Catholic Officers favoured the Maronite Christians in Lebanon and fancied themselves as modern Crusaders. Left-wing French Governments indulged in anti-religious prejudice, getting up the noses of those of all faiths.

They used excessive force to put down any opposition, using artillery and air-bombardment on densely populated cities in the mid 1920s on at least the scale the Germans used on Guernica a dozen years later.

The Syrian Governments, led by Hafez al-Assad and his son, Bashar al-Assad,

have followed the French practice of crushing revolt. But their record of abolishing illiteracy, bringing piped water, and electricity to most of the people since 1970 is a creditable one. None of their competitors have anything to offer their people but division fanatical bigotry, and subservience to their foreign enemies.

The other side of the Sykes/Picot line, which divided Greater Syria, is Iraq, which was mandated to Britain. Britain 'policed' Iraq from the skies, machine-gunning villagers or dropping bombs on them in the 1920s, a habit they have not got out of. Iraq has oil, and the Brits got a better bargain than the French.

Donal Kennedy

Another Visit To Black Hugh's Quarter

Sectarianism is something you want to get away from if you have suffered it in your life, as the last generation of your family has done. Also, as a Catholic in Northern Ireland, to discuss it with a Protestant can seem offensive to that person. The facts of life aren't always popular. When the Northern Catholic realised they had to do something for themselves, Britain, who had instigated their dilemma, was not going to reverse the situation, whether it was Labour, Conservative or Lib-Dem.

The Republic of Ireland was still running its arms-length policy from the early 1920s, and the monopoly Unionist Government was still practising an armed apartheid against the Catholic population, without hope of anything being done constitutionally.

So, you have Protestants offended by you bringing up what they had being part of, while, at the same time, you had, in the South, fellow-Catholics, being offended by you mentioning their non-involvement in your dilemma.

The differences then became greater when the Long War broke out in 1971. They were now you telling to stop doing things for yourself, or they might get into trouble? Thus, in my opinion, the Northern Catholic became a third force beside the British Protestant of the North and the Republic of Ireland Catholic.

The Two-Nations theory has been proven in what is called Northern Ireland and that has brought forward a generosity of spirit towards the Protestant nation. But

that hasn't always being reciprocated, though, local Protestant historians have come to recognise that Catholics – known as Roman Catholics – have existed in their midst for centuries, and acknowledged that Catholicism has grown in the form of new churches and schools. This is still a remarkable change of thinking by some members of the Protestant community.

These local historians may not, as yet, acknowledge the severe sectarianism of the area in the past, but it is one step in the right direction. Take Carryduff, for example, a townland in mid County Down. History was closed down completely during monopoly Unionist rule.

As a schoolboy I passed a derelict building daily that featured strongly in the 1798 Rebellion. It was an old smithy, whose blacksmith was almost hanged when accused of making pike-heads. His future generations still lived nearby but the history of the family was never mentioned.

The small and stony lane that ran beside the garden of our house was known vaguely as the old Saintfield Road. Looking at a Google map very recently I was surprised to see it named as *Black Quarter Lane* in memory of Black Hugh from the 16th Century – *Ceathra Aodha Dhuibh* (Carryduff being an anglicised version) of Black Hugh's Quarter, or the Quarterlands of Black Hugh.

Knowing and living under the dark sectarian cloud my family and I had to live under for many years, this to me is

something I thought I would never see acknowledged in my lifetime.

This new change was written up by local Protestant historians in the late 1990s. Revealed, also to my great surprise, the ancient prehistoric hill fort, a *rath*, built on a small drumlin that rises to 400 feet. It was something very near to where we lived and it became a playground for my sisters and me. Today it is known as the Queen's Fort.

The preservation of ancient monuments and buildings doesn't seem to be very important in Northern Ireland, maybe due to the nature of society created there by outside forces. So much has been destroyed under monopoly Unionism. This *rath* is surrounded now by housing estates with back gardens impinging on the *rath* itself.

It is not just history belonging to the Catholic population, that was either destroyed or ignored, but radical Protestant history. Unionism ran a kind of Year Zero.

An old school built in 1798 was taken over by the Free Presbyterians as a temporary church in the area I lived in once. In a visit there a number of years ago I happened to be talking to the Minister of that Church and he casually mentioned the old school would be demolished to make way for a new church. Trying to find out what happened to it is impossible. No one answers my questions. I would have to go to the area myself and have a look.

History as written of Carryduff is a serene one of the land being settled in 1610 by Scots and English, and whatever happened in that settlement left one native Irish, over 18 years old in the area. There might have been others under that age as only those of 18 years of age, and male, were mentioned as they had to fight for the local squire in times of turmoil. What happened to Black Hugh and his community no one knows.

The local Protestant historians have not been afraid to handle the Irish language in their translation of anglicised place-names. Being brought up in this once violent sectarian society I still can scarcely believe it. A society of poisoned well-water, house stoning, name-calling on a daily basis and the general plot of lowering your self-esteem. I can't say it has totally disappeared in the area. I encountered pockets of it still in existence on that visit a few years ago.

But what is happening is irreversible now. The Long War has made considerable changes of course but there was an early start to change as far back as 1943. Northern Ireland is full of contradictions,

like the wealthiest man in Carryduff, Patrick Mallon, being a Catholic, a landowner, and a publican who had premises in Carryduff going back to the beginning of the 20th Century, and now had built a complete new building – a motor inn and hotel, in the 1930s art deco style. This was the only licensed premises in the whole of Carryduff.

There had been four pubs but in 1859, during the Great Presbyterian Religious Revival, they had closed down voluntarily, such was the religious fervour, and remained shut to the public until the Mallon revival. It was quite a contradiction when the 100 or so Catholics spread over a wide rural area, in isolation, could be attacked at will, while Paddy Mallon remained untouched with members of the Orange Order, after their parade on the 12th of July, celebrating in his pub.

Reluctantly or not the nearest pub was six miles away in Belfast. It is said, if he had any complaints, he would phone, not the local RUC barrack, not the District Inspector but the County Inspector for County Down. He also had a friend in the Bishop of Down and Connor, Bishop Mageean, the most active and militant member of the Catholic Church. He was a true man of the people. You could call the Catholic Church dormant during the Unionist monopoly government, but not Bishop Mageean, who was very aware of what Britain had done to his fellow Catholics and stated it on occasions. He was very much the Northern man and was experiencing the Northern Catholic dilemma and knew it had to be solved, not from the South but from within the North.

Opposite his premises, during WW2, the US army took over what was a British Army camp. They opened up their chapel to local Catholics, and drove off with shots in the air, a loyalist demo outside the camp protesting about letting the local Catholics worship there. With the Catholics now regaining their self-esteem by being protected by the representatives of a world power, that seemed to stimulate a Catholic revival in the area. Paddy Mallon gave an acre of ground as a gift for a Catholic Church to be built on. That inspired the Bishop to travel throughout the diocese of Down and Connor appealing for funds to build the new Church.

Before setting out on fund-raising he had personally visited the 100, or fewer Catholics, scattered around this rural area. The message was to hold on. He was very aware of the sectarianism in Carryduff and other townlands. I remember, as an 11 year old, his arriving unannounced at our door, with his driver, to talk to my

mother briefly, with no time to come in for a cup of tea.

My mother had wanted to leave the area after several attacks on our home. But where to go for a mixed family? The RUC by this time knew of his visits and had laid on an armoured half-track vehicle and a Crossley tender, by way of protection. I couldn't help but feeling cynical at that tender age about a police force who were part of the plot to harass and drive out the Catholics of Carryduff.

Who set things rolling – Mallon or the bishop? Bishop Mageean during that time reinstated the parish of Drumbo, after a lapse of 350 years, and Carryduff was now part of it. Did Mallon's gift of an acre of ground start things going? And who got the US Army to open up its chapel to the local Catholics? Was it Bishop Mageean or was it, as some local Protestants were saying, Mallon, by getting the commander of the camp drunk when he visited his premises across the road. Wiser souls named Bishop Mageean.

Paddy Mallon, was an equal in his endeavours. he visited the American chapel a few times as a guest of honour, led by the camp commander, who brought along a rug for Mallon to save his knees on the concrete floor. The man was now in his eighties, having been born in the mid 19th Century.

On the 30th of June, 1946, the new Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, on one of the highest hills in Carryduff, was dedicated and solemnly blessed by Bishop Mageean. Much to our surprise two local Protestants attended the ceremony. Maybe it shouldn't be a surprise for the two were unmarried mothers and were thought of as part of the developing Bohemian movement that would flourish for a while in New York and London during the 1950s. We wouldn't have understood what that meant until years later, about these two country girls defying their community. They had moved in to one huts, I describe further on in this article. The huts were in a rough stony street known as Fairview Gardens but known to the inhabitants as FU Gardens.

By Bishop Mageean's side was guest preacher, The Rev. Daly, who later as-Bishop, was to condemn the armed struggle of the Catholic community, while staying mute on British Army activities.

This church proved too small for the developing Catholic community so a larger one was built a short distance away and opened in 2002. The conditions for this new Church to be built was that it

shouldn't be seen from main road, so, it was built in what was thought to be modern architecture as low and sweeping. It retained the name of the old Church.

The old Church of 1946 was demolished in 2009, and in its place a Catholic primary school was built. Not far from that is the sports grounds and buildings of the GAA.

Like with the rest of Northern Ireland, it's hard to gauge the numbers existing of the two nationalities. This census of 1991 does give the trend though of non-committal. I believe this non-committal comes mostly from the Catholic community. Carryduff is a popular place for people in mixed-marriages. I have relatives myself in this situation and one of those families moved into Carryduff some years ago.

From the 1991 Census:

Religious Dominations of Carryduff residents:

Methodists.....	158
Roman Catholics.....	992
Presbyterians.....	1084
Church of Ireland.....	698
Other Denominations.....	557
None.....	270
Not stated.....	511
Total population.....	4270

The most interesting part is the None and the *Not Stated*, numbering 581, and this is almost 30 years ago. The population has expanded since.

In a 2000 publication by the Carryduff Historical Society, written by two Protestants, whom I have met and got to know and like, when I spoke at a Society meeting, has a piece labelled: *Carryduff's Most Distinguished Refugee*.

It tells of the passing of Anna Redlich, an Austrian Jew, who fled in the face of Hitler in 1938, to London, then to Belfast and finally to Carryduff. She was in Carryduff, ironically, because her house in Belfast had taken a direct hit during a German air-raid on Belfast. There were a number of refugees in Carryduff around the year 1938. My family was one. We had sneaked out of Belfast owing a lot of rent because of the 1930s economic downturn.

Paddy Mallon, owned two rows of former WW1 military huts on a hill overlooking his licensed premises and hotel called Ivanhoe. The rents were affordable even for the impoverished. There was one water tap for 20 huts, no electric and a dry lavatory, mixed Catholic and Protestant. We were economic refugees. The Austrian refugee lived a short walk away on the

same Manse Road, which our huts were just off, unknown to all of us.

It is interesting, as the years pass, to ponder certain things that stick in your mind and stay a mystery. One was – why did the Protestant boys of the area construct what turned out to be secret hedge schools when that was said to belong to the Catholics of Penal Time.

Parents can be difficult when trying to protect you as children with a father making the large garden a POW enclosure with a mile of barbed wire and locked gates. They try to protect you from the violence of sectarianism, the downing of self-esteem by vocal means and worse, the absolute silence you encounter when passing the locals, who are normally rural-fashion friendly to their neighbours and strangers.

You are also protected from learning social skills. They don't seem to be aware of all of this sectarianism has made you violent and, as a result, you will defend yourself. So, you break out and contact the local boys and girls. There is some sort of a sectarian truce going on, and although there may be a few remarks on your breed it's more valuable not to react.

These boys and girls are on a digging mission. They have sneaked out spades from their parents' tool sheds. There is always non-worked, win-growing, land around flooded stone quarries where you won't be disturbed. You dig a sort of basement then build a wall of grass-sods around it, roof it over with branches and more green sods, dig steps down into it, make a stone fireplace, and a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape. Finally steal

some hay from a haystack in another field for the floor covering. I was later to read William Carlton's description of a hedge-school and this fitted into what these boys were doing.

But, again, why Protestant boys digging like this, and why was it built in such a way it couldn't be seen from a road or path? Hedge-schools, suggested the Carryduff Historical Society publications, were usually in barns or any farm building available.

"Prior to the 18th Century no provision existed for any organised educational system which would have counteracted the serious problem of illiteracy prevailing throughout the country. The only facilities available to children were these isolated schools, usually operated by lay teachers and completely detached from any authoritative body. One such school located at the Moss Road, Ballymagarrick was built of grass sods and roofed with thatch. It was customary for children attending these schools to bring a sod of turf each day for the fire and one penny a week to assist the school master in purchasing his food."

There is no mention why these hedge schools were constructed like the secret schools of Penal Days. Maybe Presbyterianism was left out of the equation or another sect, who eventually emigrated to the US in order to escape persecution.

The boys constructed another hedge-school in the nearby townland of Ballymagarrick — Baile-micHabricke — the settlement of Freckled Hugh. They didn't know about hedge-schools and merely called them huts but it was history repeating itself.

Wilson John Haire. 1.4.21


Paul R. Hyde

Just published by the
Aubane Historical Society:

Paul R. Hyde's
Casement
Decoding False History

15 Euros/ 12 Pounds
Postfree from:
<https://www.atholbooks-sales.org>

Angus Mitchell's
Foreword
appears on page 17



Foreword to **Casement: Decoding False History** by Paul R. Hyde

Perhaps the first lesson any Irish history student should be taught is that the political value of a document often takes precedence over its 'truth' value. Put another way: the politics of Anglo-Irish history habitually overrides the history of Anglo-Irish politics. Whenever Roger Casement is concerned such an equation is only magnified. For a recent example of this you might refer to the entry on Casement in Eunan O'Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin's *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (Yale, 2020).

Professor O'Halpin has engaged with the Casement story for the last two decades. He appeared as one of the voices in Alan Gilson's documentary *The Ghost of Roger Casement* (2002) where he dismissed those who argued that the Black Diaries are forgeries as akin to those who believed in the Roswell conspiracy. In a book review in the *Irish Times* of 12th October 2002 he said that the forgery theory was "*essentially an article of belief, not susceptible to conventional historical analysis*". One assumes that what he means by '*conventional historical analysis*' is the examination of the source evidence in order to come to a balanced interpretation of the past.

When Professor O'Halpin made this comment, I was in the process of formulating what historians who have examined my methodology agree is an approach that is a classic piece of '*conventional historical analysis*', placing the diaries in alternative contexts and setting out legitimate concerns to do with motive and probability as to why the Black Diaries should be deemed forgeries.

Back in 2002, I found Professor O'Halpin's comment peculiarly intolerant, offensive and censoring. In the intervening twenty years he has made no effort whatsoever to understand or engage with my argument, which makes me wonder whose views are based upon an article of belief.

My interest in Casement extended out of my engagement with the Amazon and its environmental tragedy and the genocide of the pre-Colombian people of South America. It intrigued me that two of the three Black Diaries are concerned with Casement's voyages up the Amazon, during 1910 and 1911, to investigate abuses at a particularly intense moment of that on-going genocide. The

other diary deals with his investigation of atrocities in the Congo Free State in 1903. For South Americans, Casement's investigation is an important moment in their history. This is the reason why *The Amazon Journal* has now been translated into a feature-length documentary—*Secrets of Putumayo*—directed by the Brazilian / Amazon filmmaker, Aurélio Michiles. As I sorted through the documentation to do with this part of Casement's life, I was persuaded by the evidence that the Black Diaries were forged in order to destabilise Casement's investigation of atrocities and deny him the moral high ground on his road to the gallows.

The key reason for the forgery is to control understanding of what Casement revealed and to deny him his rightful place in both British imperial history and in contemporary Irish history. The Black Diaries disrupt the logic of his evolution from decorated servant of empire into an enemy of empire. The Black Diaries are still used to discredit Casement's evidence and silence the voices of the victims whose world was ravaged by the rubber resource wars. The testimony of the victim is replaced by the saga of a man on a sexual odyssey and the Indians become 'extras' in that narrative.

It is significant that Trinity College has a department of history that has been closely involved in the analysis of historical atrocities. Professors John Horne and Alan Kramer collaborated in the writing of *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (Yale, 2001). This cultural study proved influential in dispelling lingering concerns about the long-made claims that accusations of German atrocities in Belgium were exaggerated. TCD's showcase digitisation project on the 1641 Depositions should have made every student of Irish history alert to the political nature of atrocity claims. How come therefore that the atrocities investigated by Casement have received such short shrift? Why has there been so little curiosity shown by TCD's Department of History into what was in its day the most high-profile and notorious atrocity investigation of the early twentieth century and one inextricably connected to Ireland?

What is revealing about Professor O'Halpin's entry on Casement is that it captures the inertia and the bitterness that prevents the Casement story from moving

anywhere. He adopts the devices that for years have kept Casement suspended in solitary confinement outside the boundaries of acceptable historical discourse. His main authority on Casement is Brian Inglis whose involvement in the Casement cover up is once again brought under the microscope of Paul Hyde's analysis in this new collection. O'Halpin has written an entry that allows his own historical belief system to stay intact. There is nothing about the Casement who helped to inspire and sustain one of the great humanitarian campaigns of the pre-war period; who supported the Irish language movement and organised the funding of schools in the Gaeltacht; whose courage and example led intellectuals around the world to question the morals of imperial governance. That Casement is shut out. Erased.

Instead, Professor O'Halpin describes a Casement who was inconsequential to his time, who received honours for apparently no clear reason. His entry implies that Casement got what he deserved for his nationalist fantasy of wanting an independent and peaceful Ireland unshackled from the oppressive structures of elite class politics and global systems built on injustice and violence. Embedded in this narrow interpretation of Casement's contribution to Irish and world history is a form of cognitive dissonance.

Four of the eight paragraphs in Professor O'Halpin's entry reference Casement's sexuality, his 'moral' reputation or the Black Diaries. In other words, the entire biographical entry is framed around the diaries' questions and Casement's suitability to interrogate the moral foundations of empire. In the final paragraph, reference is made to the 'convoluted forgery theories'.

The longest paragraph in the entry is devoted to a defence of Cardinal Bourne's efforts to prevent Casement from reconciling to the Catholic Faith in the days before his execution. Bourne tried to force Casement to sign a recantation of his belief in Irish independence, and a confession of abhorrence of his own actions. The priests who attended Casement at the end used their special powers to override Bourne's unholy demand and the condemned man was accepted into the Catholic Church in *articulo mortis* on the night before his execution. As a reward, those priests who supported Casement were banished to the most deprived parishes in Catholic England to live out their days serving the poor and destitute (mainly Irish).

Although Professor O'Halpin is one of the authorities on British Intelligence in Ireland, there is not a single mention

of Casement's long and entangled intelligence connections. Casement's involvement with different branches of Britain's secret state might be traced through his time surveying the delta of the river Niger maps for the War Office, as one of Lord Salisbury's men-on-the-spot, to his derring-do during the Anglo-Boer War, and, to his covert return up the Amazon in 1911 to prepare British trading interests for the collapse of the Amazon rubber boom. From the autumn of 1913, Casement was closely watched by different intelligence agencies as he began to conspire against the Empire which had ennobled him. Even after his death the spooks stayed on his case; most obviously, the MI6 historian, H.H. Montgomery Hyde, who did a good deal of patching up to make sure Casement's trial appeared 'fair'.

There has been much talk in recent months of decolonising the curriculum. Universities around the world are recognising that they hang onto the epistemological structures and mentalities of empire that promote race hatred and gender divisions without recognising it. And even if they do see it, they don't do much about it. Public intellectuals and some media outlets continue to perpetuate the symbolic and epistemic violence which supports the prejudices that keep us locked into a world of race and sectarian division and social inequality. Prejudice, especially race prejudice, is so engrained we just can't see it even when it's in plain view.

Anyone who doubts this should read Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Empire: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (Verso, 2020). The Black Diaries are an offensive residue from a time when the exploitation and murder of forest communities across the Amazon was carried out with impunity. That genocide is still happening. However, this is a story that we do not wish to hear either from Casement or from the Environmental and Human Rights Defenders who are killed each month protecting the forest. Commercial control is maintained through denying the telling of stories that might help us to see it differently.

Paul Hyde's *Anatomy of a Lie*, for which I was also happy to write a foreword, was in many ways unanswerable in how it interrogated the carefully constructed archive and the suspect intellectual traditions supporting this remarkably toxic intersection of British and Irish history. Hyde's argument in that book should have put this whole matter to rest. Instead, the publisher was intimidated and withdrew the book. What Hyde revealed was clearly highly discomfiting in some

quarters. Despite these difficulties, Hyde's argument enduresunanswered. In this latest collection of essays, Hyde has excavated once more the murky depths of the Black Diaries' history and provided additional evidence of the interpretative violence and articles of faith that have

kept Casement's legacy locked in a barren focus on his sexuality, as if nothing else matters. And once more, Hyde's analysis presents questions that demand answers from the stout exponents and defenders of 'conventional historical analysis'.

Angus Mitchell

War And Peace As Forms Of Conflict!

Pat Rabbitte, who has been through many political metamorphoses, is now a columnist on the *Sunday Business Post*. On March 7th he published *A Critical Analysis Of The IRA's Leading Role In The Troubles*.

What were the *Troubles*? They were a War between the Provisional IRA—the IRA discarded by Rabbittes organisation—and the British State over British government in the Six Counties. It was never acknowledged to be a *war* by the Irish Government (though it held that the British State presence in the North was illegitimate), nor by British Government, nor by the "*Official IRA*". The only institution of State which recognised it as a war was the British Army, which had been deployed to "*assist the police*" in quelling disturbances but found itself in conflict with a military structure with a competence equal to its own.

The Provisional IRA represented two-fifths of the population of the Six Counties in 1970, having risen from a third during the fifty years of oppression under the Northern Ireland system.

The increase in population of the oppressed Catholic minority in the North during that period, when the population of the Irish State fell, does not contradict the fact of oppression. It is not unusual for a people that is loosely oppressed to outbreed its oppressors.

It is sometimes disputed that the Provisional IRA, in waging War against the State—the British State, which is the only State there ever was in Northern Ireland—acted as the representative of the Catholic community. Voting figures are cited to prove otherwise. But that only means that support for the IRA at war was given in a more tangible way than by voting in meaningless elections which had nothing to do with returning a party to govern the State.

The SDLP, the party most voted for, was understood by a great many of

its voters to be *constitutional* for the purpose of enabling the Government to make concessions to it, in response to the pressure for change exerted by the military pressure of the IRA. This would enable the Government to maintain that it was not conceding to terrorism because it was not formally conceding to the terrorists.

Gerry Fitt, the main founder of the SDLP, threatened the Government in 1968-9 with the IRA, if it did not concede to the demands he was making. At that time he was a member of the Republican Labour Party. When the SDLP was founded, with him as its leader, he continued that line of rhetoric for a while. Was it a threat or a warning? I found it impossible to tell.

Fitt wanted normal politics in the Six Counties, and he also wanted the Six Counties to be in the Republic. He did not see himself as a nationalist. He was Republican. He saw that nationalism repelled Protestant workers. But the distinction between nationalism and Republicanism, which had meaning for him, had no meaning for the enemy, who were infected with "*Unionism*".

I tried putting it to him that the normality he wanted was the normality produced by British party politics, and that the only possibility of developing British normality in the Six Counties lay through the British Labour Party extending its operations to the Six Counties. He was vehemently opposed to this. He seemed to be convinced that British normality could be reproduced in Northern Ireland by postulating it as an ideal and exhorting people to dedicate themselves to it.

He held two contradictory ideals. He refused to prioritise between them and he refused to commit himself to the means of achieving either of them.

His rhetorical threat/warning that the IRA was the only alternative for Catholics, seemed to belong in cloud-

cuckoo land in 1968. By 1970 the IRA was a material force. He was appalled by the reality of it, and at the same time he was stunned by it. But he churned out the required denunciation of outrages, and so he became *Fitt the Brit*—a lost soul in the House of Lords and the London West End.

Rabbitte's article has the form of an uncritical review of *Who Was Responsible For the Troubles?* By Liam Kennedy, an anti-Catholic Catholic from Tipperary who is now a Professor at the Queen's University in Belfast. Professor Kennedy's answer to his rhetorical question is, of course, the Provisional IRA.

Well, everyone knows that it was the Provisional IRA that declared War on the British State on the issue of Northern Ireland, and that it sustained that War for almost thirty years, until the British Government undertook to abolish the pseudo-democracy of Northern Ireland and set up an arrangement that was frankly based on the existence of two political bodies which were incapable of functioning as one for lack of any bonds of national sentiment, and a recognition that one of them was therefore incapable of governing the other.

The pertinent question is not *who was responsible for the War*, but *how was War possible* within the longest-established system of representative government in Europe?

I at least asked that question when the War was beginning back in 1970, and answered it as best I could. Pat Rabbitte did not ask it then and does not ask it now. Neither does Professor Kennedy.

My answer was that the Six Counties, when being separated from the rest of Ireland and retained within the British state, were excluded from the actual political organisation by which the democracy of the British state functioned, its party-system, and were required to operate a separate form of politics, entirely subordinate to the Government of the state, though excluded from its effective political life. I could not see Partition as a the sufficient cause of the War. The effective cause was the perverse system of local government, outside the representative system of the state, insisted upon by Whitehall.

Rabbitte, quoting Kennedy, gives a list of conditions under the Northern Ireland system which were *not* sufficient for war: Gerrymandering, the Business Vote in Local Government, discrimination in housing allocation, the Special Powers

Act, bias in policing, Local Government boundaries. All of these complaints were remedied in response to Civil Rights agitation before the War began, as I pointed out at the time.

But it was apparent at the time that these reforms were little more than cosmetic. They did nothing to alleviate the profound discontent of the Catholic Community.

"*One man, one vote!*" was a catchy slogan. But it merely had to do with a very marginal issue: a second vote given to businessmen in Local Government Elections on the basis of property holdings, on which they paid tax to the local Councils. It had been abolished in England a generation previously. Its influence in Northern Ireland was negligible. Catholics held it on equal terms with Protestants. It was not a Penal Law applied against Catholics on religious grounds.

The slogan was presented as if the Unionist/Nationalist balance depended on it. But, when it was abolished, it was seen that there was no perceptible change to that balance.

If this is news to Pat Rabbitte, he must have been living in another world in 1970.

The Civil Rights demands were conceded, and then the War started. What's paradoxical about that?

One of the great complaints of native Ireland in the 19th century was the colonial system of landlordism. Landlordism was abolished by William O'Brien's land agitation followed by his collaboration with the Unionist Government to buy out the landlords who were on the verge of bankruptcy and transfer the land to the tenant farmers. The Redmondites feared that remedy of the complaint would undermine support for Home Rule. And so it did, in a sense. It was largely the tenants who had become independent small farmers who fought the War of Independence, while the remnant of Redmond's party kept traipsing over to Westminster complaining.

The rack-rented tenant farmers could never have done what they did when they became men of property.

And, leaving aside that practical instance, it was a well-known maxim of revolution that the danger of it is greatest when the old regime is being reformed.

Rabbitte relates from Professor Kennedy the remarkable achievements won "*from a reluctant Stormont government*" in 1968-9, before the War started. But that it not quite how it was. The Stormont Government was not the Government of a state. All the main

services of State were provided from Whitehall. Only policing was devolved to the local government at Stormont.

All the real powers of State were "*reserved powers*" under the 1920 Act. In other words, the State reserved the powers of State to itself when setting up the pseudo-democracy in the Six Counties.

Policing was not a reserved power, but, in a sense, neither was it a State power in Britain. There was at least a maintained fiction in Britain that policing was done by autonomous County Constabularies.

In Ireland under the Union, however, policing was a State power. The RIC did not consist of County Constabularies. It was centrally organised and conducted by the Department of State in Dublin Castle, and its personnel were developed as a caste separate from the people.

I found that there was a widespread notion that the RUC was a continuation of the RIC in the Six Counties after the 26 Counties went its own way. If it had been, it is conceivable that the "*Explosion In Ulster*" in August 1969 would not have happened.

In the 19th century "*sectarian rioting*" was policed by a State force without local attachments and loyalties, and was comparatively impartial. But in 1921 the State police, the RIC, was abolished, and the RUC set up in its place was something like an English County Constabulary. The State policing function of Dublin Castle was not transferred to Belfast. There was in the Belfast system no counterpart of Dublin Castle. Policing was local and communal.

I recall in the 1970s an Englishman who had some acquaintance with East Germany coming to Belfast for the first time and seeing in the RUC the features of a "*people's police*". But it was the police of one people and its job was to police another people.

So who was responsible for the War? Rabbitte paraphrases Professor Kennedy:

"His possible culprits include the Orange state, the security forces, the Ulster Unionist Party, the DUP and Paisley-ism, the Official IRA, the Irish state, the loyalist paramilitaries, the British state, and the main Churches"

— which is almost everybody.

"None gets an entirely free pass and even history itself... is examined".

— Well, that *is* everybody!

The whole situation was responsible. But, within the situation:

“Having weighed the evidence with scrupulous care, Kennedy’s unavoidable answer must be the Provision IRA was primarily responsible for the direction, methods of engagement, scale and, above all, the longevity of the Troubles”.

This is very curious indeed, because the IRA—the one that counts—just wasn’t in the situation in 1967-9. The Orange Order, the RUC, the UUP, Paisley, the Officials, the UVF, the British and Irish states, ‘NICRA’, and the Churches were all there, constituting the situation and interacting with one another. But there was no such thing as a Provo.

The Officials were a shadow left by the past. The late Eamonn O’Kane used to collect for them in the Falls area. His account of it put me in mind of my mother making a point of buying Brian O’Higgins’s Christmas Cards around the time of the Immaculate Conception massacre every year, in the 1940s. The event was over and done with, but it should not be forgotten because it meant something in its time.

Beyond that, the Officials were re-making themselves for class war.

The Provisionals were not manipulators of the situation. They were created by the situation. The situation that created them was the feeling that the Civil Rights reforms had changed nothing essential. That was because the Civil Rights demands did not meet the actual source of the existential discontent of the Nationalist Community.

The Civil Rights leaders, as far as I could tell, believed that the actual source of the Northern Ireland problem could be by-passed, and could be made irrelevant by introducing a number of Rights within the existing Constitutional structure.

It was understood that raising “*the Constitutional question*” would unify the Protestant minority in support of the *status quo*. But it was thought that a movement based on an abstract ideal of *Rights*, imported from the United States or France, would enable the awkward Constitutional question to be set aside and cross-community support to be gathered. A refrain of the movement was that the *Border had become irrelevant*. Rights could be introduced without reference to it, and normality could be established on the basis of these Rights.

For some, inspired by the British New Left of the time, this was a deliberate

ploy to catch the Protestant community off-guard and unsettle the Stormont regime. This was explained to me by the individual who was the New Left manager of ‘*Ulster*’ affairs in 1967-9. It was also a deliberate ploy of Official Republicanism, which was trying to remake itself as a class war party. This was explained to me later by John Gillespie of Donegal who was active in it.

For both the New Left and the Officials, the object of unsettling the Unionist regime was not to end Partition but to initiate socialist revolution at a weak point in the British system in the hope that it would spread.

For the better-known Civil Rights leaders it does not seem to have been a disruptive ploy. They seemed to believe that a system of abstract Rights, introduced without interfering with “*the Constitutional question*” would serve as a foundation for harmony. I had a brief but enlightening encounter with two of them, John Hume and Gerry Fitt. And I came to see that there are two very different kinds of belief. There is belief about things on which knowledge is impossible, which might be summed up as *religious belief*. This seems to be a necessary form of belief. Then there is belief held in defiance of knowledge—the belief that “*the constitutional question*” could be set aside within the perverse Constitutional arrangements deliberately set up by the British State in 1920 for the running of its Northern Ireland region; and that things could be normalised by a mere act of will in support of an abstract ideal. (Hume later gave up on this form of belief.)

As to “*the Constitutional question*”: A Constitution is the political arrangement for the governing of a state. The transfer of a territory from one state to another, from one constitution to another, is not a Constitutional question at all.

The actual Constitutional question was the way the Six Counties were governed within the British state. This was in breach of the normality of the state as it existed everywhere else.

The normalising of Northern Ireland within the British Constitution in 1969-70 required in the first instance the bringing of Northern Ireland within the play of the party-politics of the state. The Constitution amounted to little more than the operation of the Two-Party system in Parliament. It knew nothing of Rights, which existed independently of

the Party System of Parliament. There was no Constitutional Court which might uphold Rights independently of Parliamentary politics.

The call for a *Bill of Rights* which would override politics was something that could not be met—not until Britain joined the EU (for the purpose of curbing it).

The particular reforms called for by the Civil Rights movement were implemented for the most part in 1969-70. They were implemented by Stormont, but only on the insistence of the State Government. Stormont therefore got no credit for them. Normality did not result. All that happened was that the obvious complaints were met, leaving things essentially the same, but with fewer obvious wrongs to complain about.

That was the situation in which the Provisional IRA appeared, as if from nowhere, and flourished amongst the most unlikely people.

I saw it happening all around me. It put me in mind of Ionesco’s play about a plague which turned people into Rhinoceroses. Nobody was immune to it. The sophisticates of a few months earlier were particularly prone to it.

I don’t recall what lay behind Ionesco’s play—some development in post-War Rumanian politics, I assume. But what lay behind the remarkable development in Belfast in 1970s was easy to see. Great expectations had been raised by Civil Rights sloganising. Civil Rights reform was rushed through after the crust of pseudo-democracy had been broken by the devolved state forces in August 1969. The action of the devolved state apparatus had been met by a defensive insurrection in Derry and Belfast. The lethargy of the community had been overcome by that defensive action.

The community was neither willing nor able to sink back into that lethargy when the Civil Rights reforms were found to have done nothing more than remove a few marginal grounds of complaint. Something more was required. The Civil Rights leaders could only offer more of the same. The Government of the state toyed briefly with the idea of bringing the region within the normal system of government of the state, but the Executive of the Labour Party killed that idea in the bud. (That was in the long-forgotten era when Labour seemed to have become the natural party of power in the state.)

The Irish state, having said in August

that it would not stand by, and having cooperated with the Defence Committees in the North for seven months, suddenly brought criminal charges against its liaison agent with the Defence Committees, while maintaining the sovereignty claim and continuing to assert that there could be no real peace in the North without the ending of Partition.

That was the mix of circumstances that brought the Provisional IRA suddenly into existence, giving it a new kind of membership under the leadership of discards from the Official IRA.

War was declared in the late Summer of 1970 by Rory O'Brady, as I recall—it is not a fact recorded in history books. The Declaration was treated as a customary piece of Republican eccentricity. But war happened. It was strictly a war against the State, in which elements of the Protestant community became involved by their own choosing.

It continued for a quarter of a century, until a big bomb in the City of London inspired the Government to re-make Northern Ireland.

War is an important element in human history, and particularly in British history. Even Kant, the philosopher of *Perpetual Peace*, acknowledged that the advanced civilisation in which he could speculate on *Pure Reason* could not have come into existence without war. War and Civilisation are intimately related.

The governing arrangements made by the British State for its Six County region enabled the Provo War to be fought, and in that sense they were the cause of the war. And in human affairs there is really no other kind of causation, or necessity. Pascal said that if everyone stayed quietly at home there would be much less trouble in the world. But everyone won't stay quietly at home. That is why there is civilisation and war.

The War ended when the State made drastic changes in its Northern Ireland system, and the Catholic community experienced these changes as a military triumph.

If those changes had been made in 1970, I doubt that there would have been a war, but I also doubt that they would have given the Catholic community the sense of satisfaction, and the self-confidence, that fighting a war to a successful conclusion has had.

It had been roundly defeated and

suppressed when the Treaty regime in Dublin had incited it to rebellion in 1922. Success in a War which it fought on its own responsibility and with its own resources after the Republic again abandoned it in 1970 purged the memory of that defeat and brushed away the sullen brooding that had characterised it for half a century afterwards.

Pat Rabbitte, who is now Irish Labour, was formerly Official Republican. Social and political development achieved through Republican military activity is therefore particularly problematic for him. It was achieved by the wrong IRA—the one that based its action on what actually existed and was therefore “sectarian”. Robin Wilson comes from a very different source—Alliance in the North—but has the same problem.

The Alliance Party was (and remains) a sentimental association of good people in both communities who disapproved so strongly of the make-up of Northern Ireland that they would not act within it. They were transcendentalists. They exhorted everybody to discard what they were and become something entirely different. Northern Ireland was abnormal. It could be made normal by everybody behaving normally. They refused to discuss the causes of the abnormal conduct in the abnormal structure of the state. Discussing “*the constitutional question*” would be divisive. Reality could be by-passed by the ideal. I had a long discussion with Bob Cooper, who later became Sir Robert, and that is the only sense I could make of his approach.

Robin Wilson (who used to produce a magazine in Belfast called *Fortnight*) is now Editor-in-Chief of *Social Europe*. On April 15th he told Europe that “*it has to learn from the tiny region of Northern Ireland*”—by seeing it as the horrible example which tells it what it must avoid at all costs:

“Europe has always had its anti-enlightenment side. Northern Ireland graphically presents its extreme manifestation... That, 23 years on from the ‘historic’ *Belfast Agreement*, the region has failed to consign to history its troubled past suggests that profound underlying frailties remain. And there are three—each stretching way out from the petrol bombs and ‘peace walls’ of Belfast to gnaw at the fragile Europe of postwar reconstruction...”

The three frailties seem to be “*declining support for universal norms*”;

the problem of “*managing cultural diversity in a globalising context*”; and the erosion of “*national containers*” by populists “*posing as friends of the people*”. (By “*national containers*”, he seems to mean devices for nipping national developments in the bud.)

Under No. 1:

“Before the wars of the Yugoslav succession, there were few violent conflicts defined by ethnic markers, worked up into nationalist antagonism...: Cyprus, Corsica, the Basque country and Northern Ireland”.

Of these, Northern Ireland was the only one that was a region of a functional democracy which was excluded from the democratic institutions of the state, and constituted no kind of distinct political existence until the Government of the state insisted that it must.

Cyprus had been governed by Britain, but had never been part of the British body politic. The Greek majority had fought a war for independence against Britain and for unity with Greece. Britain had encouraged the Turkish minority to assert itself against the Greeks. Thirty years earlier Britain had urged the Greek state (an enforced ally in the Great War on Germany and Turkey) to launch a war of territorial aggrandisement on defeated Turkey. When the Greek invasion was met with a powerful Turkish resistance, which not only defeated the Greek army but reversed the ethnic cleansing set in motion by the Greeks, the British Empire abandoned the Greeks. And when in the 1960s Greek Cyprus declared for unity with Greece, the Turkish Army interfered decisively to partition the island. It would be interesting to see an attempt to apply “*universal norms*” analytically to that situation.

Northern Ireland is very much the odd man out in Wilson's group of four.

And “*the wars of the Yugoslav succession*” did not come about without some help from the European universal normalisers!

The universal norms are listed as Democracy, Human Rights, and The Rule Of Law. And, in all four cases, those norms failed to take root—“*notoriously in Northern Ireland, with its one-party Protestant rule, systematic discrimination against the Catholic minority, and repressive Special Powers Act*”.

A Democracy is a state governed in a

particular way. The Six Counties had not asked to be a state, and it was not made a state. If Northern Ireland had been a state, raising its own taxes and making its own Budget—the basic thing a democratic state does—then it could not have been governed as it was governed. But it had no power of state.

The two-thirds Protestant majority at the outset did not desire to form a state. Its only policy was to remain part of the British state. Unionism had no sense of separate destiny from Britain. It had not sought to become a governing party outside the political system of the state, and had agreed to do so only under duress. The Government of the state supplied the main services of state and administered them by the civil service of the state, which was quaintly called the *Imperial Civil Service* in local parlance.

In the rhetoric of state politics, the Labour Party was a United Ireland Party and the Tories were the protectors of the Union. In accordance with this, the Ulster Unionists voted with the Tories in Westminster. In the years after 1945 they voted with the Tories against the welfare state legislation at Westminster, and then promptly photocopied the Labour legislation as Stormont legislation. This was in accordance with an understanding reached with Whitehall in the late 1920s, when the UUP indicated that, if Whitehall did not fund social welfare in the 'province' on a par with the 'mainland', it would pull out of the 1920 agreement it had entered into as the 'supreme sacrifice' in the interests of the Empire in its handling of the Dublin rebellion, to operate a Northern Ireland system.

Northern Ireland was an integral part of the state for tax and spend matters, and therefore it had no normal business for its 'wee Parliament' to transact. It was separate only in being excluded from the political life of the state. In its separated existence, the only business the majority had was turning out at elections to show a clear majority for remaining within the British State.

The Unionist Party was not a policy party. Neither was the Nationalist Party. Both parties were all-class national parties of their respective national communities. The Nationalist Party wanted to be in the new Irish state and it refused in the first instance to participate in the Six County Parliament, and Nationalist Councils—encouraged by the Treaty regime in

Dublin—refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the new 6 County system and participate within it. This was the source of gerrymandering.

Also the Treaty regime fostered war against the Northern Ireland Government immediately after it was established, so there were Special Powers.

The Nationalist Party entered the Northern Parliament in the later twenties, but there was no politics going on in it, and it had nothing to say except that it wanted Northern Ireland to leave the UK and place itself under the Free State.

In the mid-1960s the Dublin Government persuaded it to become the Loyal Opposition at Stormont. That was entry into wonderland. The Loyal Opposition is the Party out of office which is the alternative Government. The Nationalist Party did not want to become the Government. It did nothing towards enabling it to become the Government. It still wanted to leave the state.

Robin Wilson writes that "*the collapse of the Protestant-monopoly government at Stormont saw violence fill the void and a cycle of paramilitarism and state repression ensued*".

"*Protestant monopoly government*" is a fine phrase. If fine phrases had purchase on material things the Six Counties would be an Alliance paradise.

The Protestants wanted to stay in the Protestant UK, while the Catholics wanted to leave it for the Republic which was distinctively Catholic. Therefore, while Northern Ireland remained, the pseudo-democracy of 1921 vintage, it had Protestant-government.

It became something else only when, after a long war, the democratic principle of government by the majority was set aside. It is now governed by both Catholics and Protestants, with each governing a bit of it. But this does not please Robin Wilson any better:

"The '*solution*' eventually found by the British state was defined by its simplistic 'men of violence' explanation for the conflict: in the 1990s, the paramilitaries were no longer to be repressed but appeased. That this created an obvious 'moral hazard' in terms of the rule of law went unrecognised.

"Nor did the 1998 agreement add to the human-rights agenda: a 'bill of rights', long demanded by the 68ers, was stymied by being conceived in the identity politics

language of 'parity of esteem' for the 'two communities'. All rights conventions in this arena... recognise that the individual can be the only rights-bearer in a democratic society—yet this went unappreciated..."

This is very unfair to the Northern Ireland Office. It did its best from the mid-70s to the early 90s to bring on the individual *rights-bearer*—what it called "*the ordinary decent citizen*"—as the foundation of a settlement. But he wasn't forthcoming.

Perhaps the rule of law was not applied with a sufficiently strong hand to winkle him out and apply him as a solvent of *community*.

(And, by the way, is it accurate to describe the IRA as *paramilitary*? What Army was it *para* to? Briefly, for about seven months in 1969-70, the Dublin Government toyed with the idea of a paramilitary relationship between the Defence Committees and its own forces. The Arms Trials put an end to that relationship, and abandoned the Northern minority to its own devices. The outcome was an Army with its own political source of legitimacy. The paramilitaries were on the Protestant side, and the 1998 deal was not made with them.)

The individual as the bearer of universal rights on which legitimate political structures are founded has always struck me as an ideological fiction. The Nuremberg Trials purported to establish this as being the law for soldiers in future. And it is to soldiers that it has the most immediate relevance. But I have noticed only one attempt in a British law court to base a defence on it, and the Court did not allow it.

Wilson continues:

"The new paradigm is in the best enlightenment traditions. It treats the individual citizen, not the 'community', as the unit of society..."

"It has been successfully trialled in the *Intercultural Cities* network, which has mushroomed to nearly 150 cities around the world..."

So the enlightened future is essentially a reconstruction of the mediaeval Hanseatic League! It's a nice thought at least.

Brendan Clifford

A Definitive History Of Irish International Brigaders

Leopold Kerney has been much maligned in Irish academic circles. In 1949 T. Desmond Williams, a wartime member of British Intelligence, became Professor of Modern Irish History at University College Dublin. In 1953 the former Irish Minister to Spain successfully sued Williams for libel. Yet Kerney has continued to be badmouthed down the years by the Irish academic establishment, most notably by Eunan O'Hallpin, Bank of Ireland Professor of Contemporary Irish History at Trinity College Dublin, Dr. Michael Kennedy, Executive Editor of the Royal Irish Academy's *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* series, and former Senator John A. Murphy, Emeritus Professor of History at University College Cork. You might be led to believe that it was the case that Williams—contrary to the facts—had successfully defended his libel against Kerney!

But Kerney was ably vindicated in both *Leopold H. Kerney, Irish Minister to Spain 1935-1946*, a website edited by his son Éamon C. Kerney, and *Ireland's Revolutionary Diplomat: A Biography of Leopold Kerney* by Barry Whelan. My reviews of both the Kerney website and the Murphy biography appeared in the March-April 2007 and September-October 2019 issues of *History Ireland*, respectively, and can be accessed on its website. These reviews were subsequently republished in the April-June 2008 and December 2019 issues of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, and these, in turn, can be accessed on the Athol Books website.

One of the most significant documents unearthed by Éamon Kerney was the revelation that the British Foreign Office was of the opinion that Williams had not a leg to stand on. In March 1954 F.H. Boland, Irish Ambassador to the UK, was shown all of the captured German documentation that Britain made available to Williams for his libel defence, and the ambassador concluded that “if Professor Williams is relying on these ... to substantiate the allegations he made in his articles, I doubt whether he will find them of much use to him”. Furthermore, in reporting back to his departmental secretary, Boland pointed out that the British Foreign Office's legal adviser had also “expressed the opinion that the papers on the file did

not, in his view, justify the criticism of Mr Kerney which had been made in Professor Williams's articles in the *Leader* and the *Irish Press*”. Kerney was vindicated by his victory in court, much to the chagrin of the Irish academic establishment.

December 2020 has seen the publication of *In Spanish Trenches: The Minds and Deeds of the Irish Who Fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War* by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor. It is to the credit of the authors that they also break with the establishment's narrative regarding Kerney, and their testimony as to the integrity of the Minister's untiring efforts on behalf of the imprisoned Ryan complements that of Whelan. I might add here that in one respect Kerney was calling in a 1936 favour shown to a Francoist Duchess by Peadar O'Donnell, which I omitted mentioning when reviewing Peadar's book, *SALUD! An Irishman in Spain*, in this magazine's February issue.

Red Hugh O'Donnell (1572-1602), Clan Chieftain of the O'Donnells of Donegal and ruler of Tír Conaill, was a leader of the Nine Years War against the English occupation of Ireland. In the wake of defeat at the 1601 Battle of Kinsale, Red Hugh travelled to Spain to seek military assistance, but he died there the following year. The descendants of a predecessor Clan Chieftain, Red Hugh's uncle Calvagh O'Donnell (1515-1566), would themselves settle in Spain. One such direct descendant, Leopoldo O'Donnell (1809-1867), was a notorious Spanish Imperialist who held office as Prime Minister of Spain 1858-63. Previously, when Captain General of Cuba, Leopoldo had been responsible for the massacre of thousands of Afro-Cubans (both slave and free) in 1844, known by Cubans as the *Year of the Lash*. In 1859 Leopoldo declared a war of conquest on Morocco, and commanded the Spanish Army to victory at the 1860 battle of Tétouan. O'Donnell was consequently ennobled as the first Duke of Tetuán, the Spanish version of the conquered city's name.

Leopoldo's grand-nephew Don Juan was the third Duke, and died in office as Minister for War (1924-28) during the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera. It

was Don Juan's daughter, the Duchess of Tetuán, Bianca O'Donnell, that Peadar O'Donnell came to the rescue in September 1936. She was in fact the landlady of the Madrid building that had housed Leopold Kerney's Irish Consulate office, and she lived in an apartment above it. Kerney, however, was now on sick leave with polio, and a British Embassy official informed Peadar of how, at the commencement of the War, he had evacuated Kerney's secretary and then closed down the Consulate. The pro-Franco Duchess was anxious for her safety and, when the office was closed, she put the Consulate sign on the door of her own apartment. But the British Embassy was notified and the official made Bianca remove it. Peadar wrote of his reaction:

“‘Well the devil damn you’, I gasped. It surely was the hardest of bad luck that the last of a family driven into exile at the end of an unsuccessful war against British power in Ireland should once more take a knock from the same power, and have the protecting influence of the Green Flag brushed aside by an old tyranny. The hard luck was sharpened by the fact that it was a family from my own Tír Conaill, the O'Donnell family in Spain; and I am a bigoted Tír Conaillian. It was natural enough that the Spanish Government should not be very enthusiastic about any member of a family with such an association in the circumstances then obtaining in Spain, and had the Spanish Government alone been concerned in this episode, I should have contented myself with damning the family for puddling about in backward ideas, and pass on. The benign Britisher was very interested when I told him the story. Irish people are most remarkable he assured me. Fancy a family flying from justice—you know what I mean—becoming one of the ruling families in a foreign country; probably didn't even know a word of the language when they arrived. Did I know there was even a ‘Calle O'Donnell’ in Madrid? ... The last he had heard of the lady she was a prisoner in her own house.”

Peadar met with Spain's Socialist Foreign Minister, Julio Álvarez del Vayo, and related:

“I found myself facing a sensitive, eager man... I would say he had a flair for sensitive touch with the mood of the common people, and from this background his thoughts turned to the strangling cruelty of the arms blockade. What did our country think of this blockade of a democratic Government, elected by the vast majority of the Spanish people? Do the Irish people know that when the election which gave the Popular Front their victory was held, the State forces were in the hands of those who lost the election? Surely a Catholic country like Ireland, which no longer had a feudal class to make puppets of the Church, must

sympathise with the Spanish people and the Spanish Government? I explained the condition of public feeling in Ireland and of the effect of the attacks on churches; the attacks were made appear in Ireland as the policy of the Government itself. And here I was able to make my case for considerate treatment for members of a family with such appeal to Irish imagination as that of the O'Donnell family, of whose plight I had already spoken to a member of his staff. I got his promise that all possible consideration should be shown, and that beyond arrest nothing further was to be feared."

The Whelan biography of Kerney relates how, in March 1936 and four months prior to Franco's revolt, Bianca O'Donnell had briefed the Irish Minister of rumours of an immediate "*coup d'état by certain elements in the army*". He further related that, following Franco's victory, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Juan Beigbeder, appointed the Duchess to a senior position on his staff. McLoughlin and O'Connor write of her:

"Frank Ryan had an unexpected visitor (to Burgos Central Prison) on 12 September 1939: Bianca O'Donnell, Duchess of Tetuán... She undertook the journey to Burgos at the behest of the Irish Minister and with the permission of Foreign Minister Beigbeder. As an aristocrat, the Duchess had access to members of Franco's inner circle. She was grateful to the Irish and understood the concern in Ireland about Ryan's fate, not least because she had been able to leave to leave Madrid in the early part of the Civil War with the help of Peadar O'Donnell, Frank Ryan's close friend. Beigbeder provided her with an official car for her journey from Madrid to Burgos, confiding to the Duchess that he had brought the case of the Irish captive to Franco's attention several times without success. She hoped to be able to speak to Franco himself through the intercession of the Foreign Minister."

To no avail. The authors also shed light on some correspondence from my grandmother, Julia O'Riordan, with the Irish Minister to Spain, Leopold Kerney—then based across the border in St Jean de Luz, France—as well as with the Irish Minister to France itself, Art Ó Briain:

"In fairness to Ó Briain, he acted promptly on repeated appeals (April to May 1938) from two distraught Cork mothers to have their sons, James Francis O'Regan and Michael O'Riordan, stopped from going to the front in Spain, writing to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs and Kerney in St Jean de Luz. O'Riordan had slipped away leaving a note to assure his 'sincere' Catholic parents that he was bound for a job 'hundreds of miles' from the front. The

French authorities promised to assist Ó Briain by preventing the two Corkmen from entering Spain, if possible... As Ó Briain explained gently (letters, May 6 and June 27, 1938) to Mrs Julia Riordan, as she signed herself, there were several such cases and there was little the Irish Legation could do, having no channel of communication to anyone in Spain. O'Riordan was the second-last Irishman to join the International Brigades. Both he and O'Regan would see front-line service."

This was at the battle of the Ebro, which commenced on 25th July 1938, and during which battle my father was wounded in action on August 1st on Hill 481, overlooking the town of Gandesa. The authors further record his citation for bravery:

"Private Michael O'Riordan, Light Machine Gunner: He carried his light machine-gun into every action, and when he was ordered to withdraw, he waited until the whole company had done so. He said that his weapon was worth a dozen men. When he was wounded, he refused to leave his position until the others had to leave it. Even then he did not leave until he was ordered by the Commander and Commissar."

There is, however, one biographical error of fact which requires correction. The authors write:

"The outbreak of war on 1 September 1939 created a new context. O'Riordan was bribed with a commission in the army by a senior member of Fianna Fáil. Declining the carrot, he got the stick. Having moved back into the IRA, he had become quartermaster of Cork city's 1st battalion... With two other comrades of the Connolly Column, Johnny Power and Patrick Smyth, O'Riordan was among 2,000 republicans interned between 1940 and 1943."

The authors themselves are not responsible for the one error of fact contained therein. Ciarán Crossey's *Ireland and the Spanish Civil War* website featured notes of a discussion which he and J. Quinn had conducted with my father in September 2001. Those notes included the following:

"Terry Flanagan. He did end up in the Free State Army, but he wasn't the only republican to do so. Tom Barry very briefly joined them also during the Second World War 'Emergency'. Even O'Riordan himself was offered a commission after the Spanish Civil War. This post was offered by a senior member of Fianna Fáil, and was obviously refused. One reason for the offer was his military experience in Spain. Flanagan was a Lieutenant at the Curragh. There were four watchtowers with one more at the gates. Every day there was a change of

the guard and on one day MO'R was watching them when he noticed 'that Flanagan was walking in front of the guard with his sword'. As another detail Michael said that there were big rows among the internees about the politics of World War 2."

Following the posting of these notes, I asked my father why had he "*obviously refused*" the offer of a commission in the wartime National Army. "*I didn't refuse it!*" was his reply. He was giving it active consideration, but was not given the time to do so, when the more suspicious wing of Fianna Fáil took action, and the wartime Minister for Finance, Seán T. O'Kelly, signed the order for his internment in January 1940.

When I edited the second edition of *Connolly Column* for my father in 2005, I added a number of extra appendices, including the Crossey website interviews with both my father and his fellow Ebro veteran Eugene Downing. I asked my father to correct the error in Crossey's notes for this second edition, but he did wish to do so, since he considered that it had been made in good faith. The problem with an uncorrected error, however, is that it can grow legs, which is why I am correcting it here.

Frank Ryan would certainly not have considered going forward for a commission in the wartime National Army as taking a bribe. Quite the contrary, he regarded it as the patriotic responsibility of IRA officers with noteworthy military skills honed during both the War of Independence and the Treaty War to do so—even though, like himself, they remained politically averse to Fianna Fáil—men such as Ernie O'Malley, Moss Twomey, Séamas and Tomás Maloney, and John Joe Sheehy. Ryan was not, of course, to know that Sheehy had also been interned by the Government, when he sent the following January 1942 communication from Berlin to Dev's man in Madrid, Leopold Kerney:

"In time of national crisis like this, there must be a unified command. The country comes before party. So, in his neutrality policy—which is the only sane policy under the circumstances—Dev should get 100% support... Because I know hundreds of good Republicans who are standing aloof today, I am fearful of what may happen if war reaches us. What is the reason for the aloofness of men with fine national records—men like O'Malley, Twomey, Sheehy and the Malones, to name but a few? Why aren't they leaders in the Defence Forces? I just can't believe it's all their fault. Can't the Govt. itself be partly responsible for the failure to

get 100% support? There are literally hundreds of names of good men that I don't read about in the papers. All those men can't be just tired or useless."

In an April 1940 letter from Burgos Prison which Kerney had conveyed to his parents, Ryan had previously enquired: "*I would like some news of my old friend—those whom, I presume, are now within four walls, and also some who were with me (as International Brigaders fighting in Spain—MO'R) two years ago. Did Jackie Power and Paddy O'Daire get out alive?*" They did. During World Two, Paddy O'Daire, who had been a Free State Army sergeant during Ireland's Treaty War, would enlist in the British Army's Pioneer Corps, rising to the rank of major while fighting in Italy. IRA veteran Johnny Power would join his fellow International Brigaders, Paddy Smyth and my father, as prisoners in the Curragh Internment Camp. The authors refer critically to the account given in *Connolly Column* of that 1940-43 period of imprisonment:

"With his gift for political elision, O'Riordan ignored the CPI's policy during the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and wrote of the Connolly Column trio: 'their political task was to explain to the other prisoners of the Irish Republican Movement the anti-national character of Fascism and the relationship between the anti-Hitler war and the cause of national liberation.' It was not a view that commended itself to straightforward anti-British elements, and there were intense rows between the internees on the correct position on the war. One of their guards was Terry Flanagan, Ryan's second in command in Madrigueras, Flanagan had been invalided home in August 1937 and was now a lieutenant in the army."

As the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland, my father was as capable of political elision in *Connolly Column* (1979) as anywhere else. But the authors have misconstrued his politics if they think that the September 1939 to June 1941 phase of WW2 posed a problem for him. Quite the contrary. His Communism and Irish Republicanism rested easily with each other in characterising the Anglo-German conflict as an Imperialist War.

I would add that Spanish Republicans also had no difficulty in viewing it in such terms, and many of them, in fact, felt that the French Republic was only receiving its just deserts for having interned Spanish Republican refugees in atrocious concentration camp conditions. In April 1939 my father wrote to his close comrade and friend, the US International Brigader Bill Gandall, about their concerns for Bill's Barcelona girlfriend:

"*I am glad to hear Amparo is safe and sound (I will write her today), even though they are being treated like dogs in the Refugee Camps. I sent you a few papers showing the farewell of the Brigade and pictures of the Refugee Camps. They stand out today as eloquent testimony to the fact that Spaniards who wish to be free would rather live in sand holes rather than under Franco.*"

The full letter—containing what I have called a "*short Irish history course*"—was published in the July 2007 issue of *Irish Political Review*, and it can be freely downloaded from both the Athol Books and the "*Ireland and the Spanish Civil War*" websites.

The Argelès-sur-Mer Concentration Camp had been established in February 1939, with between thirty and forty people dying there each day. Anthony Beevor's 2006 history, *The Battle for Spain - The Spanish Civil War 1936 - 1939*, notwithstanding its relentless anti-Communist thrust, coupled with a sustained animosity towards the Spanish Republic itself, tells it like it was following the fall of Barcelona to Franco's troops on 26 January 1939. Amparo had been among the 450,000 Spanish Republican refugees—including 170,000 women and children—who, over the next few weeks, would embark on a horrendous mid-Winter climb over the Pyrenees mountain range. But their reception by the French Republic was to be no less horrendous. The reference in my father's letter to the sand holes of the refugee camps indicated some knowledge of what awaited them, but Beevor would recount the full scale of such horrors:

"The places to which the defeated republicans were sent consisted of stretches of coast, wet, salty and without any protection from the wind. The first camp to open, in the middle of February, was at Argelès-sur-Mer. It was little more than a marshland divided into rectangles of a hectare apiece and surrounded by a perimeter of barbed wire guarded by Senegalese troops. There was a shortage of drinking water, many resorted to drinking sea water, and nothing was done to provide washing facilities or latrines. The food they received was scarce and of bad quality. The men suffered from scabies and lice. The 77,000 refugees, many without proper clothing, belongings, money or food, had to build huts for the sick and wounded. The rest dug into the sand to shelter from the wind. Only after the first few weeks were they given drinking water in cans and wood to make latrines next to the sea ..."

"In an attempt to improve the wretched conditions in the large camps, the French authorities tried to move some of the inmates to the initial sorting camps of Arles

and Prats de Molló in the mountains, but they had to stop the practice because too many died literally of cold. The camp of Vernet-les-Bains ... was a punishment camp from the First World War cut off from the outside world. About 50 hectares in area, and divided into three sections all surrounded by barbed-wire fences, it held those republicans the French authorities considered 'a danger to public safety', among them ... 150 International Brigaders segregated in a sector known as the 'leper colony'. Under the Vichy government the camp passed to the Germans, who rebuilt it according to their own concentration camp guidelines. Yet Arthur Koestler wrote [in 1946] that 'from a point of view of food, installations and hygiene, Vernet was worse than a Nazi concentration camp'. In such conditions it was predictable that many thousands of refugees should have died."

Beevor was to retrieve from the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow—and proceed to quote from it in detail—a document entitled "*My Last 10 Days in Spain*" by Emil Voldemarovich Shteingold, in which its author bore witness as follows to his treatment in the largest French concentration camp of them all, Saint-Cyprien, into which up to 90,000 men had been herded:

"Imagine a gloomy sandy spit of land with no vegetation, which was about two kilometres long, and about 400-500 metres wide. It was washed by the Mediterranean Sea on one side and ended up in a swamp on the other. This area was fenced by barbed wire and divided into square corrals. Machine-guns were placed along the perimeter of the camp. A latrine was erected on the beach, which consisted of a long log fixed on piles, under which the tide flowed back and forth. This was how we were welcomed by republican France with its socialist government. As a sign of gratitude for this warm welcome, we decided to call the latrine area 'The Daladier Boulevard' ... The sand looked dry, but it was only dry on the surface. We had to sleep out on it in groups of five to ten men. Some of the greatcoats and blankets we put underneath, and with other coats and blankets we covered ourselves. It was not a good idea to turn from one side to another, as the wet side would freeze in the cold wind, and this could lead to pneumonia... Wounded and sick men were brought here too. The mortality was very high, it reached 100 people every day."

Shteingold had been my father's friend and comrade, as his Soviet military instructor at a 'Cabos' (Corporal) School in Catalunya in late June 1938, the month prior to the commencement of the Battle of the Ebro. The Latvian Jewish Red Army officer Emil Shteingold survived both the French Concentration Camp and the

USSR's Great Patriotic War of 1941-45, in which he had gone on to fight, and my father would have a reunion with him in Moscow in the 1960s. Amparo also survived, and would re-establish communications with Bill Gandall in the post-War years.

So, my father had no problem with designating the 1939-40 conflict as an Imperialist War. That is why, if given enough time, he had been prepared to seriously consider donning a "Free State Army" officer's uniform, and was willing to face down any possible invaders of this Republic, whether from the British Empire or the German Reich. It is how to characterise the best interests of this Republic following Hitler's invasion of the USSR in June 1941 that the problem arose. This led to sharp differences of opinion between us forty years ago. And on that issue in 1981, it is I who was the Stalinist and my father who was not.

See <http://carrowkeel.com/frof/translated.html> where the July 2006 issue of *Irish Political Review* can be accessed, as well as on the Athol Books website. My political perspective could be described as being that of a Father O'Flanagan Two Nationist Socialist Republican, aspiring to a United Ireland achieved by the consent provisions of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. That same July 2006 issue carried my obituary of my father, which was reprinted by the Communist Party of Ireland in the October 2006 issue of its Northern Ireland publication *Unity*, and wherein I wrote:

"Down through the years whatever political differences I had with my parents had always been expressed publicly. While my father was General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland, during periods when I had been chairman of the Dublin branch of the British and Irish Communist Organisation in the 1970s and chairman of the Dublin North-West branch of the Democratic Socialist Party in the 1980s, we each expressed our differences in print and for the record. Precisely because such differences had been placed in the public arena there was no need for them to enter the private domain, so that personal and family bonds remained intact. And for the last decade and a half of my father's life, we more and more acted together in respect of issues that we could espouse in common. These included solidarity with Cuba and the struggle against historical revisionism in Ireland – the latter exemplified in particular by my father's journey to Aubane in January 2004 for the launch of *Seán Moylan In His Own Words*, his review of those same Moylan memoirs and its inclusion in the second edition of his own book *Connolly Column*, and completed on his last weekend of public activity in October 2005 by his

attendance – accompanied by three other International Brigade veterans of Spain – at the Dublin launch of Meda Ryan's biography, *Tom Barry*."

The sharpest of our past differences had been, during 1976, in respect of the First World War during 1976, and during 1981, in respect of the Second World War. My father adhered to the dogma set out by C.D. Greaves, of the Connolly Association and the Communist Party of Great Britain, in his 1961 biography, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*. Greaves maintained that "*Connolly's thought ran parallel with Lenin's*". But this was simply not true. In 1976 a controversy raged in the columns of the *Irish Times* during which I challenged the Greaves School on that issue and, in particular, the prevailing view that Connolly's position in respect of the First World War was one of neutrality, when in fact he was decidedly and decisively pro-German. I pointed out that it was not Lenin who appealed to Connolly, but rather Lenin's life-long opponent, the Polish Socialist leader Josef Pilsudski. A week before the Easter Rising, Connolly enthusiastically applauded Pilsudski's Polish Legion for fighting alongside Germany against Russia, as a contingent of the Austrian army. (*Workers' Republic*, April 15, 1916).

In the years when I was an anti-revisionist Communist, I regarded Leninism and Stalinism as one and the same, and as an ex-Communist, but not an anti-Communist, I still do. In the years 1971 to 1982, I was politically a Stalinist as well as a Two Nationist, and I would have categorised my father's politics as *One Nation Khrushchevite*. It was not in respect of the 1939 *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, however, that my father had exercised any political elision, but in respect of Frank Ryan and East Germany, the state territory of the German Democratic Republic where Ryan's remains would lie buried until 1979, thirty five years after his death.

The thirtieth anniversary of the GDR, established in the Soviet Zone in 1949, coincided with a Great Leap Forward in Irish-GDR relations, centred on the June 1979 repatriation of Ryan's remains from Dresden's Loschwitz cemetery and their reburial in Dublin's Glasnevin cemetery. It had been Elizabeth 'Budge' Clissmann (*née* Mulcahy) who organised Ryan's funeral following his death in Dresden in 1944, and both she and her husband Helmut were present at the Dublin reburial. I should add one more piece to the jigsaw – a highly unorthodox encounter, in either 1962 or 1963, between my father and Helmut Clissmann, the officer in Ger-

many's Intelligence Service *Abwehr* into whose care Frank Ryan had been entrusted during the final years of his life, spent in wartime Germany, 1940-44. Clissmann was to be a founder of the Irish Section of Amnesty International in 1962, and, at one of its early public meetings, my father had followed him into the men's toilets, where he introduced himself. "*I have just one question*", he put to Clissmann. "*Was Frank Ryan a collaborator?*" Clissmann shook his head and said "*No*". "*That's all I wanted to know*", my father responded.

My father had been one of three Irish International Brigaders who had flown to the GDR to accompany the repatriation of Frank Ryan's remains from Dresden back to Dublin in June 1979. In *The Irish Socialist* of August 1979, the Communist Party of Ireland enthused about the GDR presence at the Dublin ceremony:

"Heinz Knobbe, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of the German Democratic Republic in London, also spoke at the graveside. He recalled that in Spain, Ryan had fought against German as well as Spanish fascism... 'The fact that fascism had been destroyed in Germany was the legacy of Frank Ryan and people like him.' He said that Ryan was held in great esteem in the GDR... He concluded, 'May Frank Ryan always remain an unbreakable link between Ireland and my country'."

It was in the June, July and September 1981 issues of *The Irish Communist*, theoretical journal of the British & Irish Communist Organisation, that I reviewed my father's book, *Connolly Column*. I recalled my own memories of the re-interment of Ryan's remains, at which ceremony I myself had also been present: "*Helmut Clissmann smiled wryly to himself, not without reason, as he heard the representative of the East German Government ... claiming that the destruction of fascism in Germany was the legacy of people like Ryan*". It was, of course, the USSR's Red Army that had defeated Nazi Germany. Indeed, it was Ryan himself who had openly said to his German hosts that, with the invasion of the USSR in June 1941, "*You've lost your War!*" In my 1981 review I proceeded to pose the question:

"Has any thought been given to the fact that Frank Ryan was personally quite fortunate that he died while still a 'distinguished guest' of Nazi Germany, and that he did not have to account for himself a year later, when Soviet power reached Dresden? After all, think of the subsequent fate of the many Spanish Civil War veterans who had survived the Second World War in Nazi concentration camps. The commissar of the Hungarian

Battalion of the International Brigade, Laszlo Rajk, was put on trial in 1949 and executed. After another show trial in Czechoslovakia in 1952, International Brigader Otto Sling was executed and International Brigader Artur London was sentenced to life imprisonment... But what if Frank Ryan had been available for an East German show trial?"

As my father himself had frankly acknowledged:

"Ryan found himself in Germany, neither as a captive anti-fascist nor as an invited voluntary collaborator, but in a unique category. Far from suffering the fate of other opponents of fascism, German and international, who were put into the concentration camps, the gas chambers or before the firing squads, he in fact was allowed to live with the Clissmanns."

That fact alone would have been sufficient to ensure Ryan's execution by a post-War regime in Eastern Europe. As regards our respective assessments of Ryan in 1979-81, it was I, in fact, who was the Stalinist, and not my father, since I agreed at the time with the USSR's condemnation of Irish wartime neutrality, while my father did not. My review rejected any contention that Ryan was a Nazi collaborator, and I acknowledged Ryan's personal integrity, as well as the fact that he had remained true to his Connolly Socialist Republican beliefs to the very end. But Connolly Socialism, and Ryan's championing of Dev's wartime neutrality, was incompatible with how Soviet Communism viewed its wartime needs.

In *Connolly Column* my father had written of Frank Ryan's period in wartime Germany:

"Was Ryan in the difficult situation in which he found himself using the Nazis rather than the reverse? **In that period he (Ryan) was clearly conversant with the situation in his own country and the conditions that made the Irish Government's policy of neutrality both inevitable and generally acceptable. Despite his criticisms of de Valera, he was more than capable of taking a positive position on this aspect of neutrality.** (My emphasis—MO'R). An indication of this is recorded in Enno Stephan's book *Spies in Ireland* (1965) referring to his first interrogation in Berlin: '*The Germans were impressed not only with Ryan's alert understanding of political matters, but also and above all with the respectful manner in which this Irish "Red" spoke about his country's political leader, de Valera.*' "

In my 1981 review I took issue with that defence of Dev's wartime neutrality, as I also denounced what Seán Nolan had written in *The Communist Party of Ireland —An Outline History* (1975):

"For all imaginable reasons, immediate and historical, there was no other possible choice except neutrality... Neutrality was Ireland's manifestation of anti-imperialism... Churchill, the mouthpiece of the British ruling class, on the day war ended in 1945, delivered his imperialist broadside against Ireland and the policy of neutrality."

And in the October 1978 issue of the CPI's *Irish Socialist* Nolan had further maintained:

"The success of the policy of neutrality in the Second World War is now part of our history. It was a policy that had the support of the vast majority of the Irish people... because any involvement of Ireland was only possible by way of support of Britain."

But it was not only Churchill who had pronounced such anathemas. I proceeded to further comment and pose a question:

"According to the CPI, the Soviet Union was to be defended by continuing to treat the War between its Western Allies and Nazi Germany as an Imperialist War... Why does the pro-Soviet CPI remain silent on the Soviet Union's own broadside against Ireland's wartime '*anti-imperialism*'? It was on August 17, 1947, that the present Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, gave the following explanation to the UN Security Council for the USSR's continued opposition to de Valera's Ireland as a candidate for UN membership: '*We must, of course, take into account the way that country behaved before, or especially during, the war years. We cannot fail to observe, as we all know, that Ireland was on very good terms with the Axis powers and gave no assistance whatsoever to the Allied Nations in their struggle against the fascist states.*' "

As regards Frank Ryan, I continued:

"It is only right to point out that Michael O'Riordan avoids none of the evidence which was then available at the time of writing *Connolly Column*. But for such a pro-Soviet party as the CPI, this evidence is handled in a most un-Soviet fashion. A Soviet prosecutor would have presented this evidence in a very definite way had Ryan lived one year longer and encountered the Red Army in Dresden. A Soviet defence counsel in such a highly charged political case would not have handled such evidence all that much differently from the prosecutor."

Andrei Gromyko had accompanied Stalin to the wartime Allied summits in Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam, and Stalin appointed him as a Deputy Foreign Minister to Molotov in 1946. In the wake of Khrushchev ousting Foreign Minister Molotov in 1956, he promoted Gromyko to that office the following year. Gromyko remained

Foreign Minister until 1985, when Gorbachev appointed him USSR President. Gorbachev assumed that additional office himself in 1988, a year before Gromyko's death in 1989, and three years before the self-destruction of the USSR in 1991.

In December 1955 the USSR dropped its veto of Ireland's membership of the UN, as well as that of Franco's Spain, as part of a price worth paying to get the West to drop the veto on UN membership for four of the Soviet Union's own Warsaw Pact allies—Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. While it was in the USSR's interest that Ireland should now maintain its military neutrality and not join NATO, it is beyond belief that Gromyko ever modified or revised his views of Ireland's WW2 neutrality.

During the the course of the 1990s I radically altered my perspective regarding both James Connolly and Frank Ryan. I brought together my thoughts on the former in a paper delivered to the the Douglas Hyde Summer School in July 2001—and which was published in 2006 by the Aubane Historical Society—entitled *James Connolly Re-assessed: The Irish and European Context*. See also www.indymedia.ie/article/76008 for *The Justification of James Connolly*, an updated 2006 lecture, which was published by SIPTU. On both occasions I acknowledged:

"In 1976, while holding that the 1916 Rising was justified, I had nonetheless gone on to criticise Connolly for not ideologically differentiating himself to a sufficient degree from his allies and for violating the 'pure' socialist principle of neutrality in respect of the Imperialist War. A re-assessment of Connolly on my part also involves a re-assessment of what I myself have previously written about him. The more I re-read Connolly the more convinced I am that I got it right as to where he stood on the First World War. It was, however, when I held Connolly to have been wrong for taking such a stand, that I myself got it wrong. The more I now read Connolly in conjunction with the actual history of the First World War itself, the more I appreciate his reasons for rejecting neutrality in that conflict and for preferring a German victory over a British one."

From 1986 I had already begun working closely with my father on International Brigade commemorations. Sharing such Spanish Anti-Fascist War commemorations had brought the thinking of both my father and myself closer together on a number of fronts. I was to conclude that I myself had been mistaken, and my father justified,

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IDA Eyes Israel Presence

The *Irish Examiner* reports that the Industrial Development Authority is "looking to appoint a business development consultant to work on its behalf in Israel" (*Irish Examiner*, 17.4.32). The *Examiner* report continues: "The remit for the Israel-based consultant is to win new foreign direct investment for Ireland from Israeli companies".

Ireland is one of the very few countries in the EU which takes seriously its obligations in International Law (such as it is) as regards Israel's continuing illegal colonisation of Palestine, general mistreatment of Palestinian areas under its security oversight, and tormenting of Arabs within Israel itself. Israel has devoted special attention to overcoming this anti-Imperialist reflex; and an increasing presence of its view is noticeable in such as the *Irish Times*. The Government continues to further the Israeli endeavours to to change public attitudes.

Giving Israel further leverage in the Irish economy (where it already has a surprisingly large presence) is not in keeping with the sentiment of the Irish people—though supported by the Government.

Should Corporation Tax Be The Same Around The World?

"Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe makes a critical point in his observations on the possible introduction of a relatively high minimum corporate tax rate ("Donohoe expresses reservations about global minimum corporate tax rate", *Business News*, April 22nd). The corporate tax rate is only one of the factors which businesses take into account in deciding on the location of major investment projects. If tax were the only consideration, higher-tax countries could not compete with us and we in turn would always lose out to countries where the corporate tax rate is zero.

I have always seen low corporate tax rates as one of the tools available to smaller countries to part-compensate for certain natural and immutable disadvantages. A small country does not have a large domestic market, private or public sector, for the output of factories located there. A small country which is an island clinging on to the edge of Europe suffers from the further disadvantage that it is expensive and time-consuming to import raw materials from and to export finished goods to larger markets.

All of this was true even before the recent complications attending the UK landbridge to Europe. If I may adapt Mr Donohoe's words, these are the real, material and persistent disadvantages suffered by smaller countries.

All of these disadvantages result in quantifiable costs. Corporate income tax is a cost for business and the relatively low rate which has long been a feature of our industrial development strategy offers some compensation for the other higher costs of doing business in and from Ireland.

Pat O'Brien (*Irish Times*, 24.4.21)

From Page 27

on the question of Irish wartime neutrality. In reviews for both the Spring 2003 issue of *History Ireland* and the Fall 2003 issue of *Irish Literary Supplement*, I took issue with Fearghal McGarry's 2002 biography *Frank Ryan*, and in particular with his chapter entitled "Collaborator", I argued:

"Departures by McGarry from his own previously established high standards of scholarship are compounded in his treatment of the last period of Ryan's life entitled, without qualification, 'Collaborator 1938-44'. 'Collaborator' is here used solely as a political classification in the same way as all other chapter-headings preceding it - 'Republican' 'Social Republican' and 'Anti-Fascist'. And 'collaborator' in the political sense is given only one definition in all of the leading English-language dictionaries from Oxford to Collins. A 'collaborator' is defined as one who cooperates traitorously with an enemy of one's own country, especially

with an enemy occupying or seeking to occupy that country. The dictionary definition of 'Quisling' is also given as a synonym for "collaborator", particularly a traitor collaborating with an occupying enemy force... in my 1981 review I was in no doubt that by no stretch of the imagination could Ryan's actual activities in wartime Germany be considered as a continuation of his previous anti-fascist resistance struggle, even though his inner beliefs remained as before. Writing from a point of view which regarded as valid the Soviet denunciation of Irish wartime neutrality that had resulted in the USSR veto on Ireland joining the UN for the first decade of its existence, I regarded Ryan's championing of de Valera's neutrality as being 'objectively' anti-Soviet. I no longer hold that view of Irish history... Taoiseach de Valera had, in fact, saved Ireland from both Fascism and War... Frank Ryan in Germany (as a *de facto* representative of de Valera) was neither the anti-fascist conspirator and martyr of Socialist Republican iconography nor the collaborator with the Nazis

portrayed by McGarry... 'Patriot' might well indeed have been the appropriate chapter heading to have used in respect of the final four years of Ryan's life. Patriotism can, of course, also be the last refuge of the scoundrel. But Ryan was no scoundrel. Undoubtedly he fails to pass the Stalinist test of unconditional loyalty to the interests of the Soviet Union, as he also fails to pass the Churchillian test of loyalty to the British Empire. He would have been a prime candidate for a show trial under either regime. But perhaps an admittedly more insular standard of patriotism will allow us to acknowledge the integrity of the role he played."

My father appreciated the review. I was now in agreement with his own 1979 assessment of Ryan, while he himself was no longer trying to square the circle by pretending that Ryan's devotion to Dev's policy of wartime neutrality could ever have had a blind eye turned to it in the post-War years by either the USSR or the GDR. As Khrushchev would have been no less

vehement than Stalin in condemning that wartime neutrality, my father's defence of such a policy, and his own championing of Ryan's record, can in no sense be described as Khrushchevite. Frank Ryan was a Connolly Socialist Republican who firmly grasped where Connolly himself would have stood. Just as Connolly's acute and pragmatic analysis led him to see that Ireland's interests in World War One lay in establishing a military alliance with Germany, Ryan's analysis saw that this State's interests in World War Two lay in upholding its neutrality.

Throughout his life, my father was as much inspired by Connolly as by Lenin. While he could never accept my counterposing the two in respect of World War One, his own approach to World War Two, both for its duration and retrospectively, was primarily based on his own reading of what Connolly would have done. Now that I had finally come to agree with him in my 2003 McGarry review, he wished to have it included as an Appendix in the second edition of *Connolly Column*, which he launched in March 2005. On the occasion of the AGM of the International Brigade Memorial Trust being held in Dublin in October 2005, he further asked me to organise a Frank Ryan commemoration and to give the oration at his Glasnevin graveside. This was his last public event before his passing in May 2006. My McGarry reviews and Ryan oration can be accessed on the "Ireland and the Spanish Civil War" website.

I have not been a Communist since 1982. But I am a former Communist who is particularly proud of having been one throughout that critical decade of the 1970s. I am also proud of my father's record as an Irish Republican Communist in those dangerous decades of the 1930s and 1940s, and immensely so of his defence of the Spanish Republic in the ranks of the 15th International Brigade. When no Irish historian would touch the subject, it was left to my ex-combatant father to be a pioneer in 1979 with his *Connolly Column: The story of the Irishmen who fought for the Spanish Republic 1936-1939*. And since no Irish printer would touch it, that book had to be printed in the GDR. Now, at long last, with *In Spanish Trenches: The Minds and Deeds of the Irish Who Fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War*, Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor have written the definitive history of those heroes.

Manus O'Riordan

(To be continued)

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Joe Duffy Maligns Countess Markievicz

I write concerning yesterday's programme [22.4.21] during which Joe Duffy made the assertion that Countess Markievicz had shot dead an unarmed policeman in cold blood. His statement would appear to refer to the Easter Rising, which began on 24 April 1916, and, during which, Markievicz acted as second in command to Michael Mallin at the Royal College of Surgeons. The allegation by Joe Duffy refers to the killing of Constable Michael Lahiff at Saint Stephen's Green on the day that the rebellion started. However, the trial of Countess Markievicz, which took place on 4 May, made no mention of the death of Constable Lahiff. If there had been any connection between her and the death of the constable, it would certainly have been produced by General Maxwell who was eager to secure her conviction. This account of the death of Constable Lahiff is accepted in Jim Herlihy's history of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (2001). However, Countess Markievicz is mentioned in regard to another constable, Sergeant John Hughes: he was captured by rebels on 25 April but, on the orders of the Countess, was soon released. The historical reality is that Countess Markievicz did not shoot an unarmed policeman but did release an unarmed policeman from captivity. I feel that Joe Duffy should make a public acknowledgement of this reality.

Dr Brian P Murphy osb [Letter to RTE, 23.4.21]

Defining anti-Semitism

While I agree with Oliver Sears that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism is neither useful in fighting real anti-Semitism nor correct in equating criticism of the Israeli colonisation of Palestine with anti-Semitism, I do not share his statement that the Jerusalem Declaration on Anti-Semitism (JDA), authored by 200 Israeli and Jewish scholars (yet without consultation with Palestinian civil society), is "a better attempt to offer a comprehensive definition of anti-Semitism" ("Expression of anti-Semitism must be made taboo", Opinion & Analysis, April 7th). I am a member of Jewish Voice for Just Peace (Ireland) and the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign. As a Jewish person often targeted by (Irish) anti-Semitic attacks in relation to my support for migrants and asylum seekers, and by Zionist attacks regarding my pro-Palestine activism, and who has researched racism and anti-Semitism throughout my academic career, I do not believe elevating anti-Semitism above other forms of racism, particularly Islamophobia and anti-migrant racism, is helpful in tackling racism. Yes, anti-Semitism is real and should be taken seriously, but neither the IHRA nor the JDA are concerned with the actual dangers faced by Jewish or Palestinian people. In fact, the current anti-anti-Semitism discourse masquerading as anti-racism damages any solidarity between Jews and other racialised people, and prevents the understanding of racism as a colonial technology of power aimed at maintaining white supremacy. In a recent webinar on the IHRA, Dima Khalidi, director of Palestine Legal, opposed using the Jerusalem Declaration to discredit the IHRA, arguing that the JDA is still talking about anti-Semitism when we should be talking about Palestine. By highlighting the JDA as a positive alternative to the IHRA (probably because it was authored by Jewish scholars), Khalidi said, and I agree, we participate in the distraction from talking about racism tout court and about the Israeli racialisation of the Palestinians.

Dr. Ronit Lentin

Retired Associate Professor of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin (*Irish Times*, 7.4.21)

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Cork City and its Potential for Development

Cork city is unique in Ireland. Even today, the city centre is an island in the River Lee. Originally, there were thirteen islands and over the past few hundred years, the islands were joined up, first by bridges over the streams and then by building streets over the streams which were culverted.

The land was marshy, hence the name in Gaelic, *Coreach Mór na Mumhan* which is the great marsh of Munster, the most southerly of Ireland's provinces. Corcach was anglicised to Corke and then to Cork.

The city started as a convenient place to cross the River near to a Monastery founded, it is said, by St. Finbarr. The Danes came and found it was a safe and soft place to haul up their ships and then the Normans came to join the Danes and the Irish were forced to live on the hilly areas of land outside the islands, before they all merged into one people after battles fought favoured the Irish.

These hills are a feature of Cork city. The two branches of the River Lee are forced to run between these two long hills and so we have the Northside with its steep streets going upwards from the riverbank:

Shandon Street,
Blarney Street (the longest street in Cork),
St. Patrick's Hill and Summerhill etc.

On the Southside of the river are also steep hills running up from the riverbank: Donovan's Road, Gillabbey Street, Barrack Street, Capwell Road and Summerhill South etc.

Most of the population of Cork city today do not live on the island *intra fluvios* (between the rivers) but they live on the hills, and beyond the hills because now the population is about 300,000. Most of them do not work *intra fluvios* and most of the children are schooled on the hills and beyond.

And so it does not stack up to have a bus system based on the city centre. Huge thundering double-deckers rush in and out of Cork city centre as they always did but, the city has moved out.

Recently, it has become fashionable to talk of a Light Rail System – but it also is projected to run into the city centre. There will not be room for Light Rail on the island nor will there be much demand for it on the city centre island. It does not stack up.

Japan and Switzerland

There is in Tokyo a monorail system

which runs from Hamamatsu-chō Station in central Tokyo to Hamada Airport every five minutes from 5.28 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. It is called the bullet-train.

On Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, the mountains fall straight down to the surface of the twenty-kilometre lake and down about six hundred metres or so to the bottom of the lake. And so there is no room for roadways or trains. What the Swiss people have done is to tunnel through the rock along each side of Lake Lucerne and there are roads in the tunnels on each side of the lake, and along one side of the lake is a railway also, joining up many little villages which were previously accessible by water only.

So if we join up the Tokyo idea of the monorail bullet-train and the Swiss idea of tunnels, we have the perfect solution to Cork's transport's problems.

Put the tunnels and the train along under the hills on each side of Cork and let it circle around near Ballincollig/Inniscarra and around Glounthaune/ Foto/Great Island/ Passage West on legs high enough to let sailing ships and liners under it. It would be a spectacular tourist attraction of which we could all be proud. It would also save Cork city centre from choking with traffic and let it be a tourist city.

The Cork City Council and Cork County Council should jointly own and manage the Company to develop the Monorail. Now, that would stack up!

Michael Stack ©

UNIONS concluded

The Union represented more than 1 million people at auto assembly plants as recently as the 1980s, but only 155,000 members remain at GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler today. Plant closings, automation, the shift of production to Mexico, and the rise of foreign companies such as Volkswagen and the Asian automakers have taken their toll.

The UAW says the average worker at the Volkswagen plant makes about \$21 an hour, compared to \$28 an hour at a unionised auto plant.

The VW plant in Chattanooga was one of the UAW's better opportunities to win a vote at a transplant factory. A member of the German autoworkers Union sits on VW's Board of Directors. More than 100 VW plants worldwide employ union-represented workers — everywhere but in

China and at the Chattanooga plant.

Fall in Union Membership

The overall decline in union membership is due in part to the changing job landscape. Service and healthcare jobs are some of the fastest-growing, but their unionisation rates have not increased apace. The manufacturing sector, which historically has made up the majority of unions, has been on the decline for decades.

The unionisation rate for private-sector workers increased by 0.1% point to 6.3% in 2020, reflecting the net effect of declines in both the number of Union members in the private sector and the steep drop in private-sector employment.

US Union membership: In 2019 it was 10.3%, compared to 20.1% in 1983. There were 14.6 million members in the US, down from 17.7 million in 1983. Union membership in the private sector has fallen

to 6.2%, one-fifth that of public sector workers, at 33.6%.

Irish Working Group

What is good for the US must be good for Ireland? So many aspects of our social and cultural life are based on US fads and fashions. Many Irish Trade Unionists would be a little surprised that US workers since 1934 have what we regard as a 'fundamental human right' for workers to organise, or, at the very least the right to a democratic ballot, to choose such a course.

We would be wise to familiarise ourselves with the 'in's' and 'out's' of the American way, we can be certain IBEC will waste no time. As for the ultimate panacea for falling Trade Union membership: don't be too sure — any such ballot of workers in Ireland's Google, Microsoft, and Facebook might be just as problematic as Alabama or Tennessee! This is the New Ireland.

UNIONS continued

Amazon clinched a victory in a historic vote to determine whether workers at its warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, will become the first in the US to join a retail Union.

Amazon.com Inc. is an American multinational technology company based in Seattle, Washington. It is one of the Big Five companies in the US information technology industry, along with Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook. The company has been referred to as “one of the most influential economic and cultural forces in the world”, as well as the world’s most valuable brand.

And, yes, all five are powerful players in the Irish economy: with possibly even greater clout if exercised in the Irish state than even in the US.

Unlike Irish workers who have a right to join a Trade Union, under Irish law, but no obligation on employers to recognise or engage with these workers—in the US since 1935, under the auspices of the *National Labor Relations Board*, workers are entitled to a ballot which if successful entitles them to company recognition and the right to negotiate terms of employment in their place of work.

ROOSEVELT’S ‘NEW DEAL’

Established in 1935, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s ‘New Deal’ the US *National Labor Relations Board* is an independent Federal Agency that protects employees, employers, and unions from unfair labour practices and protects the right of private sector employees to join together, with or without a Union, to improve wages, benefits and working conditions. The NLRB conducts hundreds of workplace elections and investigates thousands of unfair labour practice charges each year.

“During the New Deal (1933-39) the NLRB was staunchly pro-labor. Even so, only 40% of workplace ballots organised by the NLRB resulted in union recognition” (Cassell’s Dictionary of American History, 2002).

In 1994, Union recognition rose to 46.6% and increased to 62.3% towards the end of the decade. Subsequently, various Acts bound the NLRB to enforce restrictions on Union autonomy.

Amazon had 1,798 ‘No’ votes, a clear majority of the 3,215 ballots cast. The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) had 738, despite the support of Senator Bernie Sanders.

Approximately 5,800 workers were eligible to vote, and turnout was roughly 55%.

RWDSU accused Amazon of violating employees’ rights in the election and are asking the agency to consider overturning the result.

Employees have also said that Amazon used mandatory group meetings and one-on-one discussions to predict harmful consequences if they unionised.

Amazon’s tactics had a darker side though! The Union wanted to talk about excessive workload, bathroom breaks and pay. Amazon pushed the narrative that the Union might take away worker benefits, including healthcare. It worked!

One small detail: Around 85% of the workers at Amazon’s warehouse in Bessemer are black.

“I’m a union guy, I support unions. Unions built the middle class. It’s about time they start to get a piece of the action” (President Joe Biden, 9.4.2021).

TENNESSEE VW WORKERS REJECT UNION!

An even more interesting NLRB ballot took place in June 2019: for the second time in recent years, auto workers in a Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, narrowly voted against forming a local of the United Auto Workers in the plant.

Union affiliation was defeated by 57 votes. Over three days of voting, 776 workers backed the union, but 833 voted it down.

The outcome was seen as the latest blow against organised labour in the South, where Union advocates have tried for years to strengthen representation in auto facilities amid a shrinking Union membership base and fierce opposition from many top lawmakers in the region.

A slim 51% majority of the some 1,600 ballots cast shot it down.

The last time United Auto Workers held a vote to organise the Chattanooga factory, in 2014, roughly 53% of workers rejected the proposal.

Volkswagen has officially been ‘neutral’ in both the June vote and the one in 2014.

A Union victory at the Chattanooga factory would have delivered UAW its first fully-unionised foreign-owned auto plant in the South.

Following the earlier failed attempt to form a union, a smaller group of maintenance workers unionised, but Volkswagen

would not bargain with them unless all hourly workers had a chance to vote.

At one point, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee made a visit to the site to address workers before the vote.

“When I have a direct relationship with you, the worker, and you’re working for me, that is when the environment works the best,” Lee told workers, according to a leaked recording of his conversation.

“The visit took some observers aback.

“It’s not unusual for governors and U.S. Senators to vociferously oppose unions in private companies”, Daniel Cornfield, a labor expert at Vanderbilt University, stated. “What is unusual is this governor went inside the plant and directly talked to the workers”.”

Brian Rothenberg, a spokesman for the UAW in Detroit, said the Tennessee Governor should treat workers in Chattanooga as he does those in Spring Hill.

“Governor Lee has embraced UAW GM workers in Spring Hill, Tennessee. All Chattanooga workers want is the same rights as Spring Hill workers and every other VW worker in the world. Why should Chattanooga workers be treated differently and why wouldn’t the Governor or anyone else want Chattanooga workers to have the same rights as GM Spring Hill workers?” Rothenberg said to *Automotive News*.”

The Governor’s visit and the onslaught of advertising campaigns around the vote added to debates on the shop floor that still linger after the vote, especially after such a narrow majority of 57 against Recognition.

Workers at the Chattanooga plant typically start out getting paid \$15.50 per hour. Just months before the Union vote, the company announced pay increases for production team members. While that was a strong wage compared to median earnings in Chattanooga, it is below what unionised auto workers are paid.

Volkswagen has Union representation at all of its other major plants around the globe, but none of its factories in the South have factory-wide Unions.

The vote was a key battle in the effort of the UAW to reverse years of declining members and influence within the US auto industry.

A win for the union would have been historic. Foreign automakers, such as VW and Toyota, own 31 factories and produce nearly half of the cars built in the United States. None of those 31 foreign-owned plants have ever been unionised. Workers there are generally paid less than workers represented by the UAW.

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**LABOUR**

Comment

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Trade Union Recognition

“A high-level group will be convened to review the industrial relations and collective bargaining landscape in Ireland, the Government has announced”

(*Irish Examiner*, 31.3.2021).

Tánaiste and Employment Minister Leo Varadkar brought a memo to Cabinet on 27th March 2021, asking that the group be set up under the auspices of the *Labour Employer Economic Forum*.

“The approach to industrial relations in Ireland is one of voluntarism, whereby the State does not seek to impose a solution on the parties to a dispute but will, where appropriate, assist them in arriving at a solution. This approach has served us well for many years”, Mr Varadkar said.

OBJECTIVES

The new working group will, under its terms of reference:

- * Examine the issue of trade union recognition and its implications on the collective bargaining processes.
- * Examine the adequacy of the workplace relations framework supporting the conduct and determination of pay and conditions of employment, having regard to the legal, economic, and social conditions in which it operates.
- * Consider the legal and constitutional impediments that may exist in the reform of the current systems. In doing so, the group will need to be cognisant of the individual employment rights frameworks and the EU context. It may consider

other models of employee relations and pay determination established in other member states.

- * Review the current statutory wage setting mechanisms and, where appropriate, make recommendations for reform. This aspect will commence following the Supreme Court ruling in the National Electrical Contractors Ireland case that is currently before the Labour Court – expected in quarter II of this year.

Minister Varadkar has nominated Professor Michael Doherty of the Department of Law at Maynooth University as chair of the group, the membership of which will include senior representatives of Union and Employer sides nominated by ICTU and IBEC, Professor Bill Roche of UCD and officials from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and the Department of the Taoiseach.

The group is expected to produce an interim report in July, 2021.

PAY AND CONDITIONS

The group will examine collective bargaining, Union recognition and will seek to “*examine the adequacy of the workplace relations framework*” around pay and conditions.

Minister Varadkar said the review was designed to “*look closely*” at the bargaining framework.

Trade Unions have long argued that it is a fundamental human right for workers to be permitted to bargain collectively with their employer for fair pay and conditions of employment.

At present, while workers have rights to join a Trade Union, under Irish law there is no obligation on employers to recognise or engage with Trade Unions.

Varadkar has made a number of statements in recent weeks supporting worker rights. He has also met with Deliveroo riders who he described as “*essential workers*” and called for them to be “*treated better*”.

Danny McCoy, Chief Executive of employers’ group IBEC, said the review must “*be consistent with a dynamic workforce*”.

“It is right that we review the effectiveness of our structures and would emphasise that any review must be consistent with Irish business competitiveness, fairness and dynamism in our labour market.

“That it will be a challenge is undoubted, but must be seen under the spectrum of stakeholder engagement and our enhanced social dialogue mechanisms” (*Irish Examiner*, 31.3.2021).

THE AMERICAN WAY!

Just over a week after the Varadkar announcement, 9th April 2021, in the US Am-

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