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# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Biden's Visit

What does it mean to be Irish? And how do we relate to the rest of the world? Those are the questions that arise from Joe Biden's visit.

The Irish State was founded on a foreign policy forged during the First World War. After the 1916 Rising the people decided they would cease to be the cannon-fodder for Britain's Imperial wars in the meat-grinders of France, Belgium and Turkey. The sentiment was best expressed in the famous song about the Rising.

Right proudly high over Dublin town they hung out the flag of war  
'Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky than at Sulva or Sud-El-Bar

In the course of the twentieth century the State garnered considerable prestige among countries in Africa and Asia because of its struggle against British imperialism. Irish missionaries contributed to the education of vast swathes of the developing world. They were motivated by religious reasons rather than an economic interest.

Perhaps Biden had this in mind when he referred to the "moral authority" which Ireland carries with nations around the world. This "moral authority" must be worth something! He must be aware that the US is losing ground to Russia and China in what is now called the global south.

But does Ireland still have that moral authority? It has on occasion supported the Palestinians, but other than that it has rarely if ever been in conflict with American interests.

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## The Democratic High Horse

A Russian Oppositionist, Vladimir Kara-Murza, has been sentenced to 25 years in prison for treason. The treason seems to have consisted of going to the West and calling for stronger Sanctions against the Russian economy. This sentence has been described in the West as being unprecedented in its severity.

The purpose of Sanctions, as conducted by the European Union and the United States, is to destroy the Russian State.

The President of the Commission of the European Union (Ursula von der Leyen) a little over a year ago declared that the Russian economy would be destroyed by Sanctions. Western Sanctions have so far failed to wreck the Russian economy. Russia has managed to shift a great part of its foreign trade to countries which are not committed to the Western project for the

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## A Confluence of Interests?

Peter Taylor, the BBC journalist with a long-standing interest in Northern Ireland paramilitaries, has written a new book called Operation Chiffon. As the blurb says:

"On the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, Peter Taylor tells for the first time the gripping story of

Operation Chiffon, the top-secret intelligence operation that helped bring peace to Ireland."

The *Daily Telegraph's* review describes the book as "A gripping exploration of how MI5 and MI6 worked for a ceasefire with the IRA – and how one meeting changed everything".

The *Belfast Telegraph* gives the gist of the story of MI5 Agent Robert's contribution to the peace process making up the book:

"The MI5 spy tells Peter Taylor the goal of Britain was ultimately to unify Ireland. The exact words were noted by Mr Gerry Kelly, with Robert saying: "The final solution is union. It is going to happen anyway. The historical train, Europe, determines that. Unionists will have to change. This island will be as one."

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Our political leaders were quiet over America's invasion of Iraq and have been shrill in their support of its war in Ukraine. They do not share the scepticism of the "global south" regarding American intentions.

The legacy of our Catholic missionaries has been dissipated. All that work by Catholic idealists counts for nothing. It was part of a "narrower" Ireland from which we have now escaped. It was buried a few years ago in a documentary broadcast by the State television service called Mission to Prey. The fact that the allegations in the documentary were a pack of lies is beside the point. The point is that the State wanted them to be true.

But with what have we replaced this legacy? Our current values do not appear to be an evolution of what went before. On the contrary, they represent an escape or rupture from the past. As has been pointed out in this magazine, there has been a moral collapse. We now, apparently, are in the

vanguard of American liberalism regarding feminism and LGBT rights. It is doubtful that many Irish people or politicians believe in any of this, but they don't have the moral resources to oppose it.

It is certain that many African countries don't take to the new line. They prefer the values of a previous generation of Irish people. And such countries that recoiled from communism are more amenable to the values of Putin's Russia.

In truth our relationship with the US Empire has been far more benign than that with the previous pre-eminent Power. We haven't experienced massacres, religious oppression or famine under American hegemony. The American connection has seen a powerful and politically influential Irish diaspora arise in the US, which has driven benign US policies towards Ireland, both economic and political. Ireland's economic relations with the US were critical to it escaping its impoverished state within the British market trap, and to it becoming its current affluent

self. The personnel of the Irish professional and managerial classes have integrated and become interchangeable with that of the US, further driving Irish affluence.

Nor have we been obliged to fight American's wars . . . at least not yet.

Biden praised Ireland's honourable record of UN peacekeeping. But, of course the definition of peacekeeping may change! There has been talk of putting NATO 'peacekeepers' in Ukraine. The Russians have indicated that such 'peacekeepers', occupying contested territory, can only be considered enemy combatants. It seems unlikely that Irish troops will find themselves in the Ukrainian meat-grinder, but it is not inconceivable.

Biden's anti-British rhetoric - of a type few Irish politicians would dare utter, while silently loving it - was warmly received by his Irish audience much to the chagrin of the British media. Perhaps, in the post-Brexit era Britain's usefulness for the US has diminished?

As we go to print, it has been announced that the State will have a budget surplus of over 10 billion euro. Corporation taxes will reach 20 billion (mostly from American multinationals). The population in the Republic exceeds 5 million for the first time since the 'Famine'. We have full employment and net immigration.

We have come a long way in economic terms, but in some ways we are much poorer.

### " 'Appeasement has failed': Ukraine peace impossible until Putin stopped, Varadkar says

Due to Ireland's neutrality, it will provide €11m of non-lethal supplies for every €1bn committed by EU leaders

The invasion of Ukraine happened because of a failed policy of appeasement towards Russian president Vladimir Putin, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said, likening it to the events that led up to the second World War.

"Appeasement has failed", Mr Varadkar told reporters on arrival to a European Council meeting of the 27 national leaders in Brussels.

"We know from our history from what happened in the 1930s and 1940s what happens if you continue with an appeasement policy that's failing," he said.

"People often ask the question: where will Putin stop? Putin will stop where we stop him." This means "supporting Ukraine in its fight" (*Irish Times*, 23.3.23.)

Contributed by **Eamon Dyas**

## Ukraine: Some Considerations

The dispute over the Donbass is a national division: Ukrainians versus a long-settled population of Russian origin.

A Ukrainian source has asserted: "There are several myths used by Russia and its fellow travellers to justify the invasion of Ukraine. One is that a "genocide" was happening in Donbass, where Ukrainians killed "14,000" pro-Russian separatists and civilians since 2014" (see <https://bitterwinter.org/donbass-did-ukraine-kill-14000-pro-russians/> )

This 'justification' is pure balderdash. The Nazis have continuously bombed civilian areas: from the Maidan events of 2014 right up to the present day. They just lob missiles and bombs into the centre of Donetsk city. During the Easter ceremonies they bombed a Church. Needless to say Christ's Vicar had nothing to say except to happily call the Russians 'Satanists' at an earlier stage. Why? Because the nationalists / Nazis are mainly Catholics and are expropriating Orthodox Churches and endeavouring to wipe out the Orthodox religion. The idea that the two Churches will unite by 2025, as is the current plan, is simply laughable.

Reporting makes no mention of the fact that many of the civilians killed were children. There is a quite painful video of their graves being tended.

It has also been suggested that most of the Russian speakers from Donbass are fleeing to the West is a blatant lie. While some go West, we know the vast majority of refugees go to Russia. They are hardly altar boys. The indigenous go East for protection and because movement between East Ukraine and Russia has always been a feature. They would hardly go to Kiev to be spat at and arrested as collaborators. Furthermore they can't afford it. The nationalists work in the EU and rent out their houses. They charge refugees from the East enormous sums for rent and those that can afford must cease speaking Russian.

Finally how can it be doubted that the Nazis are the belligerents in the conflict. They repudiated the Minsk Agreement after signing it, but could offer no alternative to limited autonomy. So what plans did they have for the Russian speakers? What else except liquidation! Putin is right.

It will be noted the difficulty the Russians are having liberating these provinces. That is because of the immense fortifications trenches etc., that were laid to enable the Nazis to take back Donbass.

I have never heard any suggestion that the natives had any inclination to conquer any other parts of Ukraine.

**Willis Walshe**

## Expansionism?

What is of interest is the breakdown of the 14,000 killed between 2014 and 2022 in the Donbass area and the lame Kiev line on this. I never heard any suggestion that the natives had any inclination to conquer any other parts of Ukraine.

**Philip O'Connor**

## Some Numbers!

The figures show the bulk of the refugees go to Russia (2.85m), Poland (1.58m) and the Czech Republic (0.5m). This represents over 62% of the total of about 7.9m (an enormous amount).

The Irish figure (78k) is quite large compared to the UK (200k) and France (119k). The population of these countries is 12 or 13 times the size of Ireland.

**John Martin**

## The Afghan Example?

It's interesting to compare coverage of the US invasion of either Iraq or Afghanistan and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The US invasion was against vastly inferior forces, but hailed as a success, despite the fact that the US was bogged down there for ten years and exited without having won any clear victory, and without ever really taking full control of either country. But Russia is attacking a very different proposition—a well-armed country, both in terms of what it already had and what is being pumped into it by Western countries. The same Western countries seem to find it a useful dumping ground for their more obsolete (yet still effective) technology, and the aim seems to be to wear down Russian military and economic capability without actually attacking Russia itself. According to the Western media, Ukraine is hands down winning this war, so my question is, if that's so, why is there still a flood of Ukrainian refugees Western nations are expected to accommodate within their own borders?

**Nick Folley**

## Confluence of Interests

continued from page 1

But if it were "*the historical train, Europe*" that determines the inevitable destination of Irish unity where does Brexit leave that? It seems that what was historically inevitable in the early 1990s is no longer the actuality. Britain defied historical in-

evitability as to its future direction, hopping off the train of destiny. Britain has a habit of doing that.

Perhaps the Union might have another innings, despite all the talk of inevitability of unity. It was beginning to look like that under Johnson and Truss. But perhaps Sunak and Biden will have a different say on it.

There should be nothing surprising about

the fact that Britain could desire Irish unity. After all Britain ruled the united Kingdom of Ireland for 7 centuries. The people that the Crown planted in North East Ulster and who migrated there from Scotland and who cohered to form a substantial national community were a complication in the control of the whole island. They had to be taken account of (and used on occasion) to facilitate the control of the island. But control

or hegemony over the entire island was Britain's historic objective all the same.

When Britain reorganised its hegemony over the island in 1920-1, faced with an independence movement of substance in the south and a unionist resistance of substance to this movement in the north-east, it imposed an unusual form of government on the part of the island it retained in order to maintain hegemony over the part of the island it could no longer govern directly, short of reconquest.

So the part that was threatening to be an independent force in the world was encouraged to believe that with good future behaviour it could regain the part of its island that it had lost in partition and was faced with the prospect of losing altogether this part if it went too far with this independence malarky. That is why 'Northern Ireland' was established as a semi-detached part of the United Kingdom, maintaining leverage on the rest of the island in perpetuity, to restrain it from becoming something independent in the world.

That is the problem that faces Sinn Fein today as it faced De Valera and Collins before them. And the leverage that Northern Ireland, the heart's desire of nationalist Ireland, is proving to be as strong in the 2020s as it did in the 1920s. Who would bet against Sinn Fein bringing Ireland back under Britain's wing in NATO as the price to be paid for Irish unity? After all isn't Ukraine just a short step from NATO as Belgium was to the Great War for Civilization? Others are certainly willing to pay such a price, and they do not even desire the prize of Northern Ireland at all.

A couple of years after the Good Friday Agreement, writing after the British Northern Ireland Secretary's suspension of the Agreement, Anthony McIntyre made the following comments about the situation: "Small wonder that the British diplomat Sir David Goodall said of the Good Friday Agreement that 'it is working almost exactly to plan'. Who else knew the plot?" (Forthwrite, Spring 2000)

From the start there has been dark hints at treachery and collusion between the Republican Leadership and the British State from those who opposed the calling off of the Republican War.

It had been the objective of some elements within the British State to 'politicise' the Provos for many years, at least since

1972, as a way of ending the conflict. It had been the objective of other elements to destroy the Republican movement and claim outright victory. The British State is not a monolith, it is multi-faceted and it routinely devises many possible policies to pursue its broad objectives, and it knows that there are different ways of skinning a cat.

The vigour of the British State results from the great variety of things, often contradicting each other, that goes on within it. The key for it is to be prepared for every eventuality – even defeat – if it can gain a rewarding position!

It would be safe to say that the preferred option of the British State was to destroy the Republicans, who had been generated by the Northern Ireland system, as a political force and cobble together a settlement with some compliant Catholics from the SDLP, who would pose no problems for anyone. The second favoured option would have been to reduce the Provos to political insignificance. The third best option would be to politicise them and remove the military threat (mainly to stop bombs going off in Britain) so that they could be dealt with in politics - an art which the British State is immensely skilled at. A final option was to concede and withdraw from Ireland (though not necessarily bringing about Irish unity).

There were occasions in which some people probably toyed with the fourth option (1974/6?) but they were rare and they were discounted quickly by saner people. And they would not have necessarily resulted in a Republican victory - much killing and re-partition were more likely.

It would not be surprising or sinister for a part of British Intelligence to have been the promoters of the third best option – that of grooming the Republican movement for politics.

Over the years it became a common refrain in the British democracy that there could be 'no talking to terrorists' and the 'evil men of violence.' A consensus was developed between the parties of State that was rarely challenged. Furthermore, no politicians, who, after all, are merely temporary creatures of party in Britain - would have had the staying power for such an enterprise even if they had bothered their heads about it. Willie Whitelaw was the most substantial talent that was applied to the sorting of 'Northern Ireland' and he was moved on before his work was complete.

'Northern Ireland' only appeared on the political agenda momentarily when there were great upsurges of trouble there or the trouble visited the 'British mainland.' Recent years in which NI has become a forgotten backwater in which people stewed in their own juice illustrate that point if it needed revealing to anyone.

This was the case in the mid-1970s when British politicians made the last concerted effort to tackle the problem – when a great upsurge of trouble in Ulster threatened to get out of hand. But with the decline of the Republican capacity for escalating the War and their containment it went off the British agenda. British politics are about parties winning votes in elections to gain the power to govern and 'Northern Ireland' was detached from the party politics of the State on purpose to prevent it interfering in this contest between parties of State. With the Republican Army contained and 'Ulster' ring-fenced it was business as usual for the British State and Ulster was way down its political agenda – until the next bomb in London or large atrocity.

So the British democracy would have been the last place that an open political peace project would develop and it was much more likely to be found elsewhere within the more permanent and stable architecture of the British State.

The intelligence services have much more freedom of action than democratic politicians in the British system. For one thing they are largely beyond democratic control and the short-term hysteria of democracy. They pre-date the British democracy by many centuries - from the time of the Cecils. They represent continuity in the State and are there for both the long-haul and the long-term interest. It is one of their characteristics that they often contain innovative mavericks who have a tendency to 'go native' and start acting more in the interests of those they are supposedly countering than those they are working for (Lawrence of Arabia being a partial example). Their purpose is to 'think outside the box' and 'think the unthinkable' because the politicians might one day come to them not knowing what to do next and ask them if they have any thoughts about getting out of a damn pickle.

It could be said that toward the middle of the 1980s elements in the Republican Leadership started having the same thoughts as some elements in British intelligence and began working toward a common purpose from different directions.

They were coming from different perspectives with differing objectives in mind but they met within the understanding that a political solution was necessary because a military one was not on.

They played out a shadow war with the Provos in the late 1980s/early 1990s but were convinced of the direction things were heading in. Some people have even suggested that a Republican offensive with Libyan guns was internally subverted. Certainly volunteers were not trained to the standard that would have made a difference in war.

The main thing that came out of Peter Taylor's earlier television series, 'Brits,' was that from 1974 onwards, the running of British State policy in 'Northern Ireland' was effectively ceded by the government to the security services. The democracy began washing its hands of the mess after the failure of 1974. And, when this fact is taken into account, a lot of the subsequent developments up to the present day become more understandable.

It might seem improbable and the stuff of conspiracy theories that politicians would abandon power and responsibility to the 'securocrats' in important affairs of State. But, when one considers that the British political parties have no electoral interest in 'Northern Ireland' and have made it a detached part from their body politic for the best part of a century, it becomes apparent why they despaired of it themselves and handed responsibility for it over to those who had more experience in non-domestic and colonial environments.

The key figure in political dialogue between British Intelligence and Republicans was Michael Oatley of MI6. Oatley was instrumental in the talks leading up to, and during, the 1975 IRA truce. Later, when the Government policy of criminalising Republican prisoners ran into crisis in the H-Blocks in 1980, he came up with a functional settlement of the first Hunger-Strike, which should have averted the second one. And he re-emerged to see through the process which put an end to the War in the early 1990s.

Interestingly, on one of Taylor's programmes, he ridiculed the demand for an IRA arms handover as "meaningless" and "politically counter-productive".

Where would the British State be without people like Oatley?

So what if the British had indeed successfully moulded a compromising Irish Republican leadership. Quelle surprise! That is what the British attempted everywhere they have ever been in the world when they were forced to disengage. Usually, there was a fight, and then power was handed over by the Imperialists to the element that had proved itself dominant in the course of the anti-imperialist struggle. The British then did their best to ensure the new regime became their friends so that maximising the British interest could be resumed. Even with Robert Mugabe they nearly succeeded - if it wasn't for Tony Blair.

In 'Northern Ireland' all the previous moulds had failed. The Unionist one after fifty years, the Unionist-SDLP one after a few months, and the British-Irish Government one after a few years. If the Republican movement could engage with Protestants and make politics work over a couple of decades, development towards a unitary state could not be ruled out. And surely that was in Britain's long-term

interest, and is what its security services, which handled affairs in this area, had been working toward for the last number of years.

It was not the Provos who miscalculated in relation to the British intention of continuing the War at the political level after they had concluded an Agreement. That miscalculation was made by Anthony McIntyre in connection with the naïve venture involving the Boston College tapes. Now Mr McIntyre is a Slava Ukraina NATO Cold Warrior.

All this is food for thought for the Sinn Fein of Mary Lou and Michelle. The beardy boy is gone and the comrades of the ANC and FARC are but a distant memory. "Marxist Sinn Fein" have new progressive ideologies to attach to their mast these days that seem to be the same as the US liberals and UK left.

Perhaps the coming struggle over Irish neutrality will tell a tale and be their great test.

**Pat Walsh**

**Speech by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.  
launching his campaign to be nominated as the  
Democratic Party's Presidential candidate  
(extract)**

## **Power And Politics!**

"The general theme in my speech was this corrupt merger of state and corporate power, which has which is turning our country into a corporate kleptocracy. Into a system of... cushy socialism for the rich and this kind of brutal, merciless capitalism for the poor.

It keeps us in a state of war. It bails out banks at the same time that, you know, this month, last the United States government told 30 million people it was cutting their welfare check, their food stamp checks by 90%, it took it 15 million people off of Medicare. The same month, it gave \$300 million dollars to the Silicon Valley Bank and tapped up the cost of the Ukraine war to \$113 billion. We're sending \$113 billion to the Ukraine. The entire budget of the EPA is \$12 billion. The budget of CDC is \$11 billion.

We have 57% of American citizens could not put their hands on a thousand dollars if they have an emergency. A quarter of our citizens are hungry.

So we're cutting welfare and food stamps by 90 percent, and we're paying and we're bailing out the bankers, we're paying for a war that, you know, we can't afford.

And the way that we do this is by printing money. We've printed 10 centuries of money in the last 14 years. And that is what causes inflation, which raises food prices and which is a tax on the poor. You know, we've raised food prices for basic foods like chicken, dairy, and milk by 76% in the last two years. And now we're cutting people's food stamps and bailing out banks the same month. It doesn't make any sense and we need to get rid of this kind of corporate control government.

It comes from, you know, our democracy is devolving into a corporate plutocracy."

[April 19, 2023].

More of Robert Kennedy's speech can be found on the following link:  
<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/57493.htm>

## The Momentum of War

A cloud of ambiguity surrounds the recent leak of hundreds of NATO and CIA documents on the Ukraine War and on doings in other US hotspots across its empire. Qui bono? (who benefits?) can be a useful line of analysis in such affairs, but will not be even attempted here. It can be fairly assumed, however, that the 21-year-old National Guardsman arrested and charged with “espionage” for the “leak” is more likely the patsy or useful idiot serving as the conduit, rather than the actual principal culprit, in this highly intelligent and managed “leak”.

A curious aspect of it all is that, of the alleged 300+ documents, only a small portion has ever been actually published, in photostat form, and then mostly only on social media. The Washington Post (WaPo) and New York Times (NYT) have been given exclusive access to the full lot and are gradually revealing its 'secrets' in report form, without reproducing the actual documents. These reports are by a triumvirate of journalists with long known associations with the US 'intelligence community', including a lead analyst from “Bellingcat”—which is described as an “independent intelligence organisation” but in fact is anything but independent. Predictably, the WaPo/NYT reports are regurgitated uncritically in sub-outlets such as *The Guardian* and even the remote *Irish Times*.

What the documents allegedly reveal includes deep pessimism about how much the much-heralded Ukrainian “Spring Offensive” can actually achieve, though stressing that it is worth proceeding with anyway. They also provide implausibly low Ukrainian casualty figures, admissions that Western “special forces” (100 US, 50 UK) have been on the ground throughout, that the integration of Ukraine’s military and its training and equipping by NATO has been underway at an ever-accelerating rate since 2014, and that Ukraine is in dire shortage of munitions—especially for its artillery. Anti-aircraft missiles are likely to run out by early May.

Even if, as is likely, these documents are genuine, they serve an obvious purpose. As far as actually new information is concerned, they contain very little that close

observers of events did not already know or suspect, as well as much that observers know to be certainly untrue. The Ukrainian casualty figures, for example, and the numbers of USUK officers “on the ground” in the War are certainly gross underestimates. The documents were clearly judiciously selected from thousands of potential ones and leaked through the patsy to paint a definite picture.

Since their appearance, the EU has rushed to announce that it has 'found' 17,000 extra artillery shells and over 1,000 anti-aircraft missiles: and delivered them to Ukraine. Good boys!

One thing, incidentally, which the documents do show is just how micro-managed the Ukrainian Army and every detail of the War is, not by NATO per se, but singularly by the US. This was probably an unintended revelation, but that fact is now apparent for all to see. It is notable how even Establishment-conformist media has begun describing it now as a “proxy war”.

### Macron and the ways of the West

The British and European press are outraged at Macron’s comments on his way back from visiting Chinese President Xi on the need for European “strategic autonomy” and the danger of Europe becoming America’s “vassal”. They have universally denounced the trip as a “debacle” and come close to implying that Macron has become a “Xi stooge”. There was also much outrage at what the British Daily Telegraph (18 April) denounced as Macron’s “working on a secret plan” with China to end the Ukraine War, something regarded as utterly reprehensible. The war must go on until Russia is defeated, Putin is overthrown etc. etc.!

They contrast his statements with the “brave” and “far-sighted” “positioning” of Europe by EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen days before the trip. Denouncing China for its sins, she described it as an ever more “authoritarian” “adversary”. Her view is that the EU should not “decouple” economically from China entirely, but “de-risk” its relationship with it. By this she means prohibiting the export of “sensitive technologies”,

diversifying supply chains to more friendly countries (these include Communist Vietnam!), defending Taiwan, civil rights for the Uighers etc. “Sensitive technologies” include any that might assist China’s economic development, such as top-range semiconductors. US President Biden has declared as Western policy stifling China economically so as to lock it in at a lower economic level than the US.

Ms der Leyen, like her EU Foreign Policy colleague, Joseph (“Jungle Joe”) Borrell, faithfully parrot the US line to a far greater degree than do any of the leaders of actual West-European EU States.

Macron’s visit was a French affair, though he probably secretly coordinated aspects of it with some allies in advance. He was accompanied by a swarm of solely French business-people, there to clinch major deals. Only one of these—Airbus—was a joint 'European' company. He also brought along Ursula in his baggage, apparently at her request, as the EU don’t get invitations by China any more as they don’t trust it. Macron was given the red-carpet treatment, a six-hour banquet with Xi, several tete-a-tete meetings, and many business deals were clinched.

Ursula, on the other hand, had few meetings, and only one—a two-hour one—with Xi, but only as one of many among the French President’s entourage. This involved purely diplomatic humbug. She was excluded from the press conferences and had to give one of her own, which few took any notice of. During the days of Macron’s morning-to-night meetings, Ursula was left wandering the shopping malls of Beijing (I’m writing figuratively here). But there is nothing figurative about the fact that, while Macron was seen off at the airport by high-ranking Chinese dignitaries with full pomp and ceremony, Ursula was deposited at the airport, where she faced the humiliation of having to go through a normal check-in and passport ID control!

The US, and its aligned European media, is in outrage at Macron. The Irish Political Review would strongly advise him that he had better watch his back, for reasons outlined by Scott Ritter, a well-known former US Marine Intelligence

Officer who fought in the Gulf War and was a UN Weapons Inspector in Iraq before the unprovoked full-scale invasion and devastation of that country by the US and its Allies. (That Coalition of the Willing of 2003 incidentally included a 5,000-strong Ukrainian mechanised brigade!)

The whole Iraq experience disabused Ritter of many illusions he had had about his own country. In the current War, he has emerged as a very interesting commentator of a type that has led to his denunciation as a “Putin propagandist” and inclusion on Ukraine’s well-known “kill-list”—and more than a few on this list have already been assassinated. Ritter is not a Russian agent, though it can be seen why Ukrainians treat him as one on account of his objective reporting.

In a recent interview, Ritter gave a great description of US and UK Military Intelligence techniques. While the British had hundreds of years’ experience at the cutting-edge of building and sustaining British World Power, and had developed subtle but very effective intel gathering and human exploitation techniques, the servants of the more recent US hegemon are still quite unsubtle and crass in getting what they want. While brutal and murderous with agents/ informers in lower-ranking countries, at home, apart from willing ideologists, they have quite straight-forward methods for creating or turning agents.

“They haul you in, throw the dirty pictures on the table, and say, ‘now, this is what you’re going to do for us’ ...”

This should surprise no one in Ireland. MI6 ran brothels with hidden cameras in Belfast for years during its campaign against the IRA’s long war. As discussed in last month’s Column, this was one of its prime methods of recruitment. This method is also employed in institutions, even on the British “mainland”. Some years’ ago, it emerged to public displeasure that the Tory Chief Whip, as a matter of routine, kept a file of “compromising” material, often of a sexual nature, on all his MPs, for party discipline. These would rarely be used, but knowledge or rumours of their existence was enough to encourage the required compliance.

Something in this area might be awaiting Macron. During the later Trump years, a leaked US Intelligence document revealed the existence of a “confidential” Presidential report by the CIA, providing an “intimate” biography of Macron. The mention of this in the media was a warning to him, and we heard no more of it.

But, recently, just days after Macron’s recent interviews on China, an ever-so smoothly-worded article appeared in the influential US outlet patronised by Adam Tooze, Foreign Policy, which referred to Macron’s marriage to a woman twenty years’ his senior. The article, written by a woman, seemed to praise this relationship for its role-model modernity affirming feminist values. But it then went on to wonder whether the relationship was really alright. It had, after all, started as an illicit sexual liaison between a teacher and a 20-year younger 16-year-old schoolboy, which was then below the French legal age of consent. Did not this mean that the relationship was, well, criminal ...?

It was just a gentle hint. But we’d advise: “*Watch out Emmanuel!*”

### Fintan’s misplaced “Coffin ship” outrage

Fintan O’Toole often raises the shackles of this Column. His prodigious outpourings are certainly impressive in their extent, and, to be fair, do sometimes produce pearls of the sublime among a mountain of the otherwise ridiculous. Fintan often gives expression to the embarrassed cringe of many in Dublin 4 at the behaviour of their unsavoury fellow natives.

In a recent piece in *The Irish Times* he was again fulminating at alleged outrageous magnifying of, and wallowing in, imagined past wrongs and miseries by Irish people. He alighted on the popular allegory of “Coffin Ships” during the Great Hunger to pontificate that tales of death on ships carrying Irish “emigrants” (i.e. refugees) to America were grossly exaggerated (a “historical fallacy”, no less). For him the real atrocity, of which the Irish should be particularly ashamed (adding to Fintan’s already formidably long list of things of which the Irish should be “ashamed”), is the actual coffin-ship experience of refugees coming to Europe across the Mediterranean from Africa, with thousands dying in the process (“Talk of Irish ‘coffin ships’ is powerful – but it’s historical fallacy”, *Irish Times*, 18 April 2023).

Fintan, as usual, has some kind of point to make. But the “coffin ships” are for him yet another “national myth” to be triumphantly demolished, which he proceeds to attempt by quoting a study claiming that, apart from some ships to Canada, the Irish death rate on Atlantic crossings in those years was unexceptional:

“For the more than two million emigrants who did not travel to Canada in 1847-55 (in other words, for around 95 per cent of all Irish migrants during the Famine years), the average mortality rate

generally fell within the ‘normal’ range for Europeans on the high seas in the mid-19th century.”

From which Fintan concludes:

“Thus, of the 1,920,978 emigrants who left Ireland for destinations beyond Britain between 1845 and 1855, perhaps as many as 47,264 died en route. That’s 2.5 per cent. Every one of those deaths is tragic—but there was nothing unusual at the time in these rates of mortality among poor people on long sea voyages.”

Fintan is in a long line of *Irish Times* commentators obsessed with “proving” Irish memory to be a catalogue of delusional wrongs generating a false “sense of victimhood”. His most illustrious predecessor in that role was propagandist Kevin Myers, who even coined a sarcastic term for it: the Irish delusion that they were the “Most Oppressed People Ever”, which he abbreviated as “MOPE”. Fintan doesn’t use the term here, but is essentially saying the same thing. Myers cannot be referenced anymore, having insulted not only women, but, far more seriously, the one and only true MOPE.

In Fintan’s line of argument, or prattle, Irish alleged suffering on the “coffin ships” “generally fell within the ‘normal’ range for Europeans on the high seas in the mid-19th century” and is as nothing compared to the very real suffering of today’s refugees fleeing Africa on rickety craft, and for whom the Irish have raised not a finger. This genuine “coffin ship” tragedy puts Irish suffering in the shade.

But Fintan’s lurid Med “coffin ship” analogy gets only one thing right regarding the figures: the number who have died, which he gives as 20,000 since 2014.

This figure is really only meaningful if, using Fintan’s own logic, it is set against the total number of people who made the crossing during the same period. According to the UN, the number of known deaths has indeed amounted to around 20,000 since 2014. That is out of the minimum 2.3m people who have made the crossing—a figure Fintan does not mention.

Both figures are by definition minimum figures, as there must be some undetected crossings and uncounted deaths. But the UN figures are likely very near the true figures, given today’s surveillance technology and the fact that the Med is probably the most minutely observed stretch of water in the world. The proportionate relationship between the numbers crossing and those dying in the process is anyway probably a constant.

The migration wave across the Med since 2014 (2.3m) is certainly huge, though

in fact not all that much greater than the massive Irish refugee exodus of 1847-55. The UN figure for deaths among these refugees since 2014 (20,000) equates to 0.8 per cent of the total. That is far lower than the 2.5 per cent death rate among 95 per cent of the Irish refugees of 1847-55 Fintan triumphantly quotes to demolish Ireland's "coffin ship myth". It seems he has instead given us a new "African refugee myth" to replace our delusional nationalist one.

(Note: the UN figures are from the UN-HCR (Refugee Agency) report, *No End in Sight*, of 2022, freely available on the internet).

### "Eurasia" ... and Ireland

The generally recognised founder of "geopolitics", English Admiral Sir Halford John MacKinder (1861-1947), described the Eurasian landmass as the "heartland" of the planet and proposed the need for a British mega-strategy to control it by projecting overwhelming maritime power. This was the key to long-term global dominance. Put simply, you didn't need to conquer such places anymore, just strangle them from the sea.

This doctrine became central to English (subsequently rebranded "British") Imperial strategy until it was bequeathed to the US after the UK decided to become a US vassal after it bankrupted itself by its two World Wars. English thinking for a while was that the crude US would provide the brawn while England provided the brain. The US took to the task with fervour, though also usurping the role of the brain! The British component in US geostrategy remains important, however, in providing global reach and legitimacy through the "five eyes" Intelligence/strategy-sharing alliance, consisting of the US and UK and the latter's former white colonial "Anglo-Saxon" dominions, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

MacKinder's thinking remains a central doctrine of US global military/maritime strategy. Its Anglo-Saxon five-eyes vassals facilitate the global power projection required, functioning something like the coaling stations of MacKinder's time.

MacKinder was also taken to heart in the past by Britain's rivals, such as Germany, and latterly also by Russia and China. A particular version of MacKinderism from a Russian perspective was promoted by the Russian intellectual Alexander Dugin. He has been dubbed "Putin's brain" by the Western press, although Putin apparently never met him and has openly disagreed with things Dugin proposed. Dugin even lost his teaching post after a particularly egregious outburst drew the displeasure

of his college authorities. This did not stop Western media outlets venting a hateful spleen on him to justify the murder by car bomb of his daughter, Darina Dugina, by Ukrainian Intelligence Operatives in the Moscow area. She was deemed by the British press a "legitimate target". Needless to say, there was not a peep out of Feargal Keane OBE, who used to wax lyrical on the BBC about Provo car bombs as heinous atrocities.

Russia and China have embarked on a process of "integration" of the Eurasian landmass economically as well as politically or diplomatically, while avowing a continued commitment to peaceful global trade. The relentless Western narrative is of Russia "losing" in Ukraine, suffering horrendous casualties, the Russian economy imploding under Western sanctions, Russia "isolated" internationally etc. But what is happening in the diplomatic sphere belies this, not least in the involvement of many states in the Eurasian integration process.

The IMF—a largely Western-captured "global institution"—has reported the "surprising resilience" of the Russian economy and is predicting a further expansion of Russian industrial production, and even GDP, despite Western measures. Most countries in the world, whose joint populations compose over two-thirds of the global total, while uneasy at Russia's cross-border military operation, have refused to join the Western sanctions regime, and have abstained on UN motions condemning the Russian operation. The index of world industrial production portrays Chinese manufacturing output as now more than that of the US and EU combined, and predicts that Russia will overtake Germany on the same measure by 2030.

GDP alone, as David MacWilliams has taught us in Ireland, is a distorted measure of economic activity, counting merely financialised transactions. US GDP, for example, includes millions of coffee lattes sold every day, the vast sums wasted in "transactions" in its privatised medical care and insurance systems, and the turnover of the likes of McDonalds' Big Macs and of the vast US online pornography industry. GDP, in other words, tells you relatively little about the actual productive output of an economy or of a population's material well-being.

Much of Asia, Africa and Latin America have not only continued to trade with Russia (and China) and refused to censure it, but are expanding those relations. India, which the UN claims has just moved ahead of China in population size, has played a very subtle game managing both its Western and Eastern relationships and, much like in the last "Cold War", resisting being cajoled definitively into one camp or the other. Countries as

diverse as Pakistan, Chile, South Africa, Mexico, India and others have recently signed agreements with Russia expanding trade as well as military and cultural ties. A growing proportion of the new trade is set to take place through local currencies rather than the US dollar.

On top of this, Russian diplomacy—while faltering in the Caucasus where the EU and US are weaponising their relations with Armenia to overturn the peace achieved there in 2020—is being feted in the Middle East, where together with China, it has engineered an unheard-of rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, begun the wind-down of the Yemen War, opened relations between Turkey and Syria to end their conflict, and achieved cross-region agreement for Syria to re-join the Arab League. A mantle of peace is settling across a region torn apart by decades of war as US meddling and exploitation of differences is overcome.

Whether the US-led Anglo-Saxon alliance, with the EU and Japan/South Korea and Taiwan in toe—jointly known as "the West"—will succeed in destroying and dismantling the Russian State and balkanising it, as is clearly its agenda, and then doing the same to China, remains to be seen. What is clear is that many countries of the "Global South" believe neither the narrative of the West's "victory" and "democracy", nor that either Russia or China are facing imminent collapse. Many indeed are blatantly betting their futures on a new multi-polar world emerging through their leadership.

Where does, or should, Ireland stand in this re-aligning world? Before WW2, de Valera's Ireland sought to play an important role in the League of Nations by getting it to take its own Covenant seriously on promoting world peace. After WW2, it joined the United Nations with the same perspective, though chastened by its experience of the big-Power manipulation of the League that had opened the door to World War Two.

The League was a product of President Wilson's American imperial idealism, as was, to a lesser extent, the UN—with the main difference being that the latter had to be based on a compromise with rival Powers—which had been allies of the US until 1945 but which the US now viewed as systemic enemies. The League had been largely confined to the white West with a few add-ons in South America and elsewhere. The UN was initially a similar construct, but expanded massively as Europe's bloody retreat from its colonies proceeded.

The Irish had cautiously accepted the Wilsonian ideals of the League but, through



de Valera, championed the cause of still colonised nations. At the UN, when represented for many years by Frank Aiken—de Valera’s close colleague and Foreign Minister—Ireland was again a champion of recently decolonised peoples and those yet to be decolonised. In this role it was feted throughout the “Third World”, and this reputation has not yet totally evaporated.

Ireland in the era of US capital import and integration has declared itself “militarily but not politically neutral” and affirmed its attachment to the “values” of the West. Perhaps it should make the best of its compromised position by at least seeking to nurture a peace and conflict resolution-oriented outlook among its more stridently dominance-seeking “allies”?

In fact the position of the Irish State in the current Ukraine War, echoed by Government and Opposition parties alike, is that of uncritical Western camp follower. There are little grounds for optimism that it will depart from this. A faint echo of the Aiken era survives in Ireland’s continued support—verbal at least—for the Palestinians, though this is evidently increasingly a source of embarrassment. Irish uniqueness in world affairs is hanging by a thread.

Just before the current War, Mary Lou McDonald told a meeting in Brussels that other than Uniting Ireland, Sinn Féin’s foreign policy priorities would be for a “positive” neutrality and for supporting the national rights of the Palestinians. These positions themselves are not unique and represent the formal position of nearly all Irish parties. The marginal difference in Sinn Féin’s case is the emphasis Mary Lou has put on them as Sinn Féin “priority” foreign policies.

Sinn Féin has repackaged itself as a mainstream left-of-centre party with such success that a Frenchman, let alone a Martian, would have difficulty distinguishing it from its main political rivals on any major issue. Immediately after February 2022, it deleted thousands of posts from its websites and social media that could compromise it on issues of immediate concern. The foreign policy principles Mary Lou outlined in Brussels, which is one of the few areas somewhat distinguishing it from other parties, have not featured in public since. The robustness of Sinn Féin’s commitment to these “priorities” remains to be seen.

### **Why Ireland’s FDI “bonanza” is like Norway’s oil**

There is regular fretting in Ireland at our alleged “excessive” dependence on FDI—foreign direct investment—most of which comes in the form of huge US multinationals

based or operating through here. This “dependence” produces vast sums for the State in Corporation Tax, as well as providing a base for Irish tech and financial firms to emerge through FDI supply-chain structures. It also serves to drive high quality watermarks in the economy, and acts as a conduit for ambitious Irish professionals to rise through the global multi-national career chain. For the US companies themselves, Ireland offers numerous advantages as a preferred location for the base they must have within the EU single market. To date, there has been little competition for this role.

But for perennial pessimists, the “dependence” is yet another symptom of Irish “failure”, this time an alleged “failure” to replace FDI with home-spun capitalists. Why such an outcome would by definition be better is not explained and ignores the realities of globalisation.

In fact the State tries quite hard to build its capitalist base. It would be difficult to imagine a greater level of State support and patronage for budding indigenous companies than what Enterprise Ireland already provides. Moreover, in a pattern replicated worldwide, successful new companies are as often quickly “snapped up” by international conglomerates the moment they achieve commercial breakthrough. This is often at mouth-watering prices, which only the most ideologically committed could resist. Indeed, the conscious goal of new start-ups is often precisely to achieve sufficient success to be thus “snapped-up”. There is no shortage of millionaires and even billionaires among recent Irish entrepreneurs and industrialists created by this process.

Michael Smurfit recalled in a radio interview about five years ago how in the 1960s his father was the single globally-active Irish industrial millionaire, while now they numbered in the hundreds. He put this down to the economic transformation engineered by the Haughey Governments of 1987-93.

Irish Corporation Tax revenue from mostly US multi-nationals has functioned as our version of Norway’s oil-based Sovereign Wealth Fund: in both cases financing huge long-term expansions of the industrial base, in social and educational provision and in preparing to survive a possible transition to a post-bonanza world. The two countries moved from being poor countries to relatively very rich ones in very similar ways. The Irish, like the Norwegians, became rich by a far-sighted State harnessing of a fortuitous resource—in the Irish case by successfully shaping Ireland as an ideal location for US firms within the EU Single Market and in focusing only on a specific form of company when attracting that FDI.

This Column agrees with Cliff Taylor of The Irish Times who has described how FDI has delivered a real bonanza for Ireland. Will it run out? Maybe, of course—as will Norway’s oil . . . eventually, and some planning should be done for that time (“Having ‘struck oil’, Ireland faces big decisions about what to do with all this money”, Irish Times, 23 April 2023).

### **Ireland: *friendly management take-over?***

The drama over the appointment of a new RTÉ Governor General has seen Kevin Bakhurst emerge as favourite, ready to bring new life and, as the Irish Times put it, “renew” the “troubled” national broadcaster. Bakhurst had a long career in BBC—including over its news section—before moving to RTÉ in 2012, first as manager of news and current affairs and later in a stint as Assistant Director General. There has been an evolution of RTÉ’s presentation of world news in the same time, often detrimental to a neutral observational take on world affairs.

The welcome for his appointment has been extravagant, with former RTÉ Director-General Noel Curran lauding his “huge and varied experience, a proven track record and key leadership skills”. Rotating Tánaiste Micheál Martin parroted the same line: “[Mr Bakhurst] has a proven track record of leadership at the highest levels and will bring a wealth of experience to the role.”

All of this has an increasingly familiar ring. In recent years we have seen the appointment, with similar accolades, of Drew Harris, a senior RIC/PSNI Officer—and its point-man with MI5—as Commissioner of the State’s police force, the Gardaí. And there was Gabriel Makhlof, a former top official in both the private and public wings of the New Zealand financial system, and also in the British civil service and in the World Bank—as Chair of the Irish Central Bank, and hence as Ireland’s member on the Board of the European Central Bank.

These efficient men have all risen as managerial leaders in the Anglo-Saxon world. When Taoiseach Martin praises their “*proven track record(s) of leadership at the highest levels*”, he doesn’t say of the “*highest levels*” of what.

Shouldn’t he be asked?

What might be next?

A London Foreign Office mandarin as Secretary-General of the Department of the Taoiseach?

## A New Direction in Revisionism?

Before boarding a flight recently, I slipped into a bookshop to get something to tide me over the outgoing and return journeys. I went to the Irish non-fiction section and picked up 'The Irish Difference' by Fergal Tobin. It turned out to be a lucky dip. Having finished it, I think it's an important book, possibly the most significant development inside revisionism since Brexit.

I had heard of Tobin on and off over the years. He has generally been described as an influential figure in Irish publishing. I had the impression he was a driver of the liberalisation process going as far back as the 1960s—he wrote a book about that decade. I didn't realise his main interest was Irish history. Sadly, he died earlier this year.

This book is a serious reflection on the Anglo Irish relationship arising from Brexit. His perspective is very much sympathetic to the British perspective but the book's main thrust is that Irish nationalism and separation from Britain were natural historical outcomes. He pays serious attention to the inability of all nationalists to recognise the substance of Ulster Protestantism; the importance of the Veto controversy; and the development of Ultrmontanism in Irish Catholicism. He dislikes Fenianism and

gives Redmondism too much credit, but concedes that the Fenians were representative of Catholic opinion towards the end of the 19th century. In my opinion he has been strongly influenced by Athol Street. It is as though Brexit has opened his eyes to the misgovernment that was British rule.

There is much in the book to disagree with but if this is the new direction of revisionism, then a manageable division between Republicanism and Revisionism might just be possible. What I mean is that in an imaginary Dail composed of these two opposite poles, there may be enough common ground to avoid outright civil war.

Anyway, I found it sometimes annoying, sometimes enjoyable (his account of the strange history of Dublin complete with quotes from Joyce is well done). Unlike most of what emerges from revisionist sources, this book is actually thought provoking.

An alternative perspective is that a work such as this may be beside the point: the real factor at play may be Foreign Office involvement in Irish affairs. But Brexit has undoubtedly rewritten the script from the days when Dublin Castle propagandists in 1919-22 were treated as dependable sources.

**Dave Alvey**

## Democratic High Horse

continued from page 1

world. But actions designed and intended to undermine a state by wrecking its economy are clearly acts of war against that state, whether or not they succeed.

Only the United States, supported by the EU and the UK, is capable of launch such sanctions.

As to the severity of the Russian sentence for treason: there were two instances of Irishmen who were British subjects acting with Britain's enemy in time of War. Both fell into Britain's hands and were executed.

Roger Casement, who had served in the British diplomatic service at a high level, saw the British Declaration of War on Germany as an aggressive action which would wreck European culture. He had seen it be-

ing planned and he published articles against it as soon as it was launched. And then he went to Germany and tried to raise an Irish Brigade in German prisoner-of-war camps to fight against Britain for Irish freedom.

William Joyce, however, did no more than ridicule, on German radio, the British attempts to prosecute its second war on Germany, but he too was hanged.

An Englishman from an eminent family, John Amery, opposed the second British war on Germany as being contrary to British interests. He was far from being anti-British, as Casement and Joyce were. He just made some broadcasts from Germany. But when he was caught he was hanged.

Britain has fought more wars than any other state of recent times. Many of them were against helpless peoples—as the Chinese were when the Opium War was launched on them—and the security of the British State was not at stake in them. When the State was secure,

regardless of the outcome, comprehensive suppression of dissent from the prosecution of the war was not required. But, when the State put itself at risk by over-reaching itself in its attempts to destroy Germany, as it did in its two World Wars, there was no tolerance of dissent.

The security of the British State is not threatened by the present War in the Ukraine, yet no public voice of dissent is heard. The Russia Today Television Channel, to which many British political voices across the spectrum had been contributing, has been blocked. And, when the Russian Minister for Children appeared at a Security Council meeting to discuss the International Criminal Court's accusation of kidnapping Ukrainian children, the British Government blocked newscast of the discussion.

If the British acts as if it was at war with Russia, and as if unanimity of opinion was necessary for the war effort, it does not seem unreasonable on the part of the Russian Government to do the same.

Kara-Murza is a long-standing opponent of the State System established by Putin in place of the oligarchic anarchy of the 1990s—the democracy—in which the standard of life, and of life expectancy, of the populace plummeted. His Opposition is not that of a rival within the system who thinks he could run it better. It is an anti-system Opposition.

The most difficult thing in establishing a democracy is the production of a system of parties which are fiercely in conflict, while being basically in agreement with one another—so that they can change places with each other periodically while maintaining the system.

That kind of politics came about accidentally after a long period of revolution and counter-revolution—which England was able to indulge in because it was an Island in Oliver St. John Gogarty's definition: an island surrounded by a Navy. The revolution against the Monarchy was in 1641. The revolutions and counter-revolutions did not settle down into a system of consensual parties fighting mock battles until the late 1700s.

These parties were aristocrats at first. They gradually transitioned into mass-based institutions in the course of the 19th century.

In the 20th century the outcome of that long development was presented as the realisation of a rational ideal that established a model that could be implemented anywhere. It is now represented as if it was a system that was inherent in human nature, and that would exist everywhere if a few bad people did not prevent it. That is now the Imperialist excuse for intervention everywhere. ■

## Books, Culture and History

For the past number of months some of my friends and I have been compiling a list of the ten greatest novels since Victorian times. It has really been an enjoyable exercise and one that has raised some heated words sometimes but, in the end, there is equanimity. It all began by my finding in our book room a brilliant little book, *Essays in Irish Biography*, by W.F.P. Stockley (Cork University Press, Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd, London 1933). One of the essays in the book is ‘*Canon Sheehan and his People*’.

William Stockley was the Professor of English at University College Cork (UCC) before Daniel Corkery and what bright brains they both had. Is it any wonder that they were so slandered by Sean O’Faolain who, grappling for his place in academia, lost out to his former mentor and friend Daniel Corkery?

But really my intent here is to look at another book, *The Books that Define Ireland*, by Bryan Fanning and Tom Garvin (Merrion Press, Dublin, 2014). I have to admit I had never heard of Bryan Fanning—I actually thought he was another Fanning but apparently he is Professor of Migration and Social Policy at UCD and he has written “several books”, including *Histories of the Irish Future* (2014), *Migration and the Making of Ireland* (2018), and *Three Roads to the Welfare State: Liberalism, Social Democracy and Christian Democracy*.

Tom Garvin, on the other hand needed no introduction to me as he is, in my opinion, one of those historians who are well-poisoners. I remember on entering UCC: I thought I could make myself a scholar there—but I was in for the shock of my life. On starting our History Course, Professor John A. Murphy came into the lecture room and told us that up in the Department, in College Road, there was the list of history books that we would have to base our studies on, and we could add to them but our books would have to follow the same line of thought. We all duly got our copy of the list and of course Tom Garvin’s books were there for our study.

I would later have much cause to despise him, but that came after our exposure to the type of history, promoted by him and others of his stripe. Nobody said anything to us about the ‘r’ word—we were just starting our course—but Revisionism would taint all that it touched. Garvin and his crew were the prophets of the era and we were just unlucky enough to be their unknowing and unwilling disciples.

Garvin, now the Professor Emeritus of Politics in UCD, retired from lecturing in 2008. He is an alumnus of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. I was surprised to see that his PhD

“was awarded by the University of Georgia in 1974 for his thesis ‘Political Parties in a Dublin Constituency: A Behavioural Analysis’...”.

He was a central figure in establishing the Political Studies Association of Ireland in 1982, and his professional reputation saw him win promotion in UCD, where he became Professor of Politics in 1991. His academic career was marked by sabbaticals in the USA (where he spent extended periods in the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC; Colgate University; Mount Holyoke College; and the University of Georgia; and as Burns Professor, Boston College). He was elected as a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2003.

In ‘*The Irish Times*’, 19th April 2014, there was a highly critical analysis of ‘*The Books that Define Ireland*’. Under a picture of the Famine Memorial in Dublin there was the strapline: “*Hostility to modern IRA sours tone of odd Irish catechism*”. And below that: “*Contentious essays meander between dull historical narrative and weak literary criticism*”. The writer of this wonderful piece of work was a Nicholas Allen and I immediately set out to find out who he was because I had never seen this type of work in that particular paper.

“Nicholas Allen is the Director of the Wilson Center for Humanities and Arts, where he holds an endowed Professorship in the Humanities. His latest book, ‘Ireland, Literature and the Coast;

Seatangled’, was published in December 2020 by Oxford University Press. He has been the Burns Visiting Scholar at Boston College and has received many grants and awards, including from the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Irish Research Council.”

Allen also recently gave a talk at “*Princeton University on Seamus Heaney where he was introduced by Lecturer in Theatre, Fintan O’Toole, as part of the 2021-22 Fund for Irish Studies lecture series.*”

In an article for the *Irish Political Review*, March 2023, I wrote about the huge amount of money that Hiram Morgan of the School of History was bringing into UCC. But in recent days here in Ireland, we have all been staggered about Robert Watt, the Secretary General of the Department of Health and his complete contempt at being forced to attend the Dáil’s Committee on Finance to discuss his role in the fiasco about Dr. Tony Holohan’s job at TCD.

Without let or hindrance from his boss, in this case the hapless Stephen Donnelly TD (Minister for Health, Social Democrats), Watt (on 300,000 pa Euros himself) negotiated a 2 million Euro deal with TCD to take Holohan on board as a lecturer. But, when it became public, the deal was scuppered. But TCD insists on holding on their already collected €1 million! And, when Watt was asked about that missing million now that the deal is off, he just answered laconically: “*What is a million?*” What have Fintan O’Toole and Tom Garvin to say about that? Isn’t it right up their street to analyse this type of political/academic malfeasance? But I wouldn’t bet on it! who would?

But, back to that review by Nicholas Allen, who states that:

“...‘The Books that Define Ireland’ contain 29 essays that chart aspects of the island’s social and political thought since the 17th century. Each is written by Fanning and Garvin and each interprets a different book arranged in order of publication. The result is an uneven collection that starts slowly and generates interest only when the two authors begin to introduce personal experience into passages of otherwise pedestrian critique”.

“Garvin’s pen portrait of a gruff and growling Todd Andrews is humorously insightful of the revolutionary generation that remade Ireland into a less than radical form (when Garvin asked Andrews why he closed the Bray to Harcourt Street Railway Line in 1959, Andrew grumbled “I got fed up sitting here in Dundrum watching those Freemasons going into Trinity (College) from Foxrock to their meetings at the taxpayer’s expense”...”).

Is this just hearsay by Garvin? Has he evidence to back it up? Because the reason the line was done away with was that the traffic was too much, and the carriages too small for the people now working and still coming in their droves up to Dublin. But that pedestrian truth is cast aside by Garvin in order to have a go at a legendary hardwork-

ing politician and titan of the Fianna Fáil party. I would expect nothing less from one of the well-poisoners of Irish history.

**Julianne Herlihy ©**

**To be continued with special analysis of Brendan Clifford's critique of Tom.**

## **Turf Development Board Limited: Dispute With Engineering Staff, 1936**

The document reproduced in the March issue of Labour Comment was issued by Cumann na nInnealtoi (Engineers Association), 12 Dawson Street, Dublin.

On 16th June 1934 the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Commerce wrote to my father, Bernard P. Kennedy that—

"in accordance with the recommendations of the Civil Service Commissioners, the Minister for Industry and Commerce is prepared to offer you a post as Temporary Assistant Engineer in connection with Peat Development under this Department at a salary of £30 per month, and on the Conditions of Service applicable to the post as notified to you by the Civil Service Commission."

The Minister in question was Sean Lemass, who was not involved in the dispute which arose later.

The creation of the Board was inspired by Frank Aiken, who also was not involved in the dispute.

The Departmental Secretary asked my father, if he was prepared to accept, and to report to Mr Andrews, Peat Development Section, 10 Hume Street, Dublin on Wednesday, 20th June 1934.

Within a couple of months my father bought a Morris Cowley Car, had one driving lesson in the Phoenix Park, got married in the National University Church in Stephen's Green, and set off for the West with his Bride, along with Belleek Pottery, Art Deco Chinaware, and other treasures, across "the Lordly Shannon, stretching as a sea", as celebrated by Herbert Spenser, and over hump-back bridges and bog roads.

His work territory covered Counties Mayo and Galway, totalling over 4,500 square miles. He and my mother rented a house in Claremorris, celebrated by the folk poet Raftery, who was too blind to appreciate either its beauty or that of nearby Cong, later revealed to the world by John Ford's Quiet Man. Twenty years later I

saw the film with my mother, who had not been West of the Shannon in the following eighteen years.

My parents were both very happy in the West. My father, who had chosen engineering after reading an article by Arthur Griffith saying that Independent Ireland would need Engineers, had read "The Industrial Resources of Ireland", written in the 1840s by the Dubliner, Sir Robert Kane, a brilliant Scientist, who had been the first President of Queen's University, Cork. My father was to study there when it had become a College of the National University. In 1919 he had sat for, and won, three Scholarships to the place.

My father had lived in Myrtle Hill Terrace, Tivoli, Cork. In 1917 Henry Ford built a factory just across the river, and it was said the city might become another Detroit. During school College holidays my father took a ferry to the works, where he cleaned out boilers. Ford paid well but he was a tyrant and my father noted the hard-boiled nature of American capitalism.

After Graduation he worked for Siemens Schuckert Werke as an Engineer on the Shannon Scheme. He recalled how some Germans had insulted Irishmen who had fought in the Great War. They grabbed shovels saying,

"we bet you on the Somme and bet you on the Rhine, and by Christ, we'll can beat you on the Shannon!"

For a couple of years following completion of the Shannon Scheme he worked in New York.

When he came back to Ireland he settled in Dublin and worked in the Patents Office.

He had read all the most up-to-date literature on the uses of peat before the Peat Development Board was established.

These included the use of techniques such as the use of milled peat, pioneered or practised by Vicars in England, and in the Soviet Union—which were not adopted by Bord na Mona until the 1950s.

Besides the satisfaction my father was getting from his career, his married life was bearing fruit and my brother Brian was born in a Nursing Home in Galway on 6th October 1935. When the dispute started, my mother was again expecting and my sister Brenda was born in Dublin on 27th February 1937.

So it was back across the Shannon with an infant son, and a yet to be born daughter after barely two years in the West for my parents, my father bearing a life-long resentment for Mr. Andrews, whom he deemed the Villain of the piece.

My maternal Grandmother, a widow whose grown children were all flown the nest had bought a small bungalow on the Hill of Howth, having sold a substantial house on the Borough Road, Sutton, with the sea behind the garden.

Some well known people had lived on that Road, including Sean Etchingham, a member of the first Dail Eireann. In later years Thin Lizzie's Phil Lynott lived there. And from 1948 to 1957. St Fintan's CBS High School was two doors down from the House.

Anyhow, my parents moved into the Bungalow and I and my four siblings were brought up there. (Brenda, my elder sister, lived there until a few weeks ago, before moving into a Nursing and Convalescent Home about 300 yards across a tiny grassed and wooded valley within sight of the bungalow.)

My father subsequently worked for the Board of Works, and later for the Land Commission. It was customary for semi-Government bodies to keep employees on a temporary contracts for years. Between 1945 and 1952 he was on such a contract, earning the same money he had been on with the Turf Board in 1934. In 1952 he was made permanent, with his salary more than doubling to £750 per annum.

In 1953 he had to retire on Health grounds. His Pension was based on one year's service. So his weekly income was reduced from a then Princely £15 to a Pittance £3 per week to maintain our family.

It remained at that level until 1966 despite inflation. When Charles Haughey became Finance Minister, such pensions were increased greatly to take account of inflation.

Haughey's father, a former IRA man and (Free State) Army Officer, suffered from Multiple Sclerosis, and Charlie had resolved to leave school to support the family. But his

**continued on page 13, Column 1**

## The Brian Murphy osb Archive

### Poisoning the well or Publishing the truth? From Peter Hart's *The IRA and its Enemies* to RTE's *Hidden History* film on Coolacrease

(Part Three: continued from April issue)

#### Peter Hart, Eoghan Harris and the RTE *Hidden History* film on *The Pearsons of Coolacrease*

The film was based on the book by Alan Stanley, *I met Murder on the way. The Story of the Pearsons of Coolacrease* (Carlow, 2005). There is a direct connection between Peter Hart's findings on sectarianism and this film: firstly, Alan Stanley, the author of the book on which the film was based, acknowledged the help that he had received from the "excellent history" of Peter Hart; secondly, he made several particular references to Peter Hart's work in the course of his narrative; and, thirdly, the back cover of the book advertises the verdict of Eoghan Harris that —

"like Hart's classic, *The IRA and its Enemies*, this book opens new pages in the hidden history of southern Protestants in the period 1916-1923, and is a welcome addition to its slim historiography".

The conclusion of Hart, to which both Stanley and Harris subscribe, may be summed up in his assertion that 'nation-

alism veered towards sectarianism in late 1920 and guerrilla war became, in some places, a kind of tribal war'. In this context the reliability of Hart's findings on sectarianism are clearly all important and yet the questions that I raised about them, as long ago as 1998, have still not been answered.

The single most important issue that I raised was made in regard to Peter Hart's use of the source material that is contained in the *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*. This important document, containing the British Army's account of the Irish War, is preserved in the Imperial War Museum. Hart affirmed, citing the *Record*, that

"the truth was that, as British intelligence officers recognised, "in the south the Protestants and those who supported the Government rarely gave much information because, except by chance, they had not got it to give"."

By maintaining that Protestants did not have sufficient knowledge to act as informers, Hart heightens the suspicion that they were killed for religious motives. However, the very next sentences of the *Record*, which Hart has chosen not to reproduce, read as follows:

"an exception to this rule was in the Bandon area where there were many Protestant farmers who gave information. Although the Intelligence Officer of this area was exceptionally experienced and although the troops were most active it proved almost impossible to protect those brave men, many of whom were murdered while almost all the remainder suffered grave material loss."

The evidence from this important source confirms, therefore, that the IRA killings in the Bandon area were motivated by military rather than sectarian considerations. Moreover, the Bandon area was

not only a central focus of Hart's work but also it was for his information on that area that he was particularly thanked by Alan Stanley.

Inevitably questions arise over the findings of both authors for failing to be guided by the *Record of the Rebellion*, a source which Peter Hart, himself, has described as "the most trustworthy". This description by Hart was made in his Introduction to a published edition of the *Record* in a book entitled *British Intelligence on Ireland, 1920-1921* (2002). In that publication the two missing sentences, in relation to Bandon, are included.

However, instead of providing an explanation for, or even an acknowledgement of, their omission from his first book, there is a lengthy footnote that serves only to blur the issue. One would have hoped that an 'honest mistake' would have resulted in an honest admission.

The basic question for Peter Hart, therefore, remains: why did he choose to omit from the *Record of the Rebellion*, "the most trustworthy" source, the two sentences that make his sectarian thesis impossible to sustain?

Significantly, he chose not to address that question when interviewed by *History Ireland* in 2005. It is also worthy of note that in the edited version of the *Record of the Rebellion*, neither Peter Hart, nor the Series Editor, David Fitzpatrick, saw fit to advise readers that they had omitted a section of the *Record on The People!* There one reads, among other things, that —

"judged by English standards the Irish are a difficult and unsatisfactory people ... many were of a degenerate type and their methods of waging war were in most cases barbarous, influenced by hatred and devoid of courage."

In the midst of these manifestly racist sentiments on the part of the British Army, when all sorts of vicious charges were made against the Irish people, there is, significantly, no allegation that Irish republicans were motivated by sectarian feelings.

Another important issue that I raised in 1998 also related to source material. Having noted that Peter Hart had made reference to the private papers of Erskine Childers and his unpublished account of *The Irish Revolution*, I asked why he had failed to advert to the contents of that account by Childers which dealt specifically with the matter of sectarianism. The words of Childers that I cited were as follows:

## Turf Development Board

continued from page 12

mother insisted that he remain at school. Haughey had a better understanding of how unprivileged families lived, than did former Finance Ministers! And he did more to lift them out of poverty than the rest of them put together!!

I hope that readers of Labour Comment whose families were affected by the Turf Board Dispute and have comments to make will tell what they know about it.

I will make no further public comment until I see what they have to say.

Donal Kennedy  
LONDON

"it is worth noting once more that the violence evoked in this year (1919) was slight. Nor was it indiscriminate or un-disciplined. At no time, neither then nor subsequently, have civilians—Protestant Unionists living scattered and isolated in the South and West, been victimised by the republicans on account of their religion or religious opinion."

Childers was, of course, a Protestant, and his views, and, indeed, his work for Dail Eireann, present a compelling case against the thesis of sectarian strife proposed by Hart. Moreover, I added that during the Summer of 1920, when the pogroms against Catholics were taking place in the north of Ireland, many Protestants wrote letters to the press stating that there was no religious persecution in the south.

The words and actions of Childers and others, who assisted in the constructive work of Dail Eireann, clearly raised questions about Hart's sectarian thesis, but he failed to address these questions in his *History Ireland* interview of March/April 2005. Despite this failure on the part of Peter Hart to provide any answer to these questions about sectarianism, his views have been adopted uncritically by Eoghan Harris and, through the medium of Harris, they have been widely publicised by RTE and the television programme on Coolacrease.

Eoghan Harris, not only endorsed the original book on Coolacrease by Alan Stanley, but also he played a prominent part in the subsequent RTE film that was based on the book. His views on Peter Hart's history are, therefore, important. Writing in the *Sunday Independent* (17 December 2006), in relation to an RTE *Hidden History* programme on Frank Aiken, Harris made his views known. He stated that—

"contrary to some Southern assumptions, as Peter Hart has shown in his classic work, *The IRA and its Enemies*, sectarianism was not confined to Northern Ireland... Hart's account of atrocities in the Bandon Valley reminds us that we in the Republic have no right to feel superior to Northern sectarians."

Harris concluded that:

"Hart's book hit hard at the most basic myths of modern Irish republicans—that unlike the lowlife loyalists of the North, our noble IRA did not kill for sectarian reasons, and if perchance Protestants had been shot we could be sure they had been shot for political and not religious reasons. Hart showed all this to be a fantasy."

The article by Harris was entitled, *At the*

*very Hart of our Sectarian History.*

In the course of the article, Harris, like Hart, provided no answer either to the selective omissions from the British source on the Bandon area, or to the significant number of Protestants who supported Dail Eireann. Emotive sound-bites about sectarianism, rather than a serious study of the source material, was the message that Harris delivered to his readers.

He delivered the same message to the viewers of the *Hidden History* programme on Coolacrease: *The Four Glorious Years*—the name given by Frank Gallagher to what he termed the noble struggle for Irish freedom—were tarnished, according to Harris, by sectarian killings.

Following the showing of the Coolacrease film, Harris defended it in his *Sunday Independent* column (11 November 2007) by stating that it presented an historical reality that had been buried "*until Canadian historian Peter Hart published The IRA and its Enemies*".

The film did exactly that: it presented the story of the Pearson family of Coolacrease through the medium of interview and re-enactment; it told how the Pearson boys engaged in armed action against the local IRA, how the IRA responded by an attack on the family home, and how two of the boys were executed in appalling circumstances; it also portrayed the clash between the Pearsons and the IRA as part of a campaign by Irish republicans to drive Protestants from the land.

During the course of the film and subsequently, most recently in a contribution by Philip McConway to *History Ireland* (May/June 2008), the details of the Pearson story and general thrust of the sectarian argument have been contested.

However, the over-all impact of the film was accurately summed up by Eoghan Harris: it projected an historical reality that had been buried until Peter Hart's book on the IRA was published. Irish republicans could no longer claim, as Harris put it, that "*our noble IRA did not kill for sectarian reasons*".

The contribution to the film by Harris, himself, played no small part in promoting Hart's thesis that the IRA were sectarian killers. Not only did Harris give the impression that the Pearson brothers were shot "*very deliberately in the genitals, in their sexual parts*" (a claim that is not substantiated by documents relating to the deaths), but also he constantly repeated the sectarian line taken by Peter Hart on the killing of Protestants. In a sense this was to be expected from Harris, a self-professed member of the *Reform group*,

which, in his own words, "*for the past ten years, have been trying to put Southern attacks against Protestants in 1921/1922 on the public agenda*" (*Sunday Indep.* 17 Dec. 2006).

Questions clearly arise as to how the director of the film, Niamh Sammon, could allow any member of an organisation with a political/historical agenda a privileged position on her programme. There can be no question, however, as to the influence of Peter Hart's writings on the shaping of the RTE's *Hidden History*.

Hart's influence, through the medium of Eoghan Harris, was truly immense. Like recurring links in a chain the connections are clear to see: Peter Hart/Eoghan Harris for the promotion of Hart's book; Alan Stanley/Peter Hart/Eoghan Harris for the promotion of Stanley's book; Alan Stanley/Peter Hart/Eoghan Harris (Reform Group) for the promotion of the RTE *Hidden History* programme on Coolacrease.

Any questioning of the vital link in the chain, the historical writing of Peter Hart, had to be contested and Harris has always done that: not by engaging in academic debate but by the use of powerful and polemical prose. All opposition has had to be crushed.

In his *Sunday Independent* article (11 November 2007), Harris dismissed the criticisms of Peter Hart's work by the Aubane Society as "*violent verbal polemics*" (he used more extreme language on the Joe Duffy radio show), and he suggested, among other things, that a letter of mine to the *Irish Examiner* (3 November 2007) should have considered the events in the Coolacrease film from "*a Protestant perspective*".

As my letter had dealt exclusively with the views of Protestants, I replied to his criticisms in a letter to the *Sunday Independent* (9 December 2007). The purpose of the letter was to allow the voices of Protestants to enter, not only the debate on the Coolacrease film, but also the debate on Peter Hart's sectarian version of Irish history.

It was also intended to raise questions about a statement of Dr. Terence Dooley, which was made in the course of the film, that—

"the revolutionary period was essentially used as a pretext to run many of these Protestant farmers and landlords out of a local community for locals to take up their lands."

(To be continued)

# The Rimmel Report!

### ENERGY !

A complete change in the way energy is supplied has been announced by The German Government: but it is still a work in progress, despite the recent Government boast that: "*In just a few months, Germany has managed to become completely independent of Russian gas*". But that's not even half true! The fact is that my family, and probably the majority of other German families all over the country, are currently (April 2023) still heating and cooking with Russian gas. On top of that, huge numbers of industrial companies are still burning Russian gas. And it looks like we can live on this stockpile of Russian gas for another six months!

Thanks to a mild Winter, German gas storage facilities are as of now (the second week in April 2023) still 64% full of Russian Gas. In fact, the storage tanks are fuller now than they were in April 2022! Before cutting off imports of gas from the evil Russians last year—with no provocation—the Federal Government quickly filled all the national gas storage facilities to the brim with their cheap gas: with no constraints!

It was only then that the gas valves on the Russian pipelines were turned off!

And, with as little restraint, German politicians have travelled around the world buying up gas—because somehow, sometime, the Russian gas supply has to be replaced! And, with these worldwide gas purchases, Germany pushed up the world price of gas: and that is still affecting all of Western Europe today.

However, other European countries have not followed the German example: they continue to get gas from Russia via the Transgas and the Turkstream pipelines.

But the Government is also getting hold of another form of energy, one that cannot be procured within Germany—and one which is outrageously expensive: LNG = Liquefied Natural Gas, or liquid gas for short.

Indeed, Chancellor Scholz has already announced, in a speech about Germany's "*turning point*", the construction of his own LNG terminals; and the LNG Acceleration Act will come into force on May 24th.

The infrastructure for this fuel is being built at breakneck speed, and several of the specialised ships capable of converting liquid gas into gas that can be used in pipelines are already on order around the world. And the construction of a 26-kilometer pipeline, to connect the already-completed terminals in Wilhelmshaven and Brunsbüttel with the existing pipeline network, will begin on August 4th. What would normally take months and years can suddenly be done in days and weeks—money not an issue!

To compensate for the loss of Russian gas, Germany is working flat out on a total of eleven (11) liquefied gas terminals! If all of these plants are operational within four years, their annual capacity will be 73 billion cubic metres of LNG gas—mainly to be imported from the USA. A deal of the century for the Americans! It's worth blowing up a pipeline to get that—one would think! Incidentally, the price of this gas has yet to be discussed!

It might also be mentioned that the LNG terminals planned for the Baltic Sea have run into virtually unanimous opposition from the population of the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania: citizen protests have halted the preliminary work on a planned LNG terminal off the island of Rügen for the time being.

But at the same time the Federal Government is putting out propaganda about energy transition and climate protection: as if it's only the people of Germany who are responsible for the fate of our planet in this regard—even though us 83 million Germans are only 1.1% of the world population!

To further this energy transition, our politicians have now devised a law intended to serve as a central lever to promote electricity generation from renewable energies—the EEG, the Renewable Energy Sources Act.

Renewable energies are those energies that have little impact on the environment and produce more energy than they consume, if they consume any at all. The main sources include wind and solar energy

(photovoltaics and solar thermal energy), biomass (biogas, biofuels/biopetrol), hydro-power (electricity generation from water) and geo-thermal energy (use of the heat of the earth).

The aim of the law is to make the whole of Germany greenhouse gas-neutral in Electricity Supply: generation is to be entirely based on renewable sources. Since the German Green Party played a leading role in promoting this law, chaos is inevitable—and already at least 25 million German home and apartment owners are worried about how they will heat their homes.

The new EEG law actually bans the installation and extension of gas and oil heating systems in public and private housing as from 2024.

Existing oil or gas heating systems may only be used until 2045 at the latest, and any new heating systems should operate with 65% renewable energies. Home owners are obliged to modernise systems which are over 30 years old.

All of this presents huge problems to most home- and flat-owners, faced with the problem of financing the new heating systems.

To mitigate these catastrophic consequences, politicians have devised so-called hardship regulations—the 65% requirement is not to apply to home-owners over 80 years of age. In addition, openness to technology applies in principle: meaning that you can heat with heat pumps, with wood pellets, and also with hydrogen—they don't say where the latter is to come from. However, the number of home owners who can pay 25,000 to 30,000 euros for a heat pump is also limited!

Of course, there is nothing wrong with politicians trying to get the climate crisis under control as far as possible, and promoting the sparing use of natural resources. But, when prohibitions which present an unbearable burden for the citizen are enacted with little consideration, and insufficient expert advice, then there has to be at least a protest! So please forgive me for giving a somewhat detailed report on a very current German energy problem.

By the way: One of the most recent highlights of the German Greens' energy policy is the shutting down of the last three German nuclear power plants on 15th April 2023. To replace the 8% power supply provided by nuclear power, the coal-fired power plants will now have to blow even more poisonous clouds of CO<sub>2</sub> into the sky. By contrast, only harmless water vapour came out of the fuel from the nuclear power plants.

## Splits in the Left Party

Let us stay with German domestic policy, but change the subject: in debates — not just about the future energy security of our country, but also concerning other pressing current and existential political questions — the choir of parties is missing one voice — that of *Die Linke* [The Left].

This German socialist party with Marxist roots was formed after the fall of the Wall in June 2007 by the merger of the East German left-wing ruling party, the Party of Democratic Socialism [Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus] — the successor to the Socialist Unity Party [*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*], the former ruling party of the German Democratic Republic — with the West German Wahlalternative Arbeit und Sozialsrecht [Electoral Alternative Labour And Social Rights]. So in 2007, these two former left-wing parties constituted themselves as the all-German party Die Linke.

These tortuous issues have created a deep split within the Linke. The party's best-known theoretician and most popular YouTube speaker, Sahra Wagenknecht, gave a short, passionate speech in the Bundestag, demanding an end to the ramping up of enthusiasm for war — with its almost gleeful promoting of a German martial spirit, with its demands for heavier, more powerful weapons for Ukraine; and the demand for a permanent, sanctions-based breach in commercial relations with Russia — a policy which might be good for some American producers but is immensely harmful for the people of Germany.

Ms Wagenknecht was ferociously attacked by the 'reformer' wing of the Linke, with some calling for expulsion. Her opponents, currently in the majority, for the most part omit any blame on the belligerent eastward expansion of NATO and the USA and their extension of blanket support to Zelensky; in other words they climb on the bandwagon. Many hope that this will win them more votes in this year's state elections — after Berlin come Hesse, Bavaria and Bremen. But the opposite outcome is very possible.

Up to now Linke was regarded as a protest party, with concern for disadvantaged classes and groups. It is probably the only party in Germany that has always campaigned for social justice measures and continues to do so. And up to now it has been seen as a peace party at any rate. But now that the party leadership has backed the sale of arms to Ukraine it has largely lost that reputation. The banner of protest has been yielded by the Linke to the extreme right-wing conservative party,

AFD (Alternative for Germany).

The sad fact is that all the good political initiatives of the Linke have been thoughtlessly undermined by incessant internal rows, arguments and power struggles. Worst of all, this has wrecked its reputation and prestige with the electorate.

In 2021, in the last elections to the German Bundestag, the party received a miserable 4.9% of the votes. And it was only because three of its representatives had won their constituencies nationwide, directly and with a majority, that the Linke was able to enter the Bundestag as a party: with a parliamentary group of 39 elected representatives, due to a special passage in German electoral law.

The present public profile of the deeply divided Linke couldn't be more tragic, its condition can only be described as disastrous.

A strong grouping of self-proclaimed "reformers", anchored primarily in the party's Federal Executive Committee, is fully on message with the mainstream bourgeois-imperialist media in unconditionally condemning Putin, and Russian Imperialism, downplaying NATO's aggressive role, and clamouring for military support and arms deliveries to Ukraine, and sanctions against Russia, etc. etc.

A peace rally, with well over 30,000 participants was held in Berlin in February 2023, supported by other parts of the Left, but it was sabotaged and ignored by the party leadership, as was a "*Manifesto for Peace*", that was initiated by Left-wing comrades and comrades, and signed by more than three-quarters of a million citizens so far.

This other part of the party (probably the majority??) thinks the leaders should worry less about securing their lavish salaries as members of the Bundestag and take more notice of popular concerns.

On the question of the war in Ukraine, these leftists do not deny that Putin started this war, but emphasise its origins: provoked as it was by America's morbid anti-Russian policy and the aggressive behaviour of NATO.

I remember 13th April 1994, in my hometown of Schwerin: the "*Western Group of Soviet Armed Forces in Germany*", stationed in East Germany (GDR) since the end of World War II, was withdrawing from Germany in accordance with the two-plus-four treaty between the two parts of Germany and the four victorious Powers of World War II.

The Russians withdrew from East Germany/GDR: back/"*Damoi*" — said the Russians — "*back to the homeland*".

That 13th April, hundreds of Schwerin residents bade farewell at Schwerin train station to the Soviet soldiers, who had been stationed in Schwerin and the surrounding area. The newspapers headline was "*farewell to friends*": for most East Germans, the Russians had become friends after being there for almost 50 years.

A total of 340,000 Soviet soldiers — along with 163,700 members of their families — left Germany. Incidentally, the German Government spent 7.3 billion German marks (DM), constructing apartments in Russia for the returning soldiers.

Among other things, the Soviets took military material back home with them:

- 4,800 main battle tanks,
- 8,208 armoured vehicles,
- 3,682 artillery systems,
- 691 aircraft, 683 helicopters,
- 106,094 motor vehicles,
- 2.75 million tons of material, including 677,032 tons of ammunition including nuclear-tipped missiles.

Not only that: because the Soviets had been assured by the West that NATO would not expand into Eastern Europe, they deployed the withdrawn troops well away from the Western frontiers of Russia: deep into the hinterland — into Siberia. This was to avoid provoking the West by deploying this huge mass of troops into the European part of the country.

And how did NATO, led by the USA, respond? Step by step, it has expanded eastwards, without the least concern for Russia's security interests. Putin has repeatedly warned about this down the years.

This is also roughly the line of argument of this other LEFT fraction — possibly the majority? — which advocates a peaceful, negotiated solution to the armed conflict and which strictly rejects arms deliveries to Ukraine.

Let's hear from a US military man who cannot be suspected of being a leftist. The following is a short extract:

Published by Daniel Davis  
March 9, 2022

"15 Years of Western Failure to Acknowledge Reality Contributed to the Russo-Ukraine War

Let's get this clear right up front: there is one, solitary person who is responsible for the war that is raining down death and destruction on Ukraine today, and that is Vladimir V. Putin, President of Russia.

There is another reality at play in this war however, that is equally true: the West has been grossly irresponsible in its conduct towards Ukraine and is not without culpability in preventing war.

We had numerous, valid off-ramps — over many years — to temper Putin's



worst impulses towards Kyiv that might reasonably have prevented war from ever breaking out. It is of paramount importance...that we acknowledge where we missed opportunities to prevent war, because if we maintain the same blind spots that blocked us from preventing the outbreak of war, we may unwittingly lay the foundation for something much worse: an escalation of hostilities that could expand beyond the Ukrainian borders and, in a catastrophic worst case, end with a nuclear attack..." (Armed Forces Journal, 2022 / Daniel L. Davis is a Senior Fellow for Defense Priorities and a former Lt. Col. in the U.S. Army who deployed into combat zones four times. He is the author of "The Eleventh Hour in 2020 America").

### A Memory

An MP from Germany's Left Party on April 1st called for the United States military forces to pull out from the country, as well as demanding immediate removal of nukes from the German territory. Invoking German's painful WWII history, The Linke MP, Sevim Dağdelen, said on the floor of Germany's parliament, the Bundestag, that it was time, after nearly 78 years, for the US soldiers "to go home". The United States has stationed an estimated 38,500 troops in Germany and has scores of defence bases and other military installations in the country.

The phrase, *Go home*, reminded me of my militant past: of my time in the left-wing youth organisation, the FDJ = Free German Youth. Back then, in the 1950s, we were still fighting for German unity and against the remilitarisation of the country.

Marching through streets and squares in Cologne, we were always accompanied by the song, "*Ami go home*", and we sang it with all our hearts.

The FDJ was later (1951) banned by the Adenauer Government and so was the song. But we kept on singing it in public: and we had to take a lot of beatings from the police for that. Nevertheless—a lovely childhood memory! Here are the words

Ami, Ami go home  
Was ist unser Leben wert  
wenn allein regiert das Schwert,  
und die ganze Welt zerfällt in toten Sand?  
Aber das wird nicht geschehen,  
denn wir wollen nicht untergehen,  
und sorufen wird durch unser deutsches Land:

### Chor

*Go home, Ami, Ami go home,*  
spalte für den Frieden dein Atom,  
Sag good bye dem Vater Rhein,  
rühr nicht an sein Töchterlein; Lorelei,  
so lang du singst, wird Deutschland sein.

English translation:

Ami, Ami go home  
What's our life worth,  
When only the sword rules,  
And the whole world melts to dead sand?  
But that won't happen,  
Because we don't want to perish.  
And so we shout throughout  
our German land:  
*Go home, Ami Ami, go home!*  
Split your atom for peace.  
Say: Good bye to Father Rhine.

Don't touch his little daughter:  
Lorelei—as long as you sing,  
Germany will exist!

The tune for this song derives from the American song, *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp* of 1864: it was one of the most popular songs of the American Civil War. The song portrays the captivity of a soldier, and is intended to inspire hope.

The same tune is used for the Irish patriotic song, *God Save Ireland*.

**Herbert Remmel**

## Sino/Soviet Relations:

### *a look at the past!*

SACU—The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding—was founded by Dr. Joseph Needham of Cambridge University in 1965. Bishops, MPs, professors, business people, and Trade Union leaders joined it. It had its first meeting in a House of Commons Committee Room. SACU followed in the footsteps of a number of friendship organisations, like the British-China Friendship Association (BCFA), founded in 1949 after the People's Republic had been proclaimed. It was mainly meant to encourage trading and friendship with China.

SACU is still alive in Britain today and publishes a magazine called *China Eye*. Its website features videos, and opportunities for members.

The BCFA was split when China, in 1960/1962, broke with the Soviet Union, which was under the leadership of Khrushchev. The split meant that the mainly communist membership went over to the Soviet side. The organisation was proscribed by the Labour Party and lost further leftist support. The Jewish Left went mainly towards China, joining SACU eventually. The Leftist, Ronald Berger, a businessman, was a prominent member who was visiting China regularly. To him China wasn't contaminated with anti-Semitism as had been Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, with its—what he called—unjustified accusations of a Jewish doctors' plot, who allowed Stalin to die alone from a stroke.

The matter was never something to be investigated, by even the most dedicated communist, for fear of being accused of anti-Semitism. Another taboo question was: why did the Soviet Union recognise the independence of Israel, even though it was brought about by the terrorisation

and killing of the Palestinian people. (Brendan Clifford did comment, some years ago, on the Soviet recognition of Israel's independence.)

I did attend a meeting of SACU and found a few of the already privileged, jockeying for free trips to China. You had to be something in your community to get one.

Though one American, living in Britain because of the McCarthy persecution did get to go. And the widow of a killed member of the Lincoln Brigade (which was active during the Spanish Civil War) did deservedly, in my opinion, get a free trip.

I did reluctantly recognise China's need to spread the word through the middle class in Britain and Ireland.

Class differences was always a difficulty in the CPGB, with the working class members feeling left out. What the working class membership wanted was very different from what the middle class wanted. One wanted a new person in the street, much like themselves, while the other wanted better jobs, with better condition, with proper housing and education for their children.

The one benefit of membership was that you were exposed to some of the more prominent intellectuals in the UK, like university lecturers and a prominent composer, which at times made you feel you were now attending university.

Many of the Jewish members of SACU ended up working in China as lecturers in English and as engineering instructors. Then came the Cultural Revolution under Mao, which lasted from 1966 to 1976. I had been in the Young Communist League in the early 1950s, in the Hampstead Branch, which had a majority of young Jews.

One in particular I knew was, after leaving university, off to China to lecture at Beijing University, while others went off to East Germany to be part the radio complex that broadcast to other countries. The China volunteer went with his young wife and child. Then the Cultural Revolution struck. He was all right for a time until he was ordered to stay in his hotel, under house arrest. That meant two years of restrictions.

When he got home to London he didn't complain. He could have earned money telling his story in the media but never did. He thereafter supported China until his death last year. In the meantime, he

had founded two radical weekly papers for Camden and Islington, with a third covering the West-end of London.

Now the old communist movement is no more, with the Left being squeezed out of the Labour Party and, in that vacuum, without a proper Parliamentary Opposition, the opening is there for the neo-liberal 'Woke' crowds to disrupt normal life with their growing unattainable demands, ranging from the use of oil to sexual identity politics—with the resulting hardening of racial ghettos in both living space and thinking.

**Wilson John Haire** (21.4.23)

### THE COLONIAL MINDSET

Oh dear, I wish I could remember who said it but it had to do with someone killing 25 Taliban from a helicopter gunship, or was it a scam. US soldier Manning reported such a hit and was sent to the torture of a silent cell. The 25 killer was cleaning the world of those his ilk had created, the armed churl, and who would eventually send them to hell. Don't kill Saddam and then complain about ISIS. Don't oppress the NI Catholic and not expect payback. Don't arm Ukraine and moan about the economy wrecked. Don't taunt China and then call it their crisis. Don't make the human race dispensable. Don't...

*But you will, you who are reprehensible.*

**Wilson John Haire**

## More On The *Moylan Play* !

Michael Patric as Seán Moylan at Cork Arts Theatre.

He shone in a memorable performance in *An Cailín Ciúin*, the little Irish movie that made it all the way to the Oscars. Now actor Michael Patric is bringing us a very different role - that of real-life revolutionary Seán Moylan - in a new one-man show.

The Newmarket actor is telling the extraordinary story of Moylan, a senior officer of the Irish Republican Army who headed the Newmarket division following the Easter Rising, before taking part in both the War of Independence and the Irish Civil War. He would later become a prominent Fianna Fáil politician.

"I was aware that he was a revolutionary and then a politician," says Patric of first exploring the Irishman's story. "I was looking at doing something on him and I wanted to do something about somebody local, because we've a beautiful new venue in Newmarket [Cultúrlann, where the play was recently staged]. I started reading about him, and I thought he was fascinating.

"Sheila O'Sullivan, who's a local historian, brought it back to me. When that happens I just take it as a sign and I looked into it more."

Based around Moylan's reports to the Bureau of Military History, Patric spent months researching and writing the one-man show, taking audiences through the dramatic events of the period.

"He's a fascinating man. He was charismatic, wishing and sensitive. But at the same time, he was no nonsense and intolerant of anything that got in the way of his objective or the movement's objectives.

"He was a carpenter but he was self-educated, he made sure that he was extremely well read. He taught himself to speak Irish, obviously, at the time that Irish was not taught in the schools in this country. And he made sure that he was fluent in Irish, so he went to the Gaeltacht as much as he could and upskilled his Irish as often as he could. All this while running a war from the saddle of a bicycle."

Moylan, the actor says, found the reports a rich source for the play. They were submitted when he was in his sixties and Patric spent eight months researching them and cross-referencing them with other accounts of similar events. As an actor, he adds, he felt an even deeper sense of responsibility in depicting somebody who has lived.

"It's an in depth account of the War of Independence," he says of the reports. "He was supposed to do a similar thing for the Civil War, but didn't and I would imagine that's because it was too painful. Maybe life just got in the way and he didn't have time. I can't be sure, but I suspect it's the former.

"He has a child who's still alive. A lot of people I know in this area are related to him - not just him but to all the other members of that battalion and brigade.

"You want to be respectful and pay tribute to the dead but also not to offend the living and it's a fine balance.

"People sacrificed enormously so that we could end up here and so that we could, for instance, have an Irish-language film at the Oscars and the BAFTAS this year."

(Irish Examiner, 28 March 2023)



**Cork actor Michael Patric on his new role as Seán Moylan**  
**The Newmarket actor tells Esther McCarthy of *The Examiner* (28.3.23)**  
**about his stage show on the War of Independence here**

## Further Comments On Professor Kenny's Books On The 'Treaty'

"The Chairmen of the two delegations, Griffith and Lloyd George, had a particular burden to carry. They were there to make a deal for their people—to avoid further deaths, if reasonably possible. No deal is done without some compromise. The British brought things to a head with their ultimatum on the night of 5-6 December, but the Irish for their part had also held out the threat of a renewed War of Independence" (Midnight In London, p12).

### ULTIMATUM

Lloyd George was not acting for a people: he was acting for a State, which was the most powerful State in the world. In 1921 Britain was the world Superpower. It had defeated, and broken up the German, Austrian and Turkish Empires, and the Russian Empire had destroyed itself by joining Britain in War against Germany, Austria and Turkey for the purpose of gaining Istanbul. The French Empire, which had borne the main cost of fighting the War, had survived, but Britain had decisively set limits to its influence during the Peace Settlement at Versailles.

The United States, which in 1918 had won the War for Britain, had withdrawn from European affairs, leaving the British to make what it would of the rest of the world.

This was the burden that poor Lloyd George had to carry. Something close to world conquest had just been achieved by the British State. Innumerable peoples here and there all over the world were subject to his will. His task was to establish an orderly system of dominance over them. Peoples meant nothing to him, except as subjects. He invented peoples—the Czechoslovak people and the Yugoslav people—and set them up in nation-states, which they were unable to govern because they were not nations.

He was a dynamo of world-creating will-power. A Yale Professor quotes him as saying—

"The whole state of society is more or less molten and you can stamp upon that molten mass almost anything as long as you do it with determination" (*Contesting Democracy* by J.W. Miller, Yale 2011).

In other words, he was in a condition of megalomania. In his physical presence he exuded megalomania and the Irish delegates did something under its influence which they would not have done otherwise. They signed a document for him without questioning it too closely, even though they were under instruction from their Government not to sign anything without its authority. By that act they undermined their Government and involved themselves in a tangle from which they could only escape, seven months later, by acting for the British Government in a 'Civil War' against their colleagues from the War of Independence.

Was the megalomaniac bluffing on December 5th?

"The Irish did not know if the ultimatum was real or a bluff. But their two senior colleagues... believed that they had already achieved enough to sign the agreement rather than risk war" (p10).

The megalomaniac was not put to the test. He was not required to show that he was omnipotent rather than deluded. He had his way with the Irish in 1921, but the following year the Turkish anti-Treatyites repudiated the Treaty Britain had imposed on the Sultan, Lloyd George called on the Empire to come and enforce the Treaty on the Turks, and the Empire—remembering its engagement with the Turks at Gallipoli seven years earlier—did not respond. The pedestrian Tories in the War Coalition then removed the Liberal Imperialist megalomaniac from the Prime Ministership, consigning him to the sidelines for the rest of his long life.

Lloyd George broke under the burden he was carrying, a burden which had sought avidly.

The Ultimatum which he issued on 5th December 1921 might well have been what would have broken him, if he had been required to put it into effect. It was entirely unreasonable. It was that the Delegates must sign the document that very night without consulting their Government.

It was a sheer gamble on his part. Some of his closest associates did not expect it to succeed.

If Griffith and Collins had just said they would put the matter urgently to their Government, he would have failed. Could he have launched a War just because the delegates insisted on putting the matter to their Government? If not, his position would have been weakened.

But the gamble came off. It was a gamble based on character assessment. And it bears out what John O'Leary, the Fenian said:

"The English do not hate the Irish: they just despise them.

### DIVISIONS

"When the seven ministers of the Dail Cabinet met in Dublin on 8 December to discuss the signed agreement... W.T. Cosgrave voted with Griffith, Collins and Barton to recommend the proposed Treaty to the Dail, notwithstanding any reservations that the four men had. De Valera sided with the more militant Cathal Brugha and Austin Stack against doing so" (p124).

The "*signed agreement*" was something that the delegates had been under Government instruction not to bring back from London.

Their instructions were to see how far they could get the British Government to go to meet Irish requirements and then to bring what they considered to be the final British position back to the Government, without signing it, and leave it to the Government to decide what to do about it.

Griffith, Collins and Barton had been present at the previous Government meeting five days earlier, on December third. They had then given no hint that they contemplated signing a British document on their own authority as Plenipotentiaries, and claiming that the Dail had authorised them to do so.

Griffith had said at that meeting that he thought the British would make no further concession, and that he was satisfied with the British offer as it stood, but that he would not sign without Government authority. Collins is not recorded as having said anything one way or the other. Barton did not think the British concession was sufficient.

All agreed to return to London for a final attempt to get the British to meet the Irish requirements.

Griffith agreed that, although he agreed with the British offer as it stood, signing it would split the country. He undertook to go back to London and try to get better

terms, but to sign nothing in London. He did not challenge the general assumption that the delegates, even though called Plenipotentiaries, were under Government instruction, and were not themselves authorised to make an agreement with Britain on behalf of the Irish State.

The delegates left for London late on the evening of 3rd December 1921. Some of them returned on the evening of December 6th bearing a signed document with the word "*Treaty*" written on it.

News of what they had done had come before them in the London papers.

Griffith said he would have liked to bring back the document to his Government for decision on whether to sign it, and that he had tried to do so, but the British Government would not let him. It threatened an immediate resumption of the War if the Plenipotentiaries tried to take the document back to Dublin for consultation.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY!

Professor Kenny understates what Cosgrave did on December 8th. He did not merely join the Plenipotentiaries in recommending the 'Treaty' to the Dail: he prevented the Government from holding the Plenipotentiaries to account for signing a deal with Britain—not only without Government authority, but against Government instructions.

Cosgrave disabled the Government by joining the Plenipotentiaries against it. He enabled the Plenipotentiaries to continue sitting as Cabinet members, as if they had not gone rogue and usurped Government authority by signing a deal with Britain under which they undertook to set up an alternative Government under British authority.

If the War fought in response to a second British ultimatum seven months later has any ground for being called a civil war, it is because it followed from a coup d'etat, engaged in by Griffith and Collins on December 6th and reinforced by Cosgrave on December 8th.

Collins is reported as having said to his friend, Lord Birkenhead, when signing the 'Treaty', that he was probably signing his death warrant. What reason could he have had for making that remark if it was clear in his mind that he was acting in accordance with a Plenipotentiary power given to him by the Dail to make a deal with Britain? Who was going to execute, or assassinate, him for carrying out his Constitutional duty?

When making that remark he must have felt that he was engaging in a very risky business. And so he was, if he was acting against the authority of the Government that appointed him by collaborating with the enemy to replace a Dail Government with a system of government based on the British 1920 Act, which the Dail had rejected.

Five months earlier the newly-elected Second Dail was able to meet freely under Truce conditions. It set about giving an orderly Constitutional structure to what it had been doing for two years under the Terror.

#### THE PRESIDENCY

De Valera had been called President since the middle of 1919, without any clear description of what that meant. Some said it meant Presidency of the Dail, or the Ministry, but not of the Republic. That distinction is not at all clear. The state was a republic, in that it consisted of an elected Parliament and Government which recognised no higher power of State above them.

There was of course the President of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood conspiracy, established in 1859. It might be that the distinction between the Presidency of the Dail and that of the Republic was made with the IRB conspiracy in mind, but the IRB had no acknowledged place in the political system of the Dail.

De Valera told the Second Dail that he would accept nomination for re-election as President only on the condition that he would be head of the Government with the powers normally held by the head of a Government, and—on the issue of Ulster and the Crown—he would have the authority to exercise his judgment on what was compatible with the Declaration of Independence and what was not. And, beyond that, he would, as President, be beyond party politics and would act as symbol of the Republic.

And, on these terms, he was supported for re-election by those who, five months later, not only brought down his Government by making an agreement with Britain to set up a Government on British authority in place of it, but denied that there had ever been a governed Republic.

De Valera acted as head of the Government of the state from his re-election in August until 8th December 1921.

He exchanged letters with Lloyd George and had meetings with him, and called his bluster, and set the scene for negotiations. Collins had wanted to go with him to

those meetings but Dev insisted that, as the notorious leader of the "murder gang", Collins should stay out of reach at home. He took with him Collins' close personal friend, and collaborator in re-launching the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1917, Harry Boland.

Having set up the negotiations, De Valera appointed five negotiators. He insisted that Collins must be one of them, though Collins wanted to stay at home. There were obvious reasons for this. Collins's reputation was that of the all-out Republican. In an interview with an American newspaper correspondent, which was given worldwide publicity, he had dismissed the need for compromise, saying that the effort required to get Dominion Status would also get the Republic. And he had rejected De Valera's suggestion that arrangements such as America had with Cuba might be made to meet British security concerns over Ireland. It was therefore necessary that Collins should be made to discover for himself whether things were as he had represented them.

De Valera had, in August 1921, given the 2nd Dail a severely realistic account of how things stood. He suggested that, in order to gain a peaceful settlement with Britain, compromise would be necessary, and demanded that it should be left to him as head of government to judge how far compromise could go without undermining Independence.

It was put to him, when the delegates were being chosen, that he should head the delegation. He insisted that, as Head of Government, he should stay at home and conduct the State, which needed to be prepared for a possible breakdown in negotiations, and to ensure that the Delegates, under the authority of the Government in Dublin, should make no rash decisions when they came under the influence of grandees of the Empire in London.

These careful arrangements proved to be a house of cards, which fell at a touch—Collins's touch, reinforced by Cosgrave's.

Should De Valera have foreseen that Collins was liable to go rogue and pull the house down? And for which reason would he go rogue: resentment or ambition?

Was Dev negligent in not having set up an espionage system of surveillance over his colleagues—as Collins had done?

Florence O'Donoghue, the only impartial insider who has tried to give an account of it all, says that Collins used

the IRB network to compile dossiers on everyone, friend and enemy.

That may have been a precaution for the head of a conspiracy to take in a volatile political situation in which an unexpected turn of events could at any moment redefine friend and foe. The organiser of a conspiracy within a broadly-based political movement must be prepared for every eventuality.

In this instance the conspiracy had not developed within the movement. It was prior to the movement. During the sixty years of its existence, movements had come and gone, leaving the Conspiracy itself as the constant element. It gave assistance to the various movements, while always retaining its own sense of destiny. Movements were characterised by spontaneity, subject to ebb and flow, potentially anarchic, but the Conspiracy endured.

#### CREATOR AND CREATURE

The movement within which they acted in 1921 was the most ambitious yet. It imagined itself to have become a State, stabilised by a constitutional structure. But the conspiracy knew the part it had played in launching that movement in 1917-18, by helping to remake Griffith's small Sinn Fein propaganda organisation (whose vision was of a restoration of the (British) Colonial "*Kingdom of Ireland*" constitution of 1782) into a nation-wide Republican Party.

The IRB was a creator of the movement which had overwhelmed the Home Rule Party in the General Election of 1918, and had asserted itself as a State in January 1919—and therefore it could not subordinate itself in fact to its creation.

On 5th December 1921 the IRB acted in defiance of its creature, which had taken itself too much in earnest as a sovereign Government. That is to say, Collins did. Collins decided to make an agreement with the British Government to set up a Provisional Government in Southern Ireland under British authority, displacing the Republican Government, which his followers immediately set about dismissing as a fiction. (Professor Kenny describes it as having had a merely 'notional' existence.

Collins knew that, by making his deal with Lloyd George, he was breaking up the system of government established in January 1919. It is not imaginable that he might not have known. His idea for mastering the disorder resulting from his action was the setting up of a Committee of Public Safety—an emergency system

of authority which would have displaced the Constitution.

It is fairly obvious that he looked on the Constitution as a piece of make-believe—a foible of De Valera's, if not a Machiavelian ploy by De Valera. But, when support was expressed for De Valera's insistence that there was a Constitutional way of dealing with the matter that had been raised, he did not persist with his idea of a Committee of Public Safety. However, in carrying through the Treaty within the Constitutional procedures of the Republic, he and his Party—because it was a Party from the start—ridiculed the notion that it was, or had ever been, a Republic.

Pierce Beaslai, in particular, kept up a refrain of disparaging remarks, throughout the Treaty Debates, about the illusory Republic that De Valera was asking them to reject the 'Treaty' for. The anti-Treatyites, he said, had lost themselves in a forest of words which were not the names of real things. And this was the theme of the biography of Collins which he published in 1926.

#### THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

The difficulty with this view of things was that the Anti-Treatyites could quote the Treatyites of December as having been ardent Republicans in the Election campaign that returned the Second Dail in May 1921. Beaslai, in the biography, dealt with his difficulty by saying that the election campaign had been conducted as a gesture of defiance with the purpose of getting the British to make a better offer. The Deputies returned at that Election were therefore entirely unsuitable for dealing with the much better offer that Britain had made.

Griffith had said much the same thing in the debates: the election campaign had been a kind of ruse, it had worked, but it left them with a Dail which, although only elected over six months ago, had ceased to be representative of "the will of the people" in the new situation brought about by the 'Treaty' offer. A Dail rejection of the 'Treaty', based on policies that the people had voted for six months previously, would be a usurpation of the will of the people!

Deputies who were inclined to vote against the Treaty would be acting undemocratically if they did so without fresh authority from their constituents.

This led to a subsidiary debate on the status of Parliamentary representatives. The Republicans held to the position defined by Edmund Burke in the work-

ing out of the representative system in the late 18th century, while the Treatyites insisted that TDs were not entitled to use their own judgment in these matters, as they were only day-to-day agents of their constituents.

There was also some discussion on the associated subject of "*the will of the people*": Griffith claimed to know that the will of the people was in favour of the Treaty to the extent of 95%. Mandates given for independence in May 1921, before the signing of the Treaty, were therefore no longer valid. He appeared to have an idealistic notion of the will of the people as something which formed itself spontaneously, which it was the business of leaders to follow or reflect. It was the view of a propagandist.

De Valera's view was closer to that of Edmund Burke, who had shaped the development of representative government. It was a matter of government with the consent of the governed, rather than government driven by the active will of the governed. Public opinion did not arise independently of political leadership—at least not in any politically functional form.

The will of the people would not have been what it was in 1921 if a Republican political party had not been formed in 1917 by survivors of the Insurrection, and contested the issue electorally with the Home Rule Party in 1918, and demonstrated a will to establish independent government in 1919 and defend it by whatever means were necessary.

The Republicans would have held the electorate to what it had voted for in May 1921. This would have required Britain to recognise the essential independence of Ireland as asserted in the Declaration of Independence made by the First Dail, and confirmed by the Second Dail. In De Valera's judgment the Republic might, without cancelling its independence, go as far as joining the Commonwealth of Nations development of the Empire and recognising the Crown as head of the association of States. Accepting the Crown as head of the Irish State would be a repudiation of the Declaration of Independence.

#### LLOYD GEORGEISM

If Britain refused to come to terms with Irish statehood while the Irish insisted on it, then the British could of course make war on the Irish with a view to subjugating them again. But what Britain could not do was resume the police action it had launched in 1919. It had been negotiating with representatives of the

Irish for four months, recognising them as representatives. It had not recognised de jure the Government formed by these representatives in Ireland, but it had dealt with it de facto.

Lloyd George could not have slipped back into 'the murder gang' rhetoric. He would have had to declare war on people with whom he had been negotiating, with the Governments of the Commonwealth taking a close interest in the matter.

His exceptional position in British political life was becoming increasingly brittle. He was maintaining himself in power by sheer virtuosity from day to day. He was a Prime Minister without a Party. He had come to power by forming an alliance with the Unionist Party against his own Party Leader, Asquith, and had by his action damaged the Liberal Party beyond possibility of repair.

As War Leader for the Unionists, he had become the closest thing to a dictator since Cromwell. His support base in Parliament was the Unionist Party on which he had preached class war in 1910. They allowed him to form a very small War Cabinet (which included Arthur Henderson, who was forming Labour into a functional Parliamentary Party) to conduct the War.

When the War ended he held an immediate election before things could settle down. The Unionists agreed to fight it with him as a Coalition of the Men who had Won the War, but Henderson, the Labour leader, had opted out. The election destroyed the Liberal Party, as well as its Home Rule allies, and the Labour Party became the second Party, the official Opposition.

The Unionists gave Lloyd George his head for a while. He had extraordinary gifts, both of demagoguery and will-power, which were useful in the post-War chaos of the world. But what future was there for him in British politics as a Great Man without a party? British political culture, which is a durable force, has no knowledge of such a thing. As Erik Lindler put it: "*How limp and peevish is the mind that cannot find a party*" (*Crisis In Heaven*).

There was talk of founding a *Lloyd George Party*, but it came to nothing. The inclination in British political life was for a return to party-politics, rather than the adoption of fascist politics.

Lloyd George continued in Office for about eight months after he got his Provisional Government established in opposition to the Dail Government in January 1922.

He did not fall until he had obliged his Treaty Government to make War on the IRA which had held to its allegiance to the Republic.

He fell because the Turks resisted the Treaty he had imposed on them. He called on the Empire to rally to the cause of compelling the Turks to submit to this Treaty. Only New Zealand responded.

The backbenches of the Unionist Party thereupon decided that they had had enough of their exotic Great Man. The War Coalition was brought down on a vote of confidence. The routine of party-politics resumed, but without its pre-War vigour. The 'second-raters' took Office—"second eleven", as Churchill put it. The purposeful government required by the expanded Empire could not be maintained.

Lloyd George's final achievement was the 'Irish Civil War', which was raging as the Free State, having served its apprenticeship, was installed in December 1922.

Griffith and Collins, once they decided, under his influence, to set up a Provisional Government against the Dail Government, were putty in his hands. One might say, "*Father forgive them*", for they certainly did not know what they were doing.

After a couple of weeks of debates they carried a motion in favour of the 'Treaty' in the Dail. The Personality Cult of Collins was crucial in getting the small majority of seven, along with the promises he made that he only wanted the Treaty in order to get an Army with which to break it.

#### THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT

De Valera, having been defeated in Parliament on a basic issue, resigned, and his Government fell with him. The Treatyites then did not seem to know what to do next. He had to explain to them that they had brought down his Government, and it was their business to elect another President who would form another Government.

(He had in August 1921 envisaged the possibility of a split into parties occurring if a settlement was made with Britain, and had set out the procedure for dealing with it, but the Treatyites seem to have forgotten, or not to have been listening.)

He was told that there was no need for him to resign just because he had lost a Vote of Confidence. He insisted that it was the business of the majority to govern.

"President de Valera: In view of the vote that was taken here on Saturday and which I had definitely to oppose as one that was tending to subvert the Republic which I was elected to my present position to maintain... I could no longer continue

in my present office... I therefore wish to place my resignation in the hands of the Assembly...

"The Speaker: In that case is it your intention to proceed with the business?"

"President de Valera: No! I think the State cannot get on without definitely having somebody to deal with it.

"Mr. M. Collins: In view of that, I suggest that my previous suggestion about forming a Committee would be put. My belief about the thing is this: that no one here in this assembly or in Ireland wants to be put in the position of opposing President de Valera. Well, the practical step in my estimation is to form a Committee, if necessary on both sides for some kind of public safety... We are faced with the problems of taking Ireland over from the English, and they are faced with the problem of handing Ireland over to us, and the difficulties on both sides will be pretty big... My suggestion means that we form a Committee... for the preservation of the public peace; and that on our side we form a Committee to arrange the details and to do all the dirty work—all the difficult work that has to be done...

"President de Valera: As far as I am concerned I think we will have to proceed constitutionally in this matter. I have tendered my resignation and I cannot, in any way, take divided responsibility. You have got here a sovereign Assembly which is the Government of the nation. This assembly must choose its executive according to its constitution and go ahead.

"Sean MacEntee: I altogether fail to see how this House could assent to the suggestion of the Minister of Finance [Collins]. The formation of such a Committee and the participation in it of those of us who opposed the Treaty would mean that we... have become willing to join in the subversion of the Republic for which we stand (hear, hear). It is absolutely and utterly unconstitutional to do what the Minister of Finance has suggested, for those who voted for this Treaty declare that they are going to pull down with their own hands the Republic they set up...

"Mr. Griffith: This body, a representative body of Irishmen, on Saturday evening approved of the Treaty. In doing so they expressed the will of the people. That approval is going to stand... President de Valera said... there was a constitutional way of settling this question of the Treaty. It has been constitutionally settled; and now nothing is going to prevent that vote from being carried out and the people from having their will expressed..." (Dáil Éireann debate, 9th January 1922, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1922-01-09/2/>).

So why was Griffith not nominated for the Presidency when De Valera resigned? Presumably because the President would have to swear to uphold the Republic, and Griffith by signing the Treaty had committed himself to destroy the Republic, and

he was reluctant to perjure himself.

For him, the thing was "the will of the people", and "the will of the people" was a grand metaphysical abstraction, and he could not bend his mind down to the pettifogging detail of political and Constitutional affairs.

The vote on the 'Treaty' was not a ratifying vote because the Dail was not the body with which the British Government undertook to make a Treaty. It was a motion expressing an opinion, and it was carried by a small, insecure majority. It was of no legislative or Constitutional effect. It did not, as some Deputies seemed to have thought, oblige the existing Dail Government to implement it. De Valera took it to be a vote of No Confidence in his Government and resigned, but many Deputies protested that they had not even meant that much by voting for it.

The Dail might, of course, have made itself the ratifying body for the proposed Treaty by repealing its Declaration of Independence and revoking its rejection of the British 1920 Act, and calling on the Viceroy to come and recognise it as the Parliament of Southern Ireland, and appointing a Provisional Government under Crown authority.

The Treaty Party did none of these things in the course of the debate following De Valera's resignation. I assume it did not trust itself to do things straightforwardly. It proceeded by devious or confused routes, by means of chicanery and self-deception.

As the Treaty Party evaded the issue, Mrs. Tom Clarke proposed De Valera for re-election. He accepted re-nomination only because the party that defeated him refused to nominate a candidate. He said that, if elected, he would conduct the Government of the Republic to the best of his ability, while those who wanted to form a British Provisional Government got on with that business. For saying that, he was accused of wanting to form a minority Government—a dictatorship. His reply was: Nominate a Presidential candidate then! Nobody did.

Dev failed to be re-elected by one vote, with himself not voting. That demonstrated how insecure Griffith's "will of the people" was. In desperation Griffith agreed to be nominated to the Presidency of the Republic which he was committed to destroy; and the process of implementing the Treaty began when its supporters went elsewhere to be the Parliament of Southern Ireland and be empowered by the Viceroy as the Provisional Government headed by

Collins; while Griffith, as camouflage, conducted an increasingly powerless and irrelevant Government of the Republic. (It would not be unreasonable to regard the Provisional Government as the realisation of Collins' idea of a Committee of Public Safety.)

So that meant that, at that point, there were three Governments in existence!

Professor Kenny slides over all of this was a short sentence: "*De Valera resigned as president and Griffith was elected*".

**Brendan Clifford**

## Separatists And The West

When the Azerbaijan army defeated and surrounded Armenian military forces in Karabakh in early November 2020, it engaged with the enemy diplomatically to end the conflict and, in conjunction with the Kremlin, brought about a managed conclusion of the war. Encircled Armenian forces were allowed to withdraw and retire from the battlefield without being destroyed in their thousands. The Armenian civilians were spared the fate of the Azerbaijanis who were hunted down and killed by Armenian paramilitaries or who perished with their children fleeing across snow covered mountains in 1992-4. The main centres of Armenian population were not militarily assaulted and they were provided, through agreement, with the protection of Russian peacekeepers for a period not less than five years in which a peace process could bridge the gap between war and conflict resolution.

But, unfortunately, the Armenians, instead of engaging in a meaningful transition to peace and stability, have been in obstructionist mode for two and a half years, and have lately reverted to their "*Cry Genocide*" mode against "*the Turks*"/Azerbaijanis, as the squeeze has begun to be put on them to shift them out of their intransigence.

The *Trilateral Declaration*, signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia on 10th November 2020, contained Article 6 stipulating that—

"The Lachin Corridor (5 km wide)... will provide a connection between Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia while not passing through the territory of Shusha" and "shall remain under the control of the Russian Federation peace making forces... The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee the security of persons, vehicles and cargo moving along the Lachin Corridor in both directions."

Azerbaijan by this provision agreed to grant special entry and exit to Armenian citizens, vehicles, and cargo along an 80 km road on the territory of Azerbaijan to

its Karabakh region, at present populated exclusively by ethnic Armenians. This region had been depopulated of its entire Azerbaijani population 30 years ago in the course of the Armenian conquest. The depopulation was encouraged by the Khojaly massacre of February 1992, in which over 600 villagers were annihilated by Armenian forces in a day. Around 750,000 Azerbaijanis were ethnically cleansed by Armenians from the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and surrounding areas, amounting to 18 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory, which was occupied for nearly three decades.

As the road temporarily remains under the control of a Russian peacekeeping force, Azerbaijan's security apparatus, including customs, do not check persons and cargo. The Russian peacekeeping force exercise this function on behalf of Azerbaijan.

For about a year now tensions have been building up with Azerbaijan accusing Armenia of abusing the corridor's "*civilian and humanitarian*" purpose for military use, in transporting weapons, including landmines, as well as the products of illegal mining activities in Karabakh, in contradiction to provisions of the Trilateral Declaration.

It should be understood that the Lachin road is not an extra-territorial corridor because neither Armenia nor Russia have any rights over the route across Azerbaijan's territory. The temporary visa-free conditions of travel do not grant Armenia the right to transport military personnel or supplies to remaining army units in Karabakh.

Article 4 of the *Trilateral Declaration* also stipulated that the "*withdrawal of Armenian troops*" must take place from the territory of Azerbaijan. However, this has not been implemented by Yerevan. The pretence of an "*Artsakh*" pseudo-state and "*Artsakh Defense Army*" has been maintained. The *International Crisis*

*Group* has estimated that there are still 12,000 Armenian soldiers in Karabakh, on Azerbaijan's territory.

This situation prompted Azerbaijani environmentalists into starting protests close to the Russia-controlled checkpoint on the road to Stepanakert/Khankendi, from 12th December, 2022, against illegal mining operations in Karabakh. In response the Russian peacekeeping forces stopped the use of the corridor, except by Russian vehicles for supplies and for other humanitarian purposes.

The environmental protesters concluded an agreement with the Russian peacekeepers' command in early December 2022, which included a provision to inspect the environmental conditions at the two mineral deposit sites, monitor various areas and records, along with assessing potential risks and threats to the environment, including water sources. However, the planned initial inspection and monitoring did not take place after it was prevented by Karabakh Armenians who blocked the way to the mineral deposits. There has been no reference in the West to this significant event.

The protest camp has been successful in deterring the import of weapons and export of Azerbaijan's natural resources in the absence of formal customs barriers and checking. In response to the protests on the Lachin Road, and the demand to inspect the mines, the authorities in Stepanakert decided to shut them down, depriving itself of the tax revenues they had received from the illegal mining. Hundreds of miners were laid off without income and the "Artsakh government" were forced into announcing that it would allow international inspectors to come and inspect the mines. It is calculated by Armenian economists that around 20 per cent of the region's GDP has disappeared to the tune of 1.9 million US Dollars/day.

The Lachin road protest has been termed by Armenians as a "blockade" or "siege" and even an attempted "Genocide". They have received some support both in the European Parliament and from a group of US Congressmen in their campaign.

It would be unreasonable to expect Azerbaijan, or any country in the world, to tolerate the use of its territory by a foreign state for illicit mineral exploitations and cross-border weapons trafficking.

The Armenians say that this is not a normal environmental protest, as these kinds of things do not take place in Azer-

baijan. They are, of course, right in this. The environmental protest is one aspect of a wider State-directed campaign which is now taking place to put the squeeze on Armenia, to induce it to accept the reality of defeat and recognise that Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, *de jure* and *de facto*. This process is aimed at emphasising the *de facto* element of Azerbaijan's control to Yerevan.

One example of this, in the past few weeks, is that Azerbaijan has begun to exercise its right as a sovereign state to regulate movement and refuse entry to individual Armenians to Karabakh. Movement out of Karabakh is unrestricted.

This new policy is not in violation of the 2020 *Trilateral Declaration*. Azerbaijan has only signed up to "*guarantee the security of persons, vehicles and cargo moving along the Lachin Corridor in both directions*". It permits movement of its own citizens to move across and within its internationally-recognised borders at its own discretion. That is known as state sovereignty—a universal and basic concept of the nation.

The Karabakh Armenians are now learning that they are citizens of the state of Azerbaijan, whether they like it or not. And perhaps, if they do not recognise that reality, and would prefer to be purely Armenian, the road is open to them to leave for Armenia.

In February this year the Armenian Government revealed, in a case against the Azerbaijan Government at the International Court of Justice, that it had lost 215 sq. km of its territory to Azerbaijan since the conclusion of the 2020 war. It showed a map detailing the losses from May 2021 to February 2023.

These losses have come from sudden limited thrusts by the Azerbaijani army into areas of strategic value within Armenia—not the Armenian inhabited area of Karabakh in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has been very clever in this. The border between Armenia and Azerbaijan is not properly delineated at present. Soviet maps, the agreed basis for settlement between the three parties to the *Trilateral Declaration*, are inconsistent in some areas and there are "grey zones" that are now being targeted by Baku. There was an agreement to officially demarcate the border as part of the *Trilateral Declaration* but, because Armenia has not played ball in other aspects of the agreement, Azerbaijan is now exploiting the ambiguity to pressurise Yerevan in an area very dear to Armenian hearts—territory.

On 11th April at least seven soldiers were killed on both sides in the latest fracas over territory along the border near the Lachin corridor's new road linking Armenia to Karabakh.

Armenia is concerned at the lack of sympathy, let alone action, it is getting from its CSTO ally, Russia. The Kremlin is maintaining a resolute neutrality between Armenia and Azerbaijan in these disputes and conflicts. The suspicion in Armenia is that Russia is content to see Armenia feel the pressure in order for it to be more malleable. That is not an unreasonable proposition.

It is the Armenians who are attempting to draw in the West to the South Caucasus, a region which Russia sees as its geopolitical backyard, to disrupt an agreement and peace process which the Kremlin is guarantor of. Moscow is particularly concerned with the role of European Union monitors, invited by Armenia onto its territory (but refused by Baku), who are described as their "*eyes on the ground*". Armenia's plans to recognise the International Criminal Court, which has issued warrants for the arrest of the Russian President, along with its participation in US military operations this year, have raised hackles in the Kremlin.

It should be noted that it is normal politics for victors to put the squeeze on the vanquished in the aftermath of war to order to secure favourable treaties and settlements.

Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Georgians should be familiar with the fascinating Claude Stokes, officer in the British Indian Army, with General Dunsterville to Baku, British representative in the city and finally High Commissioner for Transcaucasia. Claude Stokes had a younger sister, Gwendolyn, who married Sir Eric Geddes, in November 1900.

Geddes lived a colourful life and was one of Lloyd George's "men of push and go", who the British Prime Minister drafted into his wartime administration after 1916 to make the war effort more efficient. Geddes helped reorganise the British Expeditionary Force in France, using his business expertise, and installed the Atlantic convoy system that saved Britain from the U-Boat threat. Sir Eric was also famous for his promise to "squeeze the German lemon until the pips squeak", which is often attributed to Lloyd George.

It was the Royal Navy which was to "*squeeze the German lemon until the pips squeak*".

The Karabakh War in 2020 concluded with an Armistice, rather than a total vic-



tory over Armenia. Azerbaijan's tanks did not reach Khankendi/Stepanakert to dictate terms to a defeated nation, as happened with the Allies in 1945 in Berlin. The situation in 2020 was more similar to November 1918, when Germany decided to give up resistance without suffering complete defeat to the Allies.

In the eight months after the Germans signed the Armistice, they were subjected to a naval blockade by the Royal Navy, in order to produce an acquiescence to defeat and the terms of the Versailles Treaty. A.C. Bell, in his official history of the Blockade for the British Admiralty, estimated that the Blockade resulted in the deaths of 250,000 German civilians during this period, after the War had officially concluded.

Armenia has a long way to go before it can talk of "blockade" and "Genocide". It has got off very lightly so far, considering what it did to Karabakh and surrounding territories from 1992 to 2020.

On 23rd April, Azerbaijan established an official customs post monitoring the Lackin/Khankendi (Stepanakert) Road. At the time of writing it is not clear whether customs duties will be imposed on goods moving into Karabakh. However, illicit goods will be prevented from crossing the border into Azerbaijan by the legitimate State authorities.

Elsewhere in the World the West provides massive support for a State to bomb its separatist population into submission, whilst casually issuing criticism against Azerbaijan for applying the normal methods that a State does to enforce its authority on its national territory.

The installation of the border post is the strongest indication yet that Azerbaijan is imposing its sovereignty upon the Armenian separatists, despite what the EU or Washington might want to say about it.

**Pat Walsh**

### **Whole world hates America, says Turkish Interior Minister Suleiman Soylu**

The world has no lost love for America, and the West's efforts to impose its culture and values on the planet are doomed to fail because its hegemony no longer exists, Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu has said. He pointed out:

... "But one of the greatest dangers in the world is cultural terrorism, and we are facing cultural terrorism. We are facing a cultural terrorism that's aimed at destroying the family structure, morality...the civilizations of nations, their history, our religion, our values, traditions, customs, what our mothers and fathers taught us," Sputnik quoted him as saying.

As for Europe, Soyula said:

"there is no such thing as Europe" today. "Donotoverthinkit. Americaexists. Europe is the train in the US convoy. It does not have any special features." <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/199717/Whole-world-hates-America-Turkish-interior-minister-says>

## **Details of 2023 Roger Casement Summer School**

**Colin Harvey**  
**Senator Emer Currie**

*Shaping a New and United Ireland*  
Session 1,  
2023 Roger Casement Summer School

**11 am Friday 5 May,**  
**Lexicon Library, Dún Laoghaire**  
Speakers: **Colin Harvey,**  
**Senator Emer Currie**  
Chair: **Richard Boyd Barrett TD**

Professor Colin Harvey is a member of the management board of *Ireland's Future* which advocates for, and promotes, debate and discussion about Ireland's future, including the viability of removing the Border for good. The seriousness behind the group was demonstrated last October at a conference in Dublin's 3Arena, attended by upwards of 5,000 people. Colin Harvey is offering a new approach to a subject that has often seemed intractable. Richard Boyd Barrett will respond to the lecture.

**Niamh Bhreathnach**  
*The Legacy and Achievements of  
Niamh Bhreathnach*  
Session 2,  
2023 Roger Casement Summer School

**2 pm Friday 5 May,**  
**Lexicon Library, Dún Laoghaire**

Speakers: **Tom Ferris, John Walshe**  
Chair: **Mary Mitchell O'Connor**

Niamh Bhreathnach was the first Labour TD to serve as Minister for Education, holding that office from January 1993 until June 1997. At different times between 1991 and 2014 she represented Blackrock as a member of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Council, and the Dáil constituency of Dún Laoghaire. In this session of the Summer School, which will be a remembrance as well as a discussion, her achievements as Education Minister will be discussed by her husband, Tom Ferris, and the much-respected education correspondent, John Walshe.

**Wannette Tuinstra**  
**Angus Mitchell**

**Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
and Dismantling Colonial Archives**  
Session 3,  
2023 Roger Casement Summer School

**4 pm Friday 5 May,**  
**Lexicon Library, Dún Laoghaire**  
Speakers: **Wannette Tuinstra,**  
**Angus Mitchell**  
Chair: **Senator Lynn Boylan**

Documentary: *Secrets from Putumayo*  
*directed by Aurélio Michiles*

The talks in this session will preface a screening of *Secrets from Putumayo*, a documentary about Casement's investigation in the Amazon in 1910. Dr. Tuinstra will discuss sustainability and human rights relating to indigenous peoples and Dr. Mitchell will focus on the use of images from the colonial archives, based on his experience during the making of the documentary. *Secrets from Putumayo* lasts 1 hour 23 minutes and will start at approximately 5 pm.

**Caoilfhionn Ní Bheacháin**  
**Deirdre Brady**

**Pioneering Women Publishers and  
Writers**  
Session 4,  
2023 Roger Casement Summer School

**10 am Saturday 6 May,**  
**Lexicon Library, Dún Laoghaire**  
Speakers: **Caoilfhionn Ní Bheacháin,**  
**Deirdre Brady**  
Chair: **Deirdre Black**

Women publishers and women writers are the subject of the fourth session

of the School. Dr. Ní Bheacháin will talk on *Elizabeth C. Yeats and the Dun Emer Press (1902-1908)*, and Dr. Brady will discuss the *Irish Women Writers' Club (1933-1958)*. In both instances the significance of these important and neglected initiatives will be described and appraised. At some point in this session, an extract from the winning entry in the *2022 Roger Casement Essay Competition* will be read by winner Eva Elmes from Loreto Bray secondary school.

**Session 5,  
2023 Roger Casement Summer  
School  
2 pm Saturday 6 May,  
Lexicon Library, Dún Laoghaire**  
Speakers: Luke Gibbons, Philip O'Connor. Chair: Angus Mitchell

Two Talks:

1. Speaker: **Luke Gibbons** :  
*The 'Novelistic Wing of Human Rights':  
Casement, James Joyce  
and Hannah Arendt*
2. Speaker: **Philip O'Connor**  
*Was Casement Right to be  
Pro-German in 1916?*

This session covers two quite different aspects of Casement's legacy. Both focus on meaty subjects. Professor Gibbons will seek to place Casement in a wider philosophical and literary context. Dr O'Connor will delve into Casement's view of the Great War and his attitude towards Germany in 1916. Hopefully, these discussions will complement each other, but no harm if they don't.

**Michael McCaughan**  
**Snáthaid Snáithe – Roger Casement –**  
*Fragments of a Life in Story and Song*

**Session 6,  
Roger Casement Summer School**

**5 pm Saturday 6 May,  
Dún Laoghaire Lexicon**

Performer: *Michael McCaughan*  
Introduced by: *Pierrot Ngadi*

Michael McCaughan, a native of Dún Laoghaire now based in the Burren, County Clare, has lived in Mexico, Colombia, Argentina and Venezuela. He has written books about radical political movements in South America, the Corrib

Gas controversy in Mayo and his own journey to the Irish language.

For the *2023 Roger Casement Summer School* he will perform *Snáthaid Snáithe* (Needle and Thread), a portable, interac-

tive, storytelling and music performance. All the music comes from Michael's collection, thousands of LPs and singles, painstakingly and passionately gathered over 50 years.

## **Press Statement (25 April 2023)**

**2023 Roger Casement Summer School (Fri 5, Sat 6 May)**

### ***Niamh Bhreathnach Event Booked Out***

Advance bookings on Eventbrite for an event celebrating the achievements of Niamh Bhreathnach, the first Labour Party Minister for Education, are being described as 'unexpectedly high' by the organisers. The 120-seat theatre of the Lexicon Library in Dun Laoghaire, where it will take place, is already fully booked.

The event which will be a session of the *Roger Casement Summer School* on Friday 5th May, will be addressed by long standing Education Correspondent *John Walshe* and Niamh's husband, *Tom Ferris*.

Speaking of her work as Minister, John Walshe said:

"The education system is still benefitting enormously from the reforms and legislative changes that Niamh set in train during her term of office. She made a lasting impact". Tom Ferris commented: "Niamh was politically active all her life, both as a teacher and advocate for equality of opportunity in education"

Other Sessions at the Summer School will focus on topics of current interest and Casement himself.

On the Friday morning a lecture on *Shaping a New and United Ireland* by Professor Colin Harvey of the *Ireland's Future* movement will be responded to by Fine Gael Senator Emer Currie. This will be followed by an open discussion.

Two neglected initiatives by pioneers of the women's movement—the *Dun Emer Press* at Dundrum (1902-1908) and the *Irish Women Writers' Club* (1933-58) will be described and appraised on the Saturday morning.

Roger Casement's legacy will be examined in different ways.

Two topics: his work in a literary and philosophical context, and the question of his pro-German stance in 1916, will be discussed.

A documentary about his investigation of rubber slavery in the Amazon Basin in 1910, by Brazilian director Aurélio Michiles, *Secrets from Putumayo*, will also be screened together with introductory lectures.

Michael McCaughan will stage a performance entitled, *Fragments of Casement's Life in Story and Song*. And a street theatre performance, part-funded by the Brazilian Embassy, will take place at the Casement statue at 1 pm on the Saturday.

Further information: Dave Alvey 086 0572005; Angus Mitchell 087 7571802

Short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ribG-ep5uMs>

**Web:**

**<http://rogercasementsummerschool.ie/>**

**Email: [casementschool@gmail.com](mailto:casementschool@gmail.com)**

## Rental Health!

The first in a BBC series on rented accommodation (27.03.23), presented by Kirsty Lang, was a eulogy of Vienna's social housing, which was very inspiring. This is what she explained.

Vienna has had a radical housing policy going back over a century. The city authority is the largest property owner in Europe, 60% of the population live in some form of subsidised housing, and that includes the middle classes. Tenants enjoy protection against eviction and rent rises, key workers can actually afford to live in the city centre. The large availability of subsidised housing brings down rents in the private sector. It is a model for other cities in Europe to follow.

According to Maik Novotny an architect interviewed on the programme, Vienna's housing policy stemmed from the housing shortage after the First World War. Since it has its own policy as a City State, the Council was able to raise a Housing Tax in 1923 and built 63,000 homes between 1923 and 1933.

Lang asks the question: how can a conservative country have such a progressive left-wing policy?

Vienna has been run by the same party, which has afforded continuity; the city has its own department of housing research, they keep on learning and improving.

A former Deputy-Mayor of Vienna explains the law: if a developer wants to build more than 150 housing units, two-thirds of them must be subsidised housing. The developers can get out of this by negotiation, if they contribute financially to social infrastructure—such as building a school or if the proposal is very innovative—then the proportion can be reduced to 50% plus one unit.

It is profitable: the land is affordable; the city gives loans. There are numerous developers because it is profitable.

Almost every new development is subject to an architectural competition along the four criteria or four pillars of architecture/ecology/economy/social sustainability. *Social sustainability* (the phrase was coined 25 years ago) is based on avoidance of conflict, and mixing people of different income and background.

Maik Novotny concludes: Cost is not the only difference between London and Vienna. There is a different philosophy. Housing is not considered as just a commodity that can be bought and sold by those who can afford it. It is considered a human right.

By having non-profit Housing Associations and a rent cap, as compared with the Anglo-Saxon world, you avoid social conflict and you avoid ghettos, so regulated housing is to the advantage of everyone.

By comparison, the housing market is not interested in solving conflicts, because it profits from scarcity.

**Catherine Winch**

Other sources on Vienna housing:

On the new district Aspern Seestadt:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twfrEpHeLfw>

**Michael Robinson** adds:

Here is an earlier BBC programme on Vienna housing. It really is inspirational and amongst many photos of lovely classical buildings like the Opera House, there are lots of the social housing schemes! The city is vibrant because of the housing policy combined with very cheap trams.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct1czm>

**BBC Radio 4 series: Rental Health**

## REPRINT OF *Anatomy Of A Lie: Decoding Casement*

by

**Paul R. Hyde**

*Foreword: Angus Mitchell*

**(wordwellbooks.com)**

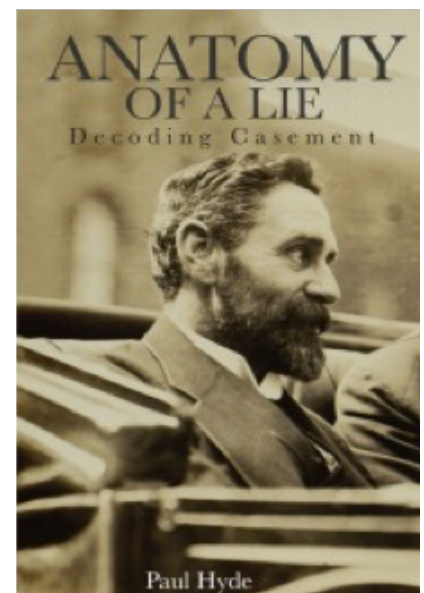
Roger Casement, executed in 1916 for his part in Ireland's Easter Rising, remains a controversial figure. His official investigations of Colonial Power on the frontier of sub-Saharan Africa and the Amazon provoked international reaction before the outbreak of war in 1914. The ex-consul's role in the Irish independence struggle resulted not only in a death sentence, but also in a planned campaign to undermine his deep critique of power and his logical evolution into an anti-imperial rebel.

For over a century, Britain's secret state has devoted much time to maintaining confusion about Casement. At the centre of his official interpretation are the notorious 'Black Diaries', documents that generated a sexual myth about the man that has purposefully masked his deeper meaning and the significance of the threat the human rights paladin posed to imperial power.

The enduring controversy over the authenticity of the 'Black Diaries' possesses all the ingredients for a Le Carré intrigue — secrecy, deception, forgery and cover-up. *Anatomy of a Lie* leads the reader into the deep archival history of this extraordinary saga. It reveals how a handful of conspirators plotted in 1914 to overthrow the rebel-traitor and how their conspiracy was necessarily continued over the next century to maintain the lie.

Based on analysis of previously unexamined documents, the official story of the 'Black Diaries' is exposed as a masterpiece of manipulation, distortion and deceit. In these pages, Casement's ghost is at last finding his voice.

**Available from Amazon, Waterstones and other major bookshops**



**"India's Dual Connectivity Projects  
In Eurasia Can  
Accelerate De-Dollarization"  
Report of article by Andrew Korybko  
(24.4.23)**

There are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the de-dollarisation of trade across Asia due to the integral role that India is poised to play in this respect via the *North-South Transport Corridor* through the Eurasian Heartland and the *Vladivostok-Chennai Maritime Corridor* across the Eurasian Rimland...

The past week saw several highly important Eurasian connectivity developments that missed the notice of most observers. A Russian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov wrapped up their visit to Delhi, during which time they explored pathways for scaling up India's exports by the whopping five times that the latter previously declared is its goal. This was followed a memorandum of understanding over transit and trade cooperation that was reached in Moscow between Russia and Iran.

At the tail end of the week, the railway companies of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan agreed to their own memorandum "to form competitive tariff rates and 'seamless' transportation of goods from [their countries] to Iran, India, the countries of the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region". This was then followed by the Chief Executive of Iran's Transport Development Fund announcing the possibility of Russian and Indian investments in his country's infrastructure.

Finally, Sunday saw the Indian Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, inaugurate a slew of projects in Chennai that he said will supercharge the *Vladivostok-Chennai Maritime Corridor* (VCMC) with Russia. This development complements the prior ones over the past week regarding the progress that was made on the *North-South Transport Corridor* (NSTC) between them, Iran, Central Asia, and at least officially, also Azerbaijan (provided that regional tensions don't preclude Baku's future role)...

India is currently the world's fifth-largest economy and on track to become its third-largest one by the end of the decade...

For a full report, see: Andrew Korybko's Newsletter on his website.

**Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times***

The *Irish Times* of today (2 March 2023) attempts to resurrect the "potato famine" lie. Why?

Will the *Irish Times* investigate why Ireland officially conceals a genocide of its own people by a foreign power?

Why did official Ireland smear Cecil Woodham-Smith for decades after her 1962 book that mentioned the Food Removal and named thirteen of the perpetrating British regiments?

Why conceal the following?

- The torrent of food arriving in England from starving Ireland?
- General Sir Edward Blakeney's command of all Food Removal forces?
- The 67 British regiments deployed into Ireland?
- The 37 militia regiments commanded by English landlords?
- Britain's Ordnance Survey of Ireland completed in 1845 and its locations by townland of each of Ireland's 1,984 grain kilns, 1,935 grain mills, 555 flour mills, 136 (grain using) breweries, 74 (ditto) distilleries, 62 threshing mills (though the flail was the usual method), 948 livestock pounds, 45 woollen mills (mutton and lamb), 43 windmills (more grain) and town markets for dairy-and poultry-products?

Why conceal the 1778 abolition of the law that, for centuries, had stripped legal personhood from all Irish persons excepting five septs, and had consequently prohibited Irish land ownership to all Irish persons excepting those septs?

Attached hereto FYI is my map of Ireland, also a representation of Queen Victoria's inaugural meeting [not reproduced]. They speak for themselves.

**Christopher Fogarty**

(author of *Ireland 1845-1850: the Perfect Holocaust, and Who Kept it "Perfect"*)



Does  
It  
Up

Stack  
?

## Solar Weather

We on earth are part of the Solar System and, as well as our own weather here on earth, we are subject to what is called Space Weather. In November 2022 the 18th European Space Weather Week took place in Zagreb, Croatia, where about four hundred scientists congregated to discuss space weather research results and to talk about the hazards of space weather for us.

There are solar winds of electro-magnetic energy which can and sometimes do affect our telecommunications, our satellite operations, electronic navigation of ships, and aircraft navigation. But these effects are hushed up by bureaucrats so that money-making can proceed as normal. “Don’t frighten the horses” is the official mantra.

There has been a more than usual solar weather activity in recent months. There have been many Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs). The latter are huge bursts of energy, which are ejected from the boiling and roiling surface of the Sun and are ejected into space for thousands of kilometres and sometimes for hundreds of thousands of kilometres. On 2nd October last there was one of the largest solar flares, called an X Class Flare.

On the 1st October 2022 a CME left the Sun and headed our way. It whipped up into a solar wind of geomagnetic activity to STORM G2 (on the NORA Geomagnetic Storm scale), which lasted for three days.

The solar winds come out from Coronal holes in the Sun’s outer mantle. STORM G2 caused some problems on Earth for telecoms and navigation, but the general public were not told: and maybe the general public does not want to know.

Scientists make up theories, based on their general scientific knowledge, as to what is inside in the Sun, but in truth nobody knows because any investigative rocket or spaceship would be melted

and burned up long before it got into the Sun.

The gravitational pull inside the Sun must be truly enormous. For example, the gravitational pull on planet Earth is six times the pull on the moon; so the gravity on the Sun, considering its size, must be thousands of times of the gravity on Earth. If a really major explosion took place on the Sun, it is possible that the momentary reduction in its gravitational pull might release planet Earth from its orbit and allow Earth to head off into space. Hopefully somebody somewhere is in control! It is one of the good reasons to believe in God—to look after us.

## Ezekiel

And mentioning God reminds me of the Holy Bible and the Book of Ezekiel. The Book of Ezekiel has been uncomfortable for theologians. What Ezekiel describes is most likely a spacecraft. He is an innocent man of the desert. He has seen or heard of wheels but that is as much technology as he, and most people of his time, knew. And so, when he has to describe an approaching and landing aircraft, he has no words to describe it several thousand years ago.

Ezekiel describes the aircraft as a creature and he knows it is not a living creature because he describes the wheels within wheels and the landing lights flashing. He says:

“I heard the noise the wings made in flight; it sounded like the roar of the sea, like the noise of a huge army...”

On top there was something that looked like a dome made of dazzling crystal.

“Above the dome there was something that looked like a throne made of sapphire and sitting on the throne was a figure that looked like a human being.”

That is a good description of a pilot’s seat and a pilot. Ezekiel is described by biblical scholars as a man of great imagination because the scholars had never seen an aeroplane nor a spacecraft and they did not know what Ezekiel was describing. Recently, however, an expert from the Space Centre in the USA said the description fits a modern spacecraft—perhaps even more modern than we know of—and that Ezekiel’s description of a man in a linen suit could be a man in protective clothing who was adjusting the nuclear fuel cells in the spacecraft.

This sounds all very mysterious even to us today. But there is not much doubt that Ezekiel was truthfully describing what he saw two thousand years ago.

However, when Ezekiel tried to pass on his message to the Israelites that Jerusalem would be destroyed unless they gave up their sinful ways, the people did not listen but they treated Ezekiel as an entertainment:

“They listen to all your words and don’t obey a single one of them.”

Jerusalem was in fact destroyed in 536 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

Later in the Book of Ezekiel, Israel and Jerusalem are built up again. Much killing and slaughter. Technical measurements of a new Temple are given in great detail. The Book of Ezekiel is one of the most technological books of the Bible. Who was the man in the spacecraft and where did he come from? Maybe Erich von Doniken has a point?

Maybe Elon Musk should read and imitate the Book of Ezekiel? Musk is depending on the brutal force of fossil fuels to lift off his massive rocket—which exploded recently in a ‘test’. But maybe there is a more subtle approach, perhaps using anti-gravity electronics to lift the craft off the ground and then use drone-like propellers to drive along in Earth’s atmosphere? And then a third sort of energy for interstellar travel?

Another consideration is weight—Ezekiel’s spacecraft description is of a very light craft. Elon Musk’s rocket was very heavy and every tonne of rocket requires a tonne of anti-gravity force to lift it off. So the spacecraft has to be made of a very strong but very light material (which perhaps we have not discovered yet), and the fuel also has to be very light, perhaps a nuclear fuel?

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## LABOUR continued

Apparently, there are moves to persuade Alan Kelly to stand for the Party in the 1924 European Elections. He was a Member of the European Parliament for the South Constituency from 2009 to 2011.

He ran in the Tipperary North Constituency in 2011 and was successful, receiving 9,559 first preference votes (19.8%) and securing the third and final seat. Ms. Phil Prendergast replaced him as MEP for the South constituency.

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“THE first essential for the success of any party, or any movement, is that it should believe it carries within its own bosom, all the material requisite to achieve its destiny. The moment any organisation ceases to believe in the sufficiency, of its own powers, the moment its membership begin to put their trust in powers not their own, in that moment that party or organisation enters on its decline”

(James Connolly, 1908).

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Readers are invited  
to send in their Trade Union news

# ORGANISED LABOUR

### A Thought For May Day!

“WORK as punishment implies a curious equation. Punishment is society’s response to a criminal act, and the sentence of “hard labor” was deemed the most severe punishment, short of death, that society could administer. Using this reasoning the vast multitudes of everyday workers all over the earth who were engaged in hard labour all the days of their lives might have asked what crime they had committed.

None asked, of course, but the presumption was clear: work is base and degrading and those who do it are equated with slaves and criminals and rightfully assigned to the lowest level of society.

It was well into this century before the working classes of the world could shake themselves loose from this evaluation and cease subscribing to their own victimisation”

(Reg Theriault,  
How To Tell When You’re

Tired—A Brief Examination Of Work, W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. New York, 1995, p.151).

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### Your Health!

SIPTU calls for investment in healthcare workers on World Health Day:—To mark World Health Day (7th April), the SIPTU Health Division has called for more investment in the working conditions of all healthcare workers to be prioritised. Union members are seeking to end the unfair system in which support workers in the public health service receive less financial supports than other healthcare colleagues when they are the victim of an assault in the workplace. SIPTU members are also seeking a replacement scheme to financially assist those are suffering with the impact of Long Covid and fair pay for workers in Section 39 agencies. (6.4.2023.)

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### More Health!!

THE worst recession in US history shaped how well people would age—before they were even born. Researchers have found that the cells of people who were conceived during the Great Depression, which lasted from 1929 to 1939 and, at its height, saw about 25% of the US workforce unemployed, show signs of accelerated ageing.

The study authors measured these changes in the cells’ epigenome—the collection of chemical markers attached to DNA that determines when, where and by how much genes are expressed in each cell. And they think the pattern of markers that they uncovered could be linked to higher rates of both chronic illness and death.

The work, published on 8th November, 2022 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, adds to a cache of studies indicating that exposure to hardship such as stress and starvation during the earliest stages of development can shape human health for decades.

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### Water Strike ?

EARLY ballot results from SIPTU members working in water services has confirmed “huge support” for strike action, the Union has said, which could result in “significant disruption” to water services if such action goes ahead in June (Irish Examiner, 21.4.2023).

The issue relates to the protection of earnings for workers opting not to transfer to Uisce Éireann, formerly Irish Water, as the body assumes direct management of all water services staff.

Under a deal reached last year, council workers currently providing water services in their areas could opt to become full and direct employees of Irish Water.

More than 3,000 workers are affected by the move.

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## LABOUR continued

A fortnight following the Conference, she was still attempting to dig herself out of her Conference Housing Address!

“We can deliver a million homes in 10 years if we stop indulging in fatalism” (*Sunday Independent*, 9.4.2023).

### HOUSING

In the days following her Conference, Ms. Bacik explained that the figure of a 100,000 would include 50,000 refurbishments. Most experts put the State’s capacity to deliver at a maximum to around 60,000 units a year. To be honest, even 60,000 would be regarded as an achievement!

But why not! Is that not what Labour is all about!

“We are in a crisis that needs bold thinking and tinkering around the edges is what Labour’s opponents to the left constantly accuse it of, so why not go all in? ... [However] nobody in the party has any illusions that Labour will be the senior partner in whatever government comes after the current one”

(*Irish Examiner*, 27.3.2023).

### HOUSING CRISIS

In November 2014, the then-Housing Minister and future Labour leader, Alan Kelly announced a €3.8bn plan to build 35,000 new social housing homes by the end of 2018. Less than two years later, Simon Coveney of Fine Gael produced an even more ambitious €5.5bn plan to provide 47,000 social housing units under his rebuilding Ireland plan. Coveney was succeeded by his FG colleague Eoghan Murphy who jettisoned these plans but produced a similar level of ambitious rhetoric. All three initiatives fell far short of the targets.

The current Housing Minister, Darragh O’Brien, is working to his plan, Housing for All, which pledges 300,000 new homes by 2030, or 33,000 per year, and it is backed by a €4bn annual budget.

“In the last couple of weeks Taoiseach Varadkar has openly admitted to Fine Gael colleagues that the state is short of 250,000 homes and that it would take years to bridge that gap”

(*Irish Independent*, 27.3.2023).

Housing is the biggest crisis facing the Government, as an entire generation of people who have no hope of home ownership.

However, the Labour Party has failed to become a central player in the debate on the issue.

If the Leader is serious about the issue, she should have taken the Housing portfolio upon her elevation as party leader, instead she opted for Environment, the Climate and the North.

The party’s Housing Spokesperson is Senator Rebecca Moynihan, tucked away in the ‘doss house’ of the Irish parliamentary structure: the Seanad.

When questioned on RTE as to the Labour Party position on Housing, the only reply Ms Bacik could make was the Party was working on a document and would be published in the coming months.

Prior to the Party Conference, the Party indicated it was moving a vote of “No Confidence” in the Government the following week. It looked as if it was a manoeuvre to draw attention to the Party Conference, such was the lack of public interest.

“Despite economic recession, Labour minister Jimmy Tully delivered 100,000 public homes during the 1973-77 government, Ms. Bacik stated.

“We are now a prosperous State, running a €5.3bn surplus in 2022. Only ideology — not the economy — is holding us back”

(*Sunday Independent*, 9.4.2023).

### FACTS

In 1973 the population of the state was 3 million plus; to-day it is 5 million plus.

In the new Liberal era so beloved by New Labour, Divorce, Separation, Immigration is mushrooming.

There were 94,924 men and 127,149 women separated or divorced in 2016.

Of the 122,000 persons who immigrated into Ireland in the twelve months before the census, [2006] 83,000 (68.2%) were single, and of these 51,700 (62.2%) were in their twenties.

The obvious thing is to build many more social and affordable homes. But money doesn’t seem to be the only obstacle. Capacity constraints within the industry and the public sector means it is barely even spending what has been allocated.

### KENNY REPORT

In 1971, the then Fianna Fail Minister for Local Government, Bobby Molloy, in reaction to the disproportionate price of building land at the time, established a Committee on the Price of Building Land.

Chaired by a Judge of the High Court, John Kenny, it reported two years later in 1973 when the Government had changed and Labour’s Jimmy Tully was now the new Local Government Minister.

The key recommendations of the Kenny Report could have prevented the current crisis or went a long way towards it.

This key passage said that the land to be purchased for development should be compulsorily purchased by the Local Authority at agricultural values plus 25%. Yet successive Governments ignored it, their excuse being the recommendation was unConstitutional!

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“WE don’t represent the people Frank Cluskey represented, because they are not the same. We don’t represent working-class Ireland, because it is not what it was 20 years ago. That’s why one looks at brands. Our base needs to be built in the middle-class, and people who aspire to be middle-class. Some of the old party associations — trade unionism, etc. — are no longer relevant”

(Fergus Finlay,  
*Hot Press* magazine, May, 2005).

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Since October, 2002, the Labour Party has had six different leaders, currently, of the 7 Dail Deputies, they have two ex-leaders along with Ivana Bacik, the present leader.

In a review of procedures at the party’s 2017 Conference, the position of Deputy Leader was abolished after a year of lying vacant, and the nomination and seconding of new leadership candidates was extended to Senators and MEPs as well as TDs.

“The whispers started as soon as Ms Bacik finally won a Dail seat after years of trying in July, 2021 (*Irish Mail* on Sunday, 2.4.2023).

“A year later, the Labour rump ousted Alan Kelly. It is still not entirely clear exactly why.

Certainly the results in the polls have been imperceptible — media impact even more so — culminating in a disastrous leader’s conference speech last Saturday.

“In contrast, in Leinster House last week, there was a universal realisation by Labour that the installation by Bacik has been the latest in a decade of mistaken decisions”

(John Lee,  
*Irish Mail* on Sunday, 2.4.2023).

continued on page



**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## Labour Sets Sail!

**“Our plans miscarry because we have no aims.  
When a ship does not know what harbour it is making for,  
no wind is the right wind”  
(Seneca)**

**72nd Labour Party Conference, 24th-26th March 2023, CORK**

### **Don't Forget Your Shovel, Ivana!**

Labour leader Ivana Bacik has said her party would aim to provide one million homes over the next decade, saying “*new thinking*” is now needed on the housing crisis.

In an Address to members at the Labour Party Annual Conference in Cork, Ms Bacik said that Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil are “*perpetuating an unequal Ireland*” and that she wants to achieve a “*left-led green-red government*”.

“Our ambition is for one million homes in 10 years, starting now. The State can, and we must, deliver 50,000 new builds and 50,000 refurbished homes a year for the next decade.

In a strong economy with financial surpluses, we can do this. With new thinking and new ideas, we can do this. With a national housing emergency causing suffering for thousands, we have to do this. That’s our ambition for housing” (*Irish Times*, 27.3.2023).

#### **CANNABIS**

“The licensed sale of cannabis at Electric Picnic and other music festivals should be permitted as part of a “rational” approach to drugs, Labour party leader Ivana Bacik has said. Calling for a “harm reduction based policy” on drugs, Ms Bacik has said politicians need to accept the reality that cannabis is now widely

consumed as a recreational drug” (*Irish Examiner*, 25.3.2023).

#### **S.D.L.P. COMRADES**

As if all the above wasn’t worry enough for the Labour leader, after announcing at the Conference in Cork she was in “*extensive discussions*” on collaboration with the Social Democratic and Labour Party in the North, she was immediately rebuffed by her fellow colleague of the Progressive Alliance, Socialist International, and Party of European Socialists (PES), Colum Eastwood, at the SDLP Conference in Derry on the same weekend.

Ms Bacik said:

“Working with our sister party, the S.D.L.P., we want to deliver on our shared ambition to achieve a social democratic vision, across 32 counties. That’s why we support call for a unity referendum.”

“Mr. Eastwood said that while the S.D.L.P. had a ‘very good relationship’ with the Irish Labour party, when it came to a merger he had ‘ruled it out’... the party was ‘not too bothered about having friends’...” (*Daily Mail*, 27.3.2023).

“Last year, it was reported that the S.D.L.P. had ended its partnership with Fianna Fail” (*ibid*).

Austin Currie, founder-member of the SDLP moved to Dublin in 1989 and was elected to Leinster House, as a Fine Gael TD. He stood for President in 1990 against the unofficial Labour Party candidate, Mary Robinson, and was ignominiously defeated.

Likewise, Mark Durkan, a former leader of the SDLP joined Fine Gael in March 2019 to contest the 2019 European Parliament election for the Dublin constituency but failed to gain a seat.

Who needs enemies when the Labour leader has Press Officers and spin doctors like she has!

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