

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Forward—To ?

When the DUP was manoeuvred by Whitehall into agreeing to share the offices of a devolved government with Sinn Fein, it was said by the Whitehall Ministers who brought about that situation that normal politics has broken out in Northern Ireland. Normal politics was defined as "*bread and butter politics*" by Secretary of State Hain. He did not explain how 'bread and butter politics' could arise out of the Northern arrangement, where the local government does not raise the money it spends. The bread and butter is supplied by the Government of the state. All parties in the North want as much of it as they can get. There is unanimity about that.

If Unionists wanted less and Nationalists wanted more, there would be grounds for at least a semblance of normal politics. But the two major parties are working class parties (with burgeoning bourgeois elements, as behoves working class parties in a capitalist meritocracy) and they both want to be given more bread and butter to distribute. And the two middle class parties, which have been marginalised, would not dare to say that they wanted less.

The only instance of bread and butter politics we have seen happening is the manipulation of the DUP by the Secretary of State six months ago. He announced that Whitehall would impose a substantial increase in Rates and would introduce Water Rates unless the DUP agreed to share local government office with Sinn Fein by a certain date. The bills for the new rates were drawn up, printed, and delivered to every home in Northern Ireland, with a notice that they would Not come into effect if the devolved administration was formed. What this amounted to was a massive bribe to the electorate which Paisley did not feel he could reject. He therefore decided to allow Sinn Fein to return to Office, and to implicate it as far as possible in the 'Northern Ireland state'.

Our basic objection to the 'Northern Ireland state', which we set out over thirty years ago, is not that it was Partitionist but that it did not exist. The state in Northern Ireland has never been anything but the British state. Most public services were provided and administered by the state—i.e. Whitehall—after 1921 no less than before. What the 'Northern Ireland state' consisted of was an exclusion from the politics of the state. Its own political life consisted only of the communal antagonism of Protestants and Catholics. That is all it could be. Therefore we never condemned it for being what it had to be.

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## Bertiegate: media-inspired "death by a thousand cuts"

As a media-generated controversy aimed at inflicting political damage on Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, ultimately forcing him from office, 'Bertiegate' is dead in the water.

Ahern is not a corrupt politician. During a marital separation in the early nineties he needed some financial payments from friends to keep his political career on the rails. He couldn't afford to process the payments through a bank account for fear that his separated spouse might lay claim to them. When the controversy hit the headlines beginning in September 2006, explaining these payments posed a problem for him, primarily because he didn't wish to re-open old wounds in the now friendly relationship with his estranged wife, or embarrass other members of his family.

As the then Minister for Finance, being in receipt of financial payments from businessmen friends was also clearly a source of embarrassment; but no corruption was involved, the sums involved were relatively minor and the arrangements

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## Iran: Part 3

### Social Customs

In a recent article Desmond Fennell described the women on his plane donning the hijab as it began its descent into Teheran airport. In practice this means putting on any old scarf at all. That fulfils the requirements for women in Iran. In the three weeks that I was there I only once came upon a woman wearing a veil and she was a pilgrim from one of the Gulf States. Below is the 'line' on dress.

" Say to the believing women that

they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty ; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what must ordinarily appear thereof. " (Quran : 24.31)

" Say to the believing man that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty ; that will make for greater purity for them, and God is well acquainted with all they do." (Quran : 24.30)

"Clothing must cover the entire body, only the hands and face may remain visible (According to some Fiqh Schools). The material must not be so thin that one can see through it. The

clothing must hang loose so that the shape/ form of the body is not apparent. The female clothing must not resemble the man's clothing. The design of the clothing must not resemble the clothing of the non-believing women. The design must not consist of bold designs which attract attention. Clothing should not be worn for the sole purpose of gaining reputation or increasing one's status in society" (from the Muslim Boutique).

It is seldom adhered to and the main thing seems to be a gesture endorsing the basic moral character of the Islamic State. The normal dress for Iranian women is a

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*Labour Comment*, edited by **Pat Maloney**:  
[The Heart Of The Celtic Tiger?](#)

Allowing that Northern Ireland must exist—the necessity of it being that the British state insisted that this segment of itself should take this form—the obnoxious feature of it was that the power of policing was devolved to the Protestant community, and also that there was a marginal element of gerrymandering. This meant that the communal antagonism was conducted on grossly unequal terms. The effect of the recent change is to provide a level battleground.

But what is the battle about?

It was never really about Partition. By the same token it was never really about the Union. It was about the political vacuum called Northern Ireland which made each community adopt shibboleths with little practical political meaning.

For Unionists the Union was reduced to the mere ceremonial symbols of the state—the Crown, the Queen, the Union Jack, etc. In Wales and Scotland the Union was maintained incidentally through mass participation in the party conflict of Labour against Tory by people who frequently expressed contempt for the symbols. The Ulster Unionists were deprived of everything but the symbols.

The Catholic community remained Nationalist because there was nothing else for it to be. The structure of Northern Ireland was an affront to its sense of self-respect. We know from experience that a substantial segment of it would willingly

have taken part in the politics of the state. That willingness is usually presented as support for the Union. But the tangible form in which 'the Union' presented itself was the political vacuum of Northern Ireland filled by the Orange Order and the RUC. Being excluded from the political life of the British state, the Catholic community therefore lined itself up ideologically as anti-Partitionist, even though the political parties of the Free State also shunned it.

This political predicament of the Catholic community gave rise to the Provisional IRA when the situation was thrown into flux by the wild Unionist assault of August 1969. We saw it being forged as a profoundly ambiguous movement during the Winter of 1969-70 and we did our best to head off the war. It was a product of 'the Northern Ireland state', not of the Treaty. Anti-Treaty Republicanism gained a lease of life through association with it, but was sloughed off twenty years ago. The Provo leadership, dealing strictly with the situation that gave rise to it, has demonstrated immense political skill in making its way from war to political office in alliance with Paisley in the 'Northern Ireland state'. It is true to its origins. Where this has led it is to making a go of the Northern Ireland state which is not a state—to success in politics without politics—to bread and butter politics in which the bread and butter is laid on by a

third party which supervises and manipulates the whole thing.

If there actually was 'a Northern Ireland state' this development could not have happened. Something different would have happened during those fifty years, if Northern Ireland was a state. A state produces a form of politics appropriate to its functioning. The form of politics that existed in Northern Ireland was irrelevant to the functioning of the state.

Professor David Fitzpatrick, the Australian who has been running a revisionist factory in Trinity College for twenty years, published a book called *The Two Irelands* (Oxford University Press 1998), in which he explained that there were "*two revolutionary movements*" in Ireland ninety years ago. In each of them there was "*subordination of individual choice to communal solidarity*". Both went on to establish states. And—

"Each new government was immediately threatened by civil war, leading to ruthless suppression... Furthermore the political alignments cemented in the two civil wars continued to dominate political debate, restricting the opportunity for social and economic reform" (Preface).

Could it have escaped his notice that the Welfare State, established after 1945 by Ernest Bevin and Clement Attlee, came to Northern Ireland as a matter of course? The North was excluded from the political process which led to that development, but it got the end product because it was part of the state.

Leaving politics aside, life in Northern Ireland was lived within the institutions of the British state. The source of trouble did not lie in Unionist prevention of social reform, but in the exclusion of the Northern Ireland populace by Britain from the political life which led to that great social reform.

Paddy Devlin, when he was a leader of the SDLP, published an academic treatise in which he asserted that the British social welfare system was put on a confessional (sectarian) basis when being set up in Northern Ireland. It was a groundless assertion, but it was swallowed by the Dublin intelligentsia as one of the grievances fuelling the war. The truth is nearer the opposite—that the war was facilitated by the dispassionate administration by the British state of its welfare system in its Northern Ireland region.

Professor Fitzpatrick wrote what he did out of honest ignorance. Honest ignorance is no less profound among the meticulous 'revisionists' than amongst others. There is however a pre-emptive quality to it: a sense that it better not to know too much.

Sinn Fein, through being successful, is beginning to discover facts of life about the North which we tried to draw attention

to almost forty years ago. We tried to inform the SDLP in its early days, but it didn't want to know. Perhaps it was never successful enough to feel the need to know. At any event, it had no wisdom in this matter that Sinn Fein might have learned from. Nor have governing circles in Dublin ever troubled to inform themselves about the North—so Sinn Fein will get nothing useful from them either. It must fend for itself.

Its first effort to establish a rapport with the Protestant community was by way of the Somme. A worse approach could hardly be imagined—unless Sinn Fein is trying to realise Arthur Griffiths' ambition of becoming a partner in Empire.

Their great-grandfathers were actually at the Somme in 1916 alongside the Ulster Volunteers but, when they came back to Belfast, they found that the shared experience of killing Germans had established nothing at all in the way of fellow feeling between them as Irish. There was no good reason why it should.

Back in 1969, when we said that Protestant Ulster had the quality of a national body, that the culture of Irish nationalism exerted no gravitational pull on it, and that the application of force would fail to dissolve it as a political bloc, we thought it was only sensible to reconsider the usual way of depicting the Home Rule conflict, and to set out the Unionist case of that time as at least having the validity of success. We did that in pamphlets published in 1969 and the early seventies.

Thirty years later Articles 2 & 3 of the Southern Constitution were amended. The 'one-nation' conception was abandoned by practical implication. But there was no follow-through, either by revisionists or their antagonists, with regard to the ideology of the Home Rule conflict. But Martin Mansergh—said to have had a part in the 1998 Agreement—delivers on Radio Eireann an unreconstructed rant about Carson (Radio Eireann 30.10.06).

Northern Ireland is now accorded a sacred right of self-determination—which Mansergh inclines to place with the Protestant community, rather than the general population—but at the same time Carson is given the old-fashioned treatment. And what sense does that make?

Mansergh also condemns absolutely the act of war to which Partition in the form of Northern Ireland led. That strikes us as equally unreasonable. We tried to prevent the war, but that is a different thing.

The war did not result from Partition. The establishment of Northern Ireland was wantonly made the means by which Partition was enacted. That was not Carson's doing. It was done by the British Government after Carson ceased to be

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## A Comment On *What Is To Be Done*

Thanks to Joe Keenan (*Irish Political Review* Sept 2007) we are reminded of the two strands within the recent Northern military struggle. It was easily enough forgotten. There is indeed a huge difference between Nationalist (Hibernian) and Republican trends. The SDLP was thought to now contain most of the Nationalist movement once represented by the corrupt Harry Diamond who held a seat in the old Stormont regime. But obviously the more militant section of Nationalism took up the armalite alongside the anti-Imperialist Republicans.

It makes you wonder if the Sinn Fein leadership is doing a De Valera when they bang on about a United Ireland. Can such a thing happen under the present North and South political set-up and be designated a successful anti-Imperialist victory. Their long rambling political statements have no substance and therefore no reality.

A possible successful anti-Imperialist struggle would have to involve the entire island of Ireland with the destruction of the Protestant nation as its first goal. Such a fight could leave hundreds of thousands dead.

Achieving it by political means, as Sinn Fein now advocates, would, as Joe Keenan says, be a step back into the British Commonwealth. The academic revisionists of Irish history and most of the Brit-mesmerised media in the South seem to look forward to that day. What passes for British culture now permeates the South. Sit in any rural railway station and it is Sky News and Sky Sports on the waiting room tv screen. Listen to the Anglicised accents on Irish television and radio. Even in the mostly Gaelic Dingle it was possible to hear the younger generation use English soap-opera accents. Discussing this with the owner of a hotel had him hot under the collar. He denied the England content of these new accents and preferred to think of them as mid-Atlantic. West Britain could be more west than we think?

Of course there had to be someone in the South supporting the Northern Republican and Nationalist struggle or life would have been all that more difficult for the fighters. The *Ho Chi Minh Trail* saw munitions filtering Northwards from Southern beaches, arms dumps were ignored. One or two old ones were *discovered* and given wide publicity at the time.

Yes, August, 1969 did mark the era of the craven government, as Joe says, but all integrity wasn't lost in the end.

Northern Catholics are aware that they have been abandoned over the years and they have had to make the best of a bad job. What you can now call Nationalist (Hibernian) representation at the new Stormont plays the game of love-thy-neighbour but that's only for political convenience. Mutual hatred and loathing is the reality of the day. The streets reflect this discord.

**Wilson John Haire**  
16 September, 2007

### BOOK LAUNCH

**Buswells Hotel, Dublin**

**Wed. 31st October  
1.00pm**

**"Myths from Easter 1916"  
by Eoin Neeson**

Speakers:

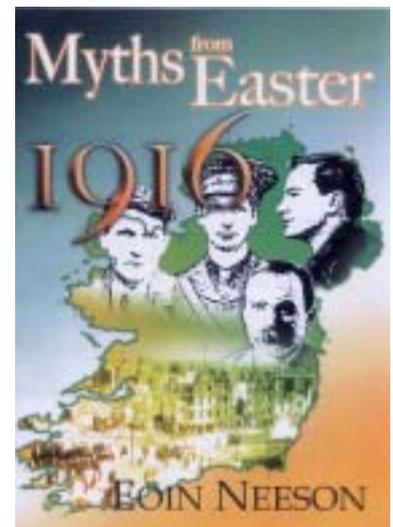
**Manus O'Riordan** (Chairman)

**Brian Lenihan TD,**  
Minister for Justice, Equality  
and Law Reform

&  
**Máire Óg MacSwiney-Brugha**

*All Welcome*

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Millstreet, Co. Cork  
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part of it, and he spoke against it in Parliament.

Mansergh's concern seems to be to burnish his own nationalist credentials within Fianna Fail, where there appears to be a degree of scepticism about them, rather than to find ways of dealing with the Home Rule conflict which would allow some possibility of *rapprochement*. But he is after all the chief Fianna Fail propagandist on the issue. And he insists that we must all start from the accomplished facts of Partition and Northern Ireland—two distinct facts which he treats as one. Stirring up the old resentments is hardly the way to do that.

## Bertiegate

continued

arose solely out of the circumstances of the marital separation. In short, from beginning to end the campaign against the Taoiseach has been much ado about nothing.

The penny is beginning to drop among some journalists that they are not now going to take out their quarry. So what are they to do? Some have invested so much in the story they cannot countenance giving up. Others have a firmer grip on reality and perhaps a shred of decency.

Stephen Collins, the Political Editor of the *Irish Times*, has distinguished himself throughout the controversy as a commentator with a political axe to grind. He is the author of a sympathetic history of the Progressive Democrats. Following the General Election he wrote an article seeking to dissuade any potential partners of Fianna Fail from dealing with Bertie on the grounds of supposedly unanswered questions regarding his finances. Notwithstanding the mandate the party had received to form the next Government, Collins was still hell bent on keeping Fianna Fail from office.

A more recent article shows him up to his old tricks. In an opinion piece published in the *Irish Times* on Friday September 21st he exhorts the Opposition parties to inflict "*death by a thousand cuts*" on Ahern. The column opens with the usual disparaging comments about the Taoiseach's credibility, then it knocks up against reality:

"So far, though, there has been no knockout punch to undermine Ahern's version of events and likelihood of one landing is remote."

Because of this everything now depends on the Opposition.

"The public will remain mired in confusion unless the Opposition parties are prepared to draw their own conclusions from the evidence already out there and provide the public with a clear alternative version of what happened.

"If they do that Ahern could face political death by 1,000 cuts, as he attempts to face down his political opponents on the one hand and deal with the unremitting pressure of the tribunal on the other."

Collins concludes the article with an unashamed rallying of the troops to keep up the pressure against the target.

"He (Ahern) will have to come back at a later date to account for the 'dig out' money, his savings of £50,000, his purchase of the house and the issue of Quarryvale itself and his involvement in that tale.

"It means that he will be in and out of the tribunal on a regular basis over the year ahead and that is where the real damage is likely to arise as he is mired in one controversy after another."

If the Opposition are foolish enough to take instructions from Stephen Collins they will fully deserve another drubbing from Fianna Fail at the polls. Recognising that the story is in danger of dying Collins contrives to keep it going by any other means available. Is this 'journalism creating the news' or what?

By way of contrast the line been taken by *Irish Times* columnist, Noel Whelan, shows definite concessions to the real world. Whelan was every bit as bad as his colleagues in dishing the dirt against the Taoiseach until the General Election results were declared. From that point on he seems to have recognised that the will of the electorate is something that should be respected.

One of his recent columns entitled, '*Ahern's flawed testimony will not bring about downfall*', published on Saturday September 22nd is interesting mainly because it is addressed to his colleagues as much as the reading public. Here are some extracts:

"Unlike the Moriarty tribunal, which inquired into payments to Charles Haughey and is still inquiring into payments to Michael Lowry, the Mahon tribunal is not an inquiry into payments to politicians per se. Neither is it a tribunal of inquiry into payments to Bertie Ahern or into his personal finances.

"It is worth reiterating that point at

this stage because now that the Taoiseach's evidence at the tribunal has failed to live up to the dramatic billing which some gave it, many commentators have moved on to suggesting that the defining moment will come when the tribunal publishes its report, which they confidently predict will be damaging for him...

"...However, in its report, the tribunal will not and indeed cannot decisively rule on whether or not the Taoiseach's explanation of these lodgements is accurate. Its function will not be to rule on whether Ahern's story about the payments is credible but rather whether there is any basis to Gilmartin's allegation. The latter question arises from the tribunal's term of reference; the former does not.

"Those hoping for adverse findings against Ahern on this point are likely to be disappointed. To date the only 'evidence' to support Gilmartin's allegation of a bribe is that of Gilmartin himself and he has proved an unreliable witness in public and private testimony to the tribunal....

"...Others were hoping that the tribunal report will rule that Ahern has impeded or obstructed it or failed to comply with its orders. The pace and extent of Ahern's co-operation with the tribunal has been far from ideal, but it has not been so deficient as to meet the relatively high bar required for a ruling that it was obstructive. The tribunal's chairman has already indicated a charge of non-compliance is not being made.

"This payments controversy did not fatally wound Ahern politically last autumn or during the election campaign and it is not fatally wounding him now. The publication of the tribunal report itself will not fatally wound him either. There is still every reason to believe he will get to go at a time of his own choosing."

That dollop of reality places the story in a very different perspective to that provided by Stephen Collins. In his own way Whelan is saying that 'Bertiegate' is dead in the water. It will be interesting to see whether the *Irish Times* and other sections of the media follow the Whelan or the Collins line in future coverage. I expect that the Irish media will continue to milk the non-story for everything it is worth in the coming months and years.

Noel Whelan deserves credit for attempting to bring his colleagues down to earth but it is too late to retrieve the good name of the Irish journalistic profession. Bertiegate is dead in the water and the time for investigating the real scandal behind the story—how the *Irish Times*, through its leading role in the media, threatens the health of Irish democracy—is at hand.

**Daithi O hAilbhe**

# Iran

continued

headscarf which may or may not cover all the hair. A tunic or kind of mini-dress over trousers or jeans. Socks seem to be optional. These clothes are certainly not loose and bust and bottom are, if anything, emphasised. Clothes come in all varieties of colours. But black is usually worn in offices dealing with the public, sometimes with a long outer cloak—in much the way that men in such places are expected to wear suits.

Long coverall black clothes were mainly worn by pilgrim women and in places where such garments are traditional. I can remember when they were traditional in West Cork. 'Islamic' garments are most often the traditional garb of the area. Damascus is a major centre for Islamic schools and for the teaching of Arabic. When I was there last year I came across many Western men, and some, women, dressed up in all the gear. They looked completely stupid and out of place. It was not their traditional form of dress and it didn't suit them.

(One thing that did strike me after the plane landed in Tehran was the overpowering smell of booze on the airport bus and the number of visitors who just about staggered up to the passport control. This amused the police more than anything else. The ban on alcohol is pretty well total—though wine is available to Christian priests for religious ceremonies.)

Iranian women tend to be big boned with very full lips and large eyes. They are distinctly beautiful and are not at all averse to the attentions of men, provided they are not simply leered at. They will also begin conversations with totally strange men. This is in contrast to the only Western woman I met in Iran. It was in Tehran airport and I offered to let her ahead of me as we arrived at a snack bar at the same time. I got a mouthful of feminist abuse for my troubles. Living in Spain for the last eight years, I was quite unprepared for this.

Now the get-up of the men was altogether another matter. In Teheran or Abadan or other places I'd noticed that many young men were done up to the nines and gave particular attention to their hair. But it was in Mashhad that things really struck me.

Mashhad is the religious centre of Iran. It is also the centre of the perfume industry. There is mile after mile of perfume shops. Most of them are full of young men trying various scents and then sniffing at each other. It all seemed very peculiar. But the thing that really knocked me sideways

was the hairstyles. Masses of hair done up in shapes that would do credit to 1960s models. Think of the character Wayne in *"Auf Wiedersehen Pet"* and you're only beginning to get the picture.

My first thought was that this lot were not exactly kitted out to repel the American hordes should they invade the country. But a friend of mine who has spent some time in Iran tells me that homosexual relationships among young men are quite usual before marriage. Maybe this is what President Ahmadinejad meant when he said that there were no homosexuals in Iran in the way that there were in America. Even if he was wrong about that.

The religious ethos is probably so all-pervasive in Iran that you hardly notice it. It is not, as they say, in your face. I came across the Islamic Study Centre by accident when looking for something else. They took me to a photographic exhibition about women. The idea seemed to be to concentrate on the character in the faces. Their explanation of the dress code, something about looking different outside to how women looked in the home, didn't make a lot of sense to me, and seemed to be a bit off the top of their heads for an unbeliever.

I asked them why I never heard calls to prayer from the Mosques, even on Fridays. Did they not do that? In Sunni Jerusalem or Damascus they'd almost deafen you. The head man, a Professor of English at the University, said there were calls to prayer in Shia Islam also. But these had to be at such a low volume that they didn't annoy the local community. Otherwise they would have the local authorities down on their heads!

There was one moment, however, when the thing did get on my nerves, and that had to do with my own background. Pilgrims visit Mashhad to see the tomb of the Imam Raza. He is believed to be the man in charge on the day of judgement and it's as well to keep in with him. Muslims also believe that he will be accompanied by Jesus, who can presumably grass up the likes of me!

I decided to visit the shrine. The crowds weren't great and were very orderly—mostly families. But lay officials insisted on ordering everyone about by shouting and waving feather dusters (for some reason) at us. They reminded me of some men from my childhood who tried to make themselves indispensable in one or two of the churches in Cork. *"Bigging themselves up"* as they say these days. I

didn't like those pretend holy men. And I didn't like this lot now. I decided to leave before I took it into my head to shove one of those feather dusters where the sun don't shine.

I'd wondered what Friday would be like in a Shia society. Well it also reminded me of my childhood—but in the best of ways. People troupe off to the Mosque at various times. Otherwise they have a lie-in. Slowly, around 11am, the shops start to open. Families and courting couples take to the parks, go for walks in the countryside and play games. Friday, like Sunday in Ireland, is the big day for sport. Football and other games dominate the TV. Offices and factories are closed. But some building work goes on, as well as repairs to public services. Transport runs with reduced services, except for those travelling long distances or to places of entertainment.

The "rules" for segregating men and women on public transport are little short of the bizarre. On buses there are separate entrances, with the women's door normally in the middle so that they sit at the rear. In taxis there is a lot of changing seats to sort out who sits where. On the Teheran Metro there is a women-only carriage on all trains. But women can also sit in any of the other carriages, where men and women sit where they like. Then on long-distance sleeper trains there is no segregation at all!

There is also no segregation on planes. There is a flat rate of about \$22 on all internal flights, though some travel agencies will add a sometimes hefty charge. But only tourists fall for that one. And then only once.

The flight always includes a very good meal, free newspapers and constant top-ups of cold water. There are special trucks for the disabled with lifts that reach up to a separate entrance on the plane. Not the precarious way that disabled people are hauled up the steps in the rest of the world.

It was on one such flight that I experienced one particular attitude to religion. The group of passengers around me were clearly scared of flying. A lot of praying and feeling beads was going on. Gestures were made in my direction to get involved. Finally some of my fellow passengers started making the sign of the cross at me. I made the sign of the cross in reply and everyone relaxed. I was now playing my part in assuring that the plane would not land prematurely.

Conor Lynch

To be concluded

## Baghdad, 1917

"Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators. Your wealth has been stripped of you by unjust men... The people of Baghdad shall flourish under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws."

General F.S. Maude, commander of British forces in Iraq, 1917

## Editorial Digest

**Labour's Sister Party?** After Dermot Ahern's statement about Fianna Fail organising in the North, South Down SDLP Cllr. Carmel O'Boyle said Fianna Fail had supported the SDLP "through all the difficult times. Now they want to support us in delivering a real republican alternative to the people of Northern Ireland by inviting us to merge with them. Such a move would surely restore hope for northern republicans who must be completely disillusioned with Sinn Fein and their political antics." Mitchel McLaughlin for Sinn Fein said: "Irish citizens should not be denied their constitutional right to participate fully in the life of the nation just because they were abandoned behind an artificial border imposed by a foreign power." (*Irish News Every Day*.) So Sinn Fein are still in favour of a united Ireland! Meanwhile Ogra Fianna Fail seem to have jumped the gun and claim that they have recruited 50 members at Magee College in Derry, and are actively recruiting at Queens during Freshers' Week.

**Giant's Causeway.** After DUP Minister Arlene Foster said she "was minded" to give permission to North Antrim businessman, Seymour Sweeney, to build a private visitor centre at the Giant's Causeway to replace the old one destroyed by fire, the Belfast press have had a field day. It transpires that Mr. Sweeney is a member of the DUP and a friend of Ian Paisley junior. No one is saying that young Ian has done anything corrupt. Nigel Dodds, who at first supported Ms Foster, says he is back in favour of the project being taken over by the public sector. Now another businessman has said he will do the job for nothing and hand the place over to the Government. With any luck the matter will drag on and the Giants' Causeway will be spared, at least for another while, any Visitors' Centre. It's nice the way it is.

**Two-headed Corkmen.** Government inspectors recently visited the offices of *The Corkman* in Millstreet. They found that the levels of radiation there were 20 times those permitted at nuclear power stations. It's good to know that even if the rest of the Free State is sleepwalking back into the British Empire, the Rebel County may be taking steps to preserve its independence!

**The Wild Geese.** On September 19th the *Irish News* printed a picture of Rev. Ian Paisley with members of the "Wild Geese Association", who were holding their banner—a green emblem with a harp surmounted by a crown plus a shamrock

and Ulster flag in the corner. (The other "chuckle brother" wasn't present.) The caption read: "First minister Ian Paisley yesterday presented members of the Wild Geese Association, a cross-border community venture that brings together serving and retired soldiers on the island of Ireland in a common bond of friendship, with certificates from the United Nations Association. Pictured with Mr. Paisley... are Jim Fee, chair of the Wild Geese Association, and Colonel Hubert McAllister, president..." This Association was formed at the beginning of this year and has already affiliated to the British Parachute Regiment Association. After the Treaty (should that be Articles of Agreement?) of Limerick, one option open to the defeated Irish armies was to join the English armies. This was rejected and the Irish armies went abroad seeking to enlist in the army of any country likely to be at war with Britain—something never too difficult to find. These were the Wild Geese. Anyone joining the English armies would be considered a mere mercenary at best and a traitor at worst. The term Wild Geese was also adopted by the *Patricios*, Irish-Americans who opted to fight for Mexico against US aggression, and by Irishmen fighting for the Boers against the British. So far this misnamed Association has been finding it difficult to recruit in the Free State to this "cross-border community venture".

**Robert Nairac.** The *Irish News* on September 10th reports that Stephen Travers, a survivor of the Miami Showband massacre near Newry in 1975, is convinced that the man who ordered the killings was the late and unlamented SAS Captain Robert Nairac. The Band was stopped by a UDR patrol. Two of the UDR men were planting a bomb on the band's bus when it exploded prematurely, killing both of them. The soldiers were then given orders to kill all the band members in an attempt to cover up what had happened. Dual-membership of most of the UDR soldiers with the UVF allowed the paramilitary group to be blamed for the atrocity.

**John Kelly.** The funeral of John Kelly took place in Maghera on September 8th. He became a household name when he was tried and acquitted of arms smuggling alongside Charles Haughey and Army Captain James Kelly in 1971. James Kelly's widow Sheila was at the funeral. Also there were Martin Meehan and Francie Brolly from Sinn Fein, Francie Mackey of the 32 Co. Sovereignty Movement, Gaelic games commentator Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Gerry McGeough, Bernadette Mc Alliskey, and SDLP leader Mark Durkan. John Kelly was from Belfast and took part in the 1956 IRA Campaign. He was captured on active service along with

John Madden from Cork and sentenced to eight years in jail. They were released in 1962 at the end of the Campaign. At the time of their arrest the B-Specials wanted to kill them with a grenade and this was prevented by an RUC man present. John later became a founder member of the Provisional IRA. He became a Sinn Fein MLA for Mid-Ulster but left the party in 2003.

**Crumlin Road Jail.** The jail, along with the nearby Girdwood Barracks, is to be redeveloped to include a leisure centre, businesses, playing fields, a hotel and other tourist facilities (up the Crumlin Road!?!), but NO HOUSES. Ardoyne is bursting at the seams and housing in the area is desperately needed. But the declining Protestant population fears the establishment of more Fenian territory. (Catholics tend to wish to stay in their areas, which usually have a very mixed pattern of housing, while Protestants, whose areas tend to be almost exclusively working-class, tend to move away when they get the chance.) So we can expect the ritual weekend fighting on the interface to continue for the foreseeable future.

**Fake Guns.** The *Belfast Telegraph* on September 16th reported that uniformed and masked IRA men carrying what they said were imitation firearms marched through the centre of Belfast on Sinn Fein's March For Truth. Sinn Fein said it was just a bit of street theatre. The DUP's Sammy Wilson said: "The next thing we will be hearing is that they want to go to the Arts Council for a grant. Or maybe even an Oscar for some of those who acted."

**A gas of a peace.** The Police have announced that they have used CS gas just under 1,000 times in the last three years. In other words an average of once a day.

**Who made the world?** Lisburn Council has voted to write to all schools in its area urging them to teach the theory of "intelligent design" to their pupils. The Protestant parties (the DUP and the OUP) voted for. The Catholic parties (the SDLP and Sinn Fein) voted against. This may seem like the Catholics have gone off God. But the Catholics believe in the who and the why of creation. Evolution they can take or leave. But Protestants, or large numbers of them, believe also in the how and the when.

## Tokyo 1945

"I suppose if I had lost the war, I would have been tried as a war criminal. Fortunately, we were on the winning side."

—US General Curtis LeMay, commander of the 1945 Tokyo fire bombing operation.

## What Is To Be Done...

### *The Responses*

I have been hearing some criticisms in Belfast and Dublin of last month's Hibernianism article. One of these concerned the futility of vulgar abuse. Another was that the Ancient Order of Hibernians is no longer a power in the land. Taken together I suppose they equal a complaint that vulgar abuse to be of some utility should be topical.

Point taken.

But then how am I to describe an Irish President, God Bless Her, and her saying the likes of this:

"It is an honour to be here at the opening of this exhibition commemorating the Battles of Guillemont and Ginchy, part of the heroic struggle of the Battle of the Somme fought over ninety years ago. Congratulations to Dr Ian Adamson, Carol Walker and all the members of the Somme Association for this labour of love which allows the stories of those who fought and died to be honoured and respected and better known by a new generation."

"Last year two very significant events in the history of this island, the 90th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme and the 90th Anniversary of the Easter Rising, were the subject of elegant and moving official commemorations in Dublin. Both events shook and shaped the destiny of this island. In the generations since, Irish men and women have often looked back at those times through very different prisms, so different and so riddled with conflicting viewpoints that the sheer reconciling power of this remarkable platform of shared memory was overlooked and neglected.

"This exhibition is part of that platform—a place to stand together in shared respect and a place to help us grow in understanding of those difficult times. Here, in recalling these battles of Guillemont and Ginchy where the 16th Irish division fought so bravely in the most outrageous conditions, we recall the courage and generosity of so many young Irish men, from every background and belief, from Antrim to Cork, whose sacrifice forged our shared history, our shared memory. They showed us that there is no contradiction between working together collegially, in friendship and good neighbourliness on missions of common concern and interest while continuing to hold differing views and identities...."

...  
"Back in June on the 90th anniversary of the battle of Messines Ridge, in the

company of Mr. Edwin Poots, the Northern Minister for Culture Arts and Leisure, I visited for the third time the Irish Peace Park at Messines in Belgium. The Park was opened a few years ago by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, His Majesty King Albert and myself, to honour the memory of the men of the 36th Ulster Division and the 16th Irish Division who fought shoulder to shoulder at Messines and Wijschaete in a cause they saw as bigger than themselves and their divisions. Those who worked so hard to create that memorial knew that this troubled and conflict-ridden generation needed to be reintroduced to the voices of those who fell at Guillemont, at Ginchy, at Messines and Wijschaete because their voices would exhort us to use our best endeavours to build the peace, the reconciliation, the better world that they dared to dream of...

...  
"The First Minister has long had an association with this Museum and with championing the memory of those who fought and died at the Somme and other battlefields of the Great War. It is an interest we have in common and I am sure he shares my great satisfaction that over recent years more and more people have found it possible to acknowledge the full reality of what happened and to take pride in the comradeship and courage of the men of the 16th Irish and the 36th Ulster Divisions. And in so doing, we have taken those tragic memories, those names of grandfathers and fathers, brothers and uncles, husbands and sweethearts out of the shoe-boxes in the attic where they had lain in restless uncertainty for decades. We have restored them to the light of respect and of pride so that they have become a powerful, recovered, shared memory and indeed a wonderful healing.

"First Minister, I congratulate you and the Deputy First Minister and all your colleagues in the Executive for the tremendous start you have made on your journey of partnership towards a new society in Northern Ireland and a new mood of good neighbourliness across this island.

"There could be no better monument to the brave men of Guillemont and Ginchy."

In last month's article I defined Hibernianism as a movement that Joe Devlin organised *"to be the moral fibre and the backbone of Redmondism"*. I really should have pointed out that historically the AOH and its Grand Master are most conspicuous for their role as British Army recruiters of Northern Nationalists for the killing fields of France and the Middle East. James Connolly had the measure of that Grand Master of a man and his AOH, as evidence of which please do read his article from 1916 which is reprinted in the Autumn issue of *Church & State*.

So until someone comes up with a

better name for that press gang trade I can only say that Hibernianism is alive and well and living in Aras an Uachtaran.

Alive and well? Okay, not so well. Alive and kicking anyway. And kicking over the traces.

Our President, God Bless Her, did not point out that the 36th Ulster Division was the Ulster Volunteer Force, organised in its old companies under its old NCO's and Officers, fighting under its own banners. Carson demanded those rights for his men and he got them. Redmond demanded the same for his Volunteers and was dismissed with all the unconcern he merited. The 16th Irish Division was a collection of old Irish regiments with Redmond's National Volunteers scattered among them, fighting under English banners.

Nor did our President, God Bless Her, point out that the Ulster Volunteer Force and the National Volunteers, whom British strategy had brought together for the moment (and such a moment it was) on the Somme, were each of them preparing to slaughter the other on the Four Green Fields of Home. The Green Fields of France were just a training ground for the fight that Redmond and Devlin, Carson and Craig were determined should follow directly upon the end of the Great War. Let any who doubts that read Pat Walsh's fine book on Irish Imperialism where he quotes Redmond's deputy John Dillon MP addressing the National Volunteers in Belfast in March 1915:

"...when the war is over, and when we shall commence to resume the thread of Irish politics, that section of the Irish nation which has done best on the battlefields of France, will be the strongest in the struggle which may then be thrust upon us."

Dillon succeeded dead John Redmond as head of the Irish Parliamentary Party just in time for its destruction (in the South) at the hands of Sinn Féin in 1918.

As far as Our President, God Bless Her, is concerned the momentary alignment of imperial forces was *"part of the heroic struggle of the Battle of the Somme"*. Heroic struggle indeed. Murderous slaughter more like!

England did not embark on the first of its twentieth century world wars for—as Our President, God Bless Her, put it—peace, reconciliation and a better world. Germany was England's major economic rival and had therefore to be destroyed. The multi-national Austro-Hungarian Empire was, at least on its Austrian wing, a force for peace and stability in central Europe which had to be destroyed to unleash the chaos on which England has always thrived. The multi-national Turkish Empire was a force for peace and stability

in the Middle East which had to be destroyed to unleash the chaos on which England has always thrived. And that is what the Great War was about, chaos, destruction and the enrichment and expansion of the British Empire. Oh to be heroic in such a cause! No thanks, I'm happy enough being abusive in opposition to such a cause.

And thinking on it, if a term is accurate is it then proper to label it abusive? Answers on a postcard please to the critics group, present address unknown (no such number, no such zone).

Finally on this I think it is appallingly ill-mannered of our Head of State, God Bless Her nonetheless, to mention the Somme without mentioning the victims of our coming together in courage and friendliness for a great cause and so on. I refer of course to the Germans we all killed and maimed in our glorious communal sacrifices (the Protestant and the Catholic communal sacrifices) of 1916. Fair enough, a lot of us were killed but we took very many young Germans with us who had never done us a pick of harm and intended Ireland still no harm in those days and weeks and all we spent butchering them. Don't they deserve some mention, a word of apology perhaps? Our President, God Bless Her even so, must hope no one passes a copy of her lack of diplomacy on to the German embassy. But then no one would be so tactless, would they?

Moving on then to the strange case of de Valera. My berating of de Valera has been criticised as follows:

"A couple of questions about JK's *What is to be done*

"JK says that De Valera was correct to choose independence from Britain for the 26-counties over a united Ireland, but then proceeds to berate him for

"(1) not organising Fianna Fail in the North, and

"(2) not stating publicly that he had chosen independence over a united Ireland and put a united Ireland on the long finger

"Surely, not organising Fianna Fail in the North was all of a piece with choosing independence over a united Ireland—organising in the North would have been a statement that Ireland was a single polity and therefore should be united forthwith.

"As for not stating publicly that a united Ireland was on the long finger, surely it was impossible for any Catholic nationalist politician in De Valera's day to adopt a public position of abandoning part of the nation.

"And if he had adopted such a position, it would have left Northern Catholics with no option but to settle for a life in the UK—in other words, the fate that JK (rightly) fears that Sinn Fein are going to lead Northern Catholics into today would have been forced upon them much earlier."

What I berated de Valera for was his role in breaking the national polity which existed in Ireland prior to, and to a lesser extent after, the second Dáil's reluctant and half-hearted acquiescence in England's Articles of Agreement (the 'Treaty'). I won't now repeat the details of how he did that. I also stated that I found the ruthless hypocrisy of de Valera's machinations disgusting, and spoke of his 50 year career of hypocrisy and dissimulation. Looking back on the article I think I am probably guilty of having understated the case.

Just how my de Valerite critic knows what would have happened if Dev had behaved other than he did is entirely beyond me. We can only know what did happen as a result of the ways in which he did in fact behave. That was a complete moral collapse of the state he built in his own image. Does my critic want me to deny the collapse? Or praise the politics that led to the collapse? Or what?

The way in which de Valera conducted his politics was convoluted and secretive. It was hypocritical in the strict sense of that term, having a public face which utterly belied the private truths of the matter. It was ruthless in slaughtering the political innocents (like Charlie Kerins) who took the public face at face value and acted on it. And it had consequences. De Valera's way of doing politics left his successors with a glaring contradiction that simply could not be resolved. We want to extend our independent Republic to 32 counties, but if we do that it will cease to be an independent Republic. When that contradiction exploded into daily politics in 1969 de Valera's state and de Valera's party collapsed in a heap. The politics of the Republic have gone on, this way and that, since then. We've had the development of a murderous drug-fuelled gang culture. We've had a Celtic Tiger. And de Valera's state and de Valera's party are still lying in a heap.

I don't pretend to know how Irish politics might stand now if they had developed differently than they did from the War of Independence on. I am well aware that such things are simply unknowable. Just let me say this.

Of course it was *"impossible for any Catholic nationalist politician in De Valera's day to adopt a public position of abandoning part of the nation"*. But the corollary of that is that it was entirely possible for de Valera to have adopted a public (and even a private) position of not abandoning part of the nation. And I see no reason why he could not have done that by giving a political voice to that part of the nation which he in fact had abandoned.

Why could de Valera not have organised Fianna Fáil in Northern Ireland, especially after the Republic was formally established in 1948? Such a thing would not have been an act of war. He could easily have

continued to insist that there could be no military solution to partition. Fianna Fáil in the North would have been an abstentionist party, and perhaps Northern Nationalists would have preferred to vote for the candidates of some other party that would have taken seats in Stormont and Westminster. Northern politics would have been enormously complicated in the event. Could that really have been a bad thing?

Organising Fianna Fáil in the North might have led to some form of representation for Northern Nationalists in Dáil Éireann, or it might not. I don't know. I only know that there is no necessary reason for it to have led to the anti-partitionist war which my de Valerite critic takes for granted. And I am positive that the 1969 collapse of party and state would thereby have been avoided. But maybe not. Maybe the worst would have happened regardless. But face it, in the real world in which de Valera acted just as he did, the worst did happen!

**Joe Keenan**

To be continued

## Unpublished Letters

**The following two letters on President McAleese's speech at the Somme have been submitted to the *Irish News***

### JOHN REDMOND

President McAleese has said that Catholic and Protestant Irishmen met on the Somme in a spirit of "courage and generosity"; that their sacrifice in that battle of the Great War "forged our shared history". She did not mention that each was preparing upon their return to make war upon the other.

As the leading Redmondite, John Dillon, said at a meeting of Volunteers in Belfast: "when the war is over, and when we shall commence to resume the thread of Irish politics, that section of the Irish nation which has done best on the battlefields of France, will be the strongest in the struggle which may then be thrust upon us." (Freeman's Journal. 8th March, 1915.) **Joe Keenan**

### YOUNG GERMANS?

President McAleese (Irish News 11/9/07) commemorated the battles of Guillemont and Ginchy recalling "the courage and generosity of so many young Irishmen, from every background and belief... whose sacrifice forged our shared history, our shared memory". This Hibernian nonsense is getting out of hand these days.

The men at the Somme may or may not have been brave. But they were there to kill young German men. What harm had the Germans ever done to the Irish—of either tradition? Indeed, what harm had the Germans ever done to the English?

Britain launched a war on the Germans, and on the Turks, for Imperial purposes and no other.

The cause for which Irishmen died in that war was ignoble. We should be sad at the loss of our young men. We should not commemorate these battles as though they were honourable affairs. Let the dead rest in peace. **Conor Lynch**

**The Rise And Fall Of Imperial Ireland.** Redmondism In The Context Of Britain's War Of Conquest Of South Africa And Its Great War On Germany, 1899-1916 by *Pat Walsh*. 594pp. Index. ISBN 1 0 85034 105 1. €24, £18.99. Postfree in Europe, from: **Athol Books**, PO Box 339, Belfast, BT12 4GQ.

## Back to the future! McAleese's Muscular Christianity

President MacAleese has been catching up with the propaganda of WWI, 90 years on and regurgitating it. At the 16th (Irish) Division Exhibition at the Somme Heritage Centre on 10th September 2007 she quoted Tom Kettle's widow saying that he fought for "Ireland, Christianity, Europe.... (and) a reconciled Ulster". The propaganda about fighting for Christianity was discredited in Ireland as soon as it first appeared. The following contemporary anonymous satire (though it might be by Sean O'Casey) summed up the feeling of sensible people who saw through this nonsense. Does President MacAleese really expect us to swallow it now? Does she take us for complete eejits? Jack Lane

*We're fighting now for Christianity  
(Air: "Killaloe")*

**I**  
Sez John Bull to Pat one day, as he came along the way,  
I'd like to tell you all about the war,  
For as I boss 'the show,' small Nations all should know,  
The causes that I'm really fighting for;  
Well I found that Kaiser Bill was an anti-bilious pill,  
I couldn't stand his 'swank' and vanity,  
So I started making war, and when they asked 'What for?'  
I say 'I'm out for Christianity!'

*Chorus:*  
*For all the little Nations,  
And all my poor relations, for every grade of real humanity!  
I've the Jingoese, Japs and Jews,  
And the Kaffirs and Hindoos,  
They're fighting now for Christianity!*

**II**  
I've got every class and clan, I've got every race of man,  
From Esquimaux to foolish Irishmen,  
There's Arabs, Jews and Japs, and some flat-nosed negro chaps,  
Who'll prove to all that I'll be boss again;  
Mike O'Leary from Macroom, and Sheikh Haffi from Khartoum,  
Have enlisted in the cause of sanity,  
There's the Gurkhas and the Sikhs, and the Mongos and the Mikes,  
All fighting now for Christianity!

*Chorus*

**III**  
There's Dagos and Fijies, and now I've got Chinese,  
There's Cannibals and Hottentots galore,  
There's men from God knows where, with feathers in their hair,  
To stop the Hun from landing on our shore;  
So Pat my cordial friend, I'd like the war to end,  
Or else 'twill drive me to insanity,  
'Tis for 'Faith and Fatherland,' that all the Allies stand,  
For we're fighting now for Christianity!

*Chorus*

**IV**  
I've Freemasons on my side, who you know are true and tried,  
You've heard of Viviani on the sly,  
Who tried to stop the sun, if he couldn't stop the Hun,  
And put the stars from shining in the sky;  
'Tis a just and blessed war, tho' slaughter I abhor,  
For I couldn't 'stick' the Kaiser's vanity,  
So Pat my gallant son, now's the time to get your gun,  
For we're fighting now for Christianity!

*Chorus:*

*by "Sliabh Ruadh".*

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# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## IRISH TIMES'S IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE

The failure of *The Irish Times's* political campaign in the 2007 election means that its ideological struggle must be stepped up. Above all the Irish people must be told that the State is corrupt and has failed. And, since the people persist in re-electing Fianna Fail, the people must understand their own corruption.

On 18th August it carried an article at the top of its *Opinion & Analysis* section with the heading: "*Integrity has had a low profile during first 66 days*". The article was written by a Dr. Elaine Byrne, who recently completed her doctorate at the University of Limerick on the history of Irish Political Corruption.

It begins with the doleful words: "*Sixty-six days have now passed...*" There then follows a litany of examples of corruption. But the list is particularly unimpressive.

One of the examples is Deputy Lowry who:

"...is currently being investigated by the Moriarty tribunal for certain financial dealings and the awarding of the State's second mobile phone licence in the mid-1990s, when he was minister for transport, energy and communications."

But no evidence of political favouritism has been found against Lowry despite exhaustive investigations which extended to a property deal involving Doncaster Football Club. No civil servant could be found to suggest any influence exerted by Lowry re: the awarding of the licence.

For no particular reason Byrne in the penultimate paragraph makes the following contemptuous remarks about one of our most distinguished elected representatives, the Minister for Justice Brian Lenihan:

"The Minister may be familiar with the story of Rip Van Winkle who, when reprimanded by his wife for his carelessness, 'had but one way of replying to all lectures of that kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head and said nothing'."

The final sentence from the University of Limerick academic has the following infantile "clincher":

"...a word search of the 86 page programme for government, which took the Green Party and Fianna Fail 10 arduous days of talks to agree upon, revealed not a single entry for the word trust".

## IRISH TIMES'S IMMIGRATION POLICY

*The Irish Times's* policy on immigration

was strikingly outlined by one of its columnists Nuala O' Faolain when the phenomenon first emerged ten years ago:

"The Irishness of de Valera's constitution made identity unavoidable. Irishness was an anthropological acne which broke out no matter what poultices you applied. Like leopards, you couldn't change your spots. But the Irishness that Mary Robinson kick-started was much more credible. Not only could you change your spots, you could change your breed, skin colour, gender, place and still be Irish, along with other identities" (*The Irish Times*, 30.3.98).

*The Irish Times* believes that immigration offers an opportunity to escape from our national identity. This year the heading on its St. Patrick's Day editorial was: "*Rebranding Ourselves*". Note: not rebranding our products but ourselves.

Its editorial of 16th August denounced the Minister for Immigration Conor Lenihan for supporting Garda policy preventing Sikh recruits from wearing turbans on duty. The editorial believes that our policy on immigration should be "a two-way integration process". This was followed up on 22nd August with an article by a UCD academic extolling the virtues of multiculturalism. But multiculturalism is a failed model.

In the UK the rate of mixed marriages among the daughters of Pakistanis is 1%, whereas the corresponding rate for Algerians in France is 25%. The recent riots in France had nothing to do with race, but were in the tradition of working class social uprising that marks the history of that country (see *Le Monde*, 13.11.05).

The pro-American President of France Nicholas Sarkozy had to abandon his proposals to introduce elements of the multicultural model such as positive discrimination. The French remain attached to republican values.

## A CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

On 28th August Fintan O'Toole pronounced on the subject of cultural diversity. The Long Fellow agrees with O'Toole when he suggests: "*creating a public realm in which all religions are respected because none is invoked*". But O'Toole is not serious. And he doesn't expect to be taken seriously because: "*typically... we are opting for an unjust, unsustainable and potentially explosive muddle*". We are doomed, despite O'Toole's exhortations for us to 'cop on to ourselves'!

The column is typical of O'Toole. We are awful. The state is awful. Our history is awful. The only point in advocating reform is to contrast the possibility of a better society with how awful existing society is.

In O'Toole's simple-minded world society should be a *tabula rasa* on which he can write his prescriptions. But no

society is like that. All societies have a history. France fought a revolution to limit Church power. And it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that Jules Ferry established the principle of separation of Church and State in education.

Institutions like societies have a history. And *The Irish Times* is certainly not a *tabula rasa*. Indeed it proclaims its allegiance to Christian values in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of *The Irish Times Ltd* and *The Irish Times Trust Ltd* (the body which has ultimate control). The directors of *The Irish Times Ltd* and the Governors of *The Irish Times Trust* each have to swear an oath of secrecy every year which includes the following:

"The promotion of a society where... the quality of spirit is instinct with Christian values but free from all religious bias and discrimination;

So if O'Toole becomes Editor of *The Irish Times* he will have to commit himself to the promotion of Christian values notwithstanding what he thinks the State's role should be.

## DAMAGE LIMITATION

The Mahon/Flood Tribunal is not going the way *The Irish Times* would like. It has failed to lay a glove on Ahern and the longer it goes on the more likely the Tribunal itself will come under scrutiny. That is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the line of questioning put to Bertie Ahern by Des O' Neill, the Tribunal lawyer. Most of O' Neill's questioning relates to Ahern's alleged lack of co-operation rather than the substantive allegations themselves. That Ahern is responsible for the delays and not the Tribunal is the thrust of the cross-examination. It is a last-ditch defence by the Tribunal itself against the unavoidable conclusion that the 10 year exercise has been a complete waste of taxpayers' money.

The original chairman Feargus Flood has rushed to the defence of Mahon by claiming that the mode of operation of the Tribunal has been proper and that Ahern will be cleared of all wrong doing. It is obvious that Flood wants the whole process wound up as quickly as possible before it discredits the judiciary even further.

The key question relating to the Tribunal's credibility is the alleged 45,000 dollar lodgement. The Tribunal claims that this round figure amount, if translated at the AIB bank's exchange rate, would equal the exact amount in Irish pounds credited to an account controlled by Ahern. The Tribunal has no evidence to suggest that this lodgement had anything to do with the allegations it is supposed to investigate re: Quarryvale. Ahern is being put in the invidious position of having to prove a negative.

The Supreme Court has already found the Tribunal's practice of withholding evidence from parties that would clear their names to be unconstitutional.

#### O'TOOLE'S SOAP OPERA

But Fintan O'Toole's recent pronouncement on the Tribunal is that the truth doesn't matter. All that matters is plausibility:

"It is rather unfortunate, therefore, that while those involved in the financial transactions in question are undoubtedly telling the truth as they remember it, the truth turns out to be so implausible...

"Michael Wall, for example, reaches into his safe and for 'no particular reason' pulls out £30,000 before heading off to Dublin. He has no idea what it is to be spent on, except that it was to refurbish a house he didn't own" (18.9.07).

So Wall has "*no idea*" what the money is to be spent on "*except*"... he does have an idea! It is for refurbishment of a house! Certainly it is "*implausible*" that anyone would intend to spend money on a house they didn't own. But the truth can be implausible if you leave out some of the facts. And O'Toole is not interested in supplying all the facts. One pertinent fact is that although Wall did not own the house when he withdrew his money, he had put down a booking deposit and had no reason to suppose that the sale (with all the ancillary costs: stamp duty, legal fees etc) would not go through.

But let's not restrict ourselves to the truth when there is a parallel universe called "plausibility" which is much more congenial to O'Toole. And in this universe Ahern is not really the Taoiseach but a character in a soap opera.

"...people see him as a soap opera character who is expected to get into scrapes. But even soap operas have to operate within the limits of plausibility".

And so O'Toole concludes that the universe of "*plausibility*" must shape the Taoiseach's destiny:

"It is rotten luck for the Taoiseach that the truth, as told so far, wouldn't pass muster on Fair City, Coronation Street or even Crossroads. And that characters the public stop believing in get written out of the script."

Unfortunately for O'Toole the reality is that the public no longer believes in *The Irish Times*.

#### REPORT

### All-Ireland Politics

The following letter has appeared in the press:

"In November the Labour Party will hold its annual conference in Wexford. Perhaps one of the most pertinent motions up for discussion will be a motion to change the Labour Party constitution to allow party members contest elections at local level in Northern Ireland.

"This motion has the potential to mark a small but critical step in transforming the political dynamic throughout the island of Ireland.

"For too long the electorate north of the Border have been forced to choose between the myopic and one-dimensional historical narratives of either nationalism or unionism. The Belfast Agreement has essentially served to institutionalise this already existing sectarian political division.

"Fianna Fáil's ambitions to organise in Northern Ireland are nothing more than a different shade of the "four green fields" nationalism already embodied by Sinn Féin.

"The Labour Party has the potential to offer a viable secular and socialist alternative. A strong active Labour Party operating on all-Ireland basis has the potential to act as a fulcrum for all progressive groups on the island who want to ensure that access to affordable house, equality in education and the protection of public services are pushed to the top of the political agenda.

I hope that delegates to the Labour Party conference grasp this opportunity and begin the difficult but critical task of giving everyone on the island a chance to vote for a party committed to secular and socialist politics. **Patrick Nulty** (Labour Party member)... Dublin 15." (Irish Times 26.9.07).

#### TEXT OF MOTION:

*Conference instructs the NEC bring forward the requisite amendments to Articles 5a and b of the Labour Party Constitution to facilitate contesting the next local government elections in Northern Ireland.*

**Submitted by:** N.I. LABOUR FORUM

**Constituency:** Northern Ireland

#### EMPEY WEDDED TO THE PAST

The Labour Forum has welcomed the prospect of Fianna Fail organisation in Northern Ireland and rejected the criticisms of the move by the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, Sir Reg Empey. (The DUP seems to have treated the matter as of being no concern.) The following is a press release issued by the Forum:

*Labour Party welcomes Fianna Fail move.*

Labour Party National Executive member, Mark Langhammer has welcomed the challenge of Fianna Fail organising and, in time, contesting elections in Northern Ireland and has issued a stinging rebuke to Sir Reg Empey—who has criticised the move. Commenting on Sir Reg Empey, Mr Langhammer said:

"Sir Reg's knee jerk reaction is a bit rich. As far back as 1986, the Ulster Unionist Party rejected the organisation of British governmental parties—Labour and Conservative—in favour of communal attrition. The UUP expelled members campaigning for equal citizenship and access to British

politics. The policy of the 'Unionist Family' (UUP and DUP alike) of "Prods" versus "Taigs"—with the Brits paying—is unsustainable and abnormal. Politics hates a vacuum. And governmental politics is the only real alternative to communal politics. Bring it on".

Further commenting on the refusal of Mark Durkan to rule out a merger with Fianna Fail, Langhammer said:

"The Labour Party will determine in our November conference at Wexford whether Labour will open the way to governmental politics and contest local elections. Mark Durkan's flirtatious response to the Fianna Fail initiative tells Labour delegates all they need to know about the state of health of the 'sister party' relationship"

### Jumping The Black Pig's Dyke

On September 16th, the Sunday Independent reported that Fianna Fáil is to set up "*a committee under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern to seriously explore the idea of advancing Fianna Fail as a political party into the North*". It quoted the Minister as saying:

"After May 8, and in the context of the Northern Ireland executive up and running, we are looking at the option of Fianna Fail becoming an all-Ireland, 32-county party."

Dermot being the third most senior Fianna Fail politician, I think we can take it that the matter is finally done and dusted. But as ever the devil is in the detail and the detail is as ever devilish.

"The idea of Fianna Fail setting up in the North has been raised at the last two Fianna Fail ard fheiseanna, and also in that context, a merger with the SDLP has been suggested before.

"At this early stage, it is thought that as a first step the establishment of a Friends of Fianna Fail organisation in the North is being looked at.

"But the issue of contesting elections in the North is a long way off, and described by sources as "not even on the agenda at the moment."

"Fianna Fail will, however, be looking, in the short-term, at aligning itself with a Northern party in the North-South parliamentary forum. It is most likely that the SDLP would be such a suitable party.

"A leading figure in the SDLP has already called for a merger with Fianna Fail.

"Tom Kelly has become the first member of the SDLP's high command

to support fusion with the Republic's largest party."

The SDLP's membership base has become so insignificant over the last decade that a merger with Fianna Fáil is unlikely to do Destiny's Soldiers any harm at all. A large influx of new members from the Republican heartlands of Tyrone, Fermanagh and Armagh can be expected to have a good influence on the character of this new party (or whatever it might call itself) on the Northern political scene.

However, a straightforward merger with the SDLP would immediately pose one very awkward question for Fianna Fáil. The great question of abstention, or not, at Westminster.

In a merger Fianna Fáil would inherit the SDLP's still fairly substantial corps of representatives in the Northern Councils, the Northern Assembly and at Westminster. After the next General Election, which can be expected sometime sooner rather than later, the SDLP will have at least two and possibly three seats at Westminster. Durkan's seat is safe. MacDonnell's seat is problematic. It appeared for some time that, with Eddie McGrady retiring, his South Down seat would go to Sinn Féin. That is now very much in doubt as McGrady's substantial local base can be expected to transfer in a body to his nominated successor (especially if that is SDLP Assembly Minister, Margaret Ritchie). And Sinn Féin, perceived to be living the high life behind closed doors of well-funded, highly-paid jobs for the boys (the Shinnerecures unkind people call them in the North), has lost electoral momentum, in the North as well as over the Black Pig's Dyke. As of now it seems likely that the SDLP will hold South Down.

So what should Fianna Fáil do with at least one, perhaps as many as three, Westminster seats? Holding on to them is just not on the cards. We would advise them to avoid any rows about abstention as such and simply take the polite option of refraining from interfering in the internal affairs of another state. End of problem.

Even if Dev's wee divils reject the merger option they can expect to be brought up against this Westminster Conundrum in short order. Dermot Ahern is quoted in the *Sindo* as saying that he does not intend to give Sinn Féin a "free run anywhere in Ireland".

That hardly squares with the idea of fighting elections in the North being "not even on the agenda at the moment". A Northern Fianna Fáil party (under whatever name or formal appearance) which backed away from fighting Gerry Adams in West Belfast would be here today and going going gone tomorrow. Not even on the agenda is just not an option.

The kind of people who can be expected to join Fianna Fáil under the banner of not giving the Shinners a free run anywhere in Ireland are precisely those people who will be straining at the leash to chase those same boyos everywhere in Ireland. The disgruntled Republicans of South Armagh and South Derry and the disillusioned SDLP members of West Belfast and West Tyrone are well used to electoral politics and not at all used to sitting through counts they haven't a candidate in. Fianna Fáil will soon find that, this side of the Black Pig's Dyke, it's in for a penny in for a pound (and devil take the hindmost).

Now then, how does the idea, which really does seem set to soon become a fact, of Fianna Fáil organising in the North look likely to pan out in the longer term?

The most that any Irish nationalist can expect over the next long haul of years is the recreation of the national body politic which, before what occurred between the 'Treaty' negotiations and the Boundary Commission fiasco, really did span and involve the whole Irish nation. That is a long way from a truly united and fully independent Ireland, but it is the essential precondition of winning that full measure of freedom.

Sinn Féin is an all-Ireland party, albeit one that is confused as between the 'independent' and the 'united' elements of Ireland's national aspiration. The worst that the appearance of another all-Ireland Republican party can do to the Shinners is shake, and hopefully wake, them up. The Labour Party has for several years now been organised nationally, albeit with illusions and inhibitions about queering the pitch for its sister party the SDLP. In all likelihood the SDLP's reaction to Northern Fianna Fáil will open the Labour Party's eyes, destroying its illusions and casting aside its inhibitions. Then there's Fine Gael which is unlikely to let the Soldiers of Destiny boldly go while its Blue shirts wave idly in the wind of them passing. And who knows, those Soldiers may even recall to mind the air and lyric of their Destiny. All in all, on every side, no bad thing!

Bearing in mind always that the Hibernian Question is hovering around, just waiting its moment to be posed. Any suggestion that Ireland can be united under the aegis, or tied to the apron strings, of Old Mother England must now and forever be rejected with all the force at this nation's command. Whack Fol the Diddle.

Joe Keenan

## Book Review

Century Of Endeavour  
Lilliput Press / Tyndall Publications

Roy H. W. Johnston  
€40.00

## Roy Johnston's Memoirs

### Part One

This very bulky book is subtitled *A Biographical and Autobiographical View of the Twentieth Century in Ireland*. The import of which is that Roy Johnston tells the story of his father Joseph ('Joe') Johnston as well as his own. His father is referred to as 'JJ' and Dr. Roy Johnston as 'RJ'. There is a tendency to reduce the many people who move through these two lives, especially Roy Johnston's, to their initials. It makes reading about minor 'characters' slightly confusing, especially as there are inevitably a large number of 'Mc / Mac's'.

**ROY**

This first part of this review will take the story up to the launching of the 'Civil Rights' strategy in Northern Ireland (chapter 7, part 1, page, 209). It deals with the period 1961-1966, and is sub-titled 'Politics heats up'. RJ returned to Ireland from London in 1961, getting a job with Aer Lingus, having worked for Guinness in London. The latter's 'science' was done in Dublin, the technology in London. There was not a large enough cohort of technologists in Ireland at that time. This

may explain the recent closure of the Guinness plant in London's Park Royal. The job in west London appears to have been interesting but largely routine, RJ had time to help expand the Association of Scientific Workers and become a member of Acton Trades {Union} Council. He kept in with the Labour Party and Communist Party factions, and worked for the Connolly Association.

He seems to be implying that the Connolly Association was not merely *not part* of the CPGB (Communist Party of Great Britain) but was at odds with the parent body. This does not seem to be the case, from evidence from other quarters (nearly everybody else on the Left in GB). The CA was not like, say, the Indian Workers' Association, which was genuinely autonomous, and tended to keep itself equidistant from Labour, the CPGB, and the Maoists. (The Trotskyists tended to want to dissolve such 'autonomist' groups, unless they proved a useful source of recruits.)

C. Desmond Greaves (CDG) looms large in this section of the book. He is quoted at length on a number of occasions, and has a very large entry in the Index. RJ

first encountered him in 1948. CDG was on one of his political 'fishing' expeditions in Ireland. He was at that point interested in John de Courcy-Ireland, and the Fabian Society in TCD (Trinity College, Dublin). RJ was a member of the Prometheus Society which had been started in St. Colomba's College, and was (just about) present in TCD at the period of CDG's visit. Justin Keating was attached to the Prometheus Society (and the Fabian Society), while attending UCD (University College, Dublin).

RJ claims that even at this period he was a 'Connolly' socialist and not a 'Stalinist'. The Stalinist orientation of the CPGB and the USSR (which he describes on page 151 as "*state-capitalist*") repelled him. I am not disputing this, but he had the alternative of working in the Labour Party. The Irish Labour Party was small, but quite enormous compared to the Irish Workers' League (which became the IW Party, then Communist Party of Ireland). Labour was in government with Clann na Poblachta (upon which the hopes of many 'progressives' rested), and admittedly, the Blueshirt Fine Gael. One would have thought that the party founded by Connolly would have been the forum for a Connollyite, especially someone specifically anti-Stalinist. But 'Britain' seems to have exercised a fascination for both Johnstons.

#### JOE

Joe Johnston was the product of a County Tyrone, Presbyterian, small farmer family. Nearly all his siblings, including the girls (quite unusual at that time—the turn of the last century) got a second and third level education by way of scholarships. JJ was a Classicist but became an economist, specialising in agricultural economics. RJ quotes much of his father's strictures on Irish agriculture, in particular his interventions in the Senate he was a representative of TCD, losing his seat to W.B. Stanford, in 1948. There is a problem in that Ministers in question (Frank Aiken and Seán Moylan) are not allowed their 'spake'. One is left with the notion that JJ was simply speaking into a void. Aiken and Moylan are mentioned, in a slighting sort of way. They were both Fianna Fáil (FF)—of which more anon.

It is claimed that JJ ran actual farms at two different periods, in two different places. One (during the War) was near Drogheda, the other near Clonmel in the fifties and sixties. There was also a model farm attached to TCD's agricultural department. But it seems to me that JJ was more in the way of being a 'gentleman farmer' than sharing the experiences of the '30 acre men'. FF is attacked for purchasing land and parcelling it out in thirty acre lots. JJ felt farmers they should be encouraged to set up co-operatives, or be employed on large mixed farms. It is probably accurate to say that such would

be a more economic (in the sense of producing more food for smaller expenditure) use of the land. But it is a classic example of the academic in politics not noticing that 'economics' is not the be-all and end-all of politics. This procedure by FF was part of the working out of the redistribution of the land, from the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy caste to the people. There is no indication that FF interfered if the 'thirty acre' men wished to form themselves into co-operatives. There are further somewhat pointless 'digs' at this 'thirty acre' business, on page 146, for example, in the context of TCD's John Kells Ingram model farm.

RJ mentions Father McDyer of Glencolmcille, Co. Donegal, in Chapter 7, and it is implied that he sent IRA personnel to do voluntary work in co-operatives there. But he nowhere mentions Muintir na Tire or Macra na Feirme, founded by Roman Catholic priests. There is no mention of the Irish Countrywomen's Association, set up in 1926, which was entirely secular in inspiration. Formerly the United Irishwomen, in 1916 it helped found the Women's Institutes in England and Wales. The UI / ICA was a 'spin-off' from Plunkett's co-operative movement of which JJ (and RJ) both approve. Despite the Ulster Presbyterian small farmer origins they seem to have absorbed an Ascendancy or 'Anglo-Saxon' attitude to the land of Ireland—it would be better, meaning more efficient, without all those people living on it.

#### ROY IN DUBLIN

RJ worked in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (set up by De Valera—possibly to get round the sectarian squabbling between TCD and UCD). JJ seems to have been prepared to acknowledge that this was not all one-way traffic. RJ seems to dump all the blame on Michael Tierney, he writes (p147) that Tierney and UCD were hostile to TCD "*on Catholic-nationalist grounds*". This was in the context of rivalry over who was to get the Agriculture and Veterinary courses. JJ disapproved of TCD dropping the 'Arts requirements' for such degrees. He wanted the students to have a French or German (presumably language) option. This was to get them to look to "*the Continent*" rather than to "*Britain*". The Tierney in question was presumably the Blueshirt intellectual, of the 1930s, which may be a secondary reason for RJ's ire. The same person leaned towards Bolshevism in the 'Civil War'.

RJ takes every opportunity to have a 'dig' at Dev and Fianna Fáil: mostly they are standard 'Sticky' ('Official' Republican) 'tropes'. He seems to be still a 'Sticky' at heart. For example, FF set up the Provisional IRA. (The Provis, like the UDA, are an unambiguous fact of life in Belfast and the North, all the wishful thinking in

the world will not magic them away. The above pairing may look odd but the two groups arose at roughly the same time in response to the same set of problems—occasioned by the collapse of the 'Northern Ireland' entity. The 'Provisionals' have become a substantial group, with a politicised *cadre*. The UDA (Ulster Defence Association) has degenerated into a group of gangs making money out of drug-dealing and other criminal scams. The point being that RJ's political (and to an extent social) perceptions have been distorted by propagandist nonsense about Fianna Fáil and the Provisionals.

Other references read very like social snobbery, on page 17, he complains partition 'crippled' the co-operative movement, and about [Sir Horace] Plunkett being 'burned-out'. There is a somewhat snide aside on "*one Edward (sic) de Valera*" [the 'sic' provided by RJ—IPR] attending the British Association for the Advancement of Science Conference in Dublin in 1908. The attendance of David Houston, who "*taught science at St Enda's Patrick Pearse's school*" is noted. De Valera is mentioned in one of RJ's italicised asides in the text. "*The culture link between science and the emerging national elite via de Valera was also flawed... when de Valera set up the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies...*" he displayed a "*limited understanding of the nature of the process of transformation of scientific research into social utility.*"

On the next page (18) RJ notes Sydney Gifford Czira's memory of the 1910 Sinn Féin Aonach na Nodlaig, which featured Harry Ferguson's aircraft (this is Harry Ferguson the tractor man). RJ seems to be implying that the "*innovative entrepreneurial*" spirit abroad in Ireland at that time was dissipated, presumably by the likes of Dev and FF. The waste of talent in the course of the Great War, the War of Independence, and 'Civil War' is not referred to. Neither is the fact that with Harry Ferguson and Dunlop resident in Belfast, it is something of an achievement that the city did not have an extensive car industry. (Rex McCandless of Crossgar held dozens of patents in this field—he was also a world famous racing motor cyclist.)

The Aonach na Nodlaig is noted as "*a major public event*", apparently publicised largely by The O Rahilly, "*with extensive participation by Northern industry*". But, as noted above 'Northern industry' faded after Partition. Ferguson, Dunlop and others out-migrated. With the exception of Faulkner, from the small capitalist class himself, 'Stormont' Ministers simply held their hands out to Westminster. The bustling, entrepreneurial, industrial North of Ireland is now an economic dust bowl, hoping to earn money from 'ghoul tourism' based on our recent blood-letting, and the Titanic. The latter is only one of hundreds of great liners built in Belfast. But even

natives of the place could be forgiven for thinking that it was the town's one attempt at a big boat.

#### PROTECTION

JJ was opposed to Protectionism, being in essence a Manchester Liberal. RJ appears to endorse this stand. The protection of local industry "was the root of all government corruption, with politicians bought by protected capitalists, as exemplified in the Indian National Congress process, and repeated in Fianna Fail". (Page 18, surely this is the wrong way round, 'Éire' became at least quasi-independent before India). Ireland (inevitably a small economy) and India (potentially a huge economy) had both been parts of the City of London's Empire. This slating of India emerges from a book, *The Political Future of India*, by James Johnston, uncle of RJ, and a former member of the ICS (Indian Civil Service), who produced a number of other books in the 1930s, *Can the Hindus Rule India?* and *Hindu Domination in India*—RJ writes that James Johnston "was very critical" of aspects of Hindu culture. Where did Muslim culture stand in his estimation? Judging from the titles (not usually the best approach, admittedly) these books may have been Partitionist in effect, certainly the Muslim League must have welcomed them.

There is an obsession in this book with the wickedness of Fianna Fáil, and its founder Dev, who is never referred to as such, despite RJ's minor obsession with diminutives. JJ developed a "devastating critique" of FF policies in the 1930s. Presumably this was despite the fact that 'amid the bulks of actual things' FF's policies were quite successful. The economy was in better shape in 1940 than it had been in 1930. When JJ was voted off the TCD Senate panel, De Valera reinstated him, in 1951, as part of the Taoiseach's panel of nominees. Dev is compared (page 57) to Mugabe, an analogy which is clearly not meant to be flattering to either man. However, the process RJ is discussing, the distribution of the land from 'commercial farmers' to the people who actually work it, is essentially the same. Except that in 'De Valera's Ireland' the process was quite painless for the owners of large farms and estates. He quotes a Senate debate of 22nd February 1944 in which JJ claims that Cromwell led a Fascist revolution (page 91). JJ complained that Senate debates were 'censored'—largely because some of his remarks weren't reported in newspapers—but this was in the middle of the second World War. RJ's interpolation here reads:

"JJ here identified the historical process which has perverted republican democratic reform movements into throwing up autocratic leaderships such as Cromwell, Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin. He was perhaps hinting implicitly at a similar process behind

the rise of de Valera."

In that case he must have been embarrassed when the same fascist invited him back into the Senate.

Dr. Roy Johnston's interpolation is difficult to understand. A label is sometimes used to cover such people as he mentions: 'revolutionary despot'. Cromwell became a despot / dictator because the English Republican State lost faith in itself. RJ and a number of similar intellectuals seem to hope something similar will happen to the Irish Republican State. Bonaparte seems a more blatant case of military adventurism but the French Republic was enfeebled by the extraordinary 'self denying ordinance' of the members of the first National Assembly in refusing to stand for election in subsequent Assemblies. The people who had been forced to construct a Republican State simply absented themselves from politics. Napoleon became a monarch and reinstated the Church, because that was what *la France profonde* wanted, and more to the point, needed. To that extent he was a despot, but he left the land settlement intact, and even the returned Bourbons left the land in the hands of the peasantry. Napoleon Bonaparte remained a revolutionary in that his forces carried the basic principles of the French Revolution to every land in mainland Europe (and England could not completely cordon-off Ireland from the infection).

Putting Hitler in the context of 'republican democratic reform movements' is a bit odd. It may refer to his giving some substance to the 'socialist' bit of National Socialism. It may also have to do with the fact that in certain sections of Irish society today, any old nonsense is entertained in regard to Dev and FF. Lenin was hyper-democratic in his propaganda, especially in *The State and Revolution*, which is practically Anarchist. In his practical politics he had no problems in ignoring vulgar matters like majorities, not even within his own Party. When Stalin took the Soviet State in hand, every 'Stalinist' convention was already in place. He simply used them to make the USSR the superpower that smashed Hitler's war machine and balanced-out the USA for half a century.

Dev was a republican, a democrat, and a substantial reformer (see above on the—peaceful—redistribution of land): quite why he is being turned into a bogeyman is difficult to understand. There are a number of asides about Dev, most of which seem intended to demonstrate his narrow-mindedness. In footnote 25, page 376, Chapter 11, he mentions "*de Valera's earlier scheme for developing a Radio Eireann World Service*". Dev's notion is undated. (It would be interesting to know who put the kibosh on this, given that 'Athlone' was not available to all of the Six Counties, and the Irish national television

station seems to have been deliberately organised so that much of Northern Ireland could not receive the signal. Some of these problems are technical and geographical—in the Newry area it is difficult to pick up signals from anywhere—except the mindless commercial (one man and a wee lad) Omeath station. But many Northerners still have to go to pains to get RTÉ's signal. Allegedly, the homes of UDA officers can be pinpointed quite easily. They are the ones with television aerials on three metre high masts, to get the signal from the 'donkey cart Republic'—for the sport. Radio Éireann comes across clear as a bell in the flatlands of Lancashire.) This aside on a World Service is fairly neutral, but it is the only one in the book.

Page 323 mentions JJ's final political acts as part of an "anti-EEC" campaign, but RJ does not say what he felt about such matters. Having been in, at the least, the 'catchment area' of the CPGB, and at that point still in the 'official' Republican movement he would have been opposed to the EEC. The CPGB's, the CPI's (and the Workers' Party of Ireland-to-be) grounds were, in essence, Soviet—the USSR did not want a Christian / Social Democratic potential superpower on its doorstep. 'Both wings', as it was put those days, of the Republican movement were opposed to 'Europe', for reasons that would not have embarrassed an English 'Euro-skeptic'. JJ, characteristically, opposed membership because of the CAP (common agricultural policy). His reasoning was Manchester Liberal: it would interfere with trade. That any other policy would depopulate the land appears to be of no account. (The current Administration in the US is subsidising the agricultural sector, not because it has problems with 'agri-business', or fears that America may not be able to feed itself. The motivation is that the term 'American farmer' is in danger of becoming as antiquated as 'Wild West'.) Anthony Coughlan, who is mentioned frequently in this book is still opposed to the EU on vaguely nationalist / 'anti-imperialist' grounds. This is despite the fact that membership of the Union has boosted output in Irish agriculture. The EU has been very solicitous of minorities since its inception: without it a number of 'lesser used' languages would be extinct or in a very bad way. Undoubtedly the increasing dominance of the 'Anglo-Saxon' economic liberal approach in the EU will make life difficult for them and make the term 'farmer' redundant as it very nearly is in Great Britain.

Dr. Johnston's attitudes to Irish politics (which consists mostly of a blind loathing of Fianna Fáil, and thereby, an increasingly odd attitude to its opponents), and the build-up to the explosion in the North, will be dealt with in the next part of this review.

Seán McGouran

## The Burning Of Cork

Mr. Manus O Riordan's review of the Burning of Cork has only recently been brought to my attention. I would ask you to publish the attached as my reply to his review. If you do publish my reply, please publish the entire reply without any changes. **Dick Kenny** (Cork)

Manus O Riordan's critique of Jerry Whites and Brendan O Sheas book *The Burning of Cork* in the March/April issues of the *Irish Political Review*, has only recently come to my attention.

I would describe both his articles as being contrived and "all over the place" and one would wonder at times what he was really on about.

The fact that the jewess Sarah Medalie died as a result of a raid by the Black and Tans on the Friday, night before the burning of Cork and this was not mentioned in the book was regrettable. However it would have been just as regrettable if she had been a Catholic, Protestant, Atheist or Communist.

He criticizes the book for describing the period prior to the arrival of the Black and Tans as being a civil war between the RIC and the IRA. Yet it was a civil war in so far as Irish men were fighting Irishmen, the IRA were fighting the RIC and civilian spies and informers. Cork was a loyalist town.

Manus goes on to castigate the book for saying, from a British point of view, the civilian population were legitimate targets. Of course they were, does he really believe that when the IRA attacked the British and disappeared into the crowd, that the British would not feel justified in attacking the crowd. They would not be saying to themselves "we cannot do this because it is historical fact that we should not be here in the first place". Remember an IRA volunteer in Cork city could throw a bomb at the British and go home and have his supper.

Manus suggests that there is a thread running through the book which blames the IRA for British reprisals. This is of course wrong, the authors only tried to put the reprisal attacks in context—does anyone really think that the British would have tried to burn the city if there wasn't a war on?

Manus would have us believe that the burning of Cork was part of a pogrom which started with the death of the jewess Sarah Medalie.

I should point out, from the 21st of February 1920 to the 10th of December 1920, 12 business premises, 2 private houses, 5 clubs, 2 parish halls and 1 union hall had all been destroyed by fire, 4 people had been killed and 20 were

wounded. Something was happening all the time and some of it went unreported. This was a planned campaign of arson and pillage and premises were selected for destruction. Evidence of this was given by Florrie O Donoghue Cork no. 1 Brigade Intelligence officer, when he told the story of the auxiliary officer who tried to prevent the looting of one shop by the black and tans, during the burning of Cork, and the reply he got from the Tan was "we don't give a damn this is the shop that was pointed out to us".

This campaign was carried out by the Auxiliaries and Black and Tans and became a campaign of revenge for the annihilation of all their comrades at Kilmichael and the reports in the press concerning the condition of the bodies after the ambush. Part of the campaign was carried out in a "covert way" with some of the Auxiliaries masquerading as members of the so called "Anti Sinn Fein Society".

However the provocation caused by the ambush of the 2 lorry 20 man convoy of Auxiliaries 300 yards from Victoria Barracks at Dillons Cross changed all that. The Auxiliaries ran amok, burned 6 houses at Dillons Cross and then burned a large part of the City, 2000 people were put out of work, 5 acres of property were destroyed and in today's money the damage would have been 250 million Euro. The reprisal shocked Ireland and along with the hunger strike and death of Terence McSwiney for the second time in four months brought international attention to the war in Cork. It was a huge own goal by the British Government, an observer wrote "Cork is heroic, noble, immortal and its ruins are a monument to her love for liberty and humanity."

Manus is critical of what he calls the neat cause effect picture of ambush retaliation as presented by the authors in respect of Saturday night the 11th of December 1920. I wonder what book was he reading? Did he see the 2 letters captured by IRA intelligence which were written by an auxiliary who had taken part in the burning of Cork. To his sister he wrote "I just escaped the ambush in which 8 of our boys were wounded, but arrived later as a reinforcement. We took a sweet revenge". To his mother he wrote "the burning and sacking of Cork followed immediately on the ambush of our men". War is all about cause and effect.

It has been accepted by observers including the then Bishop of Cork Daniel Cohalan, and historians of the period, that the ambush at Dillons Cross provided the pretext to the Auxiliaries to burn Cork as a reprisal for Kilmichael. Florence O Donoghues (Cork No. 1 Brigade adjutant and director of intelligence and in later

years acknowledged historian) silence on this matter has been deafening. He was silent because he knew the real story of Kilmichael was reflected in the savage way the Auxiliaries behaved on that Saturday night the 11th of December. Evidence does exist which indicates we were not told the truth about Kilmichael. New evidence on Kilmichael and other actions which took place during the war of independence would not diminish peoples admiration for Commandant Tom Barry and the other prominent people in the war, but would rather renew interest, as the characters are revealed as human beings and not the "paragons of perfection" they were told they were. At this stage it would be unpatriotic not to reveal the truth.

In the months of 1921 the IRA had suffered reverses in the 3 Brigade areas at Dripsey, Mourne Abbey, Upton, Crushmalanive, Clonmult and Clogheen, plus the capture of 5 weapons dumps in the No. 1 Brigade area, and the arrest of Con Conroy, the IRA intelligence officer who worked as a clerk in the adjutants office at Victoria Barracks Cork. It would seem the British were getting to grips with the IRA and were on their way to winning the war on the military front. The IRA volunteers shortage of arms and equipment and their lack of proper training meant that a military victory for them was not possible. General Strickland wrote in his diary on the last day he spent in Victoria Barracks before the evacuation in 1922 "and so this is the end of two and half years of toil, a year ago we had a perfect organization and had them beaten, a short time more would have completed it thoroughly". Sir Neville Macready, G.O.C. of British forces in Ireland, in December 1920 asked Lloyd George for just 3 months, that was all that he would require to "clear up this mess".

However on the public opinion front the British were very definitely losing the war. Major Bernard Montgomery who was brigade major in Victoria Barracks Cork in 1921 wrote "my own view is that to win a war of this kind you must be ruthless, Oliver Cromwell or the Germans would have settled it in a very short time. Nowadays public opinion precludes such methods, the nation would never allow it and the politicians would lose their jobs if they sanctioned it".

The burning of Cork had a huge effect on British and world opinion and was instrumental in forcing Britain to agree to a truce on the 11th of July 1921, seven months later. Manus O Riordan's failure to acknowledge this about a city had had such close family connections with, is hard to understand given his readiness to acknowledge the part played by the burning of the Custom House in securing

the same truce. One possible explanation for this could be, that when Manus thinks he has a "good story" all truths and loyalties go out the window.

The Jewess Sarah Medalie, was not the only victim of that weekend, and Manus describes the authors failure to mention her name as bizarre and he calls for "elementary humanity" for her. In all there were 17 victims on that weekend, 6 people died and 11 were wounded.

To me Manus O Riordans failure to mention the names of the Catholic priest Canon Thomas Magnier and volunteer Tadgh Crowley was not only bizarre but quite sinister. These two people were murdered by Cadet Sergeant Vernon Hart as a reprisal some days after the Dillons Cross ambush. Likewise his failure to mention Cadet Spencer Chapman one of the auxiliaries who died from his wounds after the ambush, and his failure to mention the eleven other wounded auxiliaries, most of whom were wounded below the waist and would have lost their manhood—but sure they were only Christians and worse than that, they were British Christians and not deserving of Manus O Riordan's "Elementary Humanity".

## Manus O'Riordan replies to Dick Kenny:

Dick Kenny writes that "when Manus thinks he has a 'good story' all truth and loyalties go out the window". Given the fact that my articles have long been biased in the direction of my father's sentiments when singing "The Boys who Bate the Black-and-Tans were the Boys of the County Cork", I am bemused by his charge of disloyalty to my Cork roots and view it as an example of a certain type of Leaside parochial paranoia that my father also made damned sure he would escape from. But the charge that I am a liar to boot is not so amusing. For, after stating the obvious—that "the Jewess Sarah Medalie was not the only victim"—he goes on to charge that not only am I callously indifferent to other casualties on the grounds that "sure they were only Christians", but that my alleged "failure to mention", *inter alia*, "the Catholic priest Canon Thomas Magnier" is, in his view, "not only bizarre but quite sinister".

I would hate to think that any act of omission on my part has even partially fuelled Dick Kenny's dark thoughts that I am operating according to some "sinister" set of protocols. When he writes that my views are "all over the place", this has an element of truth, but only in the sense that such views have been further expressed in several other *Irish Political Review* articles

than the two described by him as "only recently brought to my attention". Yet these two articles alone refute Dick Kenny's innuendoes and false allegations. The facts are that in the March issue I specifically referred to the victims of **The Burning of Cork** as "the Catholics Jeremiah and Cornelius Delaney" as well as "the Jewish Sarah Medalie", while in the April issue I also wrote "Catholic O'Sullivan's and Jewish Spiros were no more spared the 'neighbourly' attentions of the marauding Tans of MacCurtain Street Barracks than were **Catholics and Jews—and indeed Freemasons as well**—spared the rampaging raids of the Tans from Tuckey Street Barracks on the night of Friday, 10 December 1920—the commencement of a **Tan pogrom against the citizenry of Cork as a whole**. So much for the 'scene setting' by White and O'Shea of the 'deceptive' normality with which Saturday's Christmas shopping had supposedly commenced".

Dick Kenny objects: "Manus would have us believe that the burning of Cork was part of a pogrom which started with the death of the Jewess Sarah Medalie".

It is true that the original Russian use of the word "pogrom" specifically involved Jewish victims. That is why, in accepting the need for a more precise use of language in today's circumstances, I have also come to agree that this term should no longer be used as a soft option in order to describe the 1904 anti-Semitic agitation in Limerick. In my April essay "GAA Founder No Blooming Anti-Semite", accessible at [www.anfearrua.com/story.asp?id=2126](http://www.anfearrua.com/story.asp?id=2126) on the "GAA Unplugged" website, I quote historian Dermot Keogh's own re-assessment in that regard "The story of the Limerick 'pogrom'—which really does not deserve to be called a pogrom—has been told more than once". And I go on to comment: "Now I myself must plead guilty to the usage of such terminology. The original meaning of the Russian word 'pogrom' translates as 'chaos' or 'devastation'. I have often used the term 'pogrom' to describe the mob attacks on the persons and property of both Jews in Limerick in 1904 and German nationals in Dublin 1914. If, however, accompanying deaths are taken to be a necessary component of the later understanding of both the word itself and the actual phenomenon of 'pogrom'—as it is indeed currently defined in standard English dictionaries—then the only circumstances in which that designation should now be employed would be in respect of the Orange pogroms against the Catholic minority in Ulster and the 1920 Black-and-Tan pogrom against the citizenry of Cork, which involved the death of several Catholics and one Jew".

Indeed, for many decades now it has been standard practice to use the term

"pogrom" in order to describe those anti-Catholic mob attacks, involving both death and destruction, which bedevilled Ulster-society at various stages in its history, without there being a single Jew in sight. I now stand corrected by current dictionary definitions as to my previous more liberal usage of the word "pogrom". But, for no less valid reasons, Dick Kenny should also cease defending the abuse of the term "civil war" by Gerry White and Brendan O'Shea, which they have chosen in order to misname the War of Independence waged by the Army of Dáil Éireann against the "Fascist dictation" of Britain's RIC, to quote the exact phraseology used by Frank Crozier himself, the first commanding officer of the RIC Auxiliaries. The Oxford dictionary defines "civil war" as "war between citizens of the same country". Only in respect of a nine county Ulster might it be in any way reasonable to argue that this term could be used to describe the Nationalist/Unionist conflict, where there were indeed substantial bodies of citizenry supporting opposite sides of that same War of Independence. But much though I deplore the politics of the Southern Catholic minority who voted Redmondite in the 1918 General Election, it would be slanderous to label such Nationalists as traitors who somehow provided a domestic base for a "Civil War" against the Republican majority, for there was not in fact any body of Redmondite citizenry who supported the RIC in waging Britain's war against Dáil Éireann.

And that is the main problem with the White and O'Shea approach to such history. I myself have no personal axe whatsoever to grind in respect of these two writers. When they write good history, I have no hesitation in praising them, as I did in the August 2006 issue of *Irish Political Review*, for their very realistic and cogently argued assessment of Easter 1916 in Cork. But when such professional historians' pursuit of what they want to present as a "good story" proceeds to exclude any reference whatsoever to the death and arson that had already taken place in Cork City on December 10 1920—presumably for the purposes of further heightening the dramatic impact of their narrative of the Dillon's Cross ambush on December 11 and the total destruction of the city centre that followed—it is time for somebody to blow the whistle on such bad "history".

There is one key area where I do agree with Dick Kenny, when he writes that "war is all about cause and effect". He further writes that "Dillon's Cross provided the pretext to the Auxiliaries to burn Cork as a reprisal for Kilmichael". Precisely! A pretext is not a cause, and the cause was indeed the success of Tom Barry's ambush at Kilmichael on November 28, 1920.

Dick Kenny can be excused if my article to that effect in the March 2001 issue of *Irish Political Review* had not also been brought to his attention. Subsequently updated under the title of "Forget Not the Boys of Kilmichael!" and published in the 2005 edition of the *Ballingeary Historical Society Journal*, it can also be found online at [www.indymedia.ie/article/69172](http://www.indymedia.ie/article/69172) where I wrote as follows and hopefully mentioned enough murdered and tormented Christians for Dick Kenny's satisfaction:

"Kevin Myers proceeds to re-echo Peter Hart's incorrect claim that Séamus Ó Liatháin was 'the only person killed by the Macroom Auxiliaries before Kilmichael'. They were in fact in the process of establishing a reign of terror over what they regarded as the *untermenschen* ('lesser breeds') of the West Cork Gaeltacht. Sunday after Sunday the Auxies systematically descended on Ballingeary at Mass-time in order to corral and abuse the villagers as they emerged from worship. And in a 'shoot-to-kill' mission on November 10, 1920 they murdered the unarmed Volunteer Críostóir Ó Luasa in the neighbouring townland of Túirín Dubh. Hart chose to make no reference whatsoever to this murder, nor to the subsequent encounter between the gloating Auxies and the local parish priest and Gaelic scholar, an t-Athair Donncha Ó Donnchú, at whom they gleefully roared 'There's work for you back there!' ..."

"Eoghan Harris presented the marauding Auxies of Macroom as being guilty of no more than going on 'a routine patrol' through Kilmichael ... He also argued the following on their behalf: 'My account does not depict the Auxiliary Officers—as Cork Republican folklore does—as faceless digits who got their just deserts. If that were true, the comrades of the dead men would have taken a savage revenge. Far from doing so, the Auxiliaries around Macroom remained disciplined'. No revenge? Within a fortnight of Kilmichael, on December 11, 1920, the centre of Cork City was destroyed by fire in an Auxie-led pogrom. Days later, on December 15, the Macroom Auxies also murdered the parish priest of Dunmanway, Canon Magner, shooting him dead by the side of the road. The Auxie murderer in question was, by ironic coincidence, also named Hart ..."

"Britain had indeed altered the character of warfare prior to Kilmichael, but Kilmichael in turn altered the course of the War itself ... And the attempts by assorted revisionist scribes to denigrate the Kilmichael ambush, which struck such a mortal blow against the most powerful Empire in the world, is seen to be incapable of withstanding the light of day."

And, at the end of the day, that's about the size of it!

**Manus O'Riordan**

## Dev's Refugee Policy

This May the Irish-language TV station TG4 transmitted *Stráinséirí*, a documentary detailing the experiences of various immigrant communities in Dublin, both past and present. It was sensitively produced by the daughter of a Breton immigrant who had arrived in Ireland after the Second World War in order to evade a French death sentence for collaboration with Nazi Germany, but whose story—intended to be a central feature—was to be cynically pulled from the January transmission of RTE's so-called documentary *Ireland's Nazis*, all in that network's own squalid corporate interests and the media 'principle' of 'looking after one's own'. I myself participated in the *Stráinséirí* documentary, relating my childhood experiences of the 1950s and 1960s. For I had grown up in that South Circular Road neighbourhood which was then coming towards the end of the era when it had been colloquially known among Dubliners as "*Little Jerusalem*", that initial area of significant and concentrated Jewish immigration and settlement over the course of three decades from the 1880s. (Nowadays it is among the areas of significant and concentrated Muslim immigration and settlement.)

This programme treated all minority communities—Jewish, Muslim, Black etc.—quite sympathetically, and it also contained archival footage of Dublin's Jewish community during the 1960s. One sequence featured an elderly Hassidic Jew, as he closed the hall door of a St. Kevin's Parade house converted into an ultra-Orthodox synagogue and went on to describe, in heavily-accented English which he had still some difficulty in articulating, that same neighbourhood where he had settled and raised his own family: "*When I came to Dublin over 40 years ago, I would say in the whole district nearly every second house, every third house, was Jewish. And all the Jews were living in very harmony, very nicely, very religious, 'til the War broke out*". At which point a look of such sadness crossed what had been—at the very start of that same sentence—a smiling face. No further elaboration followed, nor had there been any in the original TV programme where I had first seen this footage during the 1960s. But I myself knew what he had in mind—certainly not any wartime development in Ireland itself, but the Holocaust perpetrated on his people in Central Europe (though ignorant of the particular details of his own personal loss). I was now acutely aware that if this footage

had been accessed by the producers of *Ireland's Nazis*, a spin would have been put on this old Jew's last few words that would have twisted their meaning beyond all recognition.

Many other elderly Dublin Jews had shared the pain of immediate family loss as a result of the Holocaust, among them being a neighbour across the street from us, to whom my mother became both friend and confidant. While 90 percent of Dublin's Jewish community had originated in the Kovno (Kaunas) province of Lithuania, Mrs. Green was Polish, having left her Warsaw home as a young woman in the early 1930s for an arranged marriage with a very much older Lithuanian-born Dubliner. She did not, however, discover until she reached her new home on Victoria Street that her husband was in fact a widower, and that living in that same house were five sons of the same generation as herself. To say that she instantly felt homesick would be an understatement. And in more ways than one. All her life Mrs. Green continued to hero-worship Marshal Jozef Pilsudski—the Polish socialist nationalist leader with whom Connolly had identified most closely during the First World War, but whom Trotsky would brook no opposition in dogmatically denouncing and "*scientifically*" classifying as a "*real fascist*". But, fraught as her new domestic set-up in exile would be for both herself and her own two Dublin-born children, particularly when widowed after only a few years of marriage, she came to appreciate and love that Ireland beyond her own four walls as having been her salvation. For, with the exception of two brothers who had also emigrated from Poland, all of Mrs. Green's family ended up as Holocaust victims in the Nazi crematoria of Treblinka extermination camp.

Two streets away from us on Longwood Avenue, my contemporaries included the children of the Hassidic Jewish Bleier family. I was to learn from Sarah Bleier, when we were about 14 years of age, that both of her Yugoslav parents had been inmates of Auschwitz Extermination Camp and that Mrs. Bleier was in fact the one and only survivor of her own family. Small wonder, then, that their first-born son had been life-affirmingly named Yidele ('little Jew'). The Bleier parents had come to Ireland as post-War refugees in order to cater for the religious needs of 137 orphaned Jewish children from Central

and Eastern Europe who had also been admitted to Ireland in 1948, after surviving the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Having known by sight, but not by name, the elderly Hassidic Jew who regularly accompanied the Bleier males to the St. Kevin's Parade Synagogue, I therefore assumed that his look of sadness on TV was related to the loss of his own parents and/or siblings during the Holocaust. But when I recently enquired as to his name, his story became even more tragic, through his loss of two generations after him. For I then realised that I had already read accounts of Aaron Zvi Steinberg, who had immigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1926. The Dolphin's Barn Synagogue wedding in July 1937 of his daughter Ettie to her Antwerp-based husband had indeed been a particularly joyful celebration for Dublin's Jewish community. But within a matter of five years that same young couple and their Paris-born son were to be rounded up and transported from Drancy to Auschwitz, for immediate extermination on 4th September 1942. This, then, was the reason why Mr. Steinberg, as the father and grandfather of the only Jewish citizens of Ireland to perish in the Holocaust, had momentarily on camera expressed a look of such sadness. But there is more than human empathy involved in providing this explanation. Nowadays it has also become a political necessity to place it on record. For otherwise his statement that Dublin's Jewish community had been living in harmony "til the War broke out" would be recast by the mentality of the *Ireland's Nazis* programme and its media cheerleaders into a charge that he had suffered as a victim of some wartime outburst of anti-Semitism on the part of Ireland itself, perhaps even going as far as to also suggest that Ireland had been guilty of handing over Ettie Steinberg and her infant son to their Nazi murderers!

"A warm house for Nazis, but a closed door for Jewish children" was how Eoghan Harris headlined his acclamation of that "documentary" in the *Sunday Independent* last January 14th, reiterating the charge that de Valera, "for nationalist reasons, ran a government which warmed a cosy house for Nazi refugees but shut the door on Jewish children", making Ireland a country which saw "the fascists being welcomed with open arms". And that is how this "documentary" had indeed presented matters, suggesting that it was the Irish Government itself that had stalled any action on an agreement in principle to admit Jewish refugee children towards the end of the War, until it was far too late to save them from perishing in the Holocaust.

Dermot Keogh's 1998 history—*Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*—has been criticised by me online at [www.anfearrua.com](http://www.anfearrua.com)

[com/story.asp?id=2127](http://www.anfearrua.com/story.asp?id=2127) in some considerable detail, with regard to both his distorted analysis of Big Jim Larkin's response to Jewish immigration in the early 1900s and his misleading examination of a number of 1930s case studies, where he confused issues of immigration procedure with those of refugee policy. It is obvious that it was Keogh's history that also provided the source for a number of both wartime and post-war case studies drawn upon by the producers of *Ireland's Nazis*, but without any acknowledgement being given by them to Keogh for his specific original research. Indeed they had 'good [sic] reason' to avoid giving such credit. For in these later case studies Keogh's own handling of his material is above reproach and constitutes a direct refutation of the 'documentary' spin put on them. Here are some excerpts from Keogh's thoroughly objective narrative of wartime issues, with my own emphases and bracketed clarifications added:

"Meanwhile, the US envoy in Dublin, David Gray, had seen [Secretary of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs] Walshe on 9 February 1944 to discuss President Roosevelt's setting up of the War Refugee Board. Walshe told Gray that the Irish government was prepared in principle to receive 500 Jewish refugee children. Gray sent news of the offer to Washington, and on 22 March he sent Walshe a copy of Washington's reply: *'Please inform the appropriate Irish official that this Government accepts with deep appreciation the generous and humanitarian offer which we understand the Irish Government is prepared to make to receive and provide haven for 500 Jewish refugee children'*. Gray also asked Walshe whether the Irish government would be willing to guarantee admission after the war to an additional 500 Jewish refugee children. Such a commitment, Gray said, might enable the War Refugee Board to induce the Swiss government to accept larger numbers of refugee children from Vichy for the duration of the war... The formal decision to admit the first 500 Jewish children was taken the same day by de Valera; he told Walshe he would make a decision later on the admission of a further 500 Jewish refugee children after the war. Gray was informed of the decision and responded gratefully to the news..."

"[From Palestine] Chief Rabbi Herzog [formerly the first Chief Rabbi of Ireland] sent his next cable [to his long-standing friend, de Valera] on 5 April: 'EXTREMELY PERPLEXED. 235 JEWISH REFUGEE FAMILIES IN VITTEL VICHY FRANCE FOR WHOM YOU ONCE SUCCESSFULLY INTERCEDED ARE AGAIN THREATENED WITH DEPORTATION WHICH MEANS ALAS CERTAIN EXTERMINATION. PRAY MAKE IMMEDIATELY SUPREME EFFORTS SAVE DOOMED ...' De Valera replied on 18 April, saying

the Irish government was making a further appeal on behalf of the Jewish families ... Walshe [also wrote] on 19 April pointing out that they had so far failed to secure permission for the Vittel group to come to Ireland and that the Irish representative had been instructed to make further efforts. He understood that there was 'very little chance unless they have relatives here and even then very doubtful'. Walshe could afford to be emphatic because he had on file two recent reports from Con Cremin [Irish Minister] in Berlin which indicated that the fate of the Vittel Jews was already sealed. He [Cremin] concluded that no exit visas would be provided for Jews, even those with relatives in Ireland. On April 19 Walshe requested Cremin to make a further intervention on behalf of the Vittel Jews. Replying that he was making representations as instructed, Cremin asked Walshe whether cognisance had been taken of his despatches of 24 and 27 March. Walshe replied that Irish motivation was 'purely humanitarian', and even if there was little hope he simply wanted Cremin to try again ... When Cremin reported on 4 July, he had definite news that the Polish Jews at Vittel were in a camp in eastern Europe ... Cremin added that the official he spoke to said that the 'German authorities had been treating (our) application with all possible goodwill because it comes from Ireland instead of as would be done normally refusing it out of hand'. While Cremin continued to use his diplomatic skills in the macabre world of wartime Berlin, Herzog cabled de Valera and Walshe later in July: 'REFERENCE OUR COMMUNICATIONS MATTER JEWISH REFUGEES VITTEL ABOUT WHOM YOU WERE KIND ENOUGH TO MAKE INTERVENTION REGRET INFORM YOU THAT REPATRIATED REFUGEES FROM THAT CAMP DEPORTED FROM VITTEL ON 18.4.44 AND 16.5.44 TO UNKNOWN DESTINATION ... WE FEAR THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN SENT TO DEATH CAMPS IN POLAND. MAY I ON BEHALF HOUSE ISRAEL WHILE THANKING ESTEEMED GOVERNMENT FOR PREVIOUS INTERVENTION APPEAL YOU MAKE CALL TO GERMAN GOVERNMENT HOLD UP DEPORTATION THESE PEOPLE. IN FACE CRUEL TRAGEDY WHICH WILL SHOCK HISTORY TILL END OF DAYS ... WARMEST THANKS GREETINGS YOURSELF TAOISEACH.'

"De Valera cabled Herzog on 24 July: **'doing everything possible'**. And he was. Walshe cabled Cremin on 28 July relaying the contents of Herzog's telegram. On 2 August Cremin reported that he had raised the question of the Vittel Jews and hoped to get the information ... A newspaper clipping reported that 225 Vittel Jews were in Auschwitz, Silesia, where they faced extermination in the 'bath-houses'. Walshe cabled Cremin on 9 August with surnames and the number in the family, but all efforts proved futile ... Based on Swiss sources, Cremin

informed Dublin on 28 August that 163 of the Jews in Vittel had been removed in April and 129 in May, while some had escaped by committing suicide. According to the historian Natan Eck, the families were sent to the extermination camp at Auschwitz where they were put to death ..."

"On 14 August Aaron S. Brown of the US legation in Dublin wrote to Walshe concerning Ireland's agreement in principle to accept 500 Jewish refugee children from France and requesting that the agreement be extended to Hungary. **The Irish government readily agreed** ... Walshe told US envoy David Gray ... who wrote to the US ambassador in London [indicating a **veto by the US itself on the admission of adult Jewish refugees to Ireland—MOR**]: *'In the course of our discussion with the Irish government it was agreed that in all existing circumstances five hundred was as many as the Jewish population in Eire could reasonably be expected to support and as many as the Irish economy could reasonably be expected to absorb. The quota is limited to children inasmuch as for security reasons it was considered undesirable both from the American and Irish viewpoint to permit the entry of adult persons from Axis countries.'* ... Irish diplomatic missions abroad continued, nevertheless, to petition on behalf of Jews in the death camps ... On 29 November Cremin reported from Berlin on his enquiries about the 12,000 Jews deported from Kaunas in Lithuania ... Cremin got nowhere. On 13 December he told Walshe that he had seen the same Foreign Office official and followed instructions. But the official, who appeared to have talked to higher authorities, could not see that the question of Lithuanian Jews concerned Ireland at all ... However, Cremin continued to press the case of the Jews. He maintained close contact with the Swiss legation in Berlin and was kept informed of their actions in this area. He cabled on 21 December that a memorandum he had prepared on Jewish refugees had been handed back to him by an official at the Foreign Office. There was no justification, he was told, for an intervention by the Irish; the persons concerned were not Irish and did not have any Irish connections. As the enormity of Nazi crimes were being catalogued, Chief Rabbi Herzog cabled on 28 December: **'PRAY MAKE SUPREME EFFORT NOW SAVING BUDAPEST JEWS. IMMINENT EXTERMINATION. HEARTRENDING TRAGEDY. GREETINGS ANTICIPATORY THANKS.'** Walshe replied to Herzog on 17 January 1945: 'Have been doing everything possible behalf Hungarian Jews'. Walshe had kept in contact with US envoy David Gray about what could be done. 'This is just what we want', Gray told him on 19 January after Walshe had ordered yet another diplomatic intervention. The US War Refugee Board had Gray convey to 'the appropriate authorities

in Eire its appreciation of their humanitarian initiative with regard to threatened Jewish internees of concentration camps in Germany'. They encouraged a further intervention in Berlin. David Gray was critical of the board's 'hardly tactful method of approach' but asked Walshe 'if in your own way you could suggest to the German authorities that the safety of the inmates of these camps were a matter of concern to your government'. Walshe replied to Gray on 26 January that the Irish government had immediately wired Cremin in Berlin to approach the German authorities about Birkenau and Oswiecim (Auschwitz). Cremin reported on 1 February that the camps in question had been evacuated and the inmates transferred to a more central camp. This news was immediately sent to David Gray ..."

**"In the context of the crying need to try to stop the mass slaughter of the Jews, the project to bring 500 orphaned Jewish children to Ireland lost its urgency. The German authorities were simply not prepared to allow this to happen ... What conclusions may be drawn from the evidence presented above? Firstly, de Valera responded positively to every overture to try to assist a specific group of Jews in danger of being deported to the death camps. Secondly, Ireland's diplomatic service was active in trying to save Jews. Thirdly, Ireland was prepared to receive two large groups of Jewish children as refugees."** [Keogh, pp 180-191].

Keogh went on to provide ample evidence of the anti-Semitic prejudices of Peter Berry in the Department of Justice. The TV 'documentary' drew on this evidence, but without the *caveat*—entered by Keogh himself—as to how Berry had been overruled and defeated by de Valera. But perhaps one of the most blatantly cynical distortions of historical context by the "Ireland's Nazis" producers was to present some of Berry's statements on screen as if they related to the simultaneous presentation of a discussion as to whether or not to admit Jewish refugees fleeing from Nazi genocide. The TV viewer needed to be very quick-sighted indeed to notice that the Berry document being flashed on screen carried the date 1953 and did not at all relate to Nazi genocide but rather to Communist repression. The case actually involved a number of Orthodox Jewish families who were seeking refuge from the religious discrimination they were suffering under the Communist authorities in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, whose repression of the Catholic Church had in fact been even more severe. Here again, it is Keogh himself we have to thank for providing the narrative that refutes the dishonest character of that 'documentary' spin:

"[The Jewish Fianna Fáil TD] Robert

Briscoe, together with two members of the Paris-based Joint Distribution Committee which cared for Jewish refugees, met [Minister for Justice] Boland on 12 February 1953. Briscoe wanted to find a home in Ireland for ten Jewish families, approximately twenty adults and twenty children. The official minute of the meeting recorded that the minister adopted 'a sympathetic attitude'. Briscoe, advised to put his request in writing, wrote to Boland the following day: 'As verbally explained, there is small hurriedly constructed temporary camp to house 100 orthodox Jewish families who have escaped from behind the Iron Curtain into Austria. They are mostly of Hungarian or Czecho-Slovakian origin. Their position is very dangerous and the Joint Distribution Committee, which maintains these people, are fearful of the consequences which would flow to these people if by any chance or act they should again come under the power of the Communist authorities.' The minister instructed one of his officials, Peter Berry, to prepare a memorandum for him on the subject. Berry told the departmental secretary, Thomas J. Coyne, on 16 February that Boland, who was going to speak about the matter to do Valera that afternoon, wanted the application examined as 'a matter of urgency'. Berry proceeded to outline his views on the subject: 'The Department has refused literally hundreds of applications on behalf of refugees of good character of Catholic and Christian religions whose plight was no less pitiable than that of the group in question now ... There is a strong anti-Jewish feeling in this State which is particularly evident to the Aliens Section of the Department of Justice. Sympathy for the Jews has not been particularly excited at the recent news that some thousands are fleeing westwards because of the recent round-up of a number of communist Jews who had been prominent in Governments and Government service in Eastern European countries.' ..."

"Coyne—with Berry's assistance—prepared a memorandum for government. Dated 28 February, it continued to oppose the admission of the refugees: 'Although the Jewish community in Ireland is only 3,907 persons, according to the 1946 census, there is a fairly strong anti-Semitic feeling throughout the country based, perhaps, on historical reasons, the fact that the Jews have remained a separate community within the community and have not permitted themselves to be assimilated, and that for their numbers they appear to have disproportionate wealth and influence.' The memorandum was circulated to the other departments in preparation for a cabinet meeting."

"Briscoe's ministerial sources had kept him informed about the development of the case. He knew that the matter was very delicately balanced and had to be allowed to take its administrative course without unwell-

come pressure from any lobby group. That did not happen. Charles Jordan, of the Joint Distribution Committee, had been in the delegation which had seen the Minister for Justice about the matter in early February. Impatient with the delay, he expressed his disappointment at the lack of development in a letter on 11 March to the chief rabbi of Ireland, Immanuel Jakobovits. He explained to Jakobovits that he had phoned Briscoe a number of times and had simply got 'the curt reply that nothing had happened yet'. Jordan urged the chief rabbi to take action through the Jewish Representative Council. Briscoe in turn received a curt note from Jakobovits: 'It is most disappointing that the impetus created by our visitors has not apparently been maintained and that this vital rescue work is experiencing such delays.' The chief rabbi wanted Briscoe 'to ascertain the present attitude of the government' and inform Jordan accordingly. Jakobovits also said that he was contacting Herman Good of the Jewish Representative Council in the hope that all three of them might bring influence to bear on the responsible authorities. Briscoe told the chief rabbi on 19 March that a simple phone call to him would have enabled him to explain that 'the decision by the Government was delayed on account of principle involved, which meant, also, the possibility of admitting East German Christian families equally destitute and deserving of refuge as Ireland is a Christian country'. He added that he would also have been in a position to inform the chief rabbi of a favourable decision, news of which he had just conveyed to the JRC."

"The cabinet decision on 13 March 1953 had indeed gone against the recommendations of the Department of Justice. The subtle wording of the minute revealed the delicacy of the situation in the cabinet: **victory came to de Valera only after a struggle** ... Briscoe, who had requested the admission of ten families, had to be content with five. **This marked the end of the post-war struggle to admit Jewish refugees, and, most significantly, it ended in defeat for the Department of Justice.**" [Keogh, pp 220-223].

"**Defeat for the Department of Justice**" was in fact the heading that Keogh himself had given to that narrative. But who would ever have guessed at such an outcome from the *Ireland's Nazis* narrative? And who would have anticipated the brass neck of Part Two of that same 'documentary' in throwing consistency to the wind by presenting Berry as an Irish hero for fingering Albert Luykx at the 1970 Arms Trial? For, at the end of the day, Peter Berry's universal xenophobia easily transferred from Jew to Fleming.

**Manus O'Riordan**

To be continued

## Bowen, Lane and Mansergh

"It says much for the British Civil Service that, in an hour of grave peril for the nation, it has actually been able to find something for John Betjeman to do."

(Sir) Norman Costar, conversation with Dr. Nicholas Mansergh, 1941.

"I think I was a spy."

John Betjeman, in conversation with Frank Delaney, 1982.

I have been reading the correspondence between various people in the Irish Examiner but have been most struck by that of Jack Lane and Dr. Martin Mansergh, TD. I can't for the life of me fathom why Dr. Mansergh has persisted with his version of Bowen's "*activities*" (as one of her biographers coyly put it) when there is already so much information out there in the public domain. And to give fair dues to Mr. Lane, when he and his historical society found her espionage reports—at least those that were extant—in 1999, they immediately published them in pamphlet form as 'Notes on Eire' Espionage Reports to Winston Churchill, 1940-'2'. What is the problem? Dr. Mansergh last letter was—for a former diplomat—quite tetchy and I rather think in the circumstances, quite inappropriate.

He accused Mr. Lane of an "*offensive campaign over many years... to blacken the memory of Elizabeth Bowen*". Well let the facts speak for themselves. He (and I think *fatally*) uses Brian Girvin to back up his claims. Anyone familiar with Mr. Girvin's work, and in this I yield to none, would know that he—of all people—could never be accused of smuggling too much scholarship into his history books. Dr. Mansergh, *mortifyingly*, allows Girvin's nonsense about John Dulanty, the Irish High Commissioner in London to be placed before us—all in such a way that it looked as if our High Commissioner had himself sought out and sent Bowen to Ireland. Girvin writes that "*Dulanty believed that Bowen would provide independent and objective reports on the state of opinion in Ireland*" (p167). He cites no source for this, and anyway what's *belief* got to do with the practicalities of politics during a world war? Bowen already had decided to work for the Ministry of Information and communicated that to her friends. After all, one of her great friends was Lord David Cecil and his brother was Lord Cranborne, Head of the Dominions Office.

The reality was much more prosaic than the ambiguous account given by

Girvin and then related by Mansergh . . . Anyone who wished to leave the UK during WW2 had to obtain an Exit Visa from the Dominions Office which would permit them to visit Ireland. The main purpose of the Exit Visa process was to prevent people, who were liable to be conscripted to try and avoid that fate. Many Irish people were refused Exit Visas because they were resident in England. One method of showing entitlement to an Exit Visa was to provide evidence of residence in Ireland and so people applied to the High Commissioner in London, John Dulanty, for a letter from him certifying that the person involved was normally resident in Ireland. John Dulanty did not invite people to travel to Ireland—he merely responded factually to their request for a statement of their normal residence in Ireland. We were ourselves a Dominion after all.

Girvin brought out his book *The Emergency Neutral Ireland 1939-45* in 2006. He refers to Bowen's activities (capitalized by one biographer) as "*unpaid*" (p167). During the Bowen Centenary Conference in University College Cork in 1999, one of those bright young American scholars, Heather Bryant Jordan gave a paper in which she stated how she found *one* account of the amount of moneys paid to Elizabeth Bowen for her war work. The Ministry of Information paid Bowen £115 and 10 shillings for her espionage during 1944-45 when really the war was over and won by then. This was even then a fairly substantial sum of money. In today's terms, it would be the equivalent of £10,000 to £15,000—depending on which index is used. As Heather explained she had put this into her book *How Will the Heart Endure: Elizabeth Bowen and the Landscape of War*, which was published in 1992. So there is simply no excuse for anyone to deny the true nature of Bowen's work in Ireland. She would have been outraged, one imagines. On some of her journeys back to London, she had such sensitive information that she had to inform the relevant authorities in person. She describes in her usual surreal way how she was stopped by "*bayonets while she stated her business*" on a trip to the Dominions Office. She also had to visit the War Office with top-secret information and in a state of war, only top-brass on a need-to-know basis even knew where these were located.

Dr. Martin Mansergh stated in his letter to the *Irish Examiner* (26.9.07), that

"Elizabeth Bowen declared herself as an *Irish national*". Can he produce the source for this amazing contention? I would find this very hard to accept in the light of her many public utterances and even in her correspondence. When the war was over, she wrote to one of her dearest friends saying "I had such a good war; I cannot say I'm ashamed of the fact, as I don't think I had a good war at anybody else's expense". After the war and back in London, the man whom she "admired enormously—Churchill" was put out of office. In her biography of Bowen, Victoria Glendenning finds her in 1948 more than a bit peeved at the new order in England with a Labour Government in office. Now she felt herself to be increasingly Irish but her reasons are not ones linked to a liking for a growing into that nationality. As she frankly writes to a friend:

"Selfishly speaking, I'd much rather live my life here (i.e., at Bowen's Court). I've been coming gradually unstuck from England for a long time. I have adored England since 1940 because of the stylishness Mr. Churchill gave it, but I've always felt, 'when Mr. Churchill goes, I go'. I can't stick all these little middle-class Labour wets with their Old London School of Economics ties and their women. Scratch any one of those cuties and you find the governess. Or so I have always found."

When one looks at Lane's 'Notes on Eire' and the dates of the unearthed reports were 1940-42 and then when we read Heather Bryant Jordan's report that in 1944-45, Bowen was still being paid for her work, the only conclusion can be that Elizabeth Bowen worked in Ireland right through the war and that work **was not** conducted nor paid for—for the benefit of this country.

One other matter Dr. Mansergh seems to be exercised by and that is the nature of Ireland's relationship to England during the war. Yes, we were neutral, but Eamon de Valera was exceedingly careful of the threat posed to this country by Churchill's England. There is a memory recalled in his *A Memoir* by Terry de Valera that his father got a mid-night telegram from Churchill promising him the North if he yielded the ports. There follows a beautiful account of the young boy looking at the agitation and grief of his father who had to make a statesman's decision. In the end, he rejected Churchill's pseudo offer. I am reminded of another Dominion State, India, when it too was subject to bribery to enter the war on the allies' side. Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps to get India involved in the war and they were promised that if they did, after the war, they would get their freedom. Gandhi and his 'Quit India' movement were violently repressed by the British. Both Gandhi and Congress refused Cripps's blandishments with Gandhi famously calling the offer "a post-

dated cheque on a bank that was falling". But, after the repressions, the Indians subsided into a more or less supportive attitude. So too, Ireland had to tread a very tight line with England, not certainly out of friendship but out of a rightly-based fear.

Why Dr. Martin Mansergh ever had to go to Brian Girvin for help with his response to Jack Lane's letters, I will never fathom. His own father worked in the Ministry of Information (MOI) and surely his private papers would contain a lot of information relevant to those days. The Irish had acquiesced to Dr. Nicholas Mansergh's position as he had to be involved with External Affairs on various matters. In Bevis Hillier's biography of John Betjeman, the latter accepted that the young historian who was later to be Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, "was appointed to be John's opposite number in London". "He was taken into the MOI as 'a sort of one-man Irish Office'". But there is another interesting fact about young Nicholas and that was that he was involved in both Ireland and India on account of the Commonwealth.

Of course there was another mysterious Tipperary man who headed up the MOI and that was Brendan Bracken, later to be Lord Bracken. But as the *Observer* observed in his obituary, (10.8.1958), Bracken's war work did not begin and end at the MOI, though while there, "there was no kid glove nonsense about getting the required information. The Bloomsbury undergrowth was thinned out, pruned into shape and trained. The Ministry" (which had hitherto been a joke to the press) "began to function efficiently and do a useful job of work". And he founded the last of his journals and not the least—*History Today*.

Dr. Martin Mansergh TD also exercises himself a lot about the nationality of Bowen, which never troubled her in the slightest. But I sense in reading his letters that the matter is closer to home. Both in Kevin Rafter's unchallenging biography of Dr. Martin Mansergh, and in an address he himself made in Farahy Church (5.8.1995), Martin Mansergh offers an insight into his own hyphen identity. His ancestors were Cromwellian though, according to Rafter, Mansergh jibbed about that term. But Rafter was having none of it and according to a parchment in the possession of the National Library of Ireland it recorded: "Appointment of Brian Mansergh to be a lieutenant to the troops of Capt. Redmond in Lord General Cromwell's Regiment."

Martin Mansergh was born in Woking on Christmas Eve in 1946. He was five or six when he first visited his father's house in Friarsfield, two miles outside Tipperary town. At that time his father Nicholas

Mansergh, OBE, was working in the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House, London. Martin was schooled in an English Public School—King's School, Canterbury, which was privately funded but part of that establishment of Public Schools which even recently were denounced for their still fierce grip on England by the BBC broadcaster, Jeremy Paxman. There was a play at end of term (Martin was about 18 years) *The Importance of being Ernest* by Oscar Wilde. Micheal MacLiammoir did the honours, and at dinner, Martin in answer to MacLiammoir said he was 'Anglo-Irish'. The great actor replied: *That's a term we must abolish*". This gave pause to what Roy Foster termed "a mick-on-the-make"—though he obviously wasn't referring to the likes of Martin Mansergh!

Interestingly enough, in Terry de Valera's marvelously underrated 'Memoir', he remembers the flamboyant MacLiammoir and Hilton Edwards striding down Grafton Street before they became famous, when Terry was on his way to the Four Courts. Michael "was generally dressed in black and wearing his full stage make-up, his clearly died black hair showing in the light". Also there was the shy poet Austin Clarke... and the prima donna Margaret Burke Sheridan, "for whom Puccini had such a high opinion and affection". Apparently when Dev was inaugurated as President in 1959, amongst the distinguished guests was Micheal MacLiammoir. When introduced he said Terry said that they had first met at Blackrock College—

"when he came to give lessons in stage make-up to the principals in our Gilbert and Sullivan operas. MacLiammoir threw back his shoulders, and with that characteristic pout of his heavily made-up lips, said, When was that? I replied: In the 1930's.' His dark eyes sparkled. Placing his hand on my shoulder, he said with mock seriousness: Dear boy, you are mistaken. It must have been my father!"

Terry de Valera often went with his mother to the Gate theatre and came to know MacLiammoir "better in later years". The Longfords were very grateful for Terry's mother's support for the Gate and were thrilled when Dev nominated Lord Longford as a Senator.

Nowadays our intelligentsia always rant about Dev's dark days and I often think that something like Charles 11' aim as expressed in the wonderfully worded "Act of Indemnity and Oblivion" in 1660 has been implemented "to bury all seeds of future discords and remembrance of the former". As Jack Lane has continually said, "false history serves no one". But we will have to wait a while before its seed and those who foster it will have to make their account before the Irish people.

**Julianne Herlihy**

## Jottings

I spent over twenty years (from the late 1960s to the early 1990s) trying to get the Six Counties integrated into the political system of the British State, so that the two communities locked into the antagonism on which the spurious 'Northern Ireland state' was founded might have the opportunity to lose themselves in the very different political antagonism through which the British state functions. The British state is the only actual state in the North. The 'Northern Ireland state' does not deal with affairs of state. It is a subordinate arrangement of the British state, and communal antagonism outside the politics of state is all that could ever happen in it.

During these years I took little notice of affairs within the Irish state. I only noticed how successive Governments behaved towards the North. I found Jack Lynch, Garret FitzGerald, Conor Cruise O'Brien and Peter Barry to be the worst troublemakers—by which I mean that they aggravated communal antagonism by the various 'initiatives' which riled the Protestants without offering any realistic prospect of settlement. And, by that test, Haughey was by far the best Taoiseach. He seemed to understand what a futile Constitutional entity Northern Ireland was, and in the course of editing a weekly publication in Belfast for 20 years I did not notice a single mischievous speech by him. He did not say or do anything that drove the Protestants crazy, as Lynch did in 1969-70. FitzGerald and Peter Barry did the same some time later. And FitzGerald did it a second time in 1985.

In the early 1990s I concluded that what I had been attempting in the North was hopeless. Every British politician I discussed the matter with—and there were many of them, including some who became Cabinet Ministers—took the point of my argument quickly. They agreed that Catholics and Protestants would probably have settled down in British party politics in Northern Ireland, as they did in Liverpool and Glasgow, if that possibility had not been closed off to them. But they were then persuaded by higher authority behind the scenes that it would be well for them to drop the matter. Which they usually did. Whitehall had a purpose for Northern Ireland, which did not include settling it down within the political life of the state which held it.

Much the same thing happened with the Unionists—though I imagine that more intimidation was used with them than with the British MPs.

I then began to take an interest in the internal politics of the South, but with an idea of democracy which I'd developed

for understanding the North. Within a functional democratic state the word 'democracy' loses all definite meaning. The parties bandy it about as a mere slogan, accusing each other of being undemocratic as a matter of course. Democracy is reduced to a mere ideal. Each party is convinced that it embodies this idea, and that conviction is strongest in the parties which have least success in winning elections in the actual democracy of the state.

Why did Fine Gael never again win an election after 1932? Why did the Labour Party never come close to winning an election? Because Fianna Fail over-rode the democratic spirit of the Treatyite state by establishing a corrupt and authoritarian system of *realpolitik*—the argument goes something like that. But it did whatever it did by winning elections—elections which, unlike those held in Northern Ireland, were part of the business of setting up a Government in the state.

With the word democracy thus reduced to practical meaningless, I suppose it was only a matter of time until the democratic event in which the state was founded was conjured away altogether—a thing which has been done most comprehensively by a former Taoiseach of that state, John Bruton.

When I looked southwards again in the 1990s I found that, while there were many histories of the Insurrection, there was no history of the democratic event which preceded the War of Independence—the General Election of 1918. The fact that there was an election seemed to have been forgotten. So in the first pamphlet I wrote on Southern affairs—a review of the authoritarian reviews of the Michael Collins film by Lord Bew and Ruth Dudley Edwards—I pointed out that the film was a whitewash of the British Government, rather than of the Republicans, because the Election that preceded the war of Independence was not presented in it.

Here is a summary of what seem to me to be the salient facts.

Home Rule Ireland went to war against Germany without an electoral mandate in September 1914, and two months later, still without an electoral mandate for war, it went to war against Turkey and contributed to the British conquest of the Middle East which is the source of our present War On Terror. Home Rule militarism merged itself into British militarism and subordinated itself to Britain's war aims, never uttering a word of dissent as Britain expanded the war by fair means and foul—by collaborating with Mussolini to lure Italy into the war with the offer of part of the Austrian Empire, and by invading Greece to compel it to declare war on Turkey.

In 1916 a Republican grouping in Ireland raised a small, ill-equipped, army, and went to war with it against Britain in support of a declaration of Irish independ-

ence, making a formal alliance with Germany which undertook to recognise Irish independence. The 1916 Insurrectionaries no more had an electoral mandate for making war on Britain than the Home Rule Party had for making war on Germany, Austria and Turkey. But that similarity does not establish a moral equality between Home Rulers and Republicans in the matter of going to war without an electoral mandate.

The Home Rulers might have sought an electoral mandate for war on Germany etc. by the simple device of resigning their seats in Parliament and then contesting them on a war programme. They chose not to do so. And then, when their ordinary electoral mandate ran out in December 1915, they continued to sit in Parliament as unelected members and to take part in the British war effort, which by this time had become reckless and catastrophic.

If the Home Rulers had sought a war mandate in the Autumn of 1914, they would probably have been given it. If they had sought it any time before the five-year term of the 1910 election expired, they would possibly have got it. All the resources of the state would have been put at their disposal in the election campaign.

The Republicans could not have sought a mandate for their war. Therefore, like everybody else, they made war without an electoral mandate.

They reason they could not have sought a mandate for war, (or for independence, which amounted to the same thing, as Britain made it abundantly clear that Ireland could not gain independence by voting for it, but only by defeating the Empire in war), was that the electoral basis of Government was set aside for the duration of the Great War on Germany, Austria and Turkey.

When there was a return to elected Government, in December 1918, the group that had made war on Britain without a mandate in 1916 formed a party, contested the General Election, and won it on an independence programme. The party that made war on Germany without a mandate from 1914 to 1918 was comprehensively rejected by the electorate in 1918.

The Sinn Fein mandate of December 1918 was not only electoral, but also democratic. In 1910 only a minority of the adult population had the vote. The mandate given to the Home Rule Party in 1910 was not for war, and was not democratic. The Parliamentary franchise was democratised (or brought so close to democracy as made little difference to the outcome) by the 1918 Reform Act, which was in reality a concomitant of the Conscription Act, and the democratised franchise was applied in Ireland, even though Conscription was not.

All parties sought a retrospective mandate for their doings in December

1918. In Britain the War Coalition (which in 1916 ousted Prime Minister Asquith and brought the Unionist Party to dominance without an election) won by a landslide. Sinn Fein won by a landslide in Ireland. The Liberal Party, which had started the war in 1914, was split by the formation of the 1916 Coalition, and the Asquith faction (which had refused to participate in the 1916 Coalition) was rejected by the British electorate on much the same scale as Asquith's Home Rule allies were rejected in Ireland.

Ireland in its first democratic election voted for independence, but the first democratically-elected British Government took no heed of the election result in Ireland and carried on governing the country. That is why there was war in Ireland in 1919-21.

That is how the matter appeared to me, coming to it as an outsider after a long involvement in Northern politics in a way that certainly was not nationalist. It is also how it appeared to another outsider.

Maire MacSwiney's autobiography was published last year. Both because of the contentious matter of the kidnapping, and because it has the form of a coffee-table book, I was not inclined to read it. But I read it because it was available to me when nothing else was, and I found it very interesting. She came to Ireland (by whatever means) as a German girl in her early teens. Weimar Germany at the end of its tether was what she knew, and German was her language. She does not see that Democracy, Nazism and Communism were party-political choices available to the German electorate in the early thirties. Professor Garvin might have a word with her on the matter. He asserts that the Germans voted against democracy, which is an absurd concept in general, and has no semblance of realism as applied to German society then. (I know of only one case where democracy was put to an election. President Museveni, who runs Uganda in the British interest, asked the Ugandans in an election, or referendum, if they wanted democracy. I forget how they voted. It didn't matter. Democracy depends on more than votes.)

Maire MacSwiney came to Ireland as Terence MacSwiney's daughter, but also as a German—and I suppose with a better insight into democracy than can be got within a democracy. And thus, discovering Ireland as an outsider, she saw the 1918 Election as a particularly significant event.

In 1968 she was looking forward to the half-centenary commemoration of the event. She went to the Taoiseach (Lynch) and asked what was planned. Nothing was planned. But her query led to the cobbling together of a commemoration of the first meeting of the Dail for January 1969.

It so happens that my only significant

intervention in the affairs of the South was to help with the disruption of that commemorative event. I was associated with the late Dennis Dennehy in the Dublin Housing Action Group. To highlight the housing situation and the philistinism of the national bourgeoisie Dennis arranged to be imprisoned in Mountjoy as a homeless person for squatting in a vacant Georgian property, and to be at a critical point in a hunger strike at the moment when the Declaration of Independence, with all its fine phrases, was being commemorated in the Mansion House. It all went off perfectly. The hunger-strike set off all kinds of memories and reflexes. The centre of Dublin was in turmoil. The Mansion House proceedings were spoiled. BICO was the talk of the town. In the outcome something was done about housing. And Muriel MacSwiney (Terence's widow, Maire's mother) made contact with us from France.

Another effect of what we did in 1968-9—in conjunction with a marvellously reckless revolutionary student movement called The Internationalists—was that elements in governing circles in the Republic were made to feel that they were living precariously over a volcano. We pushed the agitation as hard as we could, but we knew when it could go no farther. If the State had crumbled, we would have seen what we could do with the situation. I did not expect it to crumble, but in those things one never knows. Our object was to put such a scare into a once-radical bourgeoisie that had gone decadent that they would be motivated to do something about the particular issue of housing. And we took effective measures to prevent the movement from lapsing into the general revolutionism that the Republican tendency that came to be known as the Stickies the following year were trying to develop.

People at the top of society do not find it easy to judge what is going on at the bottom when routines are broken. And the routine of politics for the Dublin and Cork bourgeoisie were well and truly broken in January 1969. And, before the bourgeoisie could get over their scare and settle down again, Northern Ireland went into flux. Only 8 months separated the two events. The bourgeoisie were still feeling threatened by the first when the second came along, as they thought, to reinforce it. Many of them had the hallucination of Ireland as one great cauldron of revolution.

That was the view from the top. At the bottom things looked different.

The powerful agitation in the South was powerful because it was directed at a particular issue which made sense to people because it was evident that something could be done about it, and that the governing strata were negligent in

having done nothing. By confining the agitation to that issue we made it so powerful that it scared the bourgeoisie. (We were 'Stalinists' you see, and operated the "stages theory", instead of merging everything into a general revolutionism.)

When the North went into flux—in fact a few months before it—we set ourselves against the pseudo-revolutionary agitation there, arguing that it had no ground in the realities of the situation. The position we took up, if we were wrong about the facts of the situation, was counter-revolutionary.

It was then that I developed an utter contempt for the governing strategy in the Republic, and particularly for the dregs of De Valeraism (i.e., arousing expectations about the North which there was no intention of filling) in the shape of Jack Lynch.

I suggested in a pamphlet issued in early 1969 (while we were developing the housing agitation in Dublin) that the Anti-Partition rhetoric of the Dublin establishment should be set aside, and the Ulster Protestants negotiated with as a distinct social entity. That was the "two nations theory". It became evident in August that it was a theory that corresponded with social fact, and it became the agreed view of all who were responsible for the Dublin agitation.

In the midst of the August crisis Lynch made his fierce Anti-Partition speech, and followed it up that Autumn with a specific repudiation of the two-nations view. His conduct thereafter was to stir up anti-Partition feelings and to punish actions to which they gave rise, insofar as he found it safe to do so.

John Bruton's article, which gave rise to this one, is a review of yet another book about 1916 (*The Long Revolution*, a collection edited by Dermot Keogh). Bruton particularly commends a contribution on the doctrine of 'the just war' as applied to 1916, by a Jesuit priest, Seamus Murphy:

"As we know from the recent Iraq controversy, the bar for a "just cause" for war is set quite high. It requires unprovoked armed interstate aggression, or genocide. Ireland was not subject to either of those in 1916. A 'competent authority' is also required to declare the war, and Murphy concludes that the 1916 leaders had not been given this competence or authority by the Irish people for their action. Murphy contends that 1916 moved the work for Irish independence "away from the democratic parliamentary mode, to an elitist military mode", a bad move, he feels... Murphy believes true republicanism means prior democratic involvement of the whole people in important decisions, not simply leadership by secret societies or by military elites" (*Men Of 1916 Wanted A German Victory*, Irish Indep. 4.8.07).

The US, the UK, Poland, and a few others invaded Iraq, which had not attacked

them and was not committing genocide, and they destroyed the Iraqi state and reduced the populace to a state of nature. There is an authority in the world for deciding whether wars are just and punishing states which engage in unjust war. I have not heard that this authority—the Security Council of the UN, for there is no other—judged the USUK war on Iraq to be unjust and punish them for it. This means that, under the rules which actually apply in the world, the war on Iraq was just. And that means the bar for a just war could hardly be set lower.

The Security Council did not authorise the invasion before the event. Such authorisation was not required to make it lawful. The US and the UK, as Veto Powers, are laws unto themselves under the UN system. They can do nothing illegal unless they choose to indict themselves. But, after the event, the Security Council authorised the war retrospectively (as the Irish electorate authorised the Rising) by making military resistance to the Occupation illegal.

I seem to recall that Bruton did not support that War. No more did I. But I do not mistake my dissent for a rule about just war which actually applies in the affairs of the world. And there must be limits to mere subjectivism.

Fr. Murphy's idea of a just war, as presented by Bruton, rules out the possibility of resistance to an imperialist state which is not committing genocide and which does not allow its subjects to organise themselves into a representative body with the object of opposing it.

The vagaries of the Great War, as it impinged on Ireland, actually did lead to a situation in which a democratic electoral mandate was given for the establishment of an independent state. I assume that is why there is no history of the 1918 Election, and no history of the War of Independence as an event made necessary by the British response to a democratic election. This matter is much too serious for minds made timid by indoctrination that the recent war in the North somehow followed from the formation of the IRA to give effect to the democratic election mandate of 1918, rather than from the bizarre mode of government set up in the North after Partition.

But I lived on the battlefield all through the war, publishing material against it and doing my best to shift people onto a different line of action. Democracy therefore has more definite meaning for me than it had for Southern academics—who, as far as I was aware, did nothing at all in the war—and it is plain to me that it was undemocratic action by Britain that caused the War of Independence—a fact which has far-reaching implications for the post-1918 history of Europe—and that it was the undemocratic variant of the British

state (deliberately devised for the Six Counties at the time of Partition) that eventually led to war in the North.

I don't know how 'just war' theory applies to this provocatively undemocratic enclave of the British state. I'll have to get the book and see what Fr. Murphy says about it—which I expect is nothing. I can only say that, in human terms, given the circumstances of the preceding half century, the Northern Catholics had stronger reasons, or motives, for making war, than the Irish electorate had in 1919. Accordingly, they made war in much more difficult circumstances with a much stronger will. If the same strength of will had been operative in the South after 1918 to give effect to a formally much better democratic case, there would have been no destructive Treaty arrangement.

(As to the Treaty, I published a little book recently about the establishment and decline of the Free State in 1922-1932, and I have been sent a copy of a review of it in *Books Ireland* which says that the thesis of the book is that the publication of the *Irish Press* was the cause of the decline of the Free State. It is no such thing. Most of the book has to do with the profound political crisis of 1927, long before the *Irish Press* was founded. That crisis demonstrated that the Free State was an incoherent authoritarian concoction which did its best to prevent political development within its own structures, and thereby subverted itself.)

Con Houlihan, writing in the *Sunday Independent* (12 Aug: *A Pint-Sized History Of The People Who Have Made Us What We Are*) says that Modern Ireland began on 11th July 1921 when we stopped fighting the British Army, and was reborn in 1948 when Fianna Fail lost a General Election and the first Rainbow Coalition "came to power". He hates Fianna Fail, and hates Charles Haughey only less than De Valera. Michael Collins was the man. He "chose the peaceful path". But "A leader had emerged to challenge Collins" and spoiled it all. That was Dev.

The Anti-Treaty group, he says, was soundly defeated by three to one in the Election of June 1922, but instead of taking his beating Dev decided to "wade through Irish blood" and there was a Civil War. Then, in April 1922, having been beaten at war too, he ordered the Republicans to dump arms—and Houlihan's father, in a Flying Column in Tipperary, "laughed at the order" because they had no arms to dump.

Overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate, and beaten to the ground in war, Dev formed a party—

"with a ballot paper in one hand and a ballot paper in the other hand. Then began a famine of the spirit: between the strong hand of Fianna Fail and the

cold hand of the Catholic Church the country was paralysed"—until the 1948 Coalition broke the spell—and then abased itself before the Catholic Hierarchy as no other Government ever did!

Dev was "*despised, rejected*" in 1923, but then suddenly, beyond the comprehensible realm of cause and effect, he was in command over the society that had rejected him and crushed him.

Sean McBride, the great man of the Rainbow Coalition, who sacrificed Noel Browne to the Bishops, was "*a shadow of a gunman*"; nevertheless, he "*did the state some service*".

Lemass is given a pat on the head for opening communication with the North, as are Donagh O'Malley (for education), Dick Spring (for foreign policy!?!), and the PDs. Then came the ogre:

"Charles Haughey may have seen himself as a creator of Modern Ireland... The truth is that he did more harm to this country than Oliver Cromwell and Lloyd George... He and his lovely fellows robbed the State of inestimable amounts of revenue", depriving boys and girls of education and old people of places where they might have died with dignity.

*Ologón, ologón, ologón!*

All of this is best understood as a case of self-loathing, flimsily disguised as history. Houlihan was a rather distinguished part of the Ireland he has come to hate. He did not hate it while it existed. He was nowhere in sight when we spoiled the 1969 celebrations, or when we declared war on the Church. Although he struck no blow against it, that Ireland crumbled and he found himself living amongst the ruins. And now he picks this bit, and that bit, out of the ruins at random like a magpie so that something might be left to him. ("*These I have shored against my ruin*", as Elliott put it.)

Fact has nothing to do with this kind of history, but I think I should mention that his figures for the 1922 Election are self-evidently absurd: 486,419 votes for the Treaty giving 58 seats, 133,864 votes against the Treaty giving 35 seats. Leaving aside the matter that the Election was held under a threat that Britain would punish a wrong result by launching a war of reconquest, it was held under the terms of a pact between Treatyites and Anti-Treatyites, sanctioned by the Dail, which Collins only broke on the eve of the election. Under the Pact each side undertook to vote for the other in certain constituencies, regardless of the Treaty issue, so that it is impossible to divide the vote on Treaty/Anti-Treaty lines. Houlihan gives the British/Free State propaganda figure.

Some years ago I reviewed Houlihan's introduction to a reprint of a Canon Sheehan novel, in which I think I

commented on the profound difference in culture between the Cork/Kerry borderland of Slieve Luacra and the North Kerry culture centred on Listowel. "*North of Inverary all is chaos*", Macaulay said. And west of Scartaglen one is likely to run into pockets of West Britain lurking beneath the surface. I first came to understand this forty years ago when I was plotting with Dennis Dennehy (who came from thereabouts) to put a scare into the Dublin bourgeoisie. But, long before that, around the age of 10 when I was an altar boy, I had come across it as a raw fact when we were sent a curate who was offspring of an important family in Castleisland, and he broke down during the October Devotions, while meditating on the Sorrowful Mysteries, and could not continue. People were astonished. It was the reverse of a situation described by Somerset Maugham as having happened in Spain when a preacher saw his congregation overcome by what he was telling them about the Passion, and he calmed them down by saying that it had all happened a long time ago, and it might be that it had never happened at all. I don't suppose anyone said that to our oversensitive curate, but I know that they had a robust attitude to such things, and were not given to *ologóning* about anything.

Forty years ago the West British underlay in North Kerry was buried deep under the layer of national morale. I was only aware of its existence because of scruples that Dennis Dennehy kept bringing up. He was much more nationalist than I was, but it was a problematical nationalism shot through with scruples thrown up by the underlay. I was not nationalist at all, but I was a product of the substantial culture of Slieve Luacra which was simply non-English, with no problematical British survivals, but which had taken certain things from British literature and made them its own when concluding that it could only keep itself functional by adopting the English language. Our borrowings from English literature were uprooted from English culture and made our own. I probably had more bits of English literature in my head than Dennis had, but I had nothing of the English literary style that was evident in him—and the English bits were mixed up with German bits and French bits and Russian bits (all picked up locally) and therefore were not Anglicising. And of course Gaelic bits. It still grates on my to hear Danny Boy sung to that tune instead of *Maidin in mBeara*.

The Listowel Writers' Festival seems to have developed into a British literary event, as a one-sided and mindless development of an element that I was aware of in Dennis Dennehy's complex make-up forty years ago.

**Brendan Clifford**

*To be continued*

## FUTURE continued

"Since 1987, almost half of the improvement in workers' purchasing power has come from tax reductions and just under one-half from actual pay increases." (Garret FitzGerald-Irish Times-14.7.2007).

### BENCHMARKING

"Carroll suggests that the old ITGWU was 'in essence the prime mover in this regard [Social Partnership]: 'The public sector union were secondary to the general union approach.'" (p.30). This was John Carroll, former ITGWU general secretary.

If the public sector unions were indeed a secondary factor when the Programme for National Recovery was launched in 1987, they quickly reversed the process until today the chief beneficiary and *raison d'être* for continuation of the process is the public service and their benchmarking.

Though Carroll was correct — without the involvement of the private sector, such a process was academic.

People still recall the former general secretary of the INTO, Joe O'Toole arguing on RTE radio that without the unique contribution of the teaching profession the Celtic Tiger would not have happened — it was now payback time.

Joe was going grand until a listener rang in and asked him why the Celtic Tiger hadn't happened 50 years ago if the teachers were so good.

Ireland now has some of the best-paid public servants in the developed world but some of the worst public service.

A large part of the sky-high public sector wage bill is due to the benchmarking process, which was supposed to bring public sector wages into line with those in the private sector.

The reality is that most public sector wages are now much higher than those being paid for comparable private sector jobs.

Late last month, the OECD published a report on the Irish education system.

It found that Irish primary teachers with 15 years experience were paid 24% over the OECD average while post-primary teachers with a similar length of service were paid 18% more than the OECD average.

During the nurses dispute this year, the Irish Nurses Organisation (INO) made great play of the fact that its members were underpaid and "deserved" a 10% pay increase.

In 2005, the last year for which full figures are available, the average Irish nurses salary was 56,000 euros. By comparison UK nurses are still being paid an average of just stg.£30,000 (43,500 euros).

A German hospital doctor would happily work for a third of the 200,000 euros plus

we pay hospital consultants in this country.

The first benchmarking process cost the exchequer at least 1.4bn euros a year. For this money the public sector unions were supposed to deliver greater efficiency in the public sector.

This hasn't happened. Instead, workers ended up with the worst of both worlds, paying even more for crummy, unreformed public services.

### THE WORKPLACE

"Better to be a Social Partner" was the headline used by the Sunday Tribune (8.7.2007) introducing the Chairman of the National Centre for Performance and Partnership, Peter Cassells, former general secretary of the ICTU.

"People always say to me, are you for or against partnership — my answer is yes. I'm for it in the way I've described it, where people are empowered, developed and treated fairly. I'm against it when people are exploiting people, not paying them fairly, where management is hierarchical and old-style, where we're here to give the orders and you're here to do a job. If a company organises itself along traditional lines, it shouldn't be surprised when the staff and unions equally respond along traditional lines." (*Sunday Tribune*-8.7.2007).

For the man or woman in the workplace : Social Partnership is little more than the public profile of Peter Cassells, Jack O'Connor and IBEC's Turlough O'Connor.

A real concern is that social partnership exists at the level of business, trade union and political elites — there has been no progress in building partnership in the workplace.

According to former union leader, Phil Flynn, "everyone has to bear responsibility for this failure. Most local arrangements tend to be consultative, often involving only a very limited degree of joint decision taking."

"Progress in building partnership in the workplace has been disappointing, almost the mirror opposite of what has been achieved at national level. As Professor Bill Roche of UCD wrote in a recent ESRI report: 'A decade on from the emergence of partnership at the workplace as a core issue, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that progress in this area remains patchy and the momentum has dropped.'

Bill Roche says the trade unions have been 'invited to become social partners' but they increasingly appear unwelcome in the workplace. Meanwhile, on the ground, the emphasis on the public policy of investment in the development of skills and associated work practices as a primary driver of competitive advantage 'falls well short of such a vision.'"

**The term Corporation Tax is barely mentioned in the book, if at all, however, the term 'Corporatism' is listed three times in the book's index and is in fact referred to throughout the book on seven separate occasions — in the next issue of Labour Comment, we'll reveal the extent to which the much maligned and misunderstood 'Corporatism' and the two papal encyclicals are at the heart of the process which claims to be "at the heart of the Celtic Tiger"!**

Incredible, indeed!

## "SOLDIERS OF REALITY"

"Ahern himself tells a story about trying to help resolve an issue in the Dublin Port and Docks Board, which sums up how extensive his intelligence sources are, and just how deep Fianna Fail's roots are within all segments of Irish society. His 'buddy' is the Chairman of the Board, the senior shop steward is one of his Fianna Fail activists in East Wall, and another friend works for management: 'All of them are politically supportive of me, from one extreme to the other. So I can sit here in my office and get the three views: the board's, the management's and the trade union's. We have that all the time. Probably the only sector we tend not to influence is the legal sector. We tend not to be in that game. In every other part of Irish life I think we are the predominant group.'

"Ahern also believes that in many respects Fianna Fail is to the left of the Labour Party. 'Dare I say it, the Fianna Fail parliamentary party are a long way left of Labour who tend to get involved in ideological arguments. Our people get involved in practical arguments because they are down at the post office, the pub, the old people's home. It might not be the greatest ideological, intellectual thing. But it's a pragmatic thing.'" (Saving The Future-p.181).

## TRADE UNION ACT (1941)

In February of this year, the Supreme Court ordered the Labour Court to rehear the Ryanair case, on the issue of employees' rights in the workplace, saying that the Labour Court had not used "fair procedures" in its January, 2005 recommendation. It also awarded costs against the IMPACT trade union.

The Supreme Court said the Labour Court needed stronger evidence to conclude that the airline had no collective bargaining arrangement in place, and said collective bargaining procedures could exist even if workers were unwilling to use them.

According to "Saving The Future": "The legislation has not been popular with employers and, since the Supreme Court ruling, several unions believe it has been rendered toothless."

It says the Government will have to decide whether or not to amend the legislation, or "look for an entirely different approach to dealing with employee representation rights in the workplace, such as opting for the more conventional model used in other democratic societies — straightforward statutory [union] recognition."

"Straightforward Statutory Recognition"? So this is where Social Partnership has led us after helping to "turn Ireland from an economic basket case into one of Europe's most successful economies."

Since 1946, the Labour Court acting in

a predominately voluntary capacity held a unique position as a powerful labour relations institution. Most of its findings were non-binding recommendations to employers and unions rather than legal requirements. But its standing was such that 80% of its recommendations were accepted by all parties.

In recent years it has developed powers to make binding decisions on employment rights particularly through the 2001 Industrial Relations Act and the Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2004), the combined effect which allowed unions to represent workers in non-union companies (where there is no collective bargaining) in the Labour Court and to secure legally binding decisions on legitimate claims.

"The High Level Group opted not to go down the route of giving workers a statutory right of recognition as applies in the UK, USA and other European countries. There was still a fear at government and IBEC levels that this might put off FDI [Foreign Direct Invest] firms, while the trade union preferred to stick with a voluntary system as opposed to overly legalistic solutions in traditional IR areas." (p.93).

But now in the era of Social Partnership we find ourselves reverting to the Courts and Lawyers — as if life in this state isn't plagued enough by the dead hand of an archaic judicial system.

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"Attley says that the union people with 'the problem' said nothing at all in the end and the announcement of what was to become an historic deal was made. "Perhaps the remark by Federated Union of Employers (F.U.E.) Director John Dunne, all the more powerful as it came from the employer 'side', sums up the scale of their achievement: 'The same people, if they hadn't been in the trade union movement, would have been CEOs of some of Ireland's biggest companies. That's a reality. They were substantial people. They showed and demonstrated very significant leadership qualities.'" (p.41).

They might even have become leaders of IBEC?

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## "PATRIOTISM IN ACTION"

"Chairman of FORFAS Eoin O'Driscoll, who worked in several multinational firms in Ireland and abroad over the past twenty years, recalls that Wang, with which he was involved at the time, had insisted on a non-union set-up. Local ITGWU branch official, Frank Prendergast, who was also a prominent local Labour Party leader, had come to O'Driscoll and told him the union was going to organise in Wang. O'Driscoll recalls: 'I remember sitting across the table from him and saying, 'Frank, if you want to unionise us, you probably can do it. All I can say is the growth planned here probably won't take place if that happens.' As

O'Driscoll puts it, 'Limerick had a negative cloud hanging over it.' Prendergast asked O'Driscoll if he was being serious and was assured he was. O'Driscoll describes what happened:

"When he was convinced we were going to run a progressive operation, he said, 'I will let you progress it here, but if there is a need for union representation, I'll be there. But if there isn't, I won't make a big issue.' He said he wanted me likewise not to join the FUE [the employers' union]. He asked me that, because I told him my philosophy was one of independence, sorting out our own arrangements; we didn't want third parties. I probably got more pressure from FUE for being a non-member! They were quite nervous that these companies were coming in and weren't joining.

"O'Driscoll describes Prendergast as a very experienced union official who could easily have organised in Wang 'because I was totally inexperienced and had a young team'. Looking back, he says that Prendergast realized that the 'realities' of job creation were far bigger than the smaller goals he might have had." (p.64).

The trade union movement had played a major part in setting the country to rights but, by the mid 1990s, it looked like there would be no substantial union membership dividend. In fact, as employment began to really accelerate in the 1990s, unions scored numerical gains in overall number but the crucial density level, which measures the proportion of union members to the number of employees in the workforce, came down inexorably.

Billy Attley, former SIPTU President, agrees this was a 'massive annoyance in that the longer you stay in the process, institutionally, you are damaging your own ability. The basic marketing strategy of a union is to drive pay up!' He says the recruiting field was made up of those who were 'disenchanted' with 'bad employers'. But Attley says this level of discontent 'doesn't happen in the big American companies, because they have sophisticated IR systems which effectively are far greater than the traditional Irish systems, so it is a huge drawback.'

"A survey of new job announcements in 2001-03 showed that new unionised jobs in the multinational sector had become scarcer and scarcer, 'especially as many are now in services rather than manufacturing' (Industrial Relations News 2004). Just one of the seventeen major new international companies setting up in Ireland for the first time over that three-year period had recognised a trade union, while only four of 22 companies announcing expansions considered that the new jobs would be unionised. An earlier 1996 survey — which looked at 51 new job announcements in 1994 and 1995 — had found that two of 32 new companies recognised unions, while ten out of eighteen announcing expansions provided for recognition." (*Industrial Relations News* 1996). (p.91)

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## FUTURE continued

All the major issues are covered in "Saving The Future": Benchmarking, Union Recognition, Union Membership and Recruitment, Globalisation, the choice between the voluntary code of industrial relations or the more straightforward Statutory process.

The book reverberates with the opinions of the main players of the Social Partnership era: trade union, political, social and even religious.

In his foreword to "Saving The Future", Peter McLoone, former General Secretary of IMPACT trade union declares that the book fills "a significant gap about our recent economic and social history" which often ignores or downplays the importance of social partnership."

This is true of all aspects of labour and industrial history in recent years—it is just ignored.

However, an equally serious failing would be to exaggerate the benefits to organised labour for its role in Social Partnership in the recent boom and this tends to happen in "Saving The Future".

Yes, Social Partnership played a major role in the development of a prosperous economy, so did the education system; a skilled workforce and a stable political regime. Ah! but what was the real key?

"I believe that there are important lessons, good and bad, to consider:

1. To use taxation, or rather a lack of it, in a creative way. The great Irish take-off in the last decade has been due to inward investment, particularly in high-technology industries and in financial services. Investors don't want factories for their money, what they want is to keep the profits they make.

2. Ireland has been wonderfully flexible with tax. It still is. I recently met the chairman of a company that has just moved 300 jobs here. Why? Because of our taxes. Nobody is going to say that publicly, because there is no point in attracting attention. People will say that it is due to the skill of the workforce, or improving infrastructure, and so on, but the real reason is tax." (Sunday Independent-17.4.2005).

And the author, no other than Sir Anthony O'Reilly, owner of Independent News & Media.

"... but the real reason is tax." (The 12.5% Corporation Tax).

Membership of the European Union had nothing to do with it?

The Dublin establishment have damn short memories — this has even spread to the labour movement.

While the tax of German and French

workers was underwriting billions in subsidies to the Irish "economic basket case", the Industrial Development Authority (I.D.A.) were luring global corporations with their then 10% Corporation Tax and highlighting the enormous rate of the same tax in Germany and France.

Corporation Tax in Ireland is the lowest in the E.U.

McCreevy, our European Commissioner is now an indefatigable opponent of European tax harmonisation — calling on Europe to adopt the Dublin model, i.e. bring down your Corporation taxation to the 12.5% level in Ireland.

However, how could the European labour movement support such a principle, it would merely mean handing further billions to capital at the expense of labour just when labour's slice of global wealth declines daily through globalisation.

The following is taken from the IDA Ireland website:

### Corporate Tax Rate in Ireland

**The corporate tax regime in Ireland combined with competitive operating costs and availability of highly skilled labour continues to provide investors with a uniquely high return on their investment. The corporate tax rate in Ireland is 12.5%. Corporation tax is charged on the profits of a company. "Profits" for corporation tax purposes consist of income (business or trading income comprising active income, and investment income comprising passive income) and capital gains. Capital gains arise on the disposal of capital assets.**

**Ireland operates a classical system of company taxation. Under this system, tax payable on corporate dividends is independent of the tax paid by the company paying the dividend and no credit is available to shareholders for tax paid at the corporate level. A company resident in Ireland for tax purposes is subject to corporation tax on its world-wide income. With some exceptions, a company incorporated in Ireland is automatically considered to be Irish tax resident. A company is also considered to be Irish tax resident if it is managed and controlled in Ireland.**

### Corporate Tax Rates

Country	%
Ireland	12.50%
Poland	19.00%
Netherlands	25.50%
United Kingdom	30.00%
China	33.00%
Belgium	33.99%
France	34.43%
Germany	38.60%
USA	39.50%
Japan	39.54%

Source - Deloitte & Touche, 2007

**Percentage increase in profit required to achieve the same distributable income available in Ireland**

Country	%
Netherlands	17.45%
United Kingdom	25.00%
China	30.60%
Belgium	32.56%
France	33.45%
Germany	42.51%
USA	44.63%
Japan	44.72%

Source - Deloitte & Touche, 2007

### SUBSIDIES ROLL IN

Even last year, 2006, the fastest growing economy in Europe was still raking in millions in subsidies from the EU. "Ireland received 979 million euros net from the EU last year, far in excess per head of population than many less wealthy member states." (Irish Examiner-25.9.2007).

In total, Ireland received 2.46 billion euros, 32m euros less than in 2005 and paid in 1.48bn euros, a rise of 40m euros over the previous year. The funds received represented 1.63% of gross national income — higher than Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Ireland's payments to the EU were 0.98% of GNI.

The biggest contributor continued to be Germany followed by France, Italy, Britain, Spain and the Netherlands.

### THE LABOUR PARTY

In last month's "Labour Comment" column (Sept. 2007), we highlighted the dreadful dichotomy of the labour movement whereby industrial labour played a core role in creating one of Europe's most successful economies and, political labour sat on the sidelines "sucking its thumb".

Even more galling : many of the erstwhile leaders of political labour were themselves former leading trade union figures.

Had they developed a serious critique, they would have made some contribution, but alas!

The most apparent anomaly of course, throughout the 'Partnership' process has been the trade union willingness to accept wage control without some reciprocal form of price control. Benchmarking is the other major anomaly which makes a total joke of the trade union principal of equality regardless of status.

But 'price control' would smell too much of 'old labour' in a political movement that has surrendered itself totally to the doctrines of Globalisation and the free market.

"A central theme of Mr. Gilmore's speech was that the future of Ireland and the world was determined by scientific and economic forces beyond political control. He said that the role of Labour politics was to be international and local without mentioning any national role or national polity." (Irish Political Review-Sept., 2007).

The Labour Party is doomed to irrelevancy unless it bases itself on the working class. It must show that it is ruthless in pursuing the interests of that class and ignore the bleating of the media.

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## The Heart Of The Celtic Tiger?

"SAVING THE FUTURE—How Social Partnership Shaped Ireland's Economic Success"

by Tim Hastings, Brian Sheehan and Padraig Yeats. Blackhall Publishing. €20.

Throughout the Sixties, the big debate in the labour movement was the impact Automation was going to have on our lives. Hours of work would be cut with prices and wages remaining the same. By this means we could enjoy the increased wealth resulting from automation in the form of more leisure.

"In the long term, for example, what should our attitude be to leisure? After public utilities have been brought to a satisfactory level, should we aim for a 30, a 20 or even a 10-hour week? Or should we endeavour to keep people employed for a reasonable proportion of each week just to give them something to do? Many professional people do not regard their work as drudgery. Is this attitude likely to become so wide-spread that the question of shorter hours becomes irrelevant?" (*The Impact of Automation*-Victorian Fabian Society, Melbourne-1962).

### INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

Then in the Seventies, along comes the debate on Industrial Democracy and Workers' Control. The Bullock Commission on Industrial Democracy in Britain was probably the high point in this debate, it would have led to a major extension of the considerable social power the working class had at that time in 1977. It wasn't Workers' Control, but it most certainly would have nudged society in that direction if the trade union movement had bit the bullet — they didn't.

Not prepared to embrace industrial power themselves, the trade unions prevented anyone else contemplating a change in direction. The British electorate changed all that, they mandated Thatcher to go in and carry out the necessary changes!

### 1973 ICTU CONFERENCE

"It is essential that any philosophy of industrial democracy should include the concept of a full share in the routine day-to-day operations of a company. Pay and conditions, bonus and productivity schemes, safety, work

rosters and holidays must become accepted areas of democratic decision. But in the end, all of this will count for very little if workers do not eventually have a controlling influence over investment policies."

This was the late Jim Blake, ITGWU leader in Cork addressing the ICTU conference in Killarney in 1973.

### MARKET GOVERNS ALL

Where today is the vision and the aspiration to raise humanity to a higher level? New Labour has been joined by New Unionism or to paraphrase Mr. Churchill,

"Capitalism is the worst form of an economic system, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

### SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

"*Saving The Future* tells the inside story of how social partnership helped to turn Ireland from an economic basket case into one of Europe's most successful economies and analyses the 'hidden dynamics' that allowed a highly disparate collection of individuals and organisations to successfully work together in a way that, after 21 years,

remains unique." (*IMPACTNEWS*-July/August, 2007).

The book was sponsored by the IMPACT trade union, a public sector union and they deserve credit for this publishing venture.

It is an outstanding insight not just into the 20 year history of Social Partnership and industrial relations but an astute account of the role played by politics in that process over the years of the "Celtic Tiger". Written by journalists, it has a dynamism and fluidity that a book by academics would completely lack and the information comes straight from the horse's mouth.

"It doesn't claim that social partnership was solely responsible for the Irish economic miracle, but it has made a significant contribution in shaping modern Ireland. This book will fill a significant gap in the discourse about our recent economic and social history, which often ignores or downplays the importance of social partnership, and the contribution of workers and their unions," states Peter McLoone, former General Secretary of the IMPACT trade union.

These achievements are huge:

"Between 1991 and 2003 the Irish economy grew by an average of 6.8% per annum, peaking at 11.1% in 1999. Unemployment fell from 18% in the late 1980s to 4.2% in 2005, and the Irish Debt/GDP ratio fell from 92% in 1993 to 38% in 1999. Throughout the 1990s, Irish living standards rose dramatically to the point where the country is now, at least by some measures, one of the richest in the world, and has the fourth highest GDP per capita in the world. But, paradoxically, Irish people are the most heavily indebted in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (*Cosmopolitan Ireland-Globalisation and Quality of Life*-Kuhling & Keohane-Pluto Press-2007-Page One).

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