

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

July 2010

Vol.25, No.7 ISSN 0790-7672

and **Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.24 No.7 ISSN 954-5891

Coping With The Future We Failed To Prevent

Progressive Governments must not be inward looking. The principle of Sinn Féin, if it was ever progressive, has long been reactionary and stultifying, and the inaccurate translation of it as "*Ourselves Alone*" expresses the essential truth about it. Ireland, in order to be modern, must be open to the world so that the world might be open to it. Its dynamic must be an integral part of the dynamic of the world market.

And yet, when the world market goes awry with drastic consequences for Ireland, the Government—which did what was required of it by the progressive forces—is to be held responsible because it did what was required of it.

The Government must do what the people wants. That's democracy. But, when what the people wanted leads to disaster, it is the Government that is to blame. And that's democracy too.

Modern democracy is in large part the land of make-believe—or, in the words of an Ivor Novello song around the time of Britain's Great War, the "*land-of-Might-Have-Been*". It might have been that the Government could have let the market rip, as it did, and still have remained in command of the economy. We cannot see how that could have been. But the possibility of doing what critics on all sides say should have been done is beside the point. The belief—or the pretended belief—that the Government could have remained in control of the economy while setting it free in the rapidly globalising world market seems to be an ideological necessity of the democratic process.

There are democratically necessary beliefs, and there are awkward facts, and the *Irish Times* has long since placed belief above fact in the order of truth. It has even said so, and therefore it cannot be faulted within its own terms for its mode of reporting the Honohan and Regling/Watson Reports on the crisis.

Its report of June 10th was headlined *Home-made Factors To Blame For Financial Crisis, Reports Claim*. It told its readers that the two reports commissioned by the Government—that of the new Governor of the Central Bank, Patrick Honohan; and another by two former International Monetary Fund officials, "*banking experts Klaus Regling and Max Watson*":

continued on page 2

The gEUru Returns

The guru of the concept of the EU Constitution—*cum*—Lisbon Treaty is Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. When the current existential crisis of the EU manifested itself with the defeat of the Nice Treaty in Ireland almost a decade ago, he came up with the brilliant idea of a piece of paper that would cover all the cracks and persuade all that the EU was going from strength to strength. A pompous, long winded, legalistic piece of constitution-alising would do the trick. No actual new policy but a huge new process.

Now that the existential crisis is considerably worse he offers some words of wisdom in an interview with *Le Monde*, declaring that re-establishing Franco-German "intimacy" is fundamental in order for Europe to keep on growing. He said:

"we are now in a three-speed Europe. On the one side there is Britain, which has decided to stand outside European integration, and has already announced that nothing is going to change during the next five years, as the new government has ruled out the adoption of the euro. As regards decisions concerning the Euro-zone, it will not be necessary to take into account its point of view. The second group is—with some exceptions,

continued on page 4

Turmoil In The Irish Opposition *Mayo and Galway*

In 1965 the Mayo Fianna Fáil cabinet minister, Micheál O'Morain said that *The Irish Times* was "the mistress of the Fine Gael Party and mistresses can be both vicious and demanding". The "old lady of D'Olier Street" (now resident in Tara Street) may be vicious and demanding, but she was not the mistress of Fine Gael in 1965 and the recent vote of confidence in another Mayo man shows that she is not its mistress now.

By means of a dubious opinion poll focussing on the popularity of party leaders, the newspaper engendered panic among a disaffected element within the party. The supporters of Richard Bruton thought that the "finding" that Enda Kenny had a satisfaction rating of 24% was a loaded gun pointed at the head of their party leader. But when the trigger was pulled they found that they were firing blanks.

On the weekend after the opinion poll Kenny acted decisively. When his deputy leader refused to make a public declaration of support, Kenny sacked him. He convened his Front Bench on the Tuesday and after making a 20 minute speech he dissolved it without discussion. Along with Bruton himself, nine out of the 19 former Fine Gael Front Bench spokesmen declared themselves against Kenny. They were joined on the following day by Charlie Flanagan the Party's justice spokesman. But the Mayoman's supporters held their nerve. Dr. James Reilly explained that the front bench has no

continued on page 20

CONTENTS

Coping With The Future We Failed To Prevent. Editorial	1
The gEUru Returns. Jack Lane	1
Turmoil In The Opposition, <i>Mayo And Galway.</i> Editorial	1
Readers' Letters: Cork's Sacrifice - Loretta Lane-Maloney;	
Rebel Cork And Democratic Mandates - Manus O'Riordan	
A 'Timorous Beastie'! - Stephen Richards	3,5
Bloody Sunday: <i>Saville's Unasked Questions.</i> Conor Lynch	6
Staring Debt In The Face. Tim O'Sullivan	7
<i>Lord Trimble Will Investigate: "Netanyahu Says Inquiry Will Vindicate Israel".</i> Editorial	7
Biteback: Israel's 'Botchers'? Eamon Dyas;	
Israel: An Unpublished Correction. Philip O'Connor (Sadaka)	
Dr. Mansergh And The Irish Times. Manus O'Riordan	8,23
Editorial Digest. (Israel & Lord Trimble; Dawn Purvis; Ballymurphy Massacre; Minimum Wage; Housing; A Phantom Authority; Harassment; Water Charges Tom Clarke)	10
Poems: How A Girl Became A Ship. Better Gardening, Or Else Wilson John Haire	10,11
Barking Up the Wrong Tree. Jack Lane replies to Desmond Fennell	11
Nuclear Iran: <i>where's the evidence of threat?</i> David Morrison (report)	12
Shorts from the Long Fellow (Fintan, Street Radical; Jack O'Connor; More Song And Dance; Rwanda's Genocide; Central Bank Report; <i>Irish Times</i> Poll; Sea Change In Irish Politics?)	13
DIB Blues. Sean Moylan. Jack Lane (<i>Dictionary Of Irish Biography</i> series)	14
The 1974 Bombings Of Dublin And Monaghan. John Martin (review)	15
Es Ahora. Julianne Herlihy (BPplc & Politicians; Hitchens; Lost Booker; Military Matters In Ireland; Military Memorials In UK)	16
Dunkirk And 'The Huns Of 1940'. Pat Walsh	18
Perversion Of Archbishop Of Canterbury's Son. Manus O'Riordan	19
Jack Jones Vindicated. Manus O'Riordan (Part One)	21
Political Historians Of Ancient Ireland. Pat Muldowney (review)	25
Does It Stack Up? Michael Stack (Greenpeace; BPplc; Palestine & Gaza; the Great War)	27
Labour Comment, edited by Pat Maloney:	
Private Vultures Eye E.S.B. (back page)	

"heavily criticised misguided Government economic policies, a weak system of financial regulation and poor bank lending".

It gives the subliminal impression that the two Reports attributed primary responsibility for the economic crisis to the Government. And the subliminal mode, which conveys meaning by style and headlines rather than by the old fashioned, now virtually obsolete, art of accurate reporting, has been the *Irish Times* way for a very long time. It is what the secret society that controls the paper thinks the middle class needs, and the middle-class seems happy to take it. About a century ago James Connolly described this kind of reporting in a criticism of the Belfast *Irish News* called *Press Poisoners In Ireland*. Today it applies to the *Irish Times* more than to the *Irish News*.

On June 10th there were three articles on the subject on a page devoted to the Banking Reports. The headline on the main article was: *Honohan Blames Government Policy, Banks And Regulation*. The headlines on the other two articles were: *Regulators Showed 'unduly deferential' Approach To Banks,*

and *Senior Management To Blame For Crisis, Says Honohan*. All three were written by the same reporter, Simon Carswell, Finance Correspondent.

The first sentences of the latter two articles were:

"Neither the Central Bank nor the financial Regulator believed that any institution faced serious difficulties, let alone potential insolvency, in the run-up to the financial insolvency... Patrick Honohan has concluded",

and

"The major responsibility for the banking crisis lies with the directors and senior management of the financial institutions, the report of... Patrick Honohan concludes".

In the main article, headlined *Honohan Blames Government Policy* etc., the opening sentence contradicts the order of responsibility suggested by the headline:

"...Dr. Patrick Honohan has sharply criticised the Financial Regulator, the Central Bank, the senior management of the banks and Government budgetary fiscal policy for causing the banking crisis..."

Three articles by the same reporter on

the same subject on the same page must be a record. It suggests that the reporter wrote a pretty accurate report and the Editor had to do some funny business with it in order to get a headline blaming the Government, which was not immediately contradicted by the opening sentence.

Honohan holds the banks and Financial Regulator responsible for the way things went, and throws in a comment that the Government should have controlled them. That is only the proper thing to do in a democracy in which the people must be presumed to be the masters of their fate, using the Government as their agent. It is the proper thing to do, even though it is well known that the thing was beyond the control of the Government, once globalist development by use of the trickiest devices of finance capitalism was embarked on under Haughey's leadership twenty years ago.

If capitalist prosperity was what was wanted—and we know of no evidence that it was not what was wanted—then Haughey's new departure was extraordinarily successful. And everybody with any sense was aware that the high rates of economic expansion could not last indefinitely. But nobody knew even roughly when it would end. There was no way of knowing. And, if the Government somehow had known, it is hard to see what it could have done.

The only thing to do was to wait for it to happen and then take emergency measures. Any serious attempt to anticipate the collapse and take action against it before the event, would only have accelerated its advent—and would have flown in the face of public opinion, which was wanting more of the same. Within the system of representative politics, only Joe Higgins's Socialist Party demanded something else.

The country was flooded with cheap money. The setting up of the Euro made the accessing of cheap mortgages and loans on money borrowed by the institutions from Germany easy. And two British banks that became very active in Ireland (the Royal Bank of Scotland that was, and the Ulster Bank-First Active) began the mayhem by driving the price of money down.

Then there were the new creative financial instruments, of which the CFD has perhaps been the most insidious. A 1% tax on the purchase of shares, possibly intended to discourage gambling, spawned 'Contracts for Difference'. A Government Briefing Note on these describes them as follows:

"A contract for difference (CFD) is a form of derivative instrument that enables an investor to take a position on stock and its likely performance, without owning the shares. Because they don't own the shares they pay no stamp duty.

The seller of the CFD then is exposed to a risk that the price for the share concerned will move. To cover this risk, he purchases the share itself. Institutions relied on the application of either market maker or broker/dealer relief to avoid a stamp duty charge" (see Dept. of Taoiseach site, 18.2.09).

The CFD was a way of avoiding the 1% tax. But it took off in a huge way, bizarrely coming to form about one-third of transactions by value on the small Irish Stock Market. So much so, that traditional investment in companies via buying shares in them suffered. It was more profitable to gamble on share-prices rising or falling. British hedge funds, along with other Irish and international investors, joined in this game. Tens of billions were gambled on a handful of Irish-listed shares.

When Brian Cowen, as Minister for Finance, made a tentative move in 2006 to treat the CFDs in the same way as shares, the authorities were pulled up sharply. The London Investment Banking Association, representing over 50 of the top London finance houses—including Cantor Fitzgerald, one of the main CFD players in Ireland—wrote to the Irish tax authorities:

"We are concerned that the authorities may not have fully evaluated the consequences of the announced changes... [which] have the potential to cause serious damage to the reputation of Ireland as providing a stable and well-ordered operational framework for the financial sector" (from a document obtained by the *Sunday Business Post*, under Freedom of Information provisions, 21.5.2006).

Leaving aside the diplomatic language, the London institutions threatened to boycott Ireland as a financial centre, with catastrophic consequences for the burgeoning Irish financial services sector. They were not going to tolerate new restriction or curbs on their profit-making operations. Minister for Finance Cowen had to climb down. The tax was dropped.

Being wise after the event, the *Sunday Tribune* remarked three years later, on 1st February 2009: "*Arguably, if the revenue had got its way and imposed the 1% tax on CFDs from St. Patrick's Day in 2006, the worst of the Anglo crisis may not have happened...*" The threatened boycott of Irish financial markets by the City of London is not mentioned.

Eamon Gilmore raised that climbdown over the CFDs that February 2009: rather despicably, he implied that Cowen was bowing to Fianna Fail's financial friends.

Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy initiated the "*procyclical fiscal policy*", mentioned by Patrick Honohan as promoting too expansionist an environment. McCreevy's philosophy was that 'if you have it, spend it; if you don't have it, don't

Cork's Sacrifice

The following letter appeared in the *Irish Examiner* of 10th June and the *Evening Echo* the day before

On Tuesday evening last, (1.6.2010), I attended the launch of "A Great Sacrifice-Cork servicemen who died in the great war" and with sadness I turned the pages of the book to the name of my grandfather, Christopher Lane who died in the Western Front on December, 1914, and his brother, John, my uncle, who died on the same battle front on October, 1915.

My late mother, was the only child of the union between Christopher and Margaret Mary Lane, she wasn't a year old when her father went off to the 'Great' War, never to return.

But to me, the supreme irony of last Tuesday evening was that in paying tribute to my grandfather, I had just learned that morning that his great grandson, Fintan Lane was incarcerated in a detention camp in Southern Israel.

My grandfather died for a propaganda lie 'the Freedom of small nations'. Almost 100 years later, his great grandson was on a humanitarian journey on behalf of the Palestinian nation whose fate was determined by the First World War settlement at Versailles in 1919.

All the tensions of the Middle East to-day arise directly from that war. The 'war to end all wars' and 'the peace that ended all peace' at Versailles ensured that the twentieth century was the bloodiest in human history.

The First World war was fought to further the expansion and power of the British Empire and for nothing else!

When Ireland expressed its clear desire for freedom in the 1918 General Election what we got was the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries. All the latter being veterans of the 'Great' War who burned down our City Hall in Cork and killed two former Lord Mayors of our city.

Ireland never forgot the dead of World War I—that would have been a physical impossibility. It just did not celebrate Irish slaughter in Britain's interest and it never should.

Loretta Lane-Maloney

spend it'. (This is the exact opposite of Keynesian wisdom.) However, McCreevy is on the globalist wing of Fianna Fail, and is not mentioned when blame for the crisis is being thrown around. On the other hand, Brian Cowen—who attempted to curb the speculators and kept Stamp Duty on property transactions despite populist pressure from the media and Opposition Parties during the last election campaign—has been made a whipping boy for the financial crisis.

There has been debate as to whether the crisis is 'home-grown' or imported. There is no doubt that there was a property building-induced boom, even frenzy. But property prices were already beginning to come down gradually, 18 months before the collapse of Lehman Brothers signalled the advent of the Western economic crisis. But for that world financial crunch, it is quite likely that property prices would have continued to come down and Irish markets would then have stabilised at a lower, more realistic, level: a 'soft landing'. Instead, world investor confidence has been so shaken that there has been a precipitous drop. That is not something for which the Irish state can be blamed.

Professor Garvin published his popular *Preventing The Future* not long before that 'prevented future' (which arrived about twenty years ago) collapsed. The implication of the kind of criticism of the Government there has been since the collapse is that it should have carried on preventing that future under the aegis of De Valera's ideal for Ireland. But this must remain a mere implication. It dare not be made explicit. That is why there must be Utopian belief that all the wild, economically fundamentalist, consumer prosperity of the past 20 years, that was achieved by surfing the waves of globalism, could have been achieved while securing the national economy against the globalist dynamic.

Fianna Fail launched the Irish economy on this development twenty years ago, and it was fortunate that it was in Government again when things began to fall apart. So thought the *Irish Times*, whose mission in life for a generation has been to subvert Fianna Fail. When the crisis struck, it advised the Opposition that Fianna Fail's difficulty was not really its opportunity, because it would not be adequate to the crisis. Fianna Fail had to be allowed to

cope with the emergency so that a situation might be restored in which an inadequate Opposition might pass muster as a Government.

Labour was particularly disabled for profiting from the crisis as it was in the course of modernising itself into a globalist business party, under Stickie leadership, when the crisis struck. As we write it is topping the Opinion Polls for the first time ever, but that is only because Fianna Fail is handling the emergency well, and the democracy is not pleased with the medicine it has to swallow as a cure for the situation it brought about through its eagerness for globalist prosperity.

We recall when Desmond Greaves, originator of the Stickies, used to say that Ireland was the most socialist country in Western Europe, because it had the highest rate of state participation in the economy. Well, if it was socialist then, it must be Communist now! What Fianna Fail has set up in order to ward off catastrophe is what used to be called 'state capitalism'—a form of capitalism dependent for its continuation on a framework set for it by the state. It is the kind of thing that Lenin introduced as an emergency in Soviet Russia in 1921, and that Bukharin wanted for a permanent system.

If Fianna Fail had been on one of its periods of recuperation when the crisis struck, we doubt that Labour would have had either the daring or the ability to do such a thing.

Fianna Fail has the market on life-support in the Emergency Ward. If we could see any significant political or economic force that was seriously intent on availing of the crisis to abolish the market, we would condemn Fianna Fail for that.

The gEUru Returns

continued

including Sweden and Poland—the one of new EU members, which have stood back during the euro crisis. The third group is the 'Eurogroup', which is relatively homogeneous" (2 June).

I think Giscard should learn to count. We now have not a 3- but 27-speed Europe. And the centrepiece of the EU, France and Germany, are at daggers drawn. I would not have been surprised if Valéry had proposed a newer, bigger Constitution to solve the problem. One would hope in vain that he might try to explain why his grand plan for streamlining, co-ordinating, and making the EU more efficient, has failed. But that was never his style or that of his fellows.

It is plain silly to state the Eurozone can ignore Britain. Britain has made it clear that any real changes to the Eurozone requires a Treaty change, and that it can and will veto that if it does not suit sterling—a competing currency to the Euro. And all agree that substantial changes are needed. The *Ancien Regime* crumbled because it lost a sense of reality and this latter-day echo of that regime illustrates perfectly why it did so.

I first got suspicious of Giscard's sense of reality when he came to TCD to celebrate Edmund Burke's bicentenary in 1997. I can see why Americans, Indians and the Irish would, and should, celebrate Burke. All are entitled to have a soft spot for him, as I do. But it was most peculiar that a Frenchman would have one. His philosophical treatise on the French Revolution—while very interesting as such—bore little relationship to French realities. He helped Britain make war on France and make the whole thing as bloody as possible. The Revolution has not exactly been a failure so far—and that would have had to have happened by now to prove Burke right.

Valéry says that Britain will "*stand outside EU integration*". So a member of the EU can effectively stand outside it and that's OK? What a weird concept! One need not know much about Britain and Europe to know that Britain does not stand outside anything that it's a member of. *It is very much inside and wrecking every aspect of EU development.* But it conducts itself so naturally and well that its wrecking activities cannot be seen from the lofty heights of Giscard's ego.

If anyone needs to know the real British attitude to the Euro, the place to go to is the organ of middle England, the *Daily Mail*, the paper that most clearly articulates the current Government's attitudes. One of its leading lights, Stephen Glover wrote recently:

"Of course we don't want a new crisis, but the euro's demise could prove to be our salvation. We must hope that Europe and the euro weather the storm, and that no more trillion-dollar bailouts are necessary. Or should we? There is another way of looking at this problem. The demise of the euro, though accompanied by disagreeable economic shocks, might turn out in the longer term to be the best outcome for Britain and Europe. Let me explain. The euro is a 'political construct'. It is nothing less than the main engine of European integration, designed to bind together the countries of the EU. Germany signed up to it in 1999—sacrificing the deutschmark, which had long been the strongest currency in Europe—in the cause of closer political union...

"Last Friday, in justifying to the

German parliament the €147billion in loan guarantees which she had agreed to on behalf of her country, she said that 'if the euro fails, then Europe will fail, too'. In other words, without the euro, dreams of European integration will be dashed. And so the euro must be defended to the hilt. Its champions now accept what its critics have long said—that monetary discipline is not practicable without a greater degree of political union than exists at the moment in the EU. ... Last Friday, David Cameron bluntly told Angela Merkel that Britain would veto any attempt to give Brussels more power over the budgets of individual states... But if those problems brought with them the eventual end of the euro—I do not dare to imagine it is imminent—would that not be a welcome silver lining? If the euro survives, we get more integration. If it doesn't, we will get much less. In fact, the European project would to all intents and purposes be dead, and we would return to a state of affairs close to what was originally conceived—friendly European nations trading freely with one another, and coming together on issues as suited their national interest. For Britain that would give us the chance to regain control of our political destiny and escape the increasingly heavy and undemocratic hand of Brussels. For some European countries the death of the euro could lead to an economic resurgence. Germany, for example, would no longer have to subsidise spendthrift southern Europeans.

"Nonetheless, I have no doubt the European political class, and in particular the French and German governments will fight very hard indeed to preserve the single currency, everything they believe is based upon it. We can have another perspective—which is why it is possible to say that the collapse of the euro might, in the end, be the best thing for Britain and for Europe" (27 May, 2010).

In another issue (7.6.2010), the paper outlined the history of a previous European Monetary Union, the Latin Monetary Union of 1865—which bowed eventually to the Gold Standard in the 1870s and was formally abandoned in 1927. This is the perspective from which the British view these things. I don't think Giscard has such a perspective on these issues. Giscard has about as much appreciation of British realities as Burke had of France in his day. He is in cloud cuckoo land and he is not alone. The EU has been changed utterly by Britain: Giscard should try to reflect on that and maybe produce some "*Reflections on the Revolution in the EU*".

But we are more likely to get another pathetic Mills and Boon novelette from him, a most appropriate medium for his fantasies. At least those fantasies do no harm and show him up for the silly man he is.

Jack Lane

Rebel Cork And Democratic Mandates

Both Brendan Clifford and Jack Lane are quite correct to take exception (June *Irish Political Review*) to the tag of "rebel" attached to Seán Moylan by his granddaughter's biography. Although my father sang "*The boys who bate the Black-and-Tans were the boys of the County Cork*" on the Ebro front of the Spanish Anti-Fascist War, it was always anathema for him to ever tolerate the term "rebel Cork" in connection with the War of Independence. As he explained in the second edition of *Connolly Column*, Cork "*was nicknamed the rebel county, but this was nothing to do with Irish republicanism. It dates from the period of the English War of the Roses when the Cork gentry backed the losing side.*" (p. 226)

As for Brendan's arguments re the democratic mandate for the War of Independence, there was an interesting letter penned seven years ago by Professor Risteard Mulcahy, son of Dick Mulcahy, IRA Chief-of-Staff during the War of Independence and Free State Army Chief-of-Staff during the Civil War. Mulcahy had been provoked by an extraordinary outburst on the part of John Redmond's biographer, Dermot Meleady, in response to a half sentence of my own.

In an *Irish Times* letter, on 12th September 2003, I had written:

"Seán Russell was a man whom de Valera once considered worth making the effort to save from himself. Russell had given sterling service in the 20th century's first war for democracy—the Irish War of Independence fought to give effect to the democratic mandate of the 1918 elections. When de Valera failed to persuade Russell to accept the democratic mandate of his later Republican election victories of the 1930s, he was left with no option but to act ruthlessly and with resolve against Russell and his followers."

In the issue of 24th September, Dermot Meleady took issue with what my "*defence of the reputation of Seán Russell against Kevin Myers*" said on one key issue:

"Calling the struggle 'a war for democracy' seems to suggest that the fundamentals of that system were not in place in 1918. Such a simplistic formula may be all right for feeding to gullible tourists on the open-topped tour buses of Dublin, but it ignores many facts. Free and fair elections had taken place for decades and, since 1885, on a franchise as wide as could be found anywhere. Thanks to 40 years of patient and peaceful work by Parnell, Dillon and Redmond, an executive responsible to an elected native parliament was there for the taking by

1914, were it not, tragically, for the Ulster difficulty."

On 29th September I replied:

"One issue raised is the right of the Six Counties to refuse incorporation into a United Ireland except by consent. As Dermot Meleady well knows, I spent a quarter of a century of my life publicly campaigning against Articles 2 and 3 so as to gain acceptance of that principle of consent. But this issue is a red herring because Britain's refusal to recognise the 1918 Election results was, in fact, a refusal to countenance a Republic even in the 26 Counties itself, and a determination to uphold and indeed enforce their right to execute as traitors to the King those who sought to give effect to that democratic mandate. Dermot Meleady is mistaken in asserting that there was no authorisation by the First Dáil for the War of Independence fought by the Irish Republican Army. Full and formal acceptance of such responsibility for the IRA was proclaimed by that Dáil in March 1921 and subsequently endorsed by the 26-county electorate in voting Sinn Féin back into power as the Second Dáil in the 1921 General Elections. Notwithstanding the bitterness of the Treaty Debates of January 1922, both sides continued to endorse the democratic mandate for that War, with Arthur Griffith referring to it as the war fought against 'the Black-and-Tan terror for twelve months until Britain was forced to offer terms'... General F.P. Crozier, who founded and commanded the British Auxiliary terrorist operations in Ireland from 1920 until his resignation in disgust in 1921 ... had no doubt that what Britain had been waging in Ireland was a war against democracy, as he would later recall in his 1932 memoirs: 'The (British) Coalition Government of 1920-21, as dictatorial, and therefore as nearly Fascist, as any British Government is ever likely to be, failed completely in its attempt on Irish democracy, because the army would not comply with the rules of this intolerable Fascism.' Out of the horse's mouth."

But of far greater interest was the riposte to Meleady on the following day, 30th September, from Risteard Mulcahy:

"The Irish Volunteers were initially formed in 1913 as a defence force to ensure the implementation of Home Rule. Like its predecessor, the General Headquarters Staff of the Volunteers was established in March, 1918 by the Volunteer Executive as a defence force in response to Lloyd George's conscription threat and at the time of the German plot.... It remained quiescent as a military

force until the end of 1919 but was then obliged to take action because of the British campaign of intimidation and imprisonment of Sinn Féin speakers, the suppression of Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Volunteers in June 1919, and the suppression of the Dáil later in the autumn. Military action started in January, 1920, with the attacks on RIC barracks, carried out initially in association with the Cork Volunteers."

"There is no reason to believe that GHQ would have commenced military action without the draconian attempts adopted by the RIC to suppress the activities of the representatives elected by people. Dermot Meleady is not correct in implying that the War of Independence, extending from January, 1920, to July, 1921, was not based on democratic principles. The decision to commence hostilities was approved by Cathal Brugha, Minister for Defence in the first Dáil, and responsibility for the war was subsequently accepted by Dáil Éireann. One must agree with Mr Meleady that it was unfortunate that Home Rule was not established in 1914. It was equally unfortunate that the 1918 election did not evoke a conciliatory response from Lloyd George and his Cabinet."

No less than Sinn Féin or Fianna Fáil, the Cumann na nGaedheal tradition also stands in thorough refutation of the Redmondite spin on Irish history.

Manus O'Riordan

A 'Timorous Beastie'!

I've noticed a tendency for the (Belfast) *News Letter* to become ever more parochial in its concerns. A recent startling example of this was in its coverage of the annual Presbyterian General Assembly which took place during the second week of June. On at least two of the five days of the Assembly the paper published photos of the assembled delegates with the caption: "*Presbyterians from all over Northern Ireland have gathered in Belfast this week....*" or words to that effect. I was moved to send the Editor (who should know better) an email protesting against this piece of sloppiness. At the risk of sounding like Lord Macaulay I have to say that any semi-educated person should be aware that the church is organized on an all-Ireland basis as the Presbyterian Church in Ireland—indeed as are all the mainline Protestant denominations. Generally, apart from the deaths columns, the paper struggles to convey information coherently. The editorials bring to mind the "*wee cowerin' timorous beastie*" of Burns's poem. At no time should anything be said that might cause offence to the DUP or the Orange Order.

Stephen Richards

Bloody Sunday: Saville's Unasked Questions

The events of Bloody Sunday took place on 30th January 1972, when a peaceful but prohibited demonstration in Derry was fired on by British paratroops who had been deployed. In the face of widespread horror at the killing of 13 people, the British Government immediately established the Widgery Tribunal, which took just 11 weeks to produce findings that exonerated Britain. The families campaigned for 26 years for this ruling to be overturned, finally winning the Saville Enquiry, established in January 1998. That Tribunal took extensive evidence and its report took 12 years to draw up at a cost of £191m.

On first reading, the Saville Inquiry laid the blame for the killings on the members of the Parachute Regiment who carried out the shootings, and in particular on their commander, Lt. Col. Wilford, who Saville claimed disobeyed the orders of his commander, Brig. Mac Lennan, not to go into the Bogside. Saville stated, itemising each shooting, that the victims were unarmed, posed no threat to the soldiers and were in effect murdered.

But the Report begs a lot of questions. What was a Lieutenant Colonel doing in charge, leading from the front, of a depleted Company of soldiers? What were the Paras doing there in the first place? Who decided to deploy the shock troops of the British Army against a civilian crowd? And why were troops ordered into the Bogside, when there was no violent behaviour?

As for the paratroops, if not ordered in by Brig. MacLellan, could they have been deployed without the knowledge of a senior officer? Where were the other units of the British Army?

The Civil Rights march had been declared an illegal assembly, as had all other assemblies at the time. Whoever originally made this decision, all proclamations were made by senior Army officers at press conferences, and the Army was in charge of all operations. (Frank Lagan, RUC commander in Derry, had already ordered that the march be allowed to proceed unhindered.) By the time of Bloody Sunday, there were many military units with greater experience of crowd control than the paras. The tactics at their disposal ranged from simply interposing themselves between marchers and their destination, up to snatch squads, wielding batons and firing rubber bullets and tear gas. Where were these units? Pictures, still and TV, show that the Paras were equipped only with rifles.

In a sense the Widgery Report contained

a kind of honesty. OK he covered up the murders. But he made excuses on the basis of his understanding that the British Government was responsible for the whole affair. And he doubtless suspected that the Prime Minister, Edward Heath, a particularly aggressive soldier in World War Two, was up to his neck in it. (Lieut. Col. Wilford was awarded the OBE shortly afterwards.)

Now Saville is determined to confine blame to the soldiers on the ground. He specifically exonerates Edward Heath. But Heath, after the Widgery Report, which he appeared to accept was a (necessary) whitewash, reminded people that they "*fighting a propaganda war as much as anything else*" (News Letter, 16th June). Heath also refused to say in front of the Inquiry that innocent people had been killed.

There is talk of murder charges. There has even been speculation that legislation designed to deal with gangs might be used, under which there is a collective guilt making all responsible for the actions of their colleagues. This is nonsense. Or rather it has always been part of the law. If two people rob a bank and one of them kills the teller, both are deemed guilty of murder. It was on this basis that Londoner Derek Bentley was executed in 1953, even though it wasn't he who actually killed the policeman.

There is already talk that the Paras should, following any actual conviction, be treated like anyone else under the Good Friday Agreement. This is not unreasonable.

However, it is probable that the soldiers involved will not be prosecuted. But they may be, for the sake of appearance. In that case, they are likely to be on bail and then immediately released under the GFA (Good Friday Agreement) once the trial is over. On that understanding their silence about more embarrassing matters (for the British Government) could probably be ensured. There have been many dodgy doings by the military during the 30-year war and it is remarkable how well almost all soldiers have kept their counsel and abided by their military code of honour all through this period and since.

Reaction to the Saville Report has more or less divided along sectarian lines—Catholics welcoming, Protestants critical—though no one has been crass enough to suggest that the shootings were a good thing. Nelson McCausland (DUP) on TV, before the Report was published, said that there would have been no soldiers around if it weren't for the Provisional IRA. That

does not explain why it was Paratroopers, and not ordinary military, who were deployed in Derry. Moreover, the military had already taken over the marshalling/suppression of the Civil Rights movement from the RUC by that time.

Liam Kennedy and Lindy McDowell in the *Belfast Telegraph* performed their "one lot as bad as the other" act. Even bringing up the totally irrelevant drunken brawl in May Street (Belfast) that led to the death of Robert McCartney a few years ago. (The point here was that the man alleged to have killed McCartney had earlier been at a Bloody Sunday protest.) McDowell suggested that the "godfathers of terrorism" made money while their foot soldiers suffered. An accusation much more relevant to the British.

All Belfast papers made a fuss about the fact that Saville *suspected* that Martin McGuinness was carrying a Thompson sub machine gun on the day of Bloody Sunday. McGuinness denies this. But 'so what' if it were true? The Provos had ordered that all weapons, both those of their own Volunteers and those of the Official IRA, be removed from the area that day. That edict would have needed enforcing.

Finally, Eamon Gilmore and Proinsias de Rossa have distanced themselves yet again from the the Official IRA who, Saville said, fired some shots on Bloody Sunday—though he emphasises that the killings by the Parachute Regiment were not connected to this. The ex-Stickies continue to be very sensitive about these matters. So it may again be in order to ask them who on earth they think financed their activities and their political and financial advancement down the years!

Conor Lynch

Editorial Note

This journal investigated the matter at the time. Our finding was that the only firing on the nationalist side was done by the Official IRA after the Paratroopers started shooting.

Our understanding of the whole event that it was an administrative massacre, whose purpose was to test the will of the Catholic community, causing it to back down if it was not entirely in earnest—but of course the effect was to stiffen it as it was.

From our correspondence:

"...Saville has still not entirely convinced me that it was not something more sinister than troops losing control. 1 Para is a front line combat unit and the unit that opened fire was their elite Support Unit under Major Loden. I think they did what they were ordered to do.

General Ford had sent a memo to General Tuzo saying the way to deal with things in Derry was 'selected shooting of DYH' (ie Derry Young Hooligans) and that was passed on to Lord Carver, the Chief of Staff of the British Army. Carver

actually said that Heath informed him that it would not be 'unlawful for the soldiers to shoot anyone who got in their way'. Of course, Heath denied it and General Ford conveniently 'forgot' his memo. But I think that's the link.

Wilford, o.c. of 1 Para is now blamed for disobeying orders and sending his men in. Yet the adjutant of the 8th Infantry Brigade, then Major Michael Street, who was responsible for relaying orders from his c.o. Brigadier MacLellan to Wilford, says Wilford did not disobey and no strictures were placed on him. I think there is more dirt to come out which leads to a 'higher authority' than a mere Lt. colonel..."

"Gen. Ford was about the worst of them. But there was one wonderful moment when he publically stated that the Provos had only about 50 members. The next week they paraded all four Belfast battallions—real battallions!"

Staring Debt in the Face

From when Ireland joined the Euro in 1999 the banks became in a position to access lavish amounts of funds from continental banks and lend on these to their customers in Ireland. Banks wrote to customers offering money at competitive interest rates for the purchase of cars or whatever took the customer's fancy. They pumped credit into the economy and the public reacted with an orgy of consumption and of investment which was often of a dubious nature. By 2005 the Irish economy and society had become drunk on credit.

News reports on television featured newscasters, faces smugly triumphant, informing the public as to the percentage by which house prices had climbed in the previous quarter. They climbed at a rate of approximately 20% per annum. House prices became a proxy for economic health, a national virility symbol. An obsession developed for purchasing property on the continent, especially Eastern Europe, supported by bank credit. Four wheel drive vehicles and luxury autos, most bought on credit, raced along the new motorways. There was a new boast; the Irish owned more Mercedes per capita than the Germans.

The other side to this story of consumer nirvana was that private indebtedness in Ireland had grown to reach an unprecedented and extraordinary scale.

An entrepreneur told me in 2005 how "I've got my money". He meant he had been granted a substantial bank loan. The fact the loan would need to be repaid along with interest did not appear relevant.

He had learned that apartments could

be purchased off the plans in Budapest and a quick killing could be made by selling them on after construction. So he thought.

During the years up to 2008 an average of 15,000 persons per year entered employment in the public service or semi-states. Very many of these young people took out mortgages on houses which they expected to be their family dwelling. The prices were extravagant, even extraordinary. In Dublin it was not unusual for a three bedroom house to fetch half a million Euro. The result is that these young people were led into a situation where most of their income would be eaten up by mortgage repayments. Due to cutbacks in public service pay, allied to tax increases, they have experienced a drop in income of around 15%. Since most of their income is taken up with a mortgage and other calls on their income, disposable income is just a small percentage of gross income. Thus a cut of 15% in gross pay can lead to the wiping out of a person's disposable income. As a result it has been an uphill battle for Union leaders to persuade workers to accept the recent Croke Park Agreement with the Government.

The situation for workers in the private sector is yet worse. Here workers have to contend with sharp cuts in pay, the imposition of short-time working, and becoming unemployed. As a result more and more are finding themselves unable to meet mortgage repayments. If the situation is left to fester then they will simply quit attempting to pay and hand back the house keys. This is where imaginative and humane solutions need to be put on offer.

One possibility is that a house buying couple could be offered a solution whereby they hand the house over to the bank and in return receive the right to live in the house under an attractive long-term lease arrangement for as long as at least one of them is living in the house. When they have both left or are both deceased the bank will take full possession of the house to use as it sees fit. With this arrangement the couple receive a place to live at a reasonable cost and the bank receives a stream of rent payments and eventually comes into possession of an asset.

Another possibility is that a house could be part-purchased, part-rented from the bank. This way the house purchaser has the opportunity to cash in some of the money invested in the house from the time of purchase by way of an eventual sale. Various variations along the lines of these suggestions above should be on offer. Solutions would need to be tailored to individual circumstances.

These possibilities need new legislation to become viable. One imagines such solutions would be permissible in law in cases where it is no longer reasonably

possible for the purchaser to continue with a normal schedule of mortgage repayments.

The objection can be raised that the banks themselves are "bust". From the point of view of people who are unemployed or only partially employed, and without financial wherewithal, the solvency status of a bank is of no practical relevance. They can not pay and they therefore will not pay.

There is no advantage from the point of view of a bank to taking possession of a house when there is no market into which to sell the house once possession has been achieved. The only route out of such a dilemma is an imaginative and humane compromise.

New legislation is under consideration to come to grips with the situations outlined above. Let us hope the eventual proposals display the required vision and understanding.

Tim O'Sullivan
31 May 2010

Lord Trimble Will Investigate: "Netanyahu Says Inquiry Will Vindicate Israel"

Israel is, for the moment, being strongly urged to adopt a peace policy. But, if peace was what Israel was about, it would never have been established. Its establishment was a programme for war.

The establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine began as a British colonial project in the fourth year of Britain's Great War on Germany, when Britain seemed no nearer to winning than it had been at the start and German Central Europe was where the Jews were at home. In the early years of the War, Redmondite Anti-Germanism tended to express itself as Anti-Semitism. Then, at the end of 1917, Imperial Britain made a bid for Jewish support by adopting the programme of the small but active Zionist Organisation—a minority nationalist movement among the Jews whose purpose was the colonisation of Palestine with a view to forming it into a Jewish State.

The Balfour Declaration, which made the Zionist project a policy of the British Empire, was multi-purpose. It helped to activate American Jewry for the war on Germany; it harnessed British Anti-Semitism to the cause of the Empire; and it provided Britain with an excuse for reneging on the undertakings it had given to the Arab Middle East when acquiring it as an ally in its war on Turkey.

Assimilated British Jews saw Zionism as a phenomenon of Anti-Semitism. So did the Zionists. And the leading supporters of Zionism in the British Government, Balfour and Churchill, were Anti-Semites.

Weizmann, who negotiated the Balfour Declaration with Balfour, was of the

opinion that Gentiles were incorrigibly Anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism was a virus of Gentile life. Therefore the only Gentile he could trust was one who admitted to being Anti-Semitic.

The immediate Anti-Semitic purpose of Zionism for Britain was to ease the Jews out of British and European public life—the Bolshevik Revolution was seen as a Jewish event—by diverting their energy into the colonisation of Palestine with a view to making it a Jewish State within the Empire. The Jewish State was to be "*a little loyal Jewish Ulster*" in the deceived, and therefore hostile, Middle East.

The founder of the Zionist Organisation, Theodor Herzl, was a Central European rationalist of the Environment. He deduced the necessity of Jewish nationalism from the general nationalist development of Europe in the second half of the 19th century. He was amenable to forming the Jewish state somewhere other than Palestine. But the dynamic support for his idea came from Jews in the Russian Empire, who did not participate in the culture of the German enlightenment, and they would have nowhere but Palestine.

Many of the British supporters of the Zionist project at the end of the Great War, both Jewish and Gentile, were secularist in outlook. the *Manchester Guardian* (now *The Guardian*) supported Zionism, even before the Balfour Declaration. But Claude Montefiori, who became the spokesman for the assimilated Jews against the Balfour Declaration, said that secular liberal Zionism was an illusion, and that the Zionist project could only be realised through a revival of fundamentalist millenarian Judaism.

When the Jewish State was being set up in 1947-48, it was led—or at least fronted—by liberal secular Jews. And the major parties in Israel were Mapam and Mapai, which in general ideology were of a kind with the major British parties. Mapam was affiliated to the British Labour Party.

The inadequacy of West European ideology to the realisation of the Zionist project began to be felt very quickly after the establishment of the Jewish State. When Likud entered the Israeli mainstream as the major party of the state, that might have been a moment of severe crisis. It would have been a moment of crisis if 'the world'—which authorised the establishment of the Jewish State on liberal ideological assumptions—had been scrutinising political developments within the State, with a view to holding it to account. But 'the world' took little interest in what its creation in Palestine was doing. And the Jewish nationalists had the measure of the world. They knew that in a real political sense the world did not exist. It had, through an American/Russian collabor-

• Biteback • Biteback • Biteback • Biteback • Biteback • Biteback • Biteback • Biteback

Israel's 'Botchers'?

The following letter of 6th June failed to appear in the *Sunday Independent*

Once again I am bemused by Eoghan Harris' defence of the indefensible ('Government is right about Ivor, wrong about Israel', 6 June 2010). Senator Harris is an intelligent man but continues to preach the gospel of indulgence when it comes to the behaviour of the Israeli government. He refers to the illegal boarding of the humanitarian aid ships by Israeli commandos in international waters as 'botched' and the commandos as 'lightly armed'.

Israel, Senator Harris would have us believe, seems particularly prone to botching. It seems that everything it touches with regards to the Palestinians and the outside world ends up as some kind of 'botch'. Presumably it 'botched' the carpet bombing of Gaza eighteen months ago, and it 'botched' the illegal use of Irish and other nation's passports when it murdered Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai in January this year—a mirror 'botch' of the earlier illegal use of Canadian passports in the attempted murder of Khaled Meshal in Amman in September 1997. Or, its invasion of Lebanon in 2006.

Israel, it would appear, has a long history of 'botching' in its handling of the Palestinian people ever since it emerged in 1948. Successive Israeli governments have been plagued by an unfortunate sequence of stupidity if they persistently 'botch' everything they do in their relations with the Palestinians and the outside world.

But, it would be interesting to know what it is that Senator Harris thinks has been 'botched' in the course of this diabolical trait of successive Israeli governments. There must be some other way by which Israel could achieve its objects without it falling prey to the curse of 'botching'. But what are these objects Senator Harris?

For surely we cannot comprehend if something has been 'botched' unless we have some understanding of the goal that is being consistently frustrated by the 'botchers'. Perhaps there is some coincidence between its incessant expansionist policies and the trait of 'botching' to which it seems to be particularly prone.

If only the Palestinian people would cease resisting the growth of Israel and attendant policies that result in them being expelled from their land, things would be so much easier. In such a world the Israeli apologists would be free from the intellectual dilemmas caused by the curse of the Israeli 'botchers'. But what price for the Palestinian people and the rest of us Senator Harris?

Eamon Dyas

Israel: An Unpublished Correction

The *Irish Times* published a truncated version of a letter submitted by Philip O'Connor. It failed to print the correction below.

Today you printed an edited version of a letter I submitted to you, distorting its meaning unacceptably. The letter ended: "Please spare us the humbug about the Hamas 'threat' to Israel." In editing out the sentences preceding this statement, you distort the letter in an unacceptable way. The text you excised included:

In the rhetorical Hamas "Charter" of the 1980s, which Israel's friends so love to quote, this desperation was reflected in calls for the abolition of the state of Israel. It was a cry of the desperate in a situation where an entire people were facing national, cultural and even physical extinction. Since Hamas won democratic elections (which the same pious west refuses to accept), its leaders have constantly offered ceasefires and stated clearly that they would accept a settlement on the basis of the 1967 borders if Israel withdrew from the occupied territories. One such ceasefire was in fact in place from June to November 2008 until it was annulled by a murderous Israeli incursion into Gaza. The resumption of rocket fire by Hamas in retaliation was the *casus belli* sought by Israel for its long prepared and murderous Cast Lead Operation of December that year.

The 2008 Hamas-Israel ceasefire—brokered by Egypt—and the Hamas offers to operate on the basis of the 1967 borders remove any threat to Israel, offers that Israel has chosen to ignore. Fatah and other Palestinian parties (please stop calling them "factions") are similarly prepared to operate the 1967 border solution.

All of this has been reported in your own newspaper in the past. Please spare us the humbug about the Hamas "threat" to Israel.

Philip O'Connor, Sadaka—The Ireland Palestine Alliance

ation in the UN General Assembly in 1947, authorised the Zionists to establish a Jewish State, and then, disabled by the Veto system, let them get on with it.

The extremist Likud became the moderate party of the Jewish State without

moderating itself in any way, and it set the parameters of further development—the parameters of the Biblical state.

But Likud did not so much overthrow the parties of western ideology as slough them off as having served their purpose.

The great Jewish terrorist war of 1945-7, which broke the will of the British administration, and the great Jewish ethnic cleansing of 1948, which drove out more than half the Arab population of the area granted by 'the world' for a Jewish State, and the conquest of 1948 which extended the area of the Jewish State far beyond the borders set by the UN—these things were not the work of the genteel, Western-oriented, Zionists who were accorded prominence for the purpose of reassuring the tender consciences of Western democracy.

Radio Eireann, in its interviewing of people who took part in the attempt to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza, has suggested that a harsher standard of criticism is being applied to Israel, one which is not applied to China or Zimbabwe. That is not the case. Israel is privileged to do things which would be resoundingly condemned in the case of any other state. Zimbabwe has been subject to draconian sanctions for many years because of the way it handled its own internal affairs in the matter of colonial land ownership.

But, if it was the case that a harsher standard of criticism was being applied to Israel than to other states, that would be appropriate. It is the only state created by the United Nations. The UN therefore has unique responsibility for it.

But let's leave aside the moral responsibility of the UN for the conduct of its creature, on the ground that the UN has no substantive existence of its own.

Israel merits a unique criticism because it is doing what no other state in the world is doing. It is colonising.

One of the great world issues in the second half of the 20th century was the ending of colonialism. But Israel has been an active colonising state since 1967—or, since 1948, if we apply the 1947 UN Resolution.

Zimbabwe is a British colonial development that failed. The colony held itself apart as a master race. In the mid-1960s it rebelled against its Imperial Government and declared independence. The Imperial Government introduced sanctions against it but did not enforce them. But the colony failed to make a go of Rhodesian independence against the resistance of the native population. About fifteen years later Britain came to the aid of its own colony. It brokered a deal whereby the native majority would elect the Government while the British population would retain its vast landed estates for the time being, but would be bought out gradually with British financial assistance. When Britain forgot about the last part of the deal, the Government set about expropriating colonial property by direct methods. It was then subjected to international sanctions intended to break the Zimbabwe

regime, which had done nothing it was not entitled to do as a sovereign state. But RTE has so far lost its sense of Irish and colonial history that it can take up an Israeli hint and apply it against Irish sympathisers with the Arab victims of Jewish nationalist colonialism.

There was a period when the Jewish settlements were explained away as temporary devices made necessary by the absence of a state authority in the remaining Palestine territory with which a settlement could be made. But for twenty years or more it has been reasserted authoritatively that the Jewish settlements in the territory occupied in 1967 are there to stay, and that they will never be alienated from the Jewish State.

Israel, whatever its public relations operation in Western Europe might have been saying, has always understood itself to be a colony, a Planter community amongst natives. There was from the start a sympathy between it and the apartheid regime in South Africa, and they were kind to one another.

It did not quite prove to be the "*little loyal Jewish Ulster*" it was intended to be. It rebelled and fought an unrestrained terrorist war. But its independence was a means to a further colonialism of its own.

It has now refused to allow a UN investigation into its handling of the Gaza flotilla—which attempted to relieve the punitive blockade on the Palestinian population—but has succumbed to pressure to include a couple of independent observers in its own committee of investigation. One of them is Lord Trimble. Trimble was the leader of the intransigent Ulster Unionism that was broken by the conciliatory Paisley. We cannot say what Paisley's view of Zionism is, but we discovered that Trimble, when Unionist leader, was active in an obscure but influential Zionist lobby. And the Young Unionist movement, which he developed in Queen's University, supported Apartheid South Africa.

Political apartheid has gone in South Africa, and the property system associated with it is likely to go the Zimbabwean way. That leaves only Israel for the strain of Ulster Unionism that insists on being colonial to identify with. But it is a mere fantasy identification. It is almost forty years since John McQuade of the DUP said that if they were anything like the Israelis that would long ago have taken Dundalk.

Unionist Ulster is not under any necessity of retaining a Plantation mentality. It might have been Irish or it might have been British. We tried hard to persuade it to be British. But it seems that it only feels happy with a Plantation mentality, with a sense of grievance against the Motherland, which takes vicarious satisfaction in the doings of the bold Israelis.

Editorial Digest

Israel Vote:: On June 7th, independent members of the Stormont Assembly proposed a vote of censure on Israel for the killing of the Turkish protesters in international waters off Gaza. With Sinn Féin, the SDLP and the Alliance Party supporting the motion it was assured a clear majority. But the Ulster Unionists and the DUP combined to force the issue to be voted communally, which meant it had to get a majority in each sectarian bloc—hardly something that this system was designed for. But that is how it went and the censure motion fell.

Lord Trimble: Former Unionist MP and Stormont First Minister, and now Tory Lord, David Trimble, has been appointed by the Israeli Government to the three-man inquiry team examining the shooting by Israeli soldiers of Turkish protesters on the convoy of ships trying to relieve the siege of Gaza. The chairman is retired Israeli Supreme Court judge, Yaakov Turkel.

The third member is the former chief military prosecutor in Canada, Brig. Gen. Ken Watkin. Canada has been a strong supporter of Israel. The Canadian army hasn't exactly covered itself in glory on recent missions abroad. One thinks of the human trafficking in Bosnia.

Trimble, like almost all Ulster Unionists/Loyalists, is strongly pro-Israel. There is often speculation about the support for Israel among Ulster's Protestants. The fact that Republicans support the Palestinians is often cited as a reason. And there is all the "*anti-terrorist*" rhetoric. But the real reason is usually diplomatically skirted around.

This is the fact that both the Ulster Protestants and the Israeli Jews came to be where they are in the same way and for the same reason. They launched invasions, established plantations and drove out the natives. Time and war have established an important difference. The natives of Palestine are still being daily attacked and purged. The natives of Ulster, following 30 years of successful warfare, are now as good as top dog. They certainly no longer have to take any nonsense from the descendants of the planters. This makes possible, in the foreseeable future, the ending of sectarian divisions, and the acceptance of the Irishness of the Protestants.

Irish Foreign Minister, Micheál Martin, has said that an internal Israeli inquiry would not be satisfactory. US President Obama said that he would prefer an independent inquiry, but that he nevertheless had faith in the integrity of an internal inquiry.

The *Irish News* commented:

"Can Trimble be impartial?... Lord Trimble's involvement has raised questions over his impartiality, given his long-standing sympathies with the Israeli position. Indeed, he recently joined an international Friends of Israel group headed by a close associate of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu... However, Lord Trimble's appointment, along with the scope of the inquiry, which is being seen as an attempt to turn the spotlight on the pro-Gaza activists, is unlikely to satisfy those who have been critical of the Israeli action and the subsequent government response." (Irish News, 15th June.)

Dawn Purvis (MLA), elected leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, political wing of the Ulster Volunteer Force after the death of David Ervine, has resigned her position and has left the Party altogether. This follows the killing by the UVF of Bobby Moffett, former Red Hand Commando, in public on the Shankill Road, following what appears to have been a personal dispute between Moffett and the local UVF.

Among other things, the shooting has threatened the UVF's status as being a paramilitary organisation on ceasefire. The UVF warned locals to stay away from Moffett's funeral, but a crowd of about 2,000 turned up, including Dawn Purvis, Nigel Dodds (DUP MP for North Belfast), and Nelson McCausland (DUP MLA in North Belfast). One thing that particularly incensed people was the distribution of phone pictures of the dead man.

The Forgotten Massacre: Lost in the "excitement" of the Saville Report into the Bloody Sunday killings is the lack of any official light on the even more atrocious massacre that occurred in Ballymurphy on the 9th August 1971. The British Army killed 11 people,

including the Catholic priest, Fr. Hugh Mullan.

The shootings in Derry took place in a short period of time and were most likely sanctioned, and even planned, at the highest level, to break the Civil Rights Movement, or maybe as a test of its seriousness! The Ballymurphy killings were spread over a much longer period and, following initial shootings, took the form of a series of executions. For instance, as Noel Phillips lay wounded, an Army vehicle made one of many sorties from the local barracks, drew up next to Mr. Phillips, whereupon a soldier got out and shot the wounded man twice in the head with a handgun.

At the time the Catholic Bishops corresponded with the Vatican and the British Government about the killings. Recently representatives of the families of the dead requested copies of this correspondence. The Church says it has carried out a thorough search, but all of the correspondence has disappeared! Presumably both the British Government and the Vatican will have copies!

Minimum Wage: Reasons why people in the South can survive the recession include relatively high levels of Social Welfare and Pensions, and a Minimum Wage of 8.30 euros an hour. The latter is now under attack from that fine philanthropic body—the Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Time was when accountants kept the books as state or private employees. Now they run things (into the ground as often as not). They have no interest in the goods or services being produced and are, because of such indifference, completely mobile.

In the survey of its members the ICPA found that 60% believe that the minimum wage is making Ireland "uncompetitive". However, only 20%

of respondents said that the minimum wage had any actual impact. 50% said that their companies wouldn't employ any more people even if the minimum wage was reduced. So it's just the gut instinct of the well off—a lot of poor people getting poorer makes them feel better (see Irish Examiner 14th June.)

Housing: There are about 170,000 homes in the South that no one has ever lived in. And many more are simply empty. So what to do? Cork County Council's 'solution' is to begin planning a brand new town with 15,000 new homes at Monard, near Blarney! The scheme is being backed by the Government

The Education And Skills Authority, designed to streamline education in the North and so save cash, does not actually exist, and is unlikely ever to exist. Originally it was to start on 1st April 2008 and then on the 1st January this year. Now the start date has been postponed indefinitely.

Of course, all this doesn't stop those involved getting their "priorities right". A chief executive was installed at a salary of 200,000 pounds a year. One Gavin Boyd by name. 35 other staff are also on the payroll. One Sean Hogan gets 33,000 for a three-day week plus, naturally, travel and subsistence allowances. Six directors get between 70,000 and 106,000. All this at a time when the education budget is about to be hammered.

The total amount on salaries has now reached £4.6m. The cost of the ESA Implementation Team (whatever that is) is £5.3m with a further £3.2m paid out on the project by the Department of Education. A similar nonsense was discovered by Sinn Féin's Conor Murphy when he took over his Regional Development Department and he swiftly took the axe to them. But Education Minister Catriona Ruane (SF) is behaving like a rabbit caught in lights and looks unlikely to get on top of the situation (Irish News, 15th June).

Harassment: "A 45-year-old man is being questioned in connection with the no-warning car bomb attack on Palace Barracks army base in Holywood... Police have arrested four others in connection with the incident. All have been released without charge" (Belfast Telegraph 15th June).

Not a very remarkable story, one might think. But something like it appears every day in the "shorts" reports in the *Telegraph* and in the *Irish News*. One or more arrested and then released a couple of days later. The total now runs into hundreds. There can hardly be a "dissident" Republican, and the term covers just about any Republican outside of Sinn Féin, who has not been lifted at least once. This is nothing less than a

HOW A GIRL BECAME A SHIP

The 'dozer paws the ground,
coughs black diesel smoke,
looks at the tiny figure on the mound.

A red fluorescent jacket her only hope.
The giant blade glistens in the sun,
wondering why she protects this Palestinian house.

Its armour quivers as it runs.

Crushes, backs up, runs again. Nothing
but a mouse, a louse.

PR before Accident and Emergency.
Denial before the Intensive Care Unit.
Death rather than transparency.

Not hard to say whodunit.
Thousands of miles from home
they heard Israel in her dying moan.

She became a ship.
She had steel.
She was not eclipsed.

Her backbone is the keel.
Her ribs bear the plates.
Her eyes navigate by satellite.
Her ears monitors Israeli hate.
Her nose smells Gaza's plight.

The M.V. Rachel Corrie,
though sinkable, it is replaceable.
That makes the enemy worry.

Her soul is transferable
beyond the reach of pirates,
through many generations, inheritable.

A self-deluded image of gold carats
but an unfinished graveyard of impersonation,
with the irremovable bloodstain of Rachel

Corrie
it brazens out world condemnation.

A ship sails into the Gaza flurry.
Re-born to maybe die a second time
but to re-grow on the vine.

Wilson John Haire
5th June, 2010

campaign of harassment and intimidation by the supposedly defunct Special Branch.

Water Charges: Mr. Victor Hewitt is the director of the Economic Research Unit of Northern Ireland. He is very distressed by the constant postponement of the introduction of Water Charges. Finance Minister, Sammy Wilson (DUP), has ruled out such charges for now. The original proposals for Water Charges were designed as part of a restructuring of the industry in such a way as to make it attractive to potential shareholders and prepare it for privatisation.

Mr. Hewitt is also exercised by other aspects of public spending—free travel for the elderly, a rates freeze and free prescriptions. His words of wisdom are published by one of those institutions famous for their financial rectitude—the banks—in this case the First Trust Bank. He describes public expenditure as "populist". *"The time for talking about hard choices", he says, "is over, the time for making hard decisions has begun". "Hard choices" are, of course for the "little people" and certainly not for the likes of him.*

How all this squares with the following statement from Belfast's new Lord Mayor, Pat Convery (SDLP), is anyone's guess: *"Making our city safe, promoting first class healthcare and ensuring support for those in need are all priorities... we must ensure that progress isn't blunted by the impact of the economic downturn and Government cuts. We will continue to listen to our ratepayers..."* (Feature article in the Belfast Telegraph).

The *Belfast Telegraph* stated that Finance Minister Wilson was planning the introduction of water charges from next April. In a letter to that paper, Mr.

Wilson stated:

"I do not have the power to implement water charges. They could only be introduced by the Executive if the Regional Development Minister (Conor Murphy, Sinn Féin) decided to bring forward a proposal to that effect. Furthermore legislation would be required to bring them in and, as I am on record as saying, it would be impossible to do the necessary groundwork to ensure their introduction within the lifetime of this Assembly."

Stormont Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, writing in the *News Letter* on June 16th said: *"...asking people to pay for vital medicines is a tax on illness. It is contrary to the fundamental principle on which the Health Service was founded—that health services should be free at the point of use."*

Tom Clarke: A letter appeared in the *Irish Examiner* on June 14th from Nora Comiskey of the 1916-1921 Club supporting the proposal from Senator Labhras O Murchu that Dublin Airport be renamed Tom Clarke Airport. Railway stations and bridges are named after the other executed 1916 leaders. But, for some unexplained reason, Tom Clarke has been neglected. And, whatever the formalities of the situation, Clarke was the Rising's effective leader. If there had been no Tom Clarke, there would have been no Rising.

The original proposal for the Tom Clarke Airport, however, came from Councillors in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, where Clarke grew up and joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Perhaps that should have been enough to set a campaign going. But there is still resistance in the South, even in Republican circles, to proposals emanating from north of the border. Now that the proposal has been "southernised", maybe something will be done.

BETTER GARDENING, OR ELSE

Cabbages I love
when they grow firm heads
and necks no thicker than a dove.

So green in their bed.
It is decapitate time.
When the knife is red,
drums beat and Big Ben chimes.

(Those alien seed blew in to stay)

Cabbages, I never liked their ways,
consorting with slugs,
the enemy that feeds on decay.

Some think we're mugs,
turning purple, then white
with no notion of surrender, the thugs.

Together once, armed with the pike,
but betrayed, riddled, with the caterpillar,
the aspidistra put us to flight.
After that, fertiliser, the killers.
How can a lily talk to a cabbage,
expecting the cultural cringe
when they dastardly savage
and laugh about the Orange.

So let those runner beans
run run run with gangerene,
they and their border scheme.

In league with the cabbage
is the iceberg lettuce,
being green, one another they ravage.

And what of that sharp practice,
social climbing like the clematis,
together in the same old bed,
the lily and the cabbage to apartheid wed.

And how can a garden be a nation
when it's an artificial creation
yearning for its old self in reincarnation.

Wilson John Haire
30th May, 2010

A Reply To Desmond Fennell

Barking up the Wrong Tree

Desmond Fennell, as usual, puts an interesting proposal in his *Making Ireland Unlovable—a call to Irish historians* (*Irish Political Review*, June 2010) where he asks our current historians to explain the changes in the Irish attitude to themselves which has gone from self-loving to self-hating in the last few decades. It is a good question to pose and Desmond poses it in clear and trenchant terms. It deserves an answer. However I suggest that Desmond is barking up the wrong tree in seeking or hoping for answers from our historians. They could never explain even more important and clear-cut issues.

The most important fact in modern Irish history was the establishing of

political independence. But that overwhelming fact has never been explained by Irish historians when it happened or since. If our historians could not do that why should we expect them to do a lesser job today?

The history of independence was written by the participants, Barry, Andrews, Breen, O'Donoghue, Beaslai, Gallagher, O'Malley, Moylan and many others in books, local newspapers, and magazines and mostly by word of mouth. And by people no way connected with Irish historians, like Macardle and Longford. The history should have been written by the luminaries of the NUI, principally in UCD. It had the intellectual power (and resources) to do so with Tierney, Hogan, O'Rahilly etc., but their abilities ended up in the historical *cul de sac* of the Irish variety of fascism.

The real historians were the participants of the War who wrote their stories. As

some became 'politicians by accident' some also became historians by accident. And some became both. But they did a powerfully effective job for the people who were interested in the subject at home and abroad.

The fight for independence was essentially a moral statement of independence from Britain and is therefore inextricably and inevitably linked with a rejection of Britain's moral position in Ireland and in the world then and now. And as Irish academia never got, or could get, their heads round that basic choice, or see that there is a choice to be made between those moral positions, they just do not do Irish history and instead do a version of British history.

And the official historians did not improve with time, as time itself does nothing. The next generation of NUI historians after Tierney *et al* were inspired by the post-WWII intellectual heavy-

weight in UCD, T.D. Williams. Desmond studied under him and admired him and dedicated one of his books to him. Williams also has a host of acolytes and admirers in the current media, e.g., Kevin Myers, and in intellectual circles. But did he write a definitive history of the Ireland of his time or earlier? It is patently clear he did not. It is also patently clear that he should have done so if the substance lived up to the status.

As interesting a question as Desmond's is about today's historians, it is just as interesting to ask why did T.D. Williams not do his job in his time? His job was to explain Ireland's rationale for neutrality in WWII and explain what that war was really about to Europeans and remove it from the propaganda of the War itself. It was the need of the time for Ireland and for Europe and its need was never more important than it is today where propaganda has taken over completely in writing about that War. He was regarded as a world expert on the history of Germany and Nazism before the War and he knew the facts of War and how it came about. Ireland could have done Europe a great service in explaining that War.

So why did he not do his job?

T.D. was snapped up by British Intelligence during the war, and—as it is euphemistically put in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* entry on him—“*he worked in Berlin as a honorary member of the British occupying forces*”. He worked at the top of British Intelligence, making preparations for the Nuremberg Trials. In fact he was so much part of the British Intelligence scene that he had his wedding reception in the then top secret holy of holies, Bletchley Park, where he worked.

On his return to Ireland he got the Chair of Irish history at UCD and began a new regime that has been described by one of his admirers as follows:

“Williams employed his skills to persuade the president of the College, Michael Tierney, to make a series of inspired appointments, all of them products like himself, of leading British Universities. It is difficult for today's academics to appreciate what this represented in light of the Catholic nationalist governance of UCD in the late 1940s and early 1950s” (Eda Sagarra, “Irish-German Studies” Vol. 2, 2007).

And so, without actually writing Irish history, he shaped the intellectual framework of Irish historians for a generation. His major ally in this re-orientation of UCD's history Department was Nicolas Mansergh, a colleague from Cambridge and the British Intelligence services.

Williams chose Britain's moral position in the world and was therefore paralysed as far as Irish history—and European history—was concerned despite all his knowledge and talents.

We are told he had a draft book on the Irish “civil” war and another on the rise of Hitler. But they never appeared. I wonder why? There are clear indications that T.D. knew very well that Britain created and facilitated both events—but what would Cambridge say to that? Nicholas for one would not be amused. I suspect T.D. struggled with his conscience and won—Cambridge 2, Ireland 0.

Desmond is well aware of how irrelevant Irish historians are and were to the next seminal event in Irish history—the Northern Ireland issues since they exploded in the late 60s. Britain used the events to intimidate Southern political society by every means possible, including bombs, and successfully disorientated it and gave it a bad conscience about itself.

Desmond himself provided insights along a ‘two nations’ direction and, though differing in some fundamental ways from the ‘two nations’ view of those associated with this magazine, it was the direction that would explain the Northern situation to the people of the north and the south. The ‘two nations’ analysis cut the Gordian knot of modern Irish history and owed nothing whatever to Irish historians and seemingly never will. As usual, they just can't get it.

The current doyen of Irish historians in UCD, Diarmaid Ferriter, created something of a sensation by not going to Cambridge to be finished off properly as his predecessors had been since T.D.'s day. But unfortunately that has not meant an improvement. He is even further removed from the reality of the Irish revolution for independence and therefore from the wellsprings of Irish realities. He is always telling us what Irish independence was not about, what it should have been about and where it failed. These are more important to him than what it was actually about.

There are at least a million and one things it was not specifically about—it was not about men's rights, women's rights, children's rights, pensioners' rights, gay rights, transsexuals' rights, workers' rights, bosses' rights, farmers' rights, churches' rights, atheists' rights, animal rights, etc etc. So, as it was not about a million and one things, it can be described as failing in a million and one ways and endless volumes could be written about what it was not. Generations of future post graduate student can be employed in this pointless activity. But surely historians should tell us what it was actually about and let us see if it failed by that standard.

Mr. Ferriter is essentially a media man. He is therefore under the tyranny of *now*. A historian is automatically lost under such a tyranny. He loses the first essential tool of a historian—an ability to empathise with the situation he deals with as a historian. For him and his colleagues

current problems and failures have their source in our independence and it was therefore a sort of original sin, rather than a means of salvation. Britain disappears from sight and our history is like one-handed clapping—a pointless and crazy looking activity.

So, it will be anyone but our historians who will get a handle on the issues that Desmond raises. Desmond is certainly not under the tyranny of *now* and is therefore in a much better to have a go at explaining the issues himself.

Jack Lane

Nuclear Iran: where's the evidence of threat?

The following letter appeared in
The Examiner, 2nd June

Your columnist Steven King (May 26) writes that “regime change is then perhaps the only strategy that will deny Iran a nuclear bomb”. The alternative regime he has in mind is one led by the Green movement which, he says, merits our wholehearted support.

This assumes the present Iranian regime is developing nuclear weapons, whereas the International Atomic Energy Agency has found no evidence that Iran has, or ever had, a nuclear weapons programme.

Its latest report last February repeats the message of earlier reports that only low enriched uranium suitable for a power generation reactor is being produced at Iran's Natanz enrichment plant and that no nuclear material is being diverted from that plant for other purposes, for example, to further enrich uranium to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, a Sunni Muslim country, doesn't believe Iran, its Shia neighbour, is developing nuclear weapons.

Here's what Mr Erdogan told the BBC on March 16:

“Iran has consistently spoken of the fact that it is seeking to use nuclear energy for civilian purposes, that they are using uranium enrichment programmes for civilian purposes only. That's what Mr Ahmadinejad told me many times before. But it's not very fair to manipulate this fact and say that Iran has nuclear weapons.”

As for the Green movement, there is no evidence that its attitude to Iran's nuclear programme differs from the current regime.

Its leader, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, said recently he was opposed to economic sanctions against Iran (Daily Tel. May 23).

People like Steven King who say the Green movement merits our wholehearted support should therefore be raising their voices against the present plan led by the US and supported by EU states to ramp up economic sanctions against Iran.

David Morrison

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

FINTAN'S BRIEF CAREER AS A STREET RADICAL

*"Did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot"*

Perhaps William Butler Yeats was overstating his influence on the revolutionaries of 1916, but Senator Terry Leyden for a brief moment thought that Fintan O'Toole's words, while not causing any shooting, just might have incited a scuffle outside Leinster House. The Senator then thought better of it and recanted on the Joe Duffy show, exonerating the *Irish Times* journalist.

O'Toole in his homily following the incident condemned the scuffle as being "wrong in itself and also rather ironic" (*The Irish Times*, 18.5.10). He also quoted approvingly from Leyden to the effect that the speech most definitely did not incite anyone outside Leinster House.

So Yeats may or may not have caused certain men to be shot, but O'Toole's speech did not even generate a scuffle. He is perfectly harmless!

JACK O'CONNOR

O'Toole does not represent anything substantial in the society, nor are his opinions grounded on a historical understanding. Indeed quite the opposite, his views reflect those of his newspaper: the republican development brought about by 1916 was a mistake.

The head of SIPTU, Jack O'Connor, by contrast, brings his historical understanding to bear on current problems. On the question of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) taking over the running of the economy O'Connor had this to say:

"James Connolly understood the critical importance of national sovereignty from the perspective of working people. That is why he and the Citizen Army marched out along with the republican forces to assert that right by force of arms in 1916" (*Irish Political Review*, June 2010).

On the Vincent Browne show (31.5.10) O'Connor showed a remarkable ability to hold his nerve in the face of some infantile questions. Browne opened the proceedings by accusing O'Connor of making "bombastic threats" on the programme a few months previously. The journalist was of the opinion that the Croke Park Agreement showed that the SIPTU leader's "threats" had no substance. O'Connor responded by saying that the Croke Park Agreement

provided the means to reverse the cuts over time while preserving jobs and preventing public services from being undermined. Browne blithely ignored this response and continued to accuse his guest of bombast (in effect lying). O'Connor was not going to tolerate this and threatened to leave the studio before Browne meekly suggested that "it might appear" that O'Connor was being bombastic, even though he (Browne) wasn't actually suggesting this himself.

It is clear that O'Connor is a serious player on the Irish political scene whereas Browne is just show biz.

MORE SONG AND DANCE

The Long Fellow has not been paying too much attention to the Eurovision song contest in recent years, and therefore had not realised that since 2000 the big four countries (the UK, Germany, France and Spain) have been granted an automatic place in the final whereas, apart from the previous year's winner, all other countries have to compete in a semi final. The justification for this favouritism is that these four countries contribute the lion's share of funding for the contest. Could there be a parallel trend in the political sphere since the Lisbon Treaty (with Spain being excluded)?

It was interesting to see how *The Irish Times* (29.5.10) explained this favouritism away.

"It has been widely believed that this (i.e. the exemption for the big four—LF) puts these countries at a disadvantage since voters only hear their song once."

But there is no sign of the Big Four waiving their exemption! How strange!

RWANDA'S GENOCIDE

Readers of this column will be aware that Vincent Browne's favourite regime in Africa is the current one in Rwanda. Or at least, he fully accepts that regime's version of recent history. For example, in his *Irish Times* column of 31st March he wrote:

"Inevitably, and predictably, sectarian tensions between the Hutus and Tutsis were ratcheted up and in the post-independence era there were several mini-genocides before Africa's holocaust in 1994 when one million people were slaughtered out of a population of eight million, almost all the victims being Tutsis."

While it is true that at least 1 million perished in 1994 nobody, apart from the most die hard apologists for Paul Kagame's vicious Tutsi regime, believes that "almost all the victims were Tutsis". The Tutsis represented about 10% of the population. If Browne were correct there would have been no Tutsis left. Also, how can Browne explain how the so-called victims of genocide ended up running the country for the subsequent 16 years?

The only European State that deserves any credit for its role in Rwanda in 1994 was France under the Presidency of Francois Mitterrand. It is no accident that a campaign of vilification of the Socialist President's constructive role at that time has been waged by the Rwandan regime. Incredibly, the current President of France Nicolas Sarkozy has allowed his Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner to begin reopening diplomatic relations with Rwanda and is in the process of allowing Hutus resident in France to be extradited.

A report in the *Guardian* (8.6.10) gives an indication of the quality of justice that such unfortunate people can expect on return to their native land. A US lawyer leading the defence case of "top genocide suspects" has been arrested by the Rwandan authorities and denied bail on the thought crime of "denying genocide". It is unlikely that such an incident would even have been noticed by the rest of the world if the lawyer had been a native Rwandan.

CENTRAL BANK REPORT

The report of the new Central Bank Governor, Professor Honohan on the banking crisis is certainly critical of Government policy since 2001, but from 2007 (the term of the current Government) the damage was done. The Report finds it difficult to criticise any aspect of Government policy since then. The only quibble relates to the scope of the Bank Guarantee scheme. While it says this scheme was essential to prevent a collapse of the economy costing tens of billions of euros as well as an immediate and dramatic increase in unemployment, the scheme should not have covered "dated subordinated debt" ("undated subordinated debt" was not covered). The Report does not accept the argument of policy makers that it was important to keep the scheme simple to restore confidence in the banking system. Nor does it agree with the view that since in many cases the holders of dated subordinated debt also held Government paper, not covering this category of bondholder would have undermined the State's credit rating.

If the Government had not covered dated subordinated debt the banks might have been able to obtain better discounts from these creditors. However, the Long Fellow is under the impression that in overall terms this error was not significant.

The report also indicates that the Government had no option but to keep Anglo-Irish Bank as a going concern. The value of its business made this bank of "unquestionable" systemic importance.

THE IRISH TIMES OPINION POLL

To what extent do opinion polls reflect the political environment and to what extent do they influence it? Most people do not think too profoundly about politics

between elections and yet the suggestion has been made that following the most recent *Irish Times* opinion poll both Brian Cowen and Enda Kenny should consider their position.

The most important thing to be said about *Irish Times* opinion polls is that they should be approached with caution. The allocation of "don't knows" is heavily biased against Fianna Fáil. In the most recent poll that party received 16 per cent of those polled. Labour received 21%. But following the allocation of 'don't knows', Fianna Fáil's vote increased to only 17% while the Labour percentage was miraculously transformed to 32%!

In the past, particularly in the Ahern era, opinion polls tended to overstate FF's support so there was a certain justification for adjusting the "don't know" figure against FF. And at the last General Election the *Irish Times* opinion poll prediction was remarkably accurate.

But there was an explanation for this. Ahern was a consensus figure who attracted opinion poll preferences outside the core FF vote. Therefore, a significant number of opinion poll respondents who expressed support for Ahern's FF could not be relied upon to stick with their preference at election day or even vote at all.

But that logic does not apply to current opinion polls. Anyone who expresses a preference for FF in the current environment must be a committed supporter of that party. The opposite applies to the Labour Party. Preferences for the latter are from people who have never voted for that party and must by their nature be fickle.

A SEA CHANGE IN IRISH POLITICS?

Having entered the above serious caveats it can hardly be doubted that there has been a dramatic decline in support for Fianna Fáil and that Labour has been the main beneficiary.

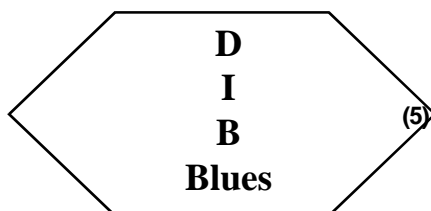
It could be said that the rise in support for Labour signifies the end of "*civil war politics*". But the nature of the "new politics" is not obvious. The shift in allegiance is certainly not class based. Labour's rise has coincided precisely with the party's movement away from its working class base. Labour's support appears to have been gained equally from almost all classes in the society with the exception of the farming class. If the Labour Party has indeed become the largest political party it may be able to form a Government with Sinn Féin and the smaller left wing parties. But one suspects that the party's recent supporters would run a mile from such a prospect.

Also, the sea change does not represent a youth revolution. The party's support is strongest among those in the 35 to 39 age group.

DECLINE IN FIANNA FÁIL

The Long Fellow thinks that the change in party allegiances has more to do with the weakness of Fianna Fáil than the strength of Labour.

Fianna Fáil's decline reflects a long term trend that has been brought about by its neglect of republican values in the last 40 years. It has relied on its political competence in that period and allowed the



Sean Moylan

One would expect any biographer of anybody to refer to the subject's own autobiography or memoir when doing a biography of that person. If it was deemed inadequate, the reader might at least expect to be referred to the work, and some explanation given for ignoring it. But Sean Kearns does nothing of the sort in the *Dictionary Of Irish Biography* entry on Sean Moylan. Moylan's own explanations for his own actions are ignored.

One can expect some strange things when a thing like this happens.

Moylan was an IRA commander in North Cork during the War of Independence. He first came to national prominence with his speech on the Treaty—which shocked many of those present when he said he would respond in kind in North Cork to a war of extermination by Lloyd George. As he clearly meant what he said, the Chairman suspended proceedings so that the statement could be taken fully on board.

Kearns described the event as follows:

"He also replied directly to Lloyd George's threat of total war by suggesting that Cork Loyalists would not survive such a war, although he had avoided targeting Unionists during the war of Independence."

If Kearns had taken the trouble to read Moylan's autobiography, he would see that Moylan targeted Crown forces, along with those who helped them in the field, and nobody else (and then only in North Cork).

Moylan fought his war against the forces of the British state which were over-ruling the election result by military action. He did not fight it against Unionists, let alone Protestants. Nobody—Protestant, Catholic, Unionist or Home Ruler—who did not take part in the British war effort against

cultural agenda to be set by others in the media and academia. In short, it has become just another political party dependant on the vicissitudes of the economy and other events. As a consequence its core vote, which it could rely on whatever the circumstances, has been in long term decline.

If Fianna Fáil does not attempt to assert the core values upon which it was founded, its long term prospects will remain bleak.

the Irish democracy, was targeted by him.

The general understanding of the situation in the Treaty debate was that Britain was preparing to use the method of Concentration Camps by which it had won the Boer War twenty years earlier, if the Dail rejected the 'Treaty'. Moylan said that, if that situation came about, he would see to it that no active supporter of the British effort would survive in his Brigade area.

It is hardly possible that Kearns cannot distinguish between these distinct categories of people. But he is no doubt following the Peter Hart line on all this. It was Hart who set the tone and who took the campaign of denigration against him a step forward when he classified Moylan's speech as an "*anti-Protestant declaration*". That is how he introduces him to his readers.

Much had been written and said about that speech but it had never occurred to anybody until Hart came along that that Moylan was talking in religious terms.

And it should be pointed out that the DIB entry, while excluding Moylan's own autobiographical work, does include Hart's book on the War of Independence.

Kearns says of Moylan as Minister for Education: "*Wary of conflict with the Church he refused to remove the ban on married women teachers*".

By today's standards such an attitude seems outrageous, but it should be pointed out that it was Government policy across the public service for decades and was not unique to Ireland. The ban was justified because it provided more teaching opportunities. It indicated a different attitude towards the bringing up of children and family life. The Church could not be the driving force of this policy and had little to do with it. And Moylan, as an ex-communicant, never showed any undue concern about a conflict with the Church if it was necessary.

Moylan's own wife had been a teacher and there is no indication that she, for example, had any objection to the policy. But past practices cannot be allowed to have their own integrity acknowledged. If they occurred in the past and were different, then that is an automatic qualification for condemnation and dismissal. And Mr. Kearns must keep up with the times.

Jack Lane

The 1974 Bombings Of Dublin And Monaghan

This book is self published and distributed. The author has been selling it from door to door around Dublin since it was published in 2006.

It is a very important book which deserves a wide readership. While there are some flaws, this reviewer suspects that the reason for it not being distributed or publicised through the mainstream channels has more to do with the book's merits. It gives an invaluable account of the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings of 1974 and as such there are powerful interests that do not wish this story to be heard.

The author is a professional journalist who has worked for RTE and Yorkshire Television as well as the BBC, Channel 4 and Canadian television. He has used his extensive contacts within, among other sources, the loyalist paramilitaries, the Gardai and the Official IRA, to piece together this remarkable story.

The strongest part of the book is the first six chapters in which the author describes the crime and its victims as well as the perpetrators and their motives and connections. Thirty-three people were killed, 300 were injured and many more were affected for the rest of their lives by the events of 17th of May 1974. The author goes behind the stark statistics. The victims were ordinary people with everyday hopes and dreams: women doing their shopping; office workers rushing to catch a train; and in one case a whole family wiped out in an instant. Who knows how their lives would have turned out if they had been somewhere else on that fateful day?

There is a gruesome fascination with the details of the planning and execution of the foul deeds. Two of the three cars that were to explode without any warning in Dublin were hijacked in Northern Ireland. The author suspects that the car owners were sympathetic to loyalist paramilitaries even if they had no inkling of the deadly purpose for which the cars were intended. The third car was stolen. Soon afterwards all three cars were driven to Dublin for a meeting at a car park in Whitehall. Bombs which had been brought by other cars were transferred to the stolen cars. There were also "scout" cars which led the drivers of the car bombs to their destination and presumably enabled the bombers to be picked up after they had parked their deadly loads.

The bombs were planted in Talbot Street, Parnell Street and South Leinster Street (near Trinity College). Talbot Street and Parnell Street are on the east side of O'Connell Street. It was anticipated that the emergency services would be drawn to this area allowing the bombers in South

Leinster Street to escape north along O'Connell Street.

The Monaghan bomb exploded 90 minutes after the Dublin bombs outside, as it happens, a Protestant-owned pub.* The intention was to divert the Republic's security services to the west of the Border so that the bombers could make good their escape back to Northern Ireland in the eastern part of the border.

The bombings were planned and executed with military precision. This is not a characteristic which is usually associated with loyalist paramilitaries. However, one of the bombers was not suited to his task. This was a person called David Alexander Mulholland who was a part time UDR member. He was very tall and strikingly handsome as well as having a volatile personality. Apart from his appearance he also drew attention to himself by driving the wrong way up a one-way street and showed impatience when parking, all of which attracted the attention of a female witness. Once the Gardai identified Mulholland, a cooperative Catholic member of the RUC was able to lead them to the leader of the bombing gang, who was a person called Billy Hanna.

Billy Hanna was the UVF leader in mid-Ulster and the author describes him as having a very close relationship with the British Army. He went on regular fishing trips with William Appleby, a British soldier. The author's UVF contacts as well as Hanna's wife describe regular visits of British Army personnel to Hanna's house. Also at UVF meetings, when Hanna was asked technical questions about an operation, he quite often said that he needed to obtain advice on that matter. It was understood by all concerned that the advice was to be from the British Army.

It was not long before the Gardai were able to identify about 95% of those who were involved. The obvious question is why no one was arrested. The author refers to a lack of cooperation, even obstruction by the RUC. He is also deeply critical of senior personnel within the Gardai. The results of the Garda investigations were brought to the attention of the Commissioner Edmund Garvey and there the files rested. The author doesn't say straight out why Garvey sat on the files, but there is at least one other book that has raised suspicions about this senior police officer who was later sacked by the Lynch Government in 1978. *The Irish Times'* former Deputy Editor, James Downey, in his autobiography says that Lynch's Government Press Secretary Frank Dunlop

* The bombers had chosen a different target, but been moved on by Garda on traffic duty. Ed.

told him that Garvey was a British spy. Downey himself doesn't give credence to this, but the anecdote certainly gives pause for thought.

The author does not adduce any evidence that Liam Cosgrave's Coalition Government hindered or obstructed the Garda investigation for fear of what might be found. But that is an allegation which is difficult to prove or disprove.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the book is that elements of the British State directed the bombings. The reasons for the attacks, according to the author, were to collapse the Power Sharing Sunningdale Agreement; threaten the Government in the South so as to prevent it from interfering in the North; and create a favourable environment for the introduction of repressive legislation aimed at the IRA. This latter objective was also the purpose of the 1972 bombings in Dublin.

The rest of the book gives a detailed description of the various personalities of loyalist paramilitarism. The reader is left with the strong impression that most of these people were nasty, thuggish, individuals who would not have been capable of executing the 1974 bombings on their own.

Although the author tells his story well the book is marred by the occasional emotional interjection which does not help the author's case. Also, this reviewer was bemused at his comments about Jack Lynch's obsequious phone call to Ted Heath after Bloody Sunday. The author is sympathetic to Lynch and complains how badly treated he was by Heath. This reviewer has no sympathy for Lynch whose capitulation to the British at the outset of the Northern conflict led to the disgraceful Arms Conspiracy Trial in 1970. Heath can hardly be blamed for knowing who he was dealing with.

There is a bizarre epilogue in the book which is nothing more than a rant against Conor Cruise O'Brien, Kevin Myers and Fintan O'Toole. The fact that these might be worthy targets is beside the point. There is no obvious connection between this and the rest of the book. Also he has some factual errors in this part of the book. For example O'Toole, despite appearances, did not grow up in "*a comfortable middle class family*". His father was a bus conductor and his mother worked as a cleaner with the *Irish Press*.

If there is a second edition it would be much more interesting to read in the epilogue section about the struggles the author had to publish and sell the book as well as the reaction of ordinary people to it.

Aside from the quibbles, this book is well worth reading and is an invaluable record of events in our recent history which still reverberate today.

The book can be obtained by contacting the following number: 086 367 9300 (outside the Republic of Ireland 00353 86 367 9300). It can also be ordered by email at dublinmonaghan@eircom.net.

John Martin

BPPLC AND POLITICIANS

On the 20th April 2010 when BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig blew up in the Gulf of Mexico killing 11 workers and spewing crude oil into the area, it took some *considerable* time for Washington/London to see the seriousness of the situation. Since then the American media has focussed their anger on BP and especially its Chief Executive Tony Hayward and rather late in the frame—on the President himself. But Obama's inability even *now* to act with decision seems to stem more from lack of innate ability than other factors. But still there is no denying that BP had a cosy relationship with the US elite political class—and it needn't be added with that of Britain—despite the best efforts of the likes of the *Financial Times* et al to make it seem like the most ethical of all the oil companies.

As ever, it takes *Private Eye* to kick the ball into play. In the 11th—24th June 2010, No. 1264 edition, *Private Eye* has done its own digging and came up with some astonishing facts. It depicts a company which rode rather roughshod over safety procedures, because BP has form in this area. In 2005, the oil company at its Texas City refinery had an incident that killed 15 workers and injured 170 others because its then Chief Executive, John Browne—now Lord Browne of Madingley—cut costs on safety.

One of the first initiatives of the new Prime Minister, David Cameron MP, was to recruit Lord Browne to counsel the new Chancellor George Osborne on saving money at Whitehall in the age of austerity. When Tony Blair was Prime Minister, BP was actually known as **Blair's Party**—but Tony knows a sinking ship like no other, so there are no public appeals for American clemency to a company whose generosity to New Labour was an open secret.

What really got to Washington was BP's initial 'buck-passing' (a practice loathed by the US, particularly as they really are prone to it themselves) when it said that another company, Transocean, along with former Vice President Dick Cheney's Halliburton, were in part responsible for the disaster. Even the *Financial Times* reported that this was the last straw for the Americans—despite the fact that it was true.

Transocean was the firm that operated the rig for BP, and Halliburton was responsible for cementing the well closed before the blow-out. But Transocean moved its operating base to the Cayman Islands in 1999 and then to Switzerland in 2008, while Halliburton—that very Ameri-

can company—started moving its operations to Dubai in 2007, so there is no money in those particular companies for the Americans to lay their hands on.

But did BP walk into a trap? *Qui Bono*?

According to *Private Eye*, BP bought American politicians but were they dangerous friends? In 2004 BP hired a lobbyist, one Andrew Lundquist, "*former director of energy policy for US vice-president Dick Cheney and hence one of the most valuable political insiders involved in US government backing for the deep drilling in the Mexican Gulf*" that has now turned belly-up."

Lundquist ran Cheney's Energy Task Force which recommended allowing oil firms to drill in the deep waters of the Mexican Gulf and in formerly-protected parts of Alaska. The task force papers remain secret but leaks, according to *Private Eye*, have shown that BP staff helped the task force draw up its oil policy. During this critical period, Tony Blair's Energy Minister Brian Wilson visited the US for talks with Lundquist and the task force and on that trip he also spent time with BP. Lundquist also has working with him in his firm Bluewater Strategies (BP's US lobbyist) Eric Washburn, a former leading Democrat Senator and early Obama supporter. He might have been Obama's Health Secretary had it not been for a scandal over his failure to pay income tax leaving him free to lobby for BP.

Another Government agency involved in the off-shore drilling project was the US Minerals Management Service (MMS), which seems "*to have approved much of BP's work without making full checks. The MMS's chief of staff in the Gulf of Mexico until 2007 was one Jim Grant. He now works for BP*". Guess who was Chairman of BP while all this was going on—well our very own **Peter Sutherland**—the *Irish Times*'s very favourite big businessman. In January 2010, BP appointed a Swedish businessman Carl-Henric Svanberg, who has no oil company experience but was formerly CEO of Ericsson—the Swedish and world's largest telecoms equipment maker—who is off to the White House by order of President Obama. It seems to me that BP will be—unthinkable before now—exterminated by the Americans.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Hitchens is an English journalist who works in the USA for the magazine *Vanity Fair* and contributes articles for other London-based magazines and papers. He had also written a few books, one of them jumping on the anti-God wagon with the likes of Richard Dawkins—whose book *The God Delusion*, published in 2006, went to the top of the best selling lists in the USA and Britain. In 2007, Hitchens published the not very originally titled *God Is Not Great*. I think he sees himself

as some kind of intellectual though, having only attained a third class degree in Balliol College, Oxford in 1970, the evidence points in only one direction. But then he is a polemicist and his type of journalism is very much of the *attack dog type*. What has been called the "*new atheism*" is very much a product of a post-Protestant intellectual environment associated with white conservative men (WASPs, to use an American expression), and is also a fundamental attack on what they call Islam-fascist extremism.

(Here in Ireland, well the Dublin media really, the phenomenon has taken the form of anti-Catholicism and seems very much to closely follow the white Anglo-American militant campaign of a virulent secular fanaticism. In the property section of *The Irish Times*, 10th June 2010, there was a heading about the sale of the contents of the monastery at Mount Argus in Harold's Cross, Dublin, called "*Clerical Clearout Of Odds & Sods*". Underneath this heading was a picture composite of Christ on the Cross with His Holy Mother and the other disciples at Calvary. Edel Morgan was named on the paper as the journalist involved. She sneered at "*the 600 lots of clerical clutter on offer*" by the auctioneers Herman & Wilkinson.

"The monastery, built in 1863 had been vacated and the remaining community of 18 Passionist priests and brothers had moved to a purpose built monastery on the grounds. An Bord Pleanála refused permission in January 2010 to a developer to build over 200 apartments on the site which would have involved demolishing part of the monastery and refurbishing the remainder."

As if more apartments were needed in Dublin but such is still our thrall to development that an old monastery can be thus excised from our past to the rather languid amusement of *The Irish Times* and its readers. No calls either for protection of our built heritage but just imagine if it was a 'big house'—consider then the outrage.)

Going back to Christopher Hitchens, who was on the road publicising his memoir, *Hitch-22*. Pat Kenny gave him air-time on his RTE radio show where he lived up to his trash image no doubt. Hitchens, like others who were rabid student Trotskyites, seems to have no problem switching over to Bushite politics when necessary to his career advancement—as *The Daily Mail* would and indeed did put it. In the English 6th March edition, Geoffrey Levy lifts the lid on the writer and the interesting companions he had while in Oxford. Apparently though Hitchens married twice, he had, according to Levy, known homosexual tendencies, though some said he was bisexual. Levy wrote that one contemporary noted that Hitchens "*had a reputation for being AC/DC and although a Trot, he was fancied by quite a few gay Tories and moved in those circles*". In his kiss and tell book, Levy wondered who were the two Minist-

ers of Thatcher's Government who had "gay relations" with the young student, though so far refusing to name them. Levy questioned Lord William Waldegrave, 63, who denied everything with "a chortling response".

The *Daily Mail* set off on a quest to find out, as only that paper could. What I found startling was the set of students there that went on to do the State some service. In Oxford,

"the colourful collection included Edwina Currie, the future head of M16 John Scarlett and Tony Blair's brother William, a High Court Judge. A bearded Bill Clinton was there for a year as a Rhodes Scholar and was a sometimes drinking buddy of Hitchens. Also in the mix was another Oxford Union president Stephen Milligan who became a MP under John Major in 1992—the other one was Gyles Brandreth who served as junior minister and whip under Major rather than Thatcher. Stephen Milligan died from auto-erotic asphyxiation at the age of 45 while engaged to the now embattled expenses Conservative MP and former journalist Julia Kirkbride. Also included in the mix was Anna Wintour who went on to become editor-in-chief of American Vogue and is known as Nuclear Wintour for her hardness as boss. Hitchens met John Sparrow, then in his 60's, the distinguished Warden of All Souls who had sensationally defeated the historian A.L. Rowse for the post."

(Incidentally, both Sparrow and Rowse were friends of the writer Elizabeth Bowen.)

The *Daily Mail*'s trawl reveals "Robert Jackson, a Tory MP who defected to Labour, whose wife Caroline is now a MEP". Then there was the writer, and fellow God-hater, "Martin Amis whom Hitchens had a crush on, the Tory MP David Heathcoat-Amory and then there was Hitchens flatmate James Fenton, the gay author and later Professor of Poetry at Oxford". Levy waspishly notes that "Hitchens, an atheist, married his first wife, Greek Cypriot Eleni Meleagrou, by whom he has two children, in a Greek Orthodox Church and his second, American Carol Blue, in a New York Synagogue".

THE LOST BOOKER

When the prize for the so-called *Lost Booker* was announced for the most overlooked novel since 1970, the media interest was huge. Lots of names were mentioned, with critics widely speculating on the eventual winner. Well last month saw the announcement that the winning book was *Troubles* by J.G. Farrell. For those on the inside it could have been predicted and indeed was by *Private Eye*. Sadly for them there was no odds offered by the bookies and they were left out-of-pocket though they were spot on. But they then went on to oddly offer "congratulations to the agent Peter Straus, Booker archivist and deviser of the stunt and to the RCW agency, home to both Straus and Deborah Rogers, agent for the estate of one J.G. Farrell".

Troubles did win the Faber Memorial Prize in 1970, so it was certainly not overlooked. Farrell famously died in August 1979 while fishing in the seas off Bantry, West Cork. He was 44 years old and was already hugely successful as an author when he won the Booker prize for *The Siege Of Krishnapur* in 1973. The judges then were Karl Miller, Edna O'Brien and Mary McCarthy. The other contesters were Beryl Bainbridge, Elizabeth Mavor and Iris Murdoch.

Farrell was born in Liverpool in 1935 into a family with an Anglo-Irish background. His father was an accountant in Bengal and after the Second World War moved the family to Dublin. Farrell had been taught in a Public School in Lancashire and then onto Oxford. He caught polio there and nearly died. The speculation about his drowning is still rife in the media and in literary groups but weakness resulting from that awful disease could have contributed to the fact that he seemed to go under without fighting, according to witnesses. To honour the writer's work the inaugural *J.G. Farrell Fiction Award* will be presented during the opening of the 12th West Cork Literary Festival in Bantry on Sunday, 4th July 2010. The award honours—according to *The Irish Daily Mail*, 24th May 2010—the "best novel-in-progress by a writer resident in Munster and the winner receives a place in the fiction workshop at the literary festival".

MILITARY MATTERS IN IRELAND

In my last month's column for the *Irish Political Review*, I wrote about the awakening sense of militarism in the UK. Talk about being blind to what was happening in my own country. Since then, as if to bite back, Cork—that famously rebel County—has outdone anything that the British have come up with. Passing along Oliver Plunkett Street—and yes I am aware of the irony here—I idly looked at the window of Liam Ruiseal Teo bookshop and there was wall to wall coverage of a new phenomenon called unself-consciously 'Our War' or even *The Great War*. The books covered the whole front window display and veered from the sacrificial to the pomp and glory. A Britisher would have blushed at such flagrant cant and propaganda. And then our very own Lord Mayor of Cork, Fine Gael's Cllr. Dara Murphy launched in the City Hall a huge book *A Great Sacrifice*, edited by two serving Irish Defence Force members (though this fact is not acknowledged in the flyleaf), Brendan O'Shea and Gerry White, and published by the Cork newspaper *The Evening Echo* owned by the local Thomas Crosbie Holdings Ltd.

When I last mentioned Elma Collins (May *Irish Political Review*) and her influence on revisionist history education, little did I realise how deep the whole

project had gone. She is now on the Editorial Board of *History Ireland* and obviously her influence has spread far and wide. All the way to a Cork Lord Mayor and our own Defence Forces decked out in uniform—should we have the slightest uncertainty about our State's involvement in honouring those who murdered two former Lord Mayors.

One couldn't make this up if one tried, but things get just more surreal. In the UK, there was the Guardian Hay Literary Festival and, as I watched one evening, Roddy Doyle the Dublin novelist and former teacher was being interviewed. His latest novel *The Dead Republic*—which has got terrible English notices in the TLS et al and deservedly so—told the interviewer that the "cause of the Irish Civil War was because the two lots of fighters didn't understand the translation of the word Freestate". This led to much audience laughter with the host joining in. A former teacher—well why am I not surprised?

MILITARY MEMORIALS IN THE UK

There is a proposal to erect a large memorial to the dead of RAF Bomber Command in the Second World War. It is to be built along Piccadilly, near Hyde Park Corner. It is going to be huge: 85 metres long running along the edge of Green Park. Some in the UK think that those who died serving in Bomber Command during WW2 deserve to be remembered, especially as they were so shabbily treated afterwards, according to 'Piloti' in *Private Eye*.

"The memorial will honour 55,573 men who did not survive. The chances of surviving a tour of bombing missions were indeed low, and when the war was over, the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill—perhaps mindful of the controversy to come over the morality of the campaign waged, in particular, by their commander, that enthusiast for "area bombing" Arthur "Bomber" Harris—the men of Bomber Command were denied their own campaign medal. The morality of area bombing with the resulting civilian casualties and the destruction of historic cities that were not serious military targets, like Lubeck, Dresden and Wurzburg continues to be questioned. It may serve justice but can it be right to put up so large and assertive a monument as the Bomber Command Association wants? And what does it say about Britain that such a thing is being built 65 years after the end of the Second World War? We seem to be in the grip of an obsession with erecting more and more memorials, which might well be seen as a refusal to face the present and future, a sort of jingoistic self-justification in our national decline."

'Piloti' calls it well but perhaps he should visit us here in Ireland and ask some pertinent questions too of our own State?

Julianne Herlihy ©

Dunkirk And 'The Huns of 1940'

In the last few weeks Dunkirk has been commemorated by the British media. It has been given the usual treatment of an event disconnected from history in which Good triumphed over Evil. And a recent book by some military man in England rather inventively described Dunkirk as "*a retreat to victory*".

But who would have thought that what happened at Dunkirk came as a result of the blockade of Germany by the Royal Navy during the Great War, two decades earlier?

The Royal Navy blockade of Germany was a decisive factor in Germany's defeat in the Great War—after the *Entente* had failed to get the better of her in the field. It proved to be totally effective in cutting off Germany's imports of food and material, and led to the German policy of unrestricted submarine warfare which brought America into the war. And the blockade was maintained for eight months after the official ending of the war—resulting in the starvation of more than half a million civilians, mostly children, in order to turn Germany's conditional surrender at the Armistice into an unconditional one in July 1919.

A relatively recent publication in America, *The Politics Of Hunger: The Allied Blockade of Germany, 1915-1919*, by C. Paul Vincent, describes it in detail. Vincent says, "*The victimized youth of 1915-1920 were to become the most radical adherents of National Socialism*" (p112). And he concluded that:

"The ominous amalgamation of twisted emotion and physical degeneration, which was to presage considerable misery for Germany and the world, might have been prevented had it not been for the postwar policy of the Allies. The immediate centerpiece of this policy was the blockade" (pp164-5).

Lest it be thought that the blockade of Germany was a Tory policy and the simple product of a business-class determined to destroy a commercial competitor, it is worth pointing out that it was the centre-piece of British Liberalism. Irene Willis in her 1921 book *England's Holy War* points out that, because the English Liberals rejected the Conservative demands for conscription to be employed in their war of civilization, they had to fall back on other policies. One of these was the recruitment of neutrals to do the fighting which English Liberals determined should not be made compulsory for the British themselves. Second, was the emphasis on the omnipotence of the British Navy—a kind of trump card which they pulled out whenever demands from the Tories reached a crescendo after

the military situation became inconclusive.

This turned the moralists of British Liberalism into the chief proponents of the blockade against German civilians. As A.G. Gardiner, of *The Daily News* put it, in advancing the case of the silent effectiveness of the Royal Navy killing: "*You do take my life when you do take the means whereby I live. And it is the means whereby she lives that the British Navy is taking from Germany*" (12th December 1914).

The "*physical degeneration*" of the Germans seems to have been an objective of the British—if an article by Mr. F.W. Wile in the *Weekly Despatch* of 10th September 1918 is anything to go by. This article, written by a well-known Berlin correspondent of the Northcliffe press, who visited the United States as part of the great British propaganda drive in 1917, was entitled *The Huns Of 1940*.

The article throws some light on British thinking with regard to warfare and eugenics. Written only two months short of the Armistice, it looked forward not only to the defeat of Germany but also to inflicting harm on German children and future unborn generations of Germans—presumably so that they would be kept down for a long time to come. The author entitled his article *The Huns Of 1940* because he felt that the effects of the British blockade on the German racial quality would really be seen 20 years hence in a degenerate form of humanity which he called "*DAMAGED HUMAN GOODS*".

It should be pointed out to the reader that the present writer has not emphasized the passages which are produced in capital letters. The capital letters are the work of the original author. These passages have been given dramatic affect by the writer, Mr. Wile, and they are the most vicious within the article.

I do not know whether the author was alive in 1940 to see the fruit of the British blockade of Germany. It may have had a psychological effect on the Germans, in that Hitler's policy of *lebensraum* may have been thought necessary to prevent another starvation blockade of Germany being effective. However, I do not think that Mr. Wile would've been altogether pleased with what happened in the battle of France and its culmination at Dunkirk.

If anything it shows how much Hitler was a man after the heart of Mr. Wile and the other racial theorists of British expansionism.

The Huns Of 1940, which we reproduce below, were, unfortunately for England, not the degenerate race which the British

blockade had attempted to create. For one thing, they sent the British Army packing, off the continent with their tails between their legs, in the space of a couple of weeks in May 1940.

However, it would not be far from the truth to suggest that in many ways they had been '*Made in England*'.

Below, then, is the brutal honesty of how Liberal England wages war, behind all the morality and niceties of '*war for small nations*' and '*war of civilization*'. It does not make pretty reading in describing the effects on the civilians of Germany of the Royal Navy blockade. And it does not make excuses for them either but describes them with the relish of a nation determined on victory at all costs and for all time:

"THE HUNS OF 1940"

"THE REAL EFFECTS OF THE BLOCKADE ON GERMANY ARE STILL TO BE EXPERIENCED BY THAT CRIMINAL NATION. By that I mean that the under-nourishment which it has suffered for the past four years, and is still suffering, will manifest itself in the years to come, on even a more terrible scale than anything thus far undergone.

"What is the effect on the German civilian population of the practically complete stoppage of imported foodstuffs and all the reduction of home-grown foodstuffs, (principally meat and fats) owing to lack of foreign fodder? The effect has been that diseases of the most virulent and devastating character are rampant from one end of the country to the other. GERMANY TODAY IS A LAND OF PLAGUE. The white scourge, tuberculosis, is epidemic. Hunger-typus is raging in numerous districts. Dysentery claims hundreds of victims. Diseases of the skin (due to lack of soap and shaving materials) prevail on an alarming scale. Infectious maladies like diphtheria, scarlet fever, and typhoid of various types are seriously destructive of child-life. Shortage of milk has produced calamitous conditions among young mothers, infants, and invalids.

"In Berlin, in June, no milk at all could be obtained even when the applicants possessed a doctor's certificate. Only children under two years of age were allowed milk, and older children were suffering terribly from the want of it. The intervening three months have brought no relief. The famine in fats not only continued but grows worse. The Germans have one meatless week a month now, and even vegetarians will admit, I suppose, that the cumulative effect of such restrictions on a race of meat-eaters is bound to be deleterious.

"The Germans made much capital during the war of the fact—incongruous on its face—that their birth rate actually increased on the average, since 1914. Whether the situation in that respect is as favourable today as the earlier periods of the war I strongly question. But the point is not HOW MANY babies are now, or at any time, born in Germany, or anywhere else, but WHAT KIND of babies. The birth rate may be satisfactory from the standpoint of officials whose business it is to juggle with vital

statistics, but what is considerably more essential for the future German race is whether these babies are EUGENIC (healthy) or DISGENIC (unhealthy)...

"If German parents of today are malnourished, or underfed, or semi-starved, or poisoned by the thousand and one so-called weird food 'substitutes' on which they are now existing, their offspring will be correspondingly inferior products. They will be subject to a vast variety of hereditary ailments. They will be less able to resist infections like tuberculosis. They may be crippled, deformed, or undersized. What is certain is that no amount of dumbbells, Indian clubs, or Prussian barrack-yard drill—no amount of gymnastics in the Germans' vaunted 'Turnverein'—can straighten the legs or arms of the children of malnourished parents or pump good red blood into their anaemic veins, or otherwise modify the permanent marks which Nature will have left imprinted upon their defective constitutions."

"While the birth rate in Germany may be satisfactory on its face, DAMAGE RATE—the INERADICABLE DAMAGE RATE—is a different and a far more serious matter. I should say that for every more or less normal infant life preserved in Germany under present conditions, there are three or four infants who are condemned to live and grow into DAMAGED HUMAN GOODS, so to speak. That means that in 1940 there will in all probability be a race of German physical degenerates."

Pat Walsh

Perversion Of Archbishop Of Canterbury's Son Denounced From Marlborough St. Pulpit

A SERMON

No, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, has not used his Pro-Cathedral pulpit on Marlborough St. to hit back at the current Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams! So, now read this 1909 report from up the street:

"Yesterday evening, in St. Thomas's Church, Marlborough Street, the Rev. E. Digges la Touche preached on the subject of the lecture recently delivered in the Mansion House by the Rev. H.R. Benson, son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, on the subject of "The Confessions of a Convert". It was {said the preacher}, apparently, a statement of his reasons for leaving the Church of his fathers to join the Church of Rome, and it was thought well that some criticism of that lecture should be made from the pulpit of St. Thomas's Church... Mr. Benson's lecture would have attracted little notice had it not been that he was the son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. It was

contemptible on his part to make use of his dead father's position in order to obtain a hearing... The Roman Catholic religion had been tested for three long centuries, and what were the historical results as shown by the progress of the nations of Europe? England, when the time to make a choice came, chose the Bible and had to-day a world Empire, while Spain had lost her place among the nations. {True to the courage of his imperialist convictions, as 2nd Lieut. la Touche of the Australian Imperial Army, the preacher, would perish at Gallipoli in August 1915, during the stalemated British Empire invasion of Turkey—MO'R.} Ireland took Roman Catholicism, and to-day, in parts, it was sunk in every form of degradation and vice. In Ireland they had a Protestant population in the North and a Roman Catholic community in the South. What did they find? In the North a flourishing and enlightened community, in the South a lack of self-respect and manliness. How did they account for the difference? The one was Roman Catholic, the other Protestant... Then let them take the question of morality—which Church taught the highest morality? They in Ireland remembered the Parnell case. What priest, monk or nun, or what Roman Catholic Bishop, raised a voice to condemn Parnell's immorality until the Protestants and Nonconformists of England said that as long as Parnell remained at the head of the Irish Nationalists they would have no Home Rule? Mr. Benson's perversion was due to spiritual blindness and to creature worship..." (*The Confessions of a Convert*, Reply to Rev. H.R. Benson, *Irish Times*, Monday, 22 February 1909.)

COMMENT:

At the age of 9, in 1958, I was compelled, twice weekly, to leave my Victoria St. home off Dublin's South Circular Road, and go down the street for a one-to-one encounter in the home of a neighbour who, no matter what way one looked at it, was undoubtedly a pervert. No, I was not an enthusiastic volunteer for violin lessons. But the sequence in which my teacher might have been described as either a pervert/convert or a convert/pervert depended very much on one's own point of view. My middle-aged teacher came from a Church of Ireland family and had been the sole inheritor of the family home. She fell in love with a much younger Catholic and had perverted/converted to the Catholic Church on marrying him. She also took out a mortgage on her home to set him up in a cobbler's shop at the rear of the house. Not too many years later, the cad skid-addled with her money and another woman, leaving his poor wife struggling to meet the mortgage from her meagre violin earnings. For some time afterwards, I still saw her attend Sunday Mass. But then she stopped.

Our South Circular Rd. stretch was

flanked by St. Kevin's Catholic Church at one end and—three blocks up—by St. Kevin's Anglican Church at the other. The latter community had once been all predominant in the neighbourhood, with George Bernard Shaw hailing from Synge St. in that same parish. By the 1950s, however, the number of Church of Ireland residents was falling sharply and, for example, fell far short of the one-in-four households on my own street that were Jewish. But Protestant self-expression in the locality nonetheless remained quite flamboyant. Poppy selling was very much to the fore each November, while Summers saw a Protestant Boys' Brigade band loudly parade up and down the Road every Saturday. The local clergy of both denominations could better be described, not as sky pilots, but as bike pilots. The Catholic curate, Father Tonge, and the C of I Minister, the Reverend Smallhorne, regularly pedalled through our streets on visitations to their parishioners. Both cycling clerics now made a beeline for the home of my violin teacher to do battle for her soul. This was a battle particularly dear to the Catholic heart of Fr. Tonge, as his own father had been a Protestant, but this was one that he lost. She perverted/converted back to her roots and resumed attending Sunday Service at St. Kevin's Church of Ireland. But, if it is to be argued whether or not her soul had been saved, her body and mind had most certainly not been. She lost her family home and moved to a bed-sit in Rathgar where, reluctantly, I attended violin lessons for a couple of years more. But she lost that too, and her mind with it, and tragically ended her life back in her own home neighbourhood, sleeping rough in various doorways along the South Circular Rd.

In a letter to the *Irish Times* on 8th November 2004 one Hugo Brady Brown of Stratford-on-Slaney, Co. Wicklow, offered the following smart-aleck advert. for Archbishop Martin's *bête noire*, the BBC:

"The recent debate on the Reform Movement has now, perhaps predictably, become ensnared in the propriety or otherwise of broadcasting the Angelus on RTÉ. I think that no sensible person could object to the broadcast. If nothing else, it affords people a minute or so to broaden their horizons by watching the BBC News. Often one becomes so hooked that one fails to switch back to Montrose."

And, singing from the same hymn sheet four years later, the following letter from him was published on 12th December 2008:

"The interesting review by Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh of a book on the 19th and 20th century Protestant missions in Ireland seemed to me to lack something. All but one of the resonant terms of the age were there—*souper*, *convert*, *jumper* etc... But

notable by its absence was a harsh term used even in my own hearing in the not very distant past for a Catholic who became a Protestant—a *pervert*. Can we forget so soon?"

Brown failed to acknowledge the fact that Protestants also used the exact same term for any co-religionist of theirs who had turned Catholic—the original, literal, meaning of *pervert* being one who turns away, the obverse of *convert*. So, looking down his nose at the untouchable masses (both M and ms) in that street's Pro-Cathedral, the Marlborough St. preacher loudly denounced "*Mr. Benson's perversion*". And the anti-Benson Service advertised for St. Kevin's C of I on the South Circular Rd. that very same Sunday had, as its prize exhibit, "*a convert from the Church of Rome*".

Manus O'Riordan

Opposition Turmoil

continued

special status within the Party. The members are not directly elected. They are appointed by the leader and therefore they can be dismissed by him.

The Front Bench of Fine Gael proved Reilly right. Richard Bruton showed that he had no sense of himself as a leader by allowing Vincent Browne subject him to the most trivial questions imaginable about his demotion, while another Mayoman, Pat Rabbitte, gazed on like a Cheshire cat. Browne asked the former Labour Party leader about the pact with Fine Gael before the last General Election. Rabbitte said that the relationship did not produce a baby, but he had thought that Kenny could be Taoiseach.

In the days preceding the vote on his leadership, Kenny showed a steely resolve which compensated for his shortcomings. It was no surprise that he retained the confidence of the Party when the vote was taken. After the ballot papers were counted they were destroyed. It does not matter what the margin of victory was since the dissidents agreed that Kenny would lead Fine Gael into the next election. As Leon Trotsky—who was not from around these parts—noted on his expulsion by the Bolsheviks: *the Party in the final analysis is always right*.

Whatever about Fine Gael, Micheál O'Morain was wrong when he said that *The Irish Times* was a "*mistress*". How can an institution which is controlled by an oath bound directorate be called a *mistress*?! The former Mayoman of the Year, Charles Haughey, was closer to the mark when he said *Irish Times* editorials are "*like something written by an ould*

wan sitting in a bath with the cold water lapping around her fanny".

A mistress sounds like too much fun. *The Irish Times* is more like a snobbish spinster, which never spares itself a bitter word. On the day following Kenny's ratification Madame wrote sniffily:

"Look at the profile of those surrounding Mr Kenny on the plinth after his victory. The younger urban members were notable by their absence. For Fine Gael and its political ambitions, the episode has been an unmitigated disaster" (*The Irish Times*, 18.6.10).

She then went on to sharpen her knitting needle:

"The relief felt by Fianna Fáil TDs during these past days, as they watched Fine Gael undergo leadership convulsions, may be short-lived. The electorate's dissatisfaction with Mr Kenny – which precipitated the challenge – was but a pale imitation of the negativity with which voters view Brian Cowen. The reason the Taoiseach escaped a similar review of his leadership within Fianna Fáil may be because of the ill-fated Fine Gael motion of no confidence in the Dáil. But pressure on his leadership is likely to intensify as a general election approaches".

Wasn't it amusing to hear Marian Finucane's shriek of horror on her radio programme (June 13th) when Martin Mansergh explained that *The Irish Times* was a "*dangerous newspaper*"! For certain unreflective liberals the newspaper is a substitute for thinking. It is above criticism because reading it is their daily prayer!

It was understandable for O'Morain to mistake the newspaper's relationship with Fine Gael. Having rejected Redmondism in favour of greater British Army oppression, *The Irish Times* then threw in its lot with the Pro-Treaty side in the Civil War. While Michael Collins believed the Treaty gave the freedom to achieve freedom, the old lady of D'Olier Street saw it as the best means of retaining the imperial connection.

When Collins's successors lost power by rigidly adhering to the Treaty settlement they became disillusioned with the State. But Fine Gael's disenchantment was different in kind to that of *The Irish Times*. Fine Gael felt that the accession to power of the losing side in the Civil War was a travesty depriving them of their rightful place whereas *The Irish Times* believed that the State itself was a travesty and should never have been formed to leave the Empire. The newspaper has been busy denigrating the Irish State ever since.

For a brief period under Garret FitzGerald, Fine Gael tried to be something else but, when his Constitutional Crusade failed, the party became disorientated. After a number of unsuccessful leaders Kenny was installed to return the party to

its fundamentals. The conviction that they, rather than the Fianna Fáilers, are the rightful leaders may not be much, but it has kept the party going through all these years. The ratification of Kenny in opposition to the media consensus shows that Fine Gael has an internal life of its own with deep roots in the society.

The Irish Times was gushing in its support of the Mayoman during the last General Election, but since then it has had doubts and has beckoned Labour to its withery embrace. Eamon Gilmore is a clever Galwayman. He may not believe in class politics, which explains his refusal to take a position on the Croke Park Agreement, but he has a feeling for some of the elements that drive Irish politics.

Gilmore knows that disillusioned Fianna Fáilers find it difficult to cross over to the pro Treaty side and— notwithstanding the legacy of James Connolly—there has always been a suspicion that the party which was founded before independence is a bit too pro British. It was very clever of Gilmore to smooth the path of such disillusioned voters by invoking the 1916 Rising in his Party address.

But what good is cleverness if you have no Party. The Labour Party remains a collection of individuals. Following its disastrous showing in the last General Election the "Party" experienced no sense of internal crisis. When Rabbitte resigned, the presumed leadership candidates preferred to tend to their own personal affairs and Gilmore was selected unopposed.

And Proinsias de Rossa for his own reasons was able to prevent a Labour running mate in the European Elections, thereby handing the final seat in Dublin to Joe Higgins, the Kerry Trotskyist. Labour is now scrambling to find candidates who will avail of the new-found support which has fallen into its lap. Perhaps the media support might be enough, but a governing party that is dependent on the media will be weak. The Labour Party must commit to renewing Social Partnership because the Trade Union movement is its most substantial connection with the society.

Meanwhile...it was a great pity that Fine Gael cancelled the bonfires for Enda's return to Mayo. That would have been some sight to behold! ...Those happy Blueshirts, impervious to media sensibility, as they march arm in arm into the Mayo night!

Athol Books Distribution

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

Books, Magazines and Much Else!

Jack Jones Vindicated

Jack Jones, General Secretary of Britain's TGWU from 1969 to 1978, died last year, on 21st April 2009. The very next morning, the *Daily Telegraph* report of his death carried the headline *Former KGB Colonel Says He Paid Late Union Leader Jack Jones £200 For Information*. That this was no isolated slander was to be made painfully clear when Jack's Union, now called UNITE, held a Jack Jones Memorial Celebration in London's Royal Festival Hall on 5th October. This was the very day that the British intelligence agency M15 also chose to launch its own official "history", authored by Cambridge Professor Christopher Andrew and entitled *The Defence of the Realm—The Authorised History of M15*. While the UNITE celebration of his life was still under way, media "*Breaking News*" headlined M15's "exposure" of Jack. That week's onslaught of character assassination reached a crescendo on 8th October with the *Daily Mail* lurid headline: "*JACK THE TRAITOR: Special investigation reveals how Union boss sold secrets to the KGB for 45 years*". See www.atholbooks.org/jackjones_MI5.pdf for full dossier.

In 1976 I edited a publication for Athol Books entitled *The American Trial Of Big Jim Larkin, April 1920*. It was patently obvious to me that what was now being staged was a *British intelligence Show Trial of Jack James Larkin Jones, 2009*. A saying used by Marx sprang to mind: "*History repeats itself; the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce*." Because of the hurt and distress caused to both family and friends of Jack by this M15 smear campaign, it was tempting, at first, to place this Show Trial in the category of tragedy. I have, however, one or two other Larkin-related 'trials' that are more appropriate for such a classification. Furthermore, because both the character and politics of Jack Jones stand out in such total refutation of M15's lies about him—and, in particular, those of the prosecution's "star witness"—Jack's posthumous Show Trial can be shown to fall more appropriately into the category of farce.

The purpose of this article is to move beyond the press reports to what is actually said by Andrew in the book itself. I have indeed read that 1,000 page tome from cover-to-cover, while also noting the fact that, in order to receive the "*Queen's shilling*" commission for its authorised "*history*", Professor Andrew had been required to become a member of—and swear an oath of loyalty to—M15 itself. And it is quite obvious that M15's agenda is as much about the establishment and

consolidation of a particular viewpoint in respect of both British domestic politics and British history, as it is about thwarting the operations of any foreign power. The purpose of M15's campaign of character assassination against Jack Jones is an attempt to destroy the reputation of post-war Britain's most outstanding Trade Union leader—and the one who had come closest to putting the working class at the helm of British society, until his work was sabotaged by a mindless British left. Such a "British Road to Socialism" achievement would, of course, have been anathema to M15. Hence the attempt to rubbish Jack's place in British history, and to try and ensure that his near-success is never repeated.

How does one become a Cambridge Professor of History? The failure or inability to cross-check "*intelligence reports*" with actual historical facts does not, obviously, serve as a disqualification. I am in no position to make a definitive judgement on whether Professor Andrew is a fool or a knave. All I know is that all too much of his "history" is at variance with historical fact. And not just in respect of Jack Jones. M15 has a particular need to present the history of Irish Republicanism as being in cahoots with the Soviet KGB. Such is Andrew's narrative of the escape of George Blake who, in 1961, had been convicted of being a KGB agent within M15's sister intelligence agency, MI6:

"The greatest espionage-related embarrassment of this period was Blake's escape from Wormwood Scrubs after serving only 5 years of his 42 year sentence. The escape had been made possible by three former prisoners who had befriended him in jail: the Irish republican Seán Bourke and the peace protesters Michael Randle and Pat Pottle. On 22 October 1966 Blake knocked a loosened iron bar out of his cell window, slid down the roof outside and dropped to the ground, then climbed over the outer wall with a nylon rope-ladder thrown to him by Bourke. Blake was later driven to East Berlin, where he was joined by Bourke before continuing to Moscow. Once in Moscow, Blake and Bourke rapidly fell out. Blake writes in his memoirs that 'arrangements were made for Bourke to return to Ireland'. He does not mention, and may not have known, that on the instructions of the head of KGB foreign intelligence Bourke was given before his departure a drug designed to cause brain damage and thus limit his potential usefulness if he fell into the hands of British intelligence. Bourke's premature death in his early 40s probably owed as much to KGB drugs as to his own

heavy drinking" (pp537-8 and 950)

Part One

I know for a fact that both Andrew's opening and closing remarks about Bourke are patently untrue. Seán Bourke was never an Irish Republican prisoner; he had been a petty criminal. His role in Blake's escape was a human response to a fellow-prisoner's predicament at the prospect of spending the rest of his life in jail. Soviet Communism never held any attractions for Bourke, and still less so after his brief experience of it. He did, however, become politicised as a democratic socialist a good decade after Andrew had declared him to be terminally brain damaged by the KGB. Off the drink for at least the duration of the 1977 General Election, the Seán Bourke I encountered on the campaign trail in Limerick was one possessed of a sharp intellect, as he functioned as a press officer for the Independent Socialist candidate, Jim Kemmy. I observed how Bourke alternated between belting away on the typewriter and operating the lead car in a banded cavalcade of canvassers through St. Mary's Park (the most deprived urban housing estate I'd ever entered, and suffering today from horrific criminal gang warfare). Through the car megaphone came the resounding voice of Bourke intoning, with impeccable diction: "*Vote No. 1 Jim Kemmy, and help put Limerick on the map!*" But this was no quasi-IRA jamboree. Kemmy's political programme not only opposed the wars waged by both the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA; it also even more pointedly opposed the territorial claim on Northern Ireland that had been restated in the Supreme Court by the Cosgrave Republic's so-called "*Government of the talents*"—Conor Cruise O'Brien and Garret FitzGerald. Kemmy's Limerick Socialist Organisation had in fact joined with the British and Irish Communist Organisation in order to establish the *Workers' Association for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland*. So much for Professor Andrew's caricature of Seán Bourke as a brain-dead IRA ex-prisoner!

Bourke did indeed die under circumstances of drink-related self-neglect. But that was 5 years later, and 16 years after Professor Andrew maintains that his brain had been knocked out of action by the KGB. Indeed, right up to the year of his death, Bourke contributed powerfully written childhood memoirs for the *Old Limerick Journal*, edited by Kemmy on behalf of the Limerick Historical Society. Jim Kemmy finally won a seat in the Dáil in the June 1981 General Election. Sadly, however, Seán Bourke died on 26 January 1982—the very same day that Kemmy made history when his one vote against a Budget to tax children's shoes brought about the fall of Garret FitzGerald's first Government.

As for Jack Jones, the first MI5 smear

by Andrew claims to expose—

"the existence of a wartime {Soviet} agent network in Britain codenamed the "X Group", which was active by, if not before, 1940... There was speculation that BOB, another member of the X Group, was the future trade union leader Jack Jones, though a report of 1969 concluded that there were 'few pointers to the identity of Bob and the most that can be said is that Jones cannot be eliminated as a candidate'..." (pp380-1)

Professor Andrew later relates:

"On 19 November 1969 Furnival Jones (DG of MI5) discussed with (Labour Government Home Secretary) Jim Callaghan proposals for telephone checks on a number of trade unionists, chief among them Jack Jones of the TGWU ... Jones had been an open CPGB member from 1932 to 1941 and, the Service believed, did not leave the party until 1949. FJ reported chiefly on the basis of eavesdropping at King St. (CPGB HQ) that there was 'no doubt that Jones, after 15 years' disassociation from the Party, has resumed active and regular contact with it ... Bert Ramelson, the Party's chief industrial organiser, claimed in August 1969 that Jones had said that although there would be tactical differences between himself and the Party, they were going in the same directions and wanted the same things ... It has become clear that (Jones) is prepared to pass, to the Party, Government and other information which has been passed to him in his trade union capacity.' ... On 28 November FJ was informed that, after long discussion, (Prime Minister) Wilson and Callaghan had decided not after all to authorise a telecheck on Jack Jones. 'They felt that the case just fell short of what was required to justify such a delicate operation'. Had the case involved a civil servant rather than a trade union leader, it is unlikely that they would have hesitated. Oleg Gordievsky (the British intelligence recruit from within the KGB) later reported that Jones had been regarded by the KGB as an agent from 1964 to 1968, providing confidential Labour Party documents which he obtained as a member of the NEC and the Party's international committee as well as information on his colleagues and contacts. Though the KGB believed that Jones's motives were ideological, his case officer noted that he accepted, without visible enthusiasm, modest contributions towards holiday expenses. Jones broke contact with KGB after the crushing of the Prague Spring by Soviet tanks in August 1968" (pp 535-6).

Writing of the subsequent Conservative Government, Andrew narrates:

"At a meeting with the Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, on 26 October 1970 FJ renewed the application for a HOW (Home Office Warrant) on Jack Jones which had been turned down by Wilson a year earlier. FJ noted afterwards: 'I said

that I did not think it at all likely that an investigation of Jones would result in his being charged with espionage under the Official Secrets Act and this was not the purpose of the proposed exercise. We did, however, think it possible that he was being manipulated by the Russians or was at least under their strong influence ... At the very least an operation against Jones and his wife would produce intelligence which could be of great value in particular to the Department of Employment and to the Government generally in the field of industrial disputes'. Maudling was hesitant about agreeing to an HOW, chiefly because of the risks involved. 'If the operation went astray it would create an intolerable situation between the Government and the Trade Unions.' However, he agreed to consult (Prime Minister) Heath, who approved the application. Though Jones was not, in fact 'being manipulated by the Russians', the Security Service was right to consider the possibility that he was. Intelligence six years later from the most important British agent of the later Cold War, Oleg Gordievsky, revealed that from 1964 to 1968 the Centre had regarded Jones as an agent. The product of the HOW on Jones, discontinued after just a year, proved to be reassuring, revealing not merely no sign of a continuing Soviet connection but also positive evidence of growing distance between him and the CPGB. The Security Service came to the conclusion that, 'In present circumstances the realities of Jones' position as General Secretary of the largest trade union in the country press more heavily on him than any influence the CBGB could bring to bear upon him.' .." (pp. 588-9)

As for the period of Jim Callaghan's Labour Government:

"In December 1976 new intelligence arrived on links between the KGB and Britain's best-known trade unionist, Jack Jones... Oleg Gordievsky reported that after being targeted for recruitment by the London residency, Jones had been regarded by the KGB as an agent for a number of years in the 'latter part of the 60s'. All contact with him had been dormant for some time. It was not, however, until Gordievsky was stationed in London in 1982 after several years working on the British desk in the KGB Centre that he was able to provide more detail on Jones's contact with the KGB... Eavesdropping at King St. no longer provided evidence of significant contact between Jones and the CPGB. In 1969 Ramelson had been overheard praising Jones as 'sound politically' with 'courage and guts'. 'The only dishonest thing about Jack', said Ramelson, 'was that he gave the impression that he was never in the (Communist) Party.' By 1976 Ramelson had changed his mind. Far from being a member of the left-wing caucus in the TUC, Jones was now regarded by the Callaghan government as, on balance, a force for moderation." (p.667)

M15 Professor Andrew's final reference to Jack Jones reads:

"Gordievsky reported that Jones had been regarded by the KGB as an agent only from 1964 to 1968. Though contact was later re-established, Jones no longer held clandestine meetings with his case officer or passed on confidential material. He ceased to be general secretary of the TGWU in 1978 and left the TUC General Council in the same year. As his case officer five years later, Gordievsky found that, unsurprisingly, Jones no longer had access to inside information of such significance. On one occasion, however, Gordievsky's report on a meeting with Jones made a considerable impression in the Centre: 'One day I took with me a brochure from the TUC which gave a long list of union leaders, and asked (Jones) to comment on them. This he did to such effect that I was later able to write a three page summary, which I added to my report of our meeting: 'Our agent's information on trade union personalities was so extensive, I wrote, 'that I am attaching it as an appendix.' The combined document made it appear that he had been outstandingly helpful and volunteered many facts of the greatest value. **You can see from this what the facts really were and how, by careful reporting, success can be created out of very little**' {my emphasis—MOR}. Though the KGB was believed to have assessed Jones's motives as ideological during the period when it regarded him as an agent, Gordievsky found him willing to accept gifts, some of them in cash. The DG reported to the cabinet secretary in October 1985 that Jones 'last received money (£250) from his case officer (Gordievsky) on the instructions of the KGB Centre in May 1984'. Thereafter the Centre issued instructions that, given Jones's lack of access to confidential information, he was to be contacted only at six monthly intervals" (p711).

M15 Professor Andrew's smearing of Jones occurs at intervals that variously stretch from 40 to 50 to 60 and to 150 pages. Bringing them all together enables us in the first place to see their internal inconsistencies. Speculation about Jones's cooperation with the CPGB, some of it informed (which will be examined later) but mostly ill-informed, is treated as being synonymous with being a Soviet agent. Yet the only direct evidence of how he might himself have regarded—and been in turn regarded by—the CPGB, based on wire-tap transcripts of Bert Ramelson statements, is from a period when even self-serving KGB reports regarded Jones as now being anti-Soviet. But what of the character of those self-serving KGB reports that purport to record supposedly friendly conversations with Jones?

In 1972 Jack Jones was elected Chairman of the International Committee of the British TUC and through the course of the following year he played a key role in the creation of the European TUC, being elected to its first Executive Board. Along with TUC General Secretary Vic Feather,

he headed up an ETUC delegation to meet the Executive Board of the US trade union movement, the AFL-CIO, in Miami. Jack recalled: "I had had a friendly argument with Jay Lovestone, the former communist leader in the US who was in charge of the international department of the AFL/CIO and had become a strong, almost fanatical, opponent of the communists, but otherwise we had been treated like long-lost brothers" (Union Man, 2008 edition, p268). He also recalled a previous 1969 encounter:

"Life at the time was full of new experiences. One such was meeting Richard Nixon, the President of the USA. Vic Feather rang me up one day and said: 'I want you to come with me to meet Nixon, he's anxious to talk with one or two trade union leaders' ... In a private room at Claridges ... we had coffee and an intense couple of hours' discussion. Dr. Henry Kissinger accompanied Nixon and was equally involved. I tried to put the President right on our industrial situation, explaining that it was infinitely more peaceful than the USA's. I also said that in my opinion British people wanted to see him improve America's relationship with the USSR and China (China was the No.1 'hate' of the Americans then). I suggested he should visit countries like Romania. It was wrong to think that our countries lived in separate worlds. I was impressed by Nixon's keenness and clarity of mind." (pp.211-2).

Nixon went on to take Jones's advice, at least in respect of Romania and China. And, given that Lovestone, having been ousted in 1929 by the Comintern from his leadership of the CPUSA, swung so far to the right that he did indeed operate unashamedly on behalf of the CIA in the post-war world of international Trade Unionism, there can be no doubt that, if Stalinist show trials were still in operation, Jack would have been vilified as a CIA agent. I myself remember how, in 1974 the *Irish Times* facilitated the Head of the Workers' Party's Industrial Department—Official IRA godfather and guru Éamon Smullen—in accusing me of being a CIA agent which, in the circumstances of those violent years, constituted active incitement for some gunman to contemplate my murder. Smullen's "evidence" was the unquestionable fact that I had been a student in the USA from 1969 to 1971 (see www.atholbooks.org/connolly_america.pdf for the introduction to my thesis *Connolly in America*).

Ironically enough, the only attempt made to enlist me for intelligence-gathering purposes actually came in the late 1980s from a KGB operative based in the USSR's Dublin Embassy as its First Secretary, Vladimir Minderov, who asked if I could get him invited to social gatherings where he might be able to engage with people of political importance. I politely declined, but I do not judge him harshly for having made the attempt. He sought to serve the interests of

Dr. Mansergh And The Irish Times

Manus O'Riordan submitted the following letter to the *Irish Times* on 15th June. It was not published. The report to which it refers is reproduced below.

The report (June 14th) of the reasons advanced on RTE radio (June 13th) by Minister of State Martin Mansergh, as to why he regarded the "Irish Times" as "quite a dangerous paper", omitted any mention of the third example he cited: "I well remember the article on the 6th of December 1994 which scuppered the Fianna Fail—Labour Government, which was all about ..." At this point Dr. Mansergh was interrupted, hauled back into a polemic about the 1990 Jim Duffy press conference, and not afforded any opportunity to elaborate on his 1994 charge. Since the Minister of State was referring to your own lead story of that date, it is only appropriate that he should now be invited to provide an opinion piece so as to explain himself. **Manus O'Riordan**

"Irish Times a dangerous paper - Mansergh (Marie O'Halloran, 14.6.10)

Minister of State Martin Mansergh has described *The Irish Times* as a "dangerous" newspaper.

Criticising the paper's Ipsos/MRBI opinion poll which showed the Labour Party as more popular than both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, Dr Mansergh said "certainly it was a very bad opinion poll but as a Fine Gael statement said, those opinion polls are heavily adjusted".

He said on the RTÉ Marian Finucane show: "Much as I am an admirer of *The Irish Times* and indeed I wrote a column for it for four years, it's also quite a dangerous paper." He said "it bounced Garret FitzGerald into a divorce referendum in 1986 by, in my opinion, a wholly misleading opinion poll".

Asked if he was saying Mr. FitzGerald "did not make an independent decision", Dr Mansergh replied: "I'm just saying he probably used that as the justification for doing it".

He also spoke of "the role they played in the presidential election when they organised a press conference for Jim Duffy", in reference to the taped conversation the researcher had with presidential candidate the late Brian Lenihan about phoning Áras an Uachtaráin in 1982 to try to persuade then president Patrick Hillery not to dissolve the Dáil, after the Fine Gael-led coalition had lost a budget vote in the Dáil.

He said a "researcher should not hold a press conference on a research conversation he had".

Marian Finucane asked: "So you think they should have concealed that information because it didn't suit Fianna Fáil?" Dr Mansergh replied: "The whole thing was academically unethical. Practically everybody in academia would agree with that." He said the paper "played a hands on" role.

He said: "This opinion poll is bad for Fianna Fáil. I wouldn't attempt to dispute that but it is also distorted."

He said "if you read Noel Whelan's article yesterday the core vote for Fianna Fáil came in at 16 per cent and was adjusted up at 17 per cent.

"The core Labour vote came in at 21 per cent and was adjusted up to 32 per cent."

He said the next poll was going to be conducted on a different basis and "I think there should be a large health warning attached to drawing a lot of consequences".

He was asked: "Would you dismiss the opinion poll saying that 40 per cent didn't want either Brian Cowen or Enda Kenny?"

Dr Mansergh replied: "No, my remarks primarily refer to party, not to other questions."

Editorial Comment

Marian Finucane, as Manus O'Riordan pointed out, neatly prevented discussion of the way the *Irish Times* engineered the downfall of the 1994 Fianna Fail/Labour coalition (<http://www.rte.ie/radio1/marianfinucane/>). Geraldine Kennedy, who gave up her journalistic career to be a Progressive Democrat candidate—but failed to make any headway—returned to the *Irish Times* but was given only insignificant work to do. However, she was leaked some small story about Bertie Ahern allegedly suppressing information about the Brendan Smyth affair. This was hyped up into a front-page lead in the *Irish Times* and Dick Spring walked away from the coalition with Fianna Fail. She was interviewed by Eamon Dunphy a few years ago and said that this 1994 story rehabilitated her. Up to then she was seen as being tainted by her association with the PDs. But it was very noticeable that she did not want to discuss the details of the story. She said something like the downfall of the Coalition really was as a result of personal differences between Reynolds and Spring. There was no claiming of any credit. Brady, who was the Editor at the time, had a very nasty editorial following Reynolds' resignation. He said something like Irish politics will not be the poorer for Reynolds's departure. He subsequently expressed regret in his book about this.

But Kennedy's comment about the downfall of Reynolds is misleading. The *Irish Times* story that Kennedy wrote did not bring about the downfall of Reynolds. Reynolds had already resigned. The Kennedy story prevented a FF/Labour coalition led by Ahern. Martin Mansergh attempted to raise these very pertinent issues on the Marian Finucane Show, but was prevented. Manus O'Riordan's suggestion that he be given an opinion piece to elaborate his views was suppressed. How long will it be before the *Irish Times* faces a reckoning?

his own country. And in his case I feel I ought to put a human face on a real KGB operative. In a previous conversation he told me that he had been based in Indonesia in the mid 60s. And when I asked what had he seen of the 1965 army coup in which Sir Andrew Gilchrist, the then British Ambassador to Indonesia (and later UK Ambassador to Ireland), had been complicit, he shuddered. Yes, he had seen the river choked with the bloated bodies of some of the half a million Indonesian Communists who had been massacred. And I also remember, at a 1985 USSR Embassy reception to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany, that somebody had been crass enough to ask him, in a most indecorous manner, if he himself had personally known any people killed in that War. Yes, he replied. His father had been killed while fighting in the Red Army in the first month of Hitler's invasion, while his elder brother and only sibling had also fought in the Red Army and had been killed at the very end of the War.

I have always had a personal policy of being willing to express verbally to all and sundry the very same views which I have been willing to place in writing in the public domain. I have no doubt that this was also Jack's approach, whether speaking to Nixon, Kissinger and Lovestone, or to Soviet officials. So I have had exchanges of views with Embassy officials of the USSR, the UK, Cuba, Israel etc.—though not the USA. (This has not, however, been a matter of policy on my part, no more than it was of my father, who did accept an invitation from a third party to have lunch with George Dempsey, one of the most politically active officials who ever served in the US Embassy in Dublin.) I have little doubt that some of these conversations would have been filed as intelligence reports, even though no spying was required, since my views would have already been an open book. Andrew, however, does not quote from any actual Soviet documentation on Jones, although I have no doubt that some of Jack's frank exchange of opinions would similarly have been presented as intelligence reports. Andrew relies on the gossip of M16's agent within the KGB, Oleg Gordievsky—and yet his own last quote from Gordievsky on Jones gives the game away, in boasting how intelligence agents regularly justify their existence by turning perfectly normal conversations into the appearance of intelligence scoops.

Jack Jones died on 21st April 2009. What Oleg Gordievsky immediately went on to allege did not, of course, constitute a libel on Jack, since—according to law—one cannot libel a dead person. But his unashamedly malicious lies most certainly slandered Jack: "*Former KGB colonel says he paid late union leader Jack Jones*

£200 for information". That *Daily Telegraph* report was a lie in more ways than one, when it stated that such an allegation had first surfaced in 1995. **It most certainly had not.** In 1995 Gordievsky maintained that some KGB files held "*information obtained*" in conversations which Jack Jones might have held with Soviet Government or Embassy officials. Jack chose to answer that charge politically. He did not need to take it further, for it was only when he was safely dead that the cowardly Gordievsky dared to proceed with his lying charge that Jack was a "*paid KGB agent*". Gordievsky's moral cowardice, of course, undoubtedly made sound financial sense. He could not risk yet another libel action. Back in 1995 the *Sunday Times* had been required to pay substantial damages to Michael Foot, after publishing Gordievsky's earlier libel that this former leader of the British Labour Party was such a "*paid KGB agent*". 'Once bitten, twice shy' accordingly became a new maxim for Gordievsky.

Cambridge Professor Andrew behaves no better than a contemptible creep in so gleefully engaging in the character assassination of Jack Jones while, as a "historian", he studiously ignores the evidence—from everyone who knew him—just how puritanically modest was Jack's whole lifestyle. In *Union Man* Jones recalled leading an earlier Union delegation to the USA in 1968:

"I met a district leader of the Teamsters' Union in Los Angeles. Having discussed comparative conditions in the haulage trade ... I was taken to dinner in a luxurious restaurant ... During the meal he turned to me and asked: 'What do you think of this place?' 'Splendid', I replied, 'it must be one of the best around.' 'It sure is—I own it and it makes eleven dollars to the invested dollar!' was his amazing response ... I came home from the USA more determined than ever to resist 'business unionism' in the UK and to eliminate any tendency towards corruption. Strict financial disciplines were necessary. The result was not pleasant, for more than one national official left the service of the union in a hurry. One officer claimed expenses for an engagement in Dublin. Since I knew he had no business there, I challenged him, only to be told lamely that 'he'd been on a secret mission'..." (pp200-1).

What of the claim that Jones was paid £200 or £250 by Gordievsky? The amount varies in Gordievsky's telling of the yarn. I do not believe for one moment that Jones ever saw a penny or was ever offered any such "gift". But I am not at all questioning that KGB records in Moscow might very well show that, in submitting his own claim for expenses, Gordievsky also claimed that he had paid Jones either £200 or £250, or that he might even have foolishly submitted claims that inconsistently

cited both amounts. Nor do I believe that possible KGB investigations into a £50 discrepancy, or a request for receipts for the full £200 or £250, were what led to Gordievsky's defection. He had worked for British intelligence long before that, and undoubtedly felt that he was worth far more. One is indeed reminded of the apocryphal conversation attributed to George Bernard Shaw, with its punch line: "*We've already established what you are, ma'am. Now we're just haggling over the price.*"

That Gordievsky is a British intelligence Prostitute with a capital P is beyond dispute. And the fact that Christopher Andrew is a Cambridge Professor with a capital P does not make him any less Gordievsky's Pimp with a capital P. Any opportunity for turning a trick for money, facilitated by Andrew, is eagerly taken up by Gordievsky. And so, last 10th February, on Ulster TV, we saw in the self-serving "documentary" *INSIDE M15*—with its closing words "*M15 is proud of its history*"—a smirking Professor Andrew insist "*These are KGB sources*", as Gordievsky maintained that he greased Jack's palm with money (rather than pocket it himself). On the same programme, with good reason, Jack's son Mick Jones, called a spade a spade when he referred to Gordievsky as "*a professional liar*". Indeed, on 20th February 1995, in a report in the London *Independent*, headed *Foot's Friends Rally To Quash Spy Theory*, it emerged that, at that early stage, M15 held the view that Gordievsky was jumping the gun far too soon in smearing people before they were actually dead:

"M15 is growing increasingly uneasy about the allegations being made by a former M16 double-agent, Oleg Gordievsky, who was at the centre of a new story after claims were made yesterday in the *Sunday Times* that Michael Foot was a KGB agent. It was alleged that the Soviet spies knew Mr. Foot by the codename 'Boot'; Jack Jones, the former general secretary of the TGWU, was codenamed 'Dream' ... Sir Edward Heath, who saw M15 and M16 reports on espionage contacts during his time as prime minister, dismissed the claims about Mr. Foot. '*People used to meet ambassadors of all countries, whether in government or in Opposition. Obviously, we don't tell them things they ought not to know but I would have thought it was most unlikely*', he said. The former Labour leader denied a charge that he accepted money from the Soviets on behalf of *Tribune* ... Mr. Foot, who is consulting his lawyer over the allegations, said yesterday: 'The headline—**KGB: Michael Foot was our agent**—that appeared in the *Sunday Times* is an absolute lie' ... Jack Jones, who is considering whether to consult his lawyers over the allegations, said: '*I have never knowingly known anybody from the KGB. If they were, I would have*

shunned them like a bargepole. I have met Russians. They could very well have been. I don't know. I mean who knows who is a CIA man and so on; it is very difficult. It is a farago of lies designed by a man who wants to make a lot of money quickly' ... Last night, Mikhail Lyubimov, a former KGB officer, denied in Moscow that Mr. Foot had been paid or was an agent."

In the same issue, under the heading of *Former KGB Agent Is Double-dealer In Deceit*, it further reported:

"Oleg Gordievsky, the former KGB double agent, is a difficult man to pin down. In the *Sunday Times* yesterday, he and six other former KGB officers claimed that in the 60s the KGB had regarded Michael Foot as one of its 'agents of influence'. They maintained that a number of small cash payments had been made to help to fund *Tribune*, the left-wing newspaper Mr. Foot then edited. Yet in 1992, Mr. Gordievsky told the *Independent* that in the early 80s, when Mr. Foot was party leader and a potential prime minister, that the Soviet Union had 'no particularly helpful friends' among Labour leaders. So which Gordievsky are we to believe? After all, he was a Soviet spy for twelve years and then a double agent for M16 for eleven. His trade was treachery and dissimulation. In 1985, as acting head of the KGB's London station, he defected and was given a substantial Surrey stock broker-belt house by M16 with a pension said to be worth about £20,000 a year..."

There was even an editorial, entitled *Michael Foot's Tainted Accuser*, in the same issue:

"Yesterday provided the latest example of Mr. Gordievsky's lucrative scheme for making money ... In February 1992 he said there were no more revelations to come about the Labour Party. He told this newspaper: 'In the Labour Party some people showed a lot more warmth and kindness to the Russians, but none was indiscreet or too helpful. Politically or diplomatically, none of them committed any blunder or mistake. I think they were impeccable. There are no revelations to come.' It seems extraordinary that such an unreliable figure should now be allowed, given the lack of supporting evidence, to damage the reputation of figures such as Mr. Foot. His claim that money changed hands should have been substantiated before publication. Instead, the *Sunday Times* seems to have been happy to accept Mr. Gordievsky at his word and so cast a shadow over Mr. Foot ... But the campaign of innuendo being waged against Labour politicians seems likely to achieve little more than make Mr. Gordievsky an even wealthier man than he already is."

But it actually achieved more than that. It also made Rupert Murdoch ever so slightly poorer. Little more than four months later, on 8th July 1995, under the

heading of *Sunday Times Pays Foot Damages Over KGB Claim*, the London *Independent* was now happy to report:

"The *Sunday Times* was forced into a humiliating climb-down at the High Court yesterday over its allegations that Michael Foot was considered 'an agent of influence' by the KGB ... Foot had sued the paper and its proprietor Rupert Murdoch ... The story alleged Mr. Foot had operated under the codename 'Boot' and that the Soviet intelligence agency made cash payments ... Under a settlement read out in open court, the paper offered Mr. Foot 'substantial' damages—which with legal costs are believed to run to at least £100,000—and an assurance that it had never intended to suggest that he had been a spy ... In need of corroboration, John Witherow, the newspaper's editor, dispatched a reporter to Moscow, where interviews were conducted with several former KGB officers, including Mikhail Lyubimov and Viktor Kubeykin. However, Mr. Lyubimov later told the *Independent* that to suggest Mr. Foot had been an agent was 'a ridiculous smear', while Mr. Kubeykin called the article 'a 100% distortion' of what he had told the reporter. On the day the story appeared, Mr. Witherow admitted on BBC Radio that the allegation that Mr. Foot was an agent might be 'utter rubbish', adding that the *Sunday Times* was merely suggesting that the KGB believed he was an agent. Mr. Foot immediately fired off writs to the *Sunday*

Times and *News of the World*; which printed a follow-up story, branding the allegations 'a McCarthyite smear'. The *News of the World* settled within hours of the writ arriving, paying Mr. Foot £35,000..."

Never interested in money, however, Jack Jones did not sue, being content with making a political response. But then it was not until the very night he died that Jack was ever smeared with the Gordievsky slander that he had taken KGB money. And, of course, a dead man, even if not yet cold, can never bring a libel action. There is only one thing that Jones and Gordievsky have in common, but for different reasons. Even though the *Independent* had mercilessly exposed and called him a consummate liar, Gordievsky did not sue either. But how could he? Yet this is the very espionage courtesan that Cambridge academia, operating on behalf of British intelligence, now presents as a "historical witness". Having been politically associated, in one way or another, with Jack over a 35 year period, and having been a close personal friend of his for 25 of those years, I can testify that the greatest refutation of M15 smears is to be found in both the character and politics of Jack Jones. And it is to such politics that I will now turn.

(To be continued)

Manus O'Riordan

REVIEW

Three Historical Poems Ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin

(Peter J. Smith, Nodus Publikationem, Muenster, 2007).

Faith and Patronage: The Political Career of Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire

(Benjamin Hazard, Irish Academic Press, 2010).

Political Historians

This journal sometimes comments on revisionists, anti-revisionists, post-revisionists and the like. But Irish historiography has a longer lineage. The books listed above refer to historians of four hundred years ago and a thousand years ago. Their subjects are Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire and Gilla Coemáin, both members of the hereditary profession of historian.

The first book is a critical edition of three poems by the 11th century scholar Gilla Cóemáin who probably lived around the time of Brian Boru. The Editor is Peter Smith, a Tyrone Gael who also happens to be an academic.

Irish history was formulated in the forms of verse and prose. Little is known of Gilla Cóemáin personally, other than that he lived somewhere in the Irish Midlands. But his compositions were among those historical works which are the basis of mediaeval Irish histories such as the 11th century *Leabar Gabála* (Book of Invasions), and the early modern *Annála* (Annals of the Four Masters)—17th century.

These works show that the Irish, and the Gaels generally, had a strong sense of who they were, where they came from, and how they fitted into world history as

it was understood in western Europe at that time. They convey a very different picture from the English-language-delineated 'chaos' and 'barbarism' of the Gaels.

In conditions of "free and fair competition" (as distinct from sword-point), native Irish culture saw off both French and English during 1200-1500, when even English magnates in Ireland, officially responsible for suppressing native Irish barbarism, were themselves composing Gaelic poetry.

A sense of the role of culture and learning in the social and political system is conveyed in the following verses, by Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe (13th century), quoted in the Gilla Cóemáin book:

Donum Dei gach dán binn
i gceartlár chuirp an léighinn;
geibh é agus casgair a chéill—
asgaídh Dé sein go soiléir.

Fios a seanchais ná a saoire
ní fhuighbhídis arddaoine;
léigídh so i ndán do dhéanamh
nó no slán dá seinsgéalaibh.

{Every melodious poem in the very heart of the body of learning is *donum Dei* (a gift from

God); recite it and dissect its sense—it is clearly the gift of God. Noble men would have no knowledge of their traditions and nobility; allow these to be composed in poetry or else bid farewell to their ancient histories.}

The three re-printed Gilla Cóemáin poems are:

Hériu ard inis na rríg (Lofty Ireland, island of the kings),

At-tá sund forba fessa (Herein is the apex of knowledge), and

Annálad anall uile (All the annal-writing heretofore).

The first of these poems catalogues the names of the pre-Christian Kings of Ireland, together with the duration of their reigns and the manner of their deaths.

The second poem lists the names of the Christian Kings of Ireland up to King Brian Boru (died 1014), together with the duration of their reigns and the dynasties to which they belonged.

The third relates the reigns of various Irish kings from the pre-Christian era, synchronising them accurately with the reigns of kings of the Mediterranean world and the Near and Middle East, and with important events in world history up to year 1072.

This history was considered sufficiently important that the poems were continuously reproduced in manuscript form in the centuries up to the Famine.

Here is a sample:

Darcellus, Solom na sleg
comaimser is Mic Míled;
cóic cét acht fiche dá n-és
Nabcodon Astiagés.

Sírna rí Temra na tor
i comflaithis Nabcodon;
and-sin fechtá, fáth ngaile,
cath Móna truim Trógaide.

{*Dercylus {and} Solomon of the lances {were} the contemporaries of the Sons of Mil; five hundred years less twenty years after these were Nebuchadnezzar {and} Astyages. Sírna the king of Tara of the towers {was} in contemporary sovereignty with Nebuchadnezzar; then was fought—a cause of valour—the battle of grievous Móin Trógaide.*}

Míl or Milesius was the legendary leader who brought the Gaels from Northern Spain to Ireland.

These genealogies and histories established the credentials and authority of the current social and political order. Their verse form is subject to complex rules of construction. Therefore they were relatively easy to memorise and recite, but rather difficult to alter or re-formulate. We can suppose that the historian class of ancient Ireland found a way to prevent revisionism in their own time!

On that account alone, Peter Smith's scholarly edition of the Gilla Cóemáin poems is to be welcomed.

Five hundred years after Gilla Cóemáin, Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire of Co. Roscom-

mon was born, like Gilla Cóemáin, into the hereditary caste of chroniclers/historians/archivists/genealogists/poets. However circumstances prescribed that Ó Maolchonaire would become a maker of history rather than a historian.

These days Ó Maolchonaire may be remembered as the author of *Sgáthán an Chrábhaidh*, a translation from Catalan of the devotional allegory *Desiderius*, and of various other religious texts. A new book by Benjamin Hazard, *Faith and Patronage: The Political Career of Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire* (Irish Academic Press, 2010) gives a fuller picture.

Ó Maolchonaire received the rigorous Irish education and literary initiation, though traditional institutions were collapsing in his native Connacht under renewed pressure from the sixteenth century English state. These developments led him into the service of the Ulster chiefs, Hugh O'Neill and Hugh O'Donnell, in their nine year war against Elizabeth. At this stage he had studied at the Jesuit College in Salamanca, where he joined the Franciscan order relatively late in life.

Ó Maolchonaire was present when the two Hughs defeated Elizabeth's army under Lord Essex at Curlew Pass, and also at the defeat of the Ulster army at Kinsale a couple of years later. Returning to Spain, Ó Maolchonaire became the representative of the Ulster Earls in the Court of the Spanish King, seeking renewal of war against England.

But Spain was losing interest in wars of ideology, and, though Charles I declared war on Spain when James I/VI died, this aspect of Ó Maolchonaire's mission came to nothing.

However, Hazard's book suggests that Ó Maolchonaire's diplomatic and political work in Spain, Rome, Flanders and Ireland had lasting consequences. Under acute pressure from the new English state, large numbers of native Irish and Hiberno-English sought refuge in Catholic Europe. Ó Maolchonaire ensured that, instead of being dispersed, Irish soldiers were kept together in an integral brigade or regiment of the Spanish army, under Irish command, in readiness for renewed war in Ireland. Ó Maolchonaire died in 1629, but this resource provided the military nucleus for the Eoghan Rua O'Neill's Ulster army, the force which came closest to defeating Cromwell's New Model Army.

In addition, Ó Maolchonaire fulfilled his scholarly heritage by founding the greatest of the continental Irish Colleges, St. Anthony's in Louvain. As author of works on St. Augustine Ó Maolchonaire contributed to the theoretical debates from which Jansenism emerged in response to the philosophical and theological theories of Calvinism and Lutheranism. (Benjamin Hazard's Maynooth tutor Thomas O'Connor has written an explanation of the

political role of Jansenism in Europe, and within the factions of the 1640s Irish Confederation, as reported in *Church & State* No. 95, Spring 2009.)

In anticipation of impending catastrophe, the "Four Masters" compiled their Annals of the millennia of native Irish civilisation in Killybegs' Franciscan friary. This establishment was destroyed along with other Irish institutions of learning. Ó Maolchonaire probably had contact with his fellow-Franciscans in Donegal, and his own Louvain College also performed a crucial role in salvaging and developing native Irish culture.

At this stage the new English state had conducted and won two wars of extermination in Ireland in the process of planting settlers in Irish territory. A similar movement was set in motion across the Atlantic. Were these policies genocidal in intent? Their intention was to make money and their other consequences were secondary.

In the first instance money was made from rents, and empty, depopulated territory produces zero rental. Also, empty virgin territory is a difficult proposition from many points of view. Settlers in America depended initially on the indigenous population for survival, and only needed to dispose of them later on. The extermination of the quite densely populated eastern seaboard was assumed to be total, until a few remnants of the indigenous peoples were "*rediscovered*" in the early twentieth century.

Extermination was a sometimes intended, sometimes incidental, consequence of the policies of colonial states for centuries. In living memory congregations attending Mass in Australia had to be hectored for practising the popular sport of hunting and shooting the indigenous people at weekends. Seventeenth century advertisements for settlers in Ulster sometimes offered the attraction of shooting the displaced native vagabonds and outlaws in the forests, mountains and bogs.

Killing people on a large scale is quite difficult and expensive and can usually only be attempted and accomplished in quite special circumstances. The technology of swift and cost-effective extermination on an extensive scale has only been perfected by the European Enlightenment in recent years.

Could the North American Indians have saved themselves by a pre-emptive counter-extermination of the early settlers? It is true that some countries saw off European colonialism by their own efforts. Contrary to Jansenism-Calvinism, nothing is pre-determined in human affairs. If the American Indians had gained some initial experience of success against colonialism they might have bought themselves a few years in which to put themselves in a better situation to resist, if and when colonialism resumed.

continued on page 27, column 2

Does It Up

Stack ?

GREENPEACE

Where are the Greenpeace environmental activists now? The Gulf of Mexico oil-well disaster was avoidable if BP/Halliburton had fitted the proper cut-off valves on the bore. But they decided to save \$500,000 by not using the valves. And apparently the USA Government knew the valves were not fitted and agreed to the situation. Why is Greenpeace—known for its activism on the environment—not protesting and why does Greenpeace not name the names of the people who agreed not to use the shut-off valves? Can its activism only be against Japan and other foreign governments over policies which are far less lethal than anything ever done by the oil companies? The question that must be asked: is Greenpeace in the pockets of US/UK big business? The dog that doesn't bark adds a silence that still somehow *uneasily* echoes. I find it similar to Amnesty International who complained about torture and civil rights abuses everywhere around the world except in the six counties in the north east of Ireland when it was happening and it took the Irish Government (almost always led by Fianna Fail) to take matters to the EU Court of Human Rights several times, where it was always successful in its endeavours against the British State. I have a simple enough philosophy—by the fruits of their efforts shall you know them. So I now know Greenpeace.

BPplc

The gushing oil-well off the SE coast of the USA is heading to be the worst environmental disaster in history. Incredibly, neither BP plc nor the USA seems to know what they are doing. Throwing golf balls into the hole says it all really. Do we believe it? Do we believe the USA had the technology to put a man on the moon or were we spoofed? Some of the Arab states and China have offered help but it seems they have been rebuffed. It would probably be unacceptable to be seen as needing that kind of assistance for the "*leader of the free world*". BPplc as at 31st December 2009 Financial Report had net assets of \$102 billion dollars (their Financial Report is all in US dollars) and in 2009 BP had "*net cash generated by operating activities*" of over \$27 billion dollars. That was over half a billion a week. But how long can BP sustain the present level of costs involved in dealing with the hole and compensating (very inadequately so

far) those whose livelihood is destroyed by the gushing oil—not to mind the unique bio-diversity of the wetlands of Louisiana.

It rather looks like the US and BP hoped for a good hurricane from a direction which would blow the oil away from the US coast but the whole thing has been going on since the 22nd April so it's way too late for weather intervention now anyway. Where it gets worrying for Ireland is that the oil could well have entered the Gulf Stream already and as we know from our national schooldays—the Gulf Stream flows across the Atlantic to Europe where it brings warm water, thus giving us the lovely temperate climate that we have. At the rate of about one-half to one knot that could mean the oil may be on European beaches around next January or February. The EU, and Ireland as a maritime nation, should be acting now and telling us what it is doing about that inevitability.

PALESTINE AND GAZA

One of the criminal acts perpetrated in the course of the Israeli piracy, murder and kidnapping recently was the jamming of international radar, voice communications and GPS. The target victims could not communicate with the outside world and they did not therefore know their navigational position. In fact, at that stage a ship is sailing *blindly*. GPS (Sat. Coms.) is controlled at source by the USA military but it can also be very easily jammed by radio impulses. Still my contention is that Israel had to get the go ahead from the US whose President therefore knew of its intentions to pirate the Turkey ship and murder some of its occupants who were unarmed.

The number of criminal violations therefore committed by Israeli navy were numerous and they should be held accountable for them under International Law. If other pirates around the world did not know the possibility of jamming GPS, well they know it now and there will very likely be unfortunate repercussions for shipping. If there was anyone left who thought the UN is anything other than a useless talking shop, they know now. But they also know who controls it, even if we all pay towards its astronomical costs. It should be boycotted—that is—none of its costs given over until it ceases to be a pawn of US/Israeli power. The UN has shown it acts only against nuclear defenceless States like Iran at the behest of its masters. The UN is a vicious thug under a sheen of democracy given to it by us all. It is time we acted—otherwise we are all *accomplices*.

PUBLIC SERVICES MISMANAGEMENT

Every person drawing Social Welfare benefits is obliged to inform the Department when there is a change in their circumstances. Such as being sent to prison where the prisoner is supported by the

taxpayers. Virtually no effective cross-checking is done officially to ensure there is no fraud. The checks are done by comparing lists of prisoners with benefit lists every three or four months. The prison service says the reports are taking longer to compile due to staff shortages. This doesn't stack up because the compilation should be automatically done by computer as part of prison admission and release procedures.

On the other hand, the Department of Social Protection gives the excuse that a number of its welfare inspectors have been seconded to the Criminal Assets Bureau to target funds accumulated by criminals and investigating social welfare entitlements of persons suspected of earnings from criminal activity. This doesn't stack up either—any welfare officers on secondment should be instantly replaced. Not to do so is very bad management. Bad management in the Public Services is costing the taxpayer billions of unnecessary euros every year.

And bad management is dangerous in the Health Services Executive (HSE). The HSE has admitted that Pre-Development Testing for young children has been cancelled for June, July and August due to nurses not being available because of so many being out of work with sick leave. It is extraordinary how many HSE and State employees get ill in the fine weather when the rest of the population is very healthy and at work. (Well, somebody has to keep the country going!)

Weak and incompetent management in the Public Services will have to be named and shamed and blamed because it is costing billions in wasted money. One major cause of bad management in the Public Service is that senior management positions are filled from within the public service. They ignore the Peter Principle which is that a person tends to be promoted to the level of their incompetence. The Public Service is a "closed shop". Even though one in five applications for senior public service jobs is from outside the Public Service, only one in three hundred and fourteen get to be appointed from outside. One of the reasons for this is of course, the make-up of the interview panels. For example, when the interviews are for a job as City Manager for a city—one of the interview panel is usually the outgoing City Manager for that city. 'Keep the secrets in the family' is not a good motto for the Public Service if good management is needed.

THE GREAT WAR

So it is called but there was nothing great about it except the great number of people that were slaughtered. On 1st June 2010, a book was launched in Cork City Hall naming 3,774 Cork men who died in that awful war declared by the UK on Germany in 1914. The book commences

with an extract from a letter written by Father Francis Gleeson which appeared in the Irish Times in 1916, two months after the Easter Rising in which he stated that "It is true and just to say that the sacrifices made and the blood shed by Irish (sic) Regiments in the present war are as truly and sincerely offered up to the same sublime object — the liberty and love of Ireland." The truth is that although many of the recruits into so-called "Irish" regiments in the British Army may have been of Anglo-Irish stock joining up to 'serve their motherland', most young men joined up out of absolute financial necessity. It was a job to them. There were no other jobs available. Extreme poverty was rampant especially in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway. But even so those men joining up at the time were not regarded as heroes. They did not regard themselves as heroes. They were destitute if they could not join the British Army.

Ireland in the years 1916-1921 knew only too well that the British Army was the enemy of Ireland. Lady Gregory's son Robert joined up as an airman in the British Army and was killed in action. But when, on one sunny afternoon at Kiltartan Cross on the Gregory estate, a young mother and her baby sitting outside their cottage were murdered by a Black and Tan shooting from a passing lorry, the poet W.B. Yeats was so outraged that he wrote the following:

"Some nineteen German planes, they say,
You had brought down before you died.
We called it a good death. Today
Can ghost or man be satisfied?
Although your last exciting year
Outweighed all other years, you said,
Though battle joy may be so dear,
It chases other thoughts away,
Yet rise from your Italian tomb,
Flit to Kiltartan Cross and stay
Till certain second thoughts have come
Upon the cause you served, that we
Imagined such a fine affair:
Half-drunk or whole-mad soldiery
Are murdering your tenants there.
Men that revere your father yet
Are shot at on the open plain.
Where may new-married women sit
And suckle children now? Armed men
May murder them in passing by
Nor law nor parliament take heed."

The killings, plunderings and burnings by the British Army in Ireland explain why those who fought for Britain in the Great War are not remembered and mourned by their families. We sympathise with those men. They enlisted for jobs and on a wave of misleading jingoistic propaganda.

The new book should have been entitled 'The Great Deception' — because they were all deceived.

copyright: Michael Stack

Forgotten Aspects of Ireland's Great War on Turkey by Dr. Pat Walsh Athol Books €25 / £20

Remembering Gallipoli by Dr. Pat Walsh

A Belfast Magazine No. 37

€5 / £4

Political Historians concluded

The least abhorrent element in the European movement into new territories was the papal, anti-Jansenist Jesuit order. For instance, the Jesuits established a separate state, under the authority of the Spanish King, for the South American natives, enabling them to attain a high level of economic, social, military and cultural achievement, until their overthrow by the colonial settlers when the weakened papacy and Spanish monarchy allowed the suppression of the Jesuits at the instigation of Enlightenment forces in the eighteenth century.

Putting up a fight can have positive results. It is notable that recent indigenous resurgence in South America is centred mainly on the region where the Jesuit state was located.

In seventeenth century Ireland extermination had been put in motion by the policies of the new English state. Could the Irish have put up a better resistance? A counter-extermination perhaps? Ó Maolchonaire protested formally when in 1614 the Irish leadership consented to the confiscation of the lands of the Ulster chiefs, leading to settler plantation. In general the Irish appear to have had insufficient appreciation of the scale of the savagery which was being unleashed against them.

Pat Muldowney

E S B continued

power-plant delivering cheap power to meet normal anticipated demand day-in and day-out, and two other less efficient plants to come in quickly with extra capacity when needed to meet temporary demand surges.

"However, at the urging of ideologically-committed market economists, the Victorian Liberal Government of Jeff Kennett in the 1990s decided to sell the SEC to a private power-generating company. It had been assured that the company would do a better job than the SEC, and more cheaply.

"Why did this strike a chord with politicians? Well, for a number of reasons, the details of which deserve to be discussed in a separate article. For the moment, it is enough to say that in the political and economic climate of the time, the idea of privatisation held strong appeal to government and business alike. Both believed that customers could be enticed, with the carrot of cheaper electricity, to embrace the idea enthusiastically.

"How wrong they were! Whatever may have been the case 20 years ago, customers now know they were sold a pup. The privatisation model is on the nose.

"Things never worked out quite as planned—if only because, as pointed out earlier, funding privately-owned power generation is more costly than if governments undertake the task.

"The private company which bought the right to take over the SEC's role can neither afford to do what the SEC did nor ensure back-up electricity generation to help with demand surges.

"To get a semblance of competition into the system, the Victorian Kennett Government set up competing distributing companies which have to buy their power from the monopoly generating company.

"They have one plant which at times will be generating more than is needed. To keep costs down, they must sell all the power this plant generates, even if it is not needed.

"To buy at the cheapest price rather than pay the crippling price the generating company sets for peak power, it makes commercial sense for the distributing companies to buy more power than they need.

"This can and does lead to the bizarre situation whereby the power station produces surplus power which is not needed, and the distributing companies buy power which they can't sell. Now it becomes clear why prices to customers have gone up 50 per cent since privatisation.

You will no doubt have guessed immediately who picks up the tab. The customer, of course! And that means mostly households, because the big commercial users usually operate on fixed-price contracts.

If you believe that the entire system so described seems incredibly convoluted compared with the public system that preceded it, you are correct" (*News Weekly*, Melbourne, 1.5.2010—Colin Teese is a former deputy secretary of the Australian Department of Trade).

ESB continued

Following recent increases in personal taxation, it would seem logical for these figures to have changed.

It is a similar story for gas prices which are 17 per cent above average for domestic users. Most industrial and commercial customers pay 9-13 per cent more than average, except for one category of medium-use customers who pay 6 per cent less. Adjusting for cost-of-living differences between countries, electricity and gas prices in Ireland are 9 per cent and 2 per cent respectively below the EU average. (*Irish Independent*, 22.4.2010).

The above only proves what you can do with statistics! In any case, a state's energy source is more than just consumers and price!

Putting electricity generation and distribution into private hands has neither reduced prices nor served the broader public interest.

AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

Below, we reprint an article from *News Weekly* (1.5.2010), an Australian current affairs bi-weekly publication, the organ of the National Civic Council and is written by Colin Tesse, a former Deputy Secretary of the Australian Department of Trade which puts the issue of privatisation in telling context.

"One of Melbourne's savvier economic and political brains, John Legge, reminds us of what a bad deal our community has got from privatisation. He used the announcement of the introduction of new electricity meters by the Victorian government to make his points. (John Legge, 'smart meters another dumb economic idea', *The Age*, April 13, 2010).

"His arguments relate specifically to electricity generation in Victoria, but actually they apply pretty much across the board concerning privatisation.

"Electricity in Victoria is, however, a good example.

"Mr. Legge contends that putting electricity generation and distribution into private hands has neither reduced prices nor served the broader public interest. What is more, the facts back him up.

"Victoria's State Electricity Commission (SEC) generated and sold power to Victorian consumers from 1926 to 1998. [In 1927 an Electricity (Supply) Act (Irish Free State) provided for the establishment of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) which would be responsible for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity throughout the new state.].

"In every single year, the SEC reduced the real price of power to customers. This meant that for ordinary households buying electricity took a smaller part of their earnings in each successive year.

"Since privatisation in 1998, however, electricity prices to the consumer have gone up 50 per cent.

"Managing price was undoubtedly the SEC's crowning achievement. But the SEC also trained thousands of apprentices in electricity and other workplace skills. Eventually, many of these highly skilled tradesmen found their way into the wider workforce. In a similar manner, the SEC also trained engineers and other skilled workers, not all of whom chose to remain in the commission's employ. Either way, the community got the benefit of skills-training provided by the SEC.

"The current privately-owned generating company does none of this.

"As to the matter of safety and security, the SEC maintained its generating and delivery systems in pristine condition. The same cannot be said for the private operators. For example, in last year's tragic Victorian bush-fires, some fires were started by poorly maintained power lines.

"But how could the SEC have run a system cheaper and better than the current private operators, especially when we have been told repeatedly over the last 30 years that governments cannot do these things as well as private enterprise?

"Let us get this whole question into perspective! There are areas of economic activity where the profit motive delivers lower prices and better outcomes for the community. Competition and markets seem to work best where there are enough suppliers in genuine competition for market share.

"Sadly, in modern economies, examples of such form of economic activity are becoming more and more difficult to identify. Small retailers are the most obvious example we can point to; but it must also be acknowledged that these businesses usually suffer at the hands of large and colluding suppliers.

"The reality is that competition and the operation of market forces—despite what many economists like to believe—do not always characterise economic activity in the 21st century. Perhaps it is time for market economists to recognise that the theoretical underpinning for their so-called scientific view were developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. If economics is a science, it surely must be the only one still working on the basis of 200-year-old theories.

"Theoretical economics tells us that genuine competition and functioning markets are essential for our economic system to work. "Perfect competition" provides the theoretical framework for competitive capitalism. In its pristine form, perfect competition means many suppliers facing many consumers with no one party in either group having the power to influence price.

"In the modern world, that theoretical ideal, sadly, does not, and cannot, exist. As we all know, governments have had to establish competition and consumer watchdogs, such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), in an effort to prevent one side exploiting an advantage over the other. At best, competition works imperfectly.

"The example of the duopolistic power of the two supermarket giants, Woolworths and Wesfarmers (the parent company of Coles), which dominate food retailing in Australia, readily illustrates this point. There

is serious doubt about whether the undue market power they wield necessarily delivers superior service and cheapest prices to consumers.

"What is more, many doubt whether, as buyers, they give their farmer-suppliers a fair go. Rather, they use their duopoly market power to squeeze farmers on price and then pocket the benefit of a higher profit on sales to their customers.

"Another example is petrol prices. We all know that the various companies are selling the same product. If so, how does one company increase market share when there are only limited opportunities to persuade consumers to buy more petrol? Certainly not by competing on price: oil companies have discerned, correctly, that price competition would be ruinous for all of them.

"So, implicitly or otherwise, they pursue a policy of live and let live at an economic price—and concentrate on keeping out new entrants! Call it collusion if you like, and certainly it is phoney competition, but given the kind of product they are selling it is probably the best way of preserving their respective businesses and serving their customers.

"So the whole issue of competition and giving customers the best deal is nowhere near as straightforward as ideologically-inclined economists would have us believe.

"And further, we can say definitively that it does not deliver good outcomes for public utilities.

"Why is this so? Why do we end up with outcomes of the kind that Mr. Legge draws to our attention? Technically, the answer lies in the phrase, "natural monopolies", but that is not much help to the ordinary reader.

"Put simply, competition in power generation makes no sense—economic or otherwise. To have two power-generating companies, with their separate and enormously costly equipment, competing on price to supply us with power would be insanely wasteful of resources and simply would not work. And if generating companies wanted to invest in that kind of model for producing electricity, even the most irresponsible financial institution would not fund it.

"There are many reasons why this is so.

"For a start the demand for electricity is not susceptible to promotion. Customers use what they need; they can't be persuaded to leave the lights on when there is no need. Demand cannot be created.

"Electric power generation has to be a monopoly. Even the ideologues concede that. But does it have to be a government monopoly?

"Other things being equal, it's cheaper that way. Governments, in any reasonably well-run country, can borrow at cheaper rates than can private companies. This means that the burden of servicing the cost of the enormous outlays necessary to build electric power generation plants is lower. And they can fine-tune the system better with a combination of power plants to make certain that they can always meet the unexpected surges in demand.

"Legge points out how the SEC used to do this. They had their highly efficient big

continued on page 28

ESB continued

"Electricity companies love to change their names every few years, something that can foster the illusion that there is real choice is the market when the reality is that the electricity market remains in the hands of a few, very large companies who were or are former monopolies."

(*Irish Independent*, 22.4.2010).

THE REGULATION THING

"Deputy O'Keeffe criticised the decision to give extra resources to financial regulator Matthew Elderfield, and praised his predecessor, Patrick Neary, describing him as decent and honest.

"He queried what the new regulator needed a proposed staff of 700 for, and said there wasn't that many bank branches in the country.

"I want to know in the name of God almighty what is this man going to do with 700 staff in his office down in the Central Bank?

"What are they for? We don't have that many branches even," he said.

"Warning against the effects of over-regulation, Deputy O'Keeffe said that it "breeds further mischief and discontent and blackguardism because people find a way around it"... (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 22.4.2010).

"Mr O'Keeffe defended AIB, which he claimed had served the agricultural sector better than any other bank.

"He told TDs that he held shares in a number of institutions including AIB and he wanted to see it owned by the people and not the State." (*RTE news*, 21.4.2010).

The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) is headed by former Department of Finance official Michael Tutty who works alongside Dermot Nolan and former Viridian official Garrett Blaney.

Set up 10 years ago, the regulator has responsibility for ensuring that the once-closed electricity market is opened to competition; something that has been effectively demanded by the European Union.

The regulator sets electricity and gas prices based on information supplied by the ESB. He is responsible for safety inside the dangerous electricity and gas industries as well as the off-shore extraction of petroleum.

Another important mandate is to ensure energy security so that the country does not grind to a complete standstill in the event of war or some sort of natural catastrophe.

All of the state's gas-fired power stations, for example, must be able to operate with oil as well and every power

station must have a five-day supply.

There is an agreement with the UK on gas supplies which enter the country from the inter-connector linking the island of Ireland to Scotland and a new inter-connector that will link with Wales which is due to open in 2012.

Under the agreements, Britain won't shut down supplies in a national emergency. That's what the agreement states.

NUCLEAR ALTERNATIVE

A former chairman, Tom Reeves encouraged public debate on nuclear power in the hope that it might be part of the solution to our energy needs.

Mr. Reeves told an Oireachtas Committee in 2006 that the need for alternative fuel sources to meet future energy needs is even greater now as neither wind power, nor any other renewable energy sources, will satisfy demand.

"Nuclear technology has made enormous advances over recent years and operates to very high standards now.

"The big issue for Ireland is their size—they need to be smaller and more efficient," he said.

"If you want a plant by 2020 then you had better start now because of the level of objections." Mr. Reeves concluded.

THE PRICE OF ELECTRICITY

With the media and the market stalkers: price is everything, nothing else matters! National security, self-sufficiency, guaranteed supply and above all safety, yes safety—it's not like running a bank you know!

In the state of Victoria in Australia up until 1998, the Government through the State Electricity Commission (SEC) was the provider of the state's electricity, very much like the ESB in Ireland, indeed both ventures started around the same time 1926/27. In every single year, the SEC reduced the real price of power to customers. This meant that for ordinary households buying electricity took a smaller part of their earnings in each successive year.

Since privatisation in 1998, however, electricity prices to the consumer in Victoria have gone up 50 per cent. (*See below*).

In the 1980s, New Zealand was the focus for the free marketeers, the whole world should emulate Kiwi land, they said. Their state electricity company was sold off, privatised. In a short time, Auckland, the largest city became the laughing stock of the world when through neglect and lack of maintenance power started to break down. It was a common site in the main thoroughfares of that city to see small Japanese generators buzzing outside all the major stores following massive power breaks.

The price of electricity in 1930 was 1.11p which compared very favourably with the rest of Europe; by 1940 this cost had been reduced to 0.61 per unit and by 1973 it had risen to 1.06. However, the oil crisis of 1973 was responsible for a dramatic increase in the cost thereafter: 1.19p (1974), 1.81p (1975), 2.18p (1976) and 2.56p in 1977.

From nearly 50,000 customers in 1930 the ESB was supplying a million in 1970 and by 2007 was providing an electricity service to over two million customers throughout the state.

"Electricity in Ireland is among the most expensive in Europe for business although it can be among the cheapest for residential users, according to the latest report by Eurostat, the European Commission's statistics agency" (*Irish Independent*, 22.4.2010)

The cost of electricity for industry is between 3 per cent and 52 per cent higher than the European average, according to a 2008 report from Sustainable Energy Ireland. Comparisons are difficult because each market varies so much but Eurostat calculates that business here pays between 23 per cent and 29 per cent of the EU average and 21 per cent and 27 per cent of the European average.

The main reason is Ireland's high reliance on gas to generate electricity.

Around 60 per cent of our electricity is generated by gas compared to 24 per cent in Europe. Gas prices have been fluctuating wildly in recent years, pushing up electricity prices here.

Other fossil fuels have also been volatile and this has been another contributing factor as no country in Europe depends on fossil fuels quite like we do.

Our dependency on oil, gas and turf is 88 per cent compared with a 60 per cent average across the continent.

The link between dependence on fossil fuels and energy costs is quite stark. After Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands have the highest dependence on these fuels and the highest costs.

Another factor contributing to high costs here is the massive investment in the national grid after 25 years of neglect. The billions being spent on the grid must be recouped from customers.

Electricity prices for householders are also higher, according to Eurostat. Looking at the most common consumption patterns, electricity is between 17 per cent and 20 per cent higher than the 27 nations in the EU, making Ireland the fifth most expensive country for middle-of-the-road domestic consumption.

Confusingly, when these figures are adjusted for purchasing power, Ireland is between 9 per cent and 15 per cent below average, according to the 2007 figures.

continued on page 29

ESB continued

competitive for electricity prices.

The need to ease pressure on the exchequer finances are contributing to speculation that the government may have to embark on a limited privatisation programme in the next few years to help fund the cost of bank bailouts.

Speculation about privatisation has abounded in the past but this time it may be different. National debt is set to rise towards 100 per cent of GDP in the coming years, and a major chunk of the National Pension Reserve Fund, created to pay public sector pensions in the future, has gone on bailing out the banks.

Some privatisations have occurred, beginning with Irish Life and Greencore. More recently, the state floated Eircom, sold oil refineries in Cork to Tosco, ACC Bank to Rabobank and ICC Bank to Bank of Scotland. Also in recent years, discussions exploring possible privatisation of Aer Rianta and Coillte took place, though nothing happened.

Bord Gáis, is seen as one of the primary candidates for privatisation, the company is planning to separate its network operations from its energy businesses.

However, the sale of state companies will be a government decision, and the separation at Bord Gáis would facilitate an easier privatisation should the Government make that decision.

After the debacle of the Eircom privatisation in 1999 and the subsequent massive debt associated with the telecommunications company's network, there is a general political and corporate view that infrastructure should not be privatised.

THE ESB

"The state electricity company is a different animal entirely. Its strategic importance and the fact that it is buying the electricity network in the North place a major health warning on the sale of the network.

"Equally, a proposal to sell its customer supply or power generation businesses would be strongly resisted.

"Trade union influence is very strong, and it would be cleaner for the company to sell its international division, ESB International, and leave the rest in state hands.

"Long seen as a candidate for privatisation, any move in that direction would be highly controversial. ESB is investing hundreds of millions in wind energy and expects to generate one third of all its electricity through renewables by 2020.

"The ESB group made after tax profits of €273 million in 2008 on a turnover of €3.5 billion.

"It had net debt of €2 billion. The company's profits consisted of €199 million from power generation, €49

million from networks and €99 million from its other businesses. The supply business lost €74 million" (*Sunday Business Post*, 16.5.2010).

"The Shannon electrification project represented "the poisonous virus of nationalisation" charged Senator Sir John Keane, a major opponent of the scheme to generate electricity from the river Shannon. He said it showed "the fatal and continuing tendency on the part of government towards nationalisation"..."

(Dail Debates, 3 April, 1925,
Paul Sweeney: *The Politics Of Public Enterprise And Privatisation*, Tomar, 1990).

Until the year 2000, the supply of electricity in the Republic was vested in the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), which by an act of 1927 was responsible for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity.

It was the first Irish State enterprise: an attempt to combine state ownership and control with a greater degree of autonomy than applied within the civil service. The company's ordinary shares were held by the Minister for Finance, who nominated the board of directors. The ESB took control of existing electricity generating companies; its monopoly powers held until 2000.

It was one of the success stories of the new state! Who can forget Sean Keating's painting of "*Night Candles are Burnt Out*"—an allegory representing the transition of Ireland from an underdeveloped country suffering through war to emerge into independence and economic prosperity.

The great dam at Arnacrusa, Co. Limerick was built in 1925 by Siemens of Germany.

Originally, electricity supply had only been considered from the view of its usefulness to industry, then in its infancy; urban areas were the main beneficiaries. It was not until the Act of 1945 that rural electrification was authorised. By 1977, there were very few single dwellings which had not yet been supplied with electricity.

Apart from the hundreds, probably thousands of electrical apprentices, engineers and other skilled workers, the ESB prompted the establishment of Bord na Mona (1946) and played a vital role restoring fish stocks in various rivers, as well as fish farming.

The ESB board consists of 12 members, who are appointed by the government. Four of the appointments arise under the Worker Participation (State Enterprises) Act, 1977.

"While competition is almost always seen as a good thing, nobody is promising price reductions and the jury is still out on whether an electricity market on a small island with around

five million inhabitants can, or ever will, enjoy a vibrant market with real choice and variety.)

(Thomas Molloy, *Irish Ind.* 22.4.2010).

Now that man knows what he's talking about!

With deregulation in 2000, private generators now supply and sell electricity to consumers up to an agreed amount. but the move had no real effect until the first months of 2009 when domestic customers finally began to see any choice after Bord Gais and Scottish power company Airtricity entered the retail market to compete. They could soon be joined by the Belfast-based Energia which was once called Viridian to supply business and residential customers.

CUSTOMERS

Since then, Bord Gais has won around 300,000 customers while Airtricity has around 200,000 by offering double digit discounts to the ESB prices.

The newcomers have been able to compete on price because they are allowed to sell below cost price while the ESB is not. That ban on the ESB is likely to be lifted once Bord Gais and Airtricity control 40 per cent of the market.

The regulator's new rules, which were announced on April 22nd last, could herald the beginning of a price war which will benefit all electricity consumers or alternatively it could push Bord Gais and Airtricity to leave the market or at the very least stop gaining market share—an outcome that would once again leave the businesses and individuals without any real competition. The likely outcome will probably be somewhere in the middle.

Bord Gais and Airtricity are fuming at the decision to open up parts of the market to competition little more than a year after they entered the market.

They believe that they will struggle to gain market share without double-digit discounts and that a small price cut by the ESB would make such discounts impossible. Executives appear to be genuinely confused about the regulator's motives for the move which they see as premature.

It is not just the ESB's rivals who baulk at the idea.

The Competition Authority has also stuck its snout into the debate. A report by the authority, states: "*It is not yet clear there is sufficient switching activity in the domestic market to consider the removal of regulatory controls. More information is required*".

It is trading in this market that can make or break new entrants to the electricity market as neither Airtricity nor Bord Gais are at present generating enough power themselves to supply the market.

Without an effective wholesale market, the ESB's rivals complain they are unable to compete effectively.

continued on page 30

**LABOUR**

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 28 No. 7

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

Private Vultures Eye E S B

"Warning: Electricity Can Kill!"

"The ESB will have to lose another 300,000 domestic customers and change its name before it is allowed to set its own prices and compete with its rivals.

"The Commission for Energy Regulation announced yesterday that it would stop fixing ESB prices as soon as its competitors sign up 40 per cent of household customers—a target likely to be achieved early next year."

The ESB will have to change its name, because the regulator says this gives it an unfair advantage with consumers, as it is almost synonymous with electricity in Ireland (*Irish Independent*, 22.4.2010). Mind boggling!

Bord Gais and Airtricity, the two main competitors have already persuaded nearly 500,000 (23 per cent) domestic electricity customers to switch since entering the market a year ago offering lower prices than the ESB. The Commission said that at the current customer-switching rates, which are among the highest in Europe, it expected the ESB's market share to fall to 60 per cent by early next year, allowing deregulation to begin.

A new name would have to be applied to its electricity supply arm, to differentiate it from ESB networks which would continue to provide the wires connecting homes to the national grid, regardless of which supplier is used. The ESB welcomed the decision as a *"significant milestone in the development of a competitive retail electricity market in Ireland and a positive step for consumers"*.

In the retail sector, where the ESB has somewhere between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the market, the regulator wants the ESB's share to fall to 60 per cent before the ESB is allowed to set its own prices; something which the regulator believes is likely to happen early next year if the present trends continue.

That figure has disappointed the ESB's rivals who hoped following what one insider has dismissed as a *"fog of consultation"* that it would be 55 per cent. The ESB's rivals argue that the market is still

far from mature and they should be allowed to continue offering big discounts while the ESB keeps prices slightly above cost.

The Government's first attempts to deregulate the energy market stretch back more than a decade and have so far met with little success.

"The first false dawn came at the turn of the century when some of the country's heavy-hitters poured time and money into ultimately fruitless projects to compete with the state-owned ESB to supply industry with power. They included the country's biggest company, CRH, and billionaire businessman Denis O'Brien's E-Power.

"Most of the players in that first wave of European Union-inspired deregulation quit the market one-by-one, complaining that the ESB's stranglehold on the market made it impossible to compete though Belfast-based Viridian did stick around, building a gas-fired power station in Huntstown in Dublin and slowly winning a decent share of the business sector" (*Irish Independent*, 22.4.2010).

The writer then goes to the very nub of the problem, the very reason why the ESB should stay in public hands.

Subscribers to the magazine are regularly offered special rates on other publications

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

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

PO Box 339, Belfast BT12 4GQ or

PO Box 6589, London, N7 6SG, or

Labour Comment,

C/O Shandon St. P.O., Cork City.
TEL: 021-4676029

Subscription by Post:

12 issues: £20, UK;
€ 30, Ireland; € 35, Europe.

Electronic Subscription:

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

You can also order from:

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

"There does not seem to be any other way of doing business as power stations or inter-connectors linking Ireland to Britain cost around €500 million each and take many years to repay.

"This is, in short, a business limited to the biggest of big boys although the prices they charge have the power to make or break thousands of smaller businesses as well as having a real effect on consumer spending" (*ibid.*).

On the same day, the media were making light of remarks made by Fianna Fail Cork deputy Ned O'Keeffe warning against the effects of over-regulation. Deputy O'Keeffe said that it *"breeds further mischief and discontent and blackguardism because people find a way around it"*.

The regulator wants the ESB to shed 300,000 customers, changes its long established and proud title: all in the name of competition and at the end of the day there is no guarantee you will be paying less for your unit of electricity, and a valuable and proven state enterprise could suffer serious damage. Again, all in the name of competition.

In the same report, an important social aspect of the ESB's role was touched upon:

"The commission said it would work with the Department of Social Protection to get better value for 300,000 ESB customers, *mainly senior citizens, who get a free electricity allowance, as few had switched*. A competitive tender for such custom may be considered" (*Irish Independent*-22.4.2010).

"If it is not broken, why fix it?" Of course, few senior citizens have switched, neither have the mass majority of loyal ESB customers—they're not for buying a pig in a poke. Airtricity and Energia are in it for the money, not to cater for the energy needs of the citizen.

ESB PRIVATISATION—ULTIMATE AIM?

But there is a wider agenda here and its not about making the market place more

continued on page 31