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## 1916: People and Regime

A popular, 1966-style determination among the population to celebrate and commemorate 1916 in a straight-forward burst of emotion has swept aside the Government's initial mealy-mouthed, "*shared history*" approach. The regime has had to run to catch up, while constantly peering over its shoulder lest the spectre of Sinn Fein overtake it.

The official State commemoration on Easter Sunday was certainly dignified and attracted a huge crowd, which burst into respectful and long applause after an Army officer read out the Proclamation, and stood totally still during the minute's silence for the Rebel dead.

But the event was surrounded by an absurdly exaggerated security operation. All streets leading to O'Connell were blocked off sixty metres and more back from the main thoroughfare. Every Guard in the country seems to have been brought to Dublin to protect an event that needed absolutely no protection. Along the main route at College Green and O'Connell Bridge the crowds were kept back by ridiculous, six metre high steel wire fences. There was a sense of absurdity about having to watch an event taking place 100 metres away on the big screens erected around the city centre.

Despite a bitterly cold wind, the crowds stayed throughout the event, following it on the screens. At the end, when the voice of the master of ceremonies came over the screens saying "*you may all now resume your seats*", the crowd burst into laughter.

The Army officer reciting the Proclamation had a powerful voice and his delivery was impeccable. The crowds listened intently, and applauded. But then the Taoiseach, speaking briefly in Irish, said the state was commemorating "*all who died in 1916*". A sly genuflection to "*shared history*" there! An Army chaplain delivered an excruciatingly painful sermon (there could be no other word for it) about "social justice", "equality", "peace" and all the other Vatican II buzzwords. People in the crowd watched tolerantly, some grimacing at the mealy words.

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## Election 2016

### A State Of Chassis!

It is nearly a month since the Election, and still "*the politicians are scurrying around trying to form a Government*", as a Trade Union leader put it.

The problem is that there are much too many politicians for functional democracy. What democracy needs is two or three parties, one to govern and the other to complain about government. And a third trying to muscle in, which keeps things healthy.

The immediate cause of the difficulty about forming a Government is the failure of the third party of ninety years' standing, the Labour Party, to come out from under the wing of Fine Gael five years years ago, when Fianna Fail collapsed, and assert itself as the Opposition and the future Government.

The opportunity that it had said for generations that it was dreaming about presented itself—and then it realised that that was not what it had been dreaming about at all. What it had been dreaming about was another stint in Office as junior partner to Fine Gael.

## After Brexit - Europe to Eurasia, from Inishvickallane to Vladivostock?

With opinion polls pointing increasingly towards Brexit and David Cameron's Conservatives losing credibility by the day, a major geopolitical realignment seems not far off. Whether or not Brexit happens, one important element of this realignment has been grudging acceptance by the US that it needs to deal with Russia as a partner and not as an adversary in the

Middle East.

To emphasise this, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov published an article entitled '*Russia's Foreign Policy: Historical Background*' in the '*Russia in Global Affairs*' magazine in early March. He notes that

"Western propaganda habitually accuses Russia of "revisionism", and the alleged

desire to destroy the established international system, as if it was us who bombed Yugoslavia in 1999 in violation of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, as if it was Russia that ignored international law by invading Iraq in 2003 and distorted UN Security Council resolutions by overthrowing Muammar Gaddafi's regime by force in Libya in 2011."

It is abundantly clear that the US, under its doctrine of '*exceptionalism*', has abandoned all pretence of legality in its dealings with states which fail to do its bidding and encourages its allies such as

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## Election 2016

continued

Labour said, when deciding to take another trip on the gravy train, instead of seizing the opportunity to realise its destiny, that what it was doing was putting the national interest before Party interest. In a functional democracy there is no such thing as sacrificing Party interest to national interest. Democracy is a system of government which operates by the conflict of parties, and the national interest is served by pulling one's weight in that conflict.

The Labour leaders sacrificed the interest of the Party to Fine Gael, which could have formed a government without it, but wanted it as a scapegoat. They were amply rewarded by another round of large salaries — and pensions — for this sacrifice.

But they also sacrificed the Labour Party to Sinn Fein. That was not intentional, but it was foreseeable. Sinn Fein was breathing down its neck for five years after it agreed to be Fine Gael's whipping-boy. And Sinn Fein has now comprehensively displaced it as the third Party in the Free State.

Martin McGuinness had a prominent front row seat. On his right was former President Mary Robinson, and on her right was Former President Mary McAleese. On his left was the former Tanaiste, Joan Burton.

It has been interesting to follow the sometimes garish but undoubtedly massively popular and representative upsurge of community celebration of 1916 as the birth of Independent Ireland, uncomplicated, and accepting at the same time of whatever awfulness may have been involved (such as Joe "Drummer Boy" Duffy's "what about the childer?"). School kids doing projects on the Rising, and incapable of imagining Ireland as anything other than the successful Republic it is, say simple home truths such as "without the Rising we would not have our Republic".

The mealy-mouthed "shared history" approach of the Regime has been swept away by a type of 1966-style wave of popular pride. RTE, after its awful revisionist-tainted 'Rebellion' drama, somewhat late in the day announced the re-screening of the popular 1966 series "Insurrection".

I myself have given talks to a number of classes in the local Christian Brothers secondary school on the 1916-22 story in the locality, warts and all. Rapt attention

from pupils and teachers. But what struck me was the heavy decoration all around the school — the Proclamation everywhere, pictures of the executed and other leaders, info panels from the official Government website. The same kind of thing is decorating several local pubs and restaurants. Publicly people are talking of 1916 as the "foundation of the state". I notice contemporary newspaper pages being put up everywhere (from The Lord Bew's 'Revolution Papers'), but prominently always the Gaelic American ones with their celebratory coverage rather than cringing condemnations of *The Irish Times* and *Independent*.

The commemorations at local level are often sometimes over the top. But so what....

An interesting anecdote: an in-law of mine works in a Protestant National School in a very affluent southside area with probably the largest Protestant population of anywhere in Dublin. She told me the school had gone 1916 mad and had celebrated "Proclamation Day" with gusto — staff and kids learning the text and reciting it with pride, much decoration of the school, the kids belting out with fervour the National Anthem. This surprised me somewhat — though of course it should not have.

**Philip O'Connor**

For Northern nationalists the Republic has always been the 'Free State'. The changes made by Fianna Fail when it was Republican did not affect them. And now Fianna Fail has disowned its origins and taken the Treaty to be the foundation document of the state, and has become a Partitionist party.

There was some interesting post-Election discussion on RTE about the ground of difference between Fine Fail and Fianna Gael. None of the TDs who were asked about it knew what it was. One new TD, when asked why he had joined Fine Fail, rather than Fianna Gael said that, when he decided to go in for politics, he got the election programmes of the two parties and joined the one that appealed to him most.

The result of that kind of frivolous approach is a miscellaneous Dail which can't figure out what it is and which is having serious trouble about forming a Government.

In the good old days, when we had a functional democracy in which the electorate could elect a Government, most people knew what they were without reading electoralist verbiage, and it was left to the uncertain minority to bring about manageable change by 'swing' voting.

Britain imposed Proportional Representation on the Irish region of the United Kingdom in 1920 for the purpose of deflating Sinn Fein. Expert opinion was of the opinion that Sinn Fein won the 1918 Election because of a combination of accidents and the winner-take-all electoral system. It expected that PR would dissolve Sinn Fein electorally but Sinn Fein consolidated its dominance in the PR elections of 1920 and 1921.

When Fianna Fail took over from the Treaty Party, it proposed a return of the First-Past-The-Post system in the interest of stable government. This proposal was condemned by the Treatyites (including the *Irish Times*) as a device for establishing an unchallengeable Fianna Fail supremacy, when it was clearly proposed for the opposite purpose.

Fianna Fail mastered PR and won a long series of elections under it. Fine Gael never won an election under it. Occasionally it managed a Coalition with Labour and others. The state didn't have a Two-Party system. It had one party, and then on the other side a half-party and a quarter-party and an eighth-party.

If the system that Britain abolished in Ireland in 1920 in the hope of undermining Sinn Fein had been restored when Dev proposed it—which he did twice—the Dail would not today be a miscellany of bits and pieces. The logic of the old system would long ago have ground out an effective two-party system under which the electorate could elect a Government

**'Drummer Boy' Duffy**

Writing in the *Sunday Business Post*, Duffy's choice of language is classic. Two examples:

"On Easter Monday alone, 57 people were killed: 11 rebels, 31 uniformed state forces, and 15 civilians (including nine children)."

"uniformed state forces"!!!

"By week's end, in a city where 22,000 armed combatants battled it out, as artillery shells rained on the main street from Trinity College and the HMY Helga, the death toll brushed 500" (entitled "*We must not forget the civilians who died*" in SBP 27.3.16).

"22,000 armed combatants"!!! No mention that 20,000 of them were "uniformed state forces" fighting just 2,000 "rebels".

The civilian casualties largely resulted from reckless British artillery bombardment. The Imperial forces took the opportunity to teach Ireland a lesson which was expected to stop all idea of rebellion for generations to come

**Philip O'Connor**

instead of an Electoral College.

It is the only electoral reform worth considering. Unfortunately PR has finally done its job after a delay of 90 years. Neither of the two major parties can gather sufficient outside support to form a Coalition. And all the other Parties and Independents have a vested interest in preserving the present system.

But, if Labour is still in the mood for sacrifice in the interest of the nation, it could call for the adoption of the system that is designed to produced Governments. ■

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**Dail Election**

The 32nd Dail was elected on Friday, 26th February. Fine Gael is said to have delayed the election at the behest of Labour, with Kenny wanting it held in November when the Party was riding high. The Election was delayed and held on a Friday, rather than the usual Thursday because Labour considered that it would benefit from the votes of young people, going home for the weekend. In the event, the timing did little to help either party.

Fianna Fail made a comeback of sorts, Sinn Fein blossomed and there was a large crop of Independents. Labour was humiliated, getting its lowest ever share of Dail seats.

Small parties and Independents achieved 34 seats, compared to 19 in 2011.

Despite a growing electorate, the

number of constituencies and TDs was reduced for this election. There was a reduction of 8 in the number of TDs, from 166 to 158. The number of constituencies was cut from 43 to 40. There was a lot of redrawing of boundaries and large areas transferred wholesale to different constituencies.

There are now 11 five-seat constituencies, 16 four-seaters and 13 three-seaters.

This was the first election at which gender quotas were in force: parties had to nominate women (and men!) as 30% of their candidates on pain of losing half their State funding. The number of women elected rose from 25% in the last Dail to 35%.

Fine Gael won 31.6% of seats, FF 27.8%, SF 14.6% and Labour 4.4%.

Party	Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil	Sinn Féin	Labour
<b>2011 election</b>	36.1%	17.5%	9.9%	19.4%
<b>2016 election</b>	25.5%	24.3%	13.8%	6.6%
<b>Seats 2011</b>	76 of 166	20	14	37
<b>Seats 2016</b>	50 of 158	44	23	7
<b>Votes 2011</b>	801,628	387,358	220,661	431,796
<b>Votes 2016</b>	544,140	519,356	295,319	140,898
<b>Seat change</b>	-26	+23	+9	-30

# Inishvickallane to Vladivostock?

continued

Turkey and Saudi Arabia to do likewise. The Europeans are no better, with the UK and France in particular (and the others not far behind) staging phoney *humanitarian* 'interventions' under US supervision which are in reality a disguise for other far more nefarious geopolitical ends.

As Lavrov notes:

"This discourse about "revisionism" does not hold water. It is based on the simple and even primitive logic that only Washington can set the tune in world affairs. In line with this logic, the principle once formulated by George Orwell and moved to the international level, sounds like the following: all states are equal but some states are more equal than others. However, today international relations are too sophisticated a mechanism to be controlled from one centre. This is obvious given the results of US interference: There is virtually no state in Libya; Iraq is balancing on the brink of disintegration, and so on and so forth.

A reliable solution to the problems of the modern world can only be achieved through serious and honest cooperation between the leading states and their associations in order to address common challenges. Such an interaction should include all the colours of the modern world, and be based on its cultural and civilisational diversity, as well as reflect the interests of the international community's key components."

It is hard to argue with any of this but, according to Natalie Nougeyrede in the *Guardian*, Lavrov

"presents a sweeping paranoid version of history, in which western Europeans have throughout the ages, conspired to victimise and humiliate Russia".

Really? Ireland is one of the very few European nations that has never participated in an attempt to invade and 'humiliate' Russia. At the present time, Russia is undergoing the threat of US/EU sponsored 'colour' revolutions, with the associated threat of 'hybrid' warfare in all the neighbouring states with which it has friendly relations and even within Russia itself. It is absurd to describe Russia's response to this as 'paranoia'. (Hybrid warfare is where a mixture of propaganda psyops, perhaps including public demonstrations, cyber-warfare and irregular guerilla warfare, possibly leading to regular warfare, is used. Russia has been accused of using it, but it is in fact standard

operating procedure for NATO these days (always accuse your opponent of doing the nefarious things you are up to yourself!). The coup in Ukraine would be an example, as is the war in Syria.)

Lavrov points out that—

"the end of the Cold War and related ideological confrontation offered a unique opportunity to change the European architecture on the principles of indivisible and equal security and broad cooperation without dividing lines.

We had a practical chance to mend Europe's divide and implement the dream of a common European home, which many European thinkers and politicians, including President Charles de Gaulle of France, wholeheartedly embraced. Russia was fully open to this option and advanced many proposals and initiatives in this connection. Logically, we should have created a new foundation for European security by strengthening the military and political components of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Vladimir Putin said in a recent interview with the German newspaper *Bild* that German politician Egon Bahr proposed similar approaches."

But that is not what happened:

"Unfortunately, our Western partners chose differently. They opted to expand NATO eastward and to advance the geopolitical space they controlled closer to the Russian border. This is the essence of the systemic problems that have soured Russia's relations with the United States and the European Union. It is notable that George Kennan, the architect of the US policy of containment of the Soviet Union, said in his winter years that the ratification of NATO expansion was "a tragic mistake"."

Last month Russian Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev, at the Munich security conference called for a revision of the 'architecture' of Euro-Atlantic security. For Nougeyrede and the *Guardian* this is a threat:

"This year is one that arguably offers Russia an unprecedented window of opportunity to push that demand. The refugee crisis threatens key EU institutions, a referendum looms on the UK's relationship to Europe, the Franco-German couple is in dire straits, Angela Merkel is politically weakened, Ukraine is unstable, populist movements are spreading throughout the continent, the Balkans are experiencing new tensions, and the US is busy with an election campaign imbued with isolationism."

She could have added that much of Europe is also going through an economic meltdown with deflation rampant and zero growth, a situation exacerbated by the

utterly pointless and self-defeating sanctions on Russia which have led to counter-sanctions. But, instead of cooperating with Russia, we should be afraid because "from the Stalinist-style gothic skyscraper of his ministry in Moscow, Lavrov has laid out the long game".

That game in Lavrov's own words is:

"I repeat, we are not seeking confrontation with the United States, or the European Union, or NATO. On the contrary, Russia is open to the widest possible cooperation with its Western partners. We continue to believe that the best way to ensure the interests of the peoples living in Europe is to form a common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so that the newly formed Eurasian Economic Union could be an integrating link between Europe and Asia Pacific."

From 'Dublin to Vladivostock' as the Russian nationalists are fond of saying. Except that the last place they should look to for an inspiring vision for Europe is Dublin. Dublin is not only on the wrong coast, it has an increasing and regrettable tendency to see its future as bound up with the island opposite rather than the island behind it.

Inishvickillane, on the other hand, is the westernmost inhabitable point in Ireland. It also has the distinction of having been a place of reflection for someone who at least had a sense of vision for the country within Europe and the world. Francois Mitterand, who also had a sense of vision for Europe, was a visitor to Inishvickallane in 1988, and vision is what will be required for Europe if the UK votes for Brexit.

Sean Owens

## Principles Into Practice?

Here is an interesting argument which shouldn't be dismissed just because it's made by a professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. Politics is not simply a matter of putting a load of "favoured causes" in a sacred back pack and carrying them through life:

The essence of politics is finding the means of balancing these causes in actual functioning societies. The question in this instance is how can this be done?

Eamon Dyas

<https://www.rt.com/op-edge/328280-europe-male-dominant-migrant-wave/>



# The Newspaper-of-Record On 1916

## INTRODUCTION

Professor Ferriter of the *Irish Times* and UCD warned recently against allowing the centenary of the Sinn Fein Rebellion to be usurped by Sinn Fein—from its rightful inheritors, the Treatyites of one kind and another. What other reason could there be for Establishment anxiety about the presence of Sinn Fein at the centenary of the Rebellion?

The problem with Sinn Fein arose when the anti-Treaty Party that had been both the brawn and the brain of the state for three-quarters of a century, Fianna Fail, disowned its anti-Treaty origins and recognised the imposition of the Treaty as the legitimate foundation of the state. That left the Establishment without an anti-Treaty presence, and therefore without a line of succession to the Republican event with which it all began.

When Fianna Fail renounced its anti-Treaty origins and character, the resurrection of Sinn Fein as a viable political party in the South as well as the North did not seem to be on the cards. But it happened. And there is little doubt that Fianna Fail's renunciation of its Republican origins contributed to it.

And because unrepresented Republican sentiment in the society fuelled the resurgence of Sinn Fein, the Establishment has had to go through the motions of celebrating the event which it had tried to sink in the historical morass created by "post-nationalist" (i.e. Oxbridge-tutored) academia. In order to prevent Sinn Fein from dominating the Sinn Fein centenary, the anti-Sinn Fein parties simulated Republicanism for a few weeks.

Professor Ferriter's paper, the *Irish Times*, has reproduced the front page of its first weekly edition after the Rebellion.

The report on the rebellion was substantially all there, except for one little bit. The original had a headline running over a number of columns and framed in a box. It said *Sinn Fein Rebellion*. That was removed from the reprint.

That is the kind of editing that Connolly wrote about in *Press Poisoners In Ireland*. But it is a pitiable instance of it.

The *Irish Times* is the Irish national newspaper of record. It was made so by Bertie Ahern's Fianna Fail Government. The State paid for digitising the whole run of it onto the Internet, so that anybody in any corner of the world can see in an instant what representative Irish opinion said at the time about any significant event.

We had always thought that the *Irish Times* was a piece of itself that England left behind when it was obliged to leave six years after the Insurrection, and then financed secretly for half a century, hoping that a time would come when the impulse of Irish national development would falter and that there would be an institution in place which could resume the work of Englishising Irish opinion.

But Fianna Fail disagrees. And so of course does Fine Gael. And Fianna Fail let the only authentic national newspaper of the state—the only national daily created within the state in the service of independence—the *Irish Press*—Fianna Fail let it go under and then facilitated its replacement in national life by the *Irish Times*. And the Fianna Fail intellectual, Martin Mansergh, said that was OK—that Fianna Fail was doing fine without a newspaper.

Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are at present kow-towing to a mood in the populace which sees the Insurrection as an event to be celebrated on its centenary. That mood

goes against all the educational indoctrination set in motion by Jack Lynch when he lost his political nerve on the North in 1970, and all the Trojan work of Oxbridge menials in the History Departments of Trinity, Dublin and Cork Universities.

How could that have happened? How could the mind of the public be so immune to the institutional public mind propagated by the apparatus of the State? What is the source of the ongoing subversion?

Well, it's an old story .

It is in large part a matter of song and dance.

Young Ireland broke free of O'Connell's restraints with songs that the London *Times* wanted to be prosecuted. Those songs, with many additional ones in the same spirit, are still going strong.

Tom Kettle and Stephen Gwynn tried to adapt those songs in 1915 for John Redmond's 'Irish Brigades' in the British Army, but the effort fell flat. The Imperialised Irish just don't have the knack. When they become imitative British, they lose their essence.

Revisionism just isn't singable. Professor David Fitzpatrick of Trinity must be given credit for trying with his sectarian variant of *The Galtee Mountain Boy*, but it didn't come off. He sang it to a select Oxbridge audience but they were not appreciative. Revisionism is poor in spirit. And what O'Shaughnessy said remains in force:

"We are the music makers,  
We are the dreamers of dreams,  
We are the movers and shakers  
Of the world it seems."

So the Insurrection is being celebrated.

But let us remind ourselves of how we should regard it. Here is the Editorial of our Newspaper-of-record on 1st May 1916:

## "The Insurrection

The "Sinn Fein" Insurrection, which began on Easter Monday in Dublin, is virtually at an end. Desultory fighting continues in suburban districts. The severity of martial law is maintained; indeed it is increased in the new Proclamation which we print to-day. Many streets and roads are still dangerous for the careless wayfarer. But the back of the insurrection is broken. Strong military forces, skilfully directed by a strong hand, have decided the issue sooner than most of us had dared to hope. The cordon of troops which was flung round the city narrowed its relentless circle until further resistance became impossible. On Saturday, P.H. Pearse, one of the seven



ring-leaders, surrendered unconditionally with the main body of the rebels. Yesterday other bodies came in dejectedly under the white flag. Of the buildings which were seized a week ago not one remains in rebel hands. The General Post Office, save for its noble portico, is a ruin. The premises of the Royal College of Surgeons and Messrs. Jacobs; factory were evacuated yesterday. St. Stephen's green was cleared on Thursday. Liberty Hall is no more than a sinister and hateful memory. It is believed that most of the ring-leaders are dead or captured. The outlaws who still "snipe" from roofs may give a little more trouble, but their fate is certain. So ends the criminal adventure of the men who declared that they were "striking in full confidence of victory," and told their dupes that they would be "supported by gallant allies in Europe." The gallant ally's only gift to them was an Irish renegade whom it wanted to lose. Ireland has been saved from shame and ruin, and the whole Empire from a serious danger. Where our politicians failed—and worse than failed—the British Army has filled the breach and won the day. The Dublin Insurrection of 1916 will pass into history with the equally unsuccessful insurrections of the past. It will have only this distinction—that it was more daringly and systematically planned, and more recklessly invoked, than any of the predecessors.

The story of last week in Dublin is a record of crime, horror, and destruction, shot with many gleams of the highest valour and devotion. We do not deny a certain desperate courage to many of the wretched men who to-day are in their graves or awaiting the sentence of their country's laws. The real valour, however, and the real sacrifices were offered on the altar of Ireland's safety and honour. The first tribute must be paid to the gallant soldiers who were poured into Dublin, including at least two battalions of famous Irish regiments. No courage could be finer than that of the young soldiers who, exhausted by a long voyage, and almost unrefreshed by sleep or food, were hurried straight into the hellish street-fighting of the last few days. Our veteran troops in France have seldom had to face a more fiery ordeal, and could hardly have done better than those lads fresh from the training-camps. Again we testify to what we have seen when we praise the splendid devotion, not only of our Dublin doctors and nurses, but of the many civilians, men and women, who moved among the soldiers, bringing them food and drink in the hottest of the fray. The temper of the city as a whole has been admirable—cool and calm, without a moment's yielding to panic,

but the cost of success has been terrible. Innocent civilians have been murdered in cold blood. The casualties among the troops have been heavy. Ten hospitals to-day report in all 158 dead, of whom 49 are soldiers. The destruction of property has been wanton and enormous. Between O'Connell Bridge and Nelson's Pillar a whole district of buildings, including the General Post Office, the Royal Hibernian Academy, and several of the most important business establishments in the city has vanished in flames. The loss is cruel, and much of it is irreparable. Its chief burden will be felt, as such burdens are always chiefly felt, by the very poor. Many years must elapse before Dublin is herself again. This insurrection will leave behind it a long trail of sorrow, poverty and shame.

In the House of Commons last week Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Redmond were at one in their desire that, so long as the country remains in the present urgent danger, nobody should try to make political capital of the old, narrow kind out of these tragic events in Dublin. Until the danger is definitely at an end we shall only say—and we are expressing the opinion of the whole world—that this outbreak and all its deplorable consequences could have been averted. For the last year all Irishmen have known that the danger existed, and that it was coming surely and steadily to a head. Urgent and repeated warnings were given to the Government. They were neglected. The men who neglected them have accepted one of the gravest responsibilities in history. They will be called to account at the bar of public opinion, and, when that time comes—and it must come soon—they will have to make their defence against a vast accumulation of damning evidence. At the moment, however, it is more important to avoid possible mistakes than to call the inevitable to judgment. The crime has been committed; the explosion has occurred; and we have gained at least one advantage. We know now, beyond yea or nay, the extent, the power, the motives, and the methods of the seditious movement in Ireland. All the elements of disaffection have shown their hand. The State has struck, but its work is not yet finished. The surgeon's knife has been put to the corruption in the body of Ireland, and its course must not be stayed until the whole malignant growth has been removed. In the verdict of history weakness to-day would be even more criminal than the indifference of the last few months. Sedition must be rooted out of Ireland once for all. The rapine and bloodshed of the past week must be finished with a severity which will make any repetition of them impossible for generations to come. The loyal people of Ireland, Unionists and

Nationalists, call to-day with an imperious voice for the strength and firmness which have so long been strangers to the conduct of Irish affairs."

#### A COMMENT

It is quite true that the Insurrection could have been nipped in the bud, and that the Government ignored "*urgent warnings*" of the danger.

Why did the Government ignore the warnings? Because, if it had acted on them, and had suppressed the Irish Volunteers, that would have interfered with recruiting for the Imperial war.

Redmond had sold to the Home Rule movement, and its Volunteers, the idea that nationalist Ireland would not get Home Rule if there was not substantial nationalist enrolment in the British Army for the wars on Germany and Turkey. The Volunteers split on the issue. The majority went with Redmond and called themselves the National Volunteers. A minority repudiated Redmond's call to Imperial War and his leadership, and formed the Irish Volunteers.

The National Volunteers were duped into Imperialism. They considered themselves to be still part of the national movement, having no essential difference with the Irish Volunteers. Both lots of Volunteers drilled and paraded publicly. The Government judged that the Irish were no longer capable of any serious national action. They let the Irish Volunteers drill and parade because suppressing them would have interfered with Army recruiting from the National Volunteers. And that is why a national Army was able to prepare for war publicly, and march publicly into the centre of Dublin in broad daylight, occupy public institutions, fortify them, and defy the Empire.

### "The Government's Duty."

**Irish Times Editorial, 2nd May 1916:**

"...Political troubles thwarted the best efforts of our thinkers and economists. Land agitation interfered with the steady development of agriculture. Capital fought shy of a restlessness that was fatal to dividends, and we begged in vain for the creation of new Irish industries... The British Government must take such measures as will satisfy the world that the spirit of sedition and anarchy in Ireland will be crushed, not merely for a time, but for all time... Only by a stern policy of suppression and punishment can the Government protect the highest interests of the Irish capital and of Ireland as a whole."

## "Rebellion And After."

Irish Times Editorial, 5th May 1916:

"...it will be the new Chief Secretary's task to undo the evil consequences of all the inefficiency and maladministration of the past ten years..."

"Is the Sinn Fein conspiracy to be killed or merely scotched? Are we to have peace and security in Ireland for at least another century, or is all the recent trouble to be renewed within the next five or ten years?..."

"Justice, patriotism, and common-sense

demand that Ireland shall be redeemed from the menace of sedition once for all... It would be the worst kind of folly... to shear the stalk of sedition and to leave the roots uninjured. We owe the complete suppression of sedition in Ireland not only to ourselves, but to our brave soldiers in France, to the United Kingdom, and to the whole Empire... In his letter in *The Times* of yesterday the Archbishop of Dublin... speaks the simple truth... Martial law, as Dr. Barnard says, is still the only security for life and property in Dublin..."

## A Redmond Eyewitness To The Rising

**[By far the best book about the Insurrection and the events which followed from it was written by John Redmond's nephew, L. G. Redmond-Howard. Happening to be in the city centre when the Rising started, he took a close interest in what was going on and wrote an account of the event, which has been reprinted by the Aubane Historical Society. Here is a short extract:]**

Those who were in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916 were privileged to witness a scene which for dramatic setting and for paradoxical conception is certainly the most extraordinary of any of the long line of rebellions in Irish history, for at a time when it seemed almost universally admitted that "Separatism" was from an economic, racial, and military point of view utterly impossible, there suddenly arose without warning, without apparent reason, and as if from nowhere, a body of men, fully armed and completely organized, who within the space of a single hour had captured every strategic point in the capital, and to its utter amazement held it up in the name of a new "Republic", in much the same way as a highwayman of old used to hold up coaches on Hounslow Heath.

It was in very deed a bolt from the blue. The first intimation that the general public got of the rising was the sudden spread of the wildest rumours—"Dublin Castle has just been taken by the Irish Volunteers", "The Post Office has been captured by the Sinn Feiners", "Soldiers and police are being shot at sight", "Larkin's Citizen Army are firing on women and children", but, for the most part, these rumours were discredited as impossible, at most being put down as some accidental clash between military and civilians, and it was only as people rushed into the street and heard the stories of the encounters first-hand that they began to realize that anything unusual was taking place.

Bodies of armed men had indeed been remarked in unusually large numbers in the streets all the morning, increasing and concentrating towards twelve, but everyone had grown so accustomed to these demonstrations for the past three years, since they had been inaugurated in Ulster by Sir Edward Carson, that nobody had taken any particular notice.

People merely remarked that it was rather strange, in view of the abandonment of the "Easter manoeuvres" which had been organized for Sunday, and which had been cancelled at the last moment, late on Saturday night, by special order of Professor Eoin MacNeill, editor of the *Irish Volunteer*, which ran: "Owing to the very critical position, all orders given to Irish Volunteers for to-morrow, Easter Sunday, are hereby rescinded, and no parades, marches, or other movements of Irish Volunteers will take place. Each individual Volunteer will obey this order strictly in every particular".

It was supposed, therefore, that the numbers were due to the new recruits which had been the outcome of the protest against the deportation of the Sinn Fein leaders some time previous to this, and moderate people hoped that the Sinn Fein authorities were about to show the same discretion in the matter of an armed demonstration in Dublin which the authorities had shown in the matter of the proposed inclusion of the military in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork.

Possibly they may have had secret information—for they had their spies in every department—that the long-meditated disarmament had been determined upon, and immediately decided to anticipate the offensive by a strong defensive of their own choosing. At any rate, Monday found them fully prepared, each in his proper place.

Accordingly, on the exact stroke of

## GOSLINGS CAN ALSO WEAR KHAKI

They were deadly enemies  
the day Dublin was seized  
those khaki-clad tame geese  
and the green upstanding wheat  
soon to be trampled and eaten before  
ripening  
but they quickly lost their  
wings  
as the Somme turned rust-red  
counting the dead wore down  
the pencil lead  
the few wheat ears that  
survived  
fell on fertile ground and  
revived  
the nation  
cracking an empire's  
creation  
now it's an iron harvest beside that  
river  
of rusted barbed-wire spent bullets  
and shell  
slivers  
though they helped fell a country  
bountiful  
with commercial success social change  
that was  
meaningful  
the cannons still roar for more human  
ware  
Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard is  
bare  
remembering the wrong `16 of July First  
that murderous scene  
First World War's worst  
to November Eighteen  
helps fill the shelves for the Old Lady  
for goslings can also wear khaki  
so don't grow your baby  
for the next malarkey

Wilson John Haire

27 March 2016

midday the Volunteers in Sackville Street were suddenly seen to stop short opposite the Post Office...

Once in possession of the Post Office—which from its position and character was admirably suited for a general headquarters—the next thing was to fortify the place, for there was no knowing what had happened to the other enterprises which had been timed to take place simultaneously, or when the authorities would send out an armed force for its recapture. Next, a number of shots—all blank—were discharged with the purpose of clearing the streets of sightseers and inquis-



itive idlers. These had the desired effect, after which floor after floor of the Post Office was systematically occupied, the officials being either placed under arrest or allowed to disperse, as each case suggested fit to the commander, and the air began to reverberate with the sounds of crashing glass and masonry as the lower windows were turned into fortified loopholes with the aid of furniture and bags.

Meanwhile a small group of policemen stood near the Nelson Monument helpless, but one must evidently have telegraphed for help, for within a few minutes a small detachment of mounted lancers came riding up.

People stood breathless in expectation.

The insurgents just allowed the first line to get abreast of the Pillar, and then they opened fire; and at once a couple of saddles were emptied and the rest at once turned and galloped for all they were worth up in the direction of the Rotunda.

One poor fellow was killed outright

and a horse shot dead; after which a great cheer went up from the crowd in the G.P.O., who proceeded to take off the harness and carry it in triumph back to headquarters, one of the rebels in uniform taking the young lancer's sword.

Immediately after this a tramway car was blown up with dynamite at the corner of North Earl Street, making a sort of barricade against any possible approach from Amiens Street Station, where the Belfast trains were expected to arrive.

By this time I was on the scene of the crisis myself, having only heard the news on my way into Trinity, which had been quickly occupied by the O.T.C. [Officers Training Corp], who, were thus able to practically cut the chief line of communication of the rebels and command a huge area of important streets which would otherwise have presented the utmost difficulties to the advance of regular troops.

Only the military were allowed in College, and, anxious to be on the spot at what

everybody then expected would be no more than an hour or so's brisk encounter, I took a car to the "Metropole" in order to be present when the Post Office was taken—the hotel actually adjoining and overlooking the building.

My own experience must have been that of thousands of people in Dublin, but I quote it, as I will quote it again, because I can personally testify to it.

## Six Days Of The Irish Republic (eyewitness account of 1916), by L.G. Redmond-Howard.

Book also contains:

- \* a profile of Roger Casement, written during his trial;
- \* the Irish Case for the League of Nations;
- \* a play written jointly with Harry Carson (the Ulster leader's son).
- \* Introduction by *Brendan Clifford*

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**POSTFREE Ireland and UK**

**Leaflet distributed at Glasnevin Cemetery on Sunday 3rd May.**

## Why The Glasnevin 1916 Wall Should Be Opposed

Two principles are being confused in the installation of a memorial wall for all who died during the 1916 Rising in Glasnevin Cemetery. The first is the humanitarian respect due to all humans in life and death. The second is the self respect of a state shown by how it honours its founders. Glasnevin Trust is using the first principle to obliterate the second. Under the guise of humanitarian concern for all who died in the Rising—rebels, civilians and soldiers of the British army—Glasnevin Trust is saying that the key event in the struggle to establish an independent Irish state should be memorialised in isolation from its historical context.

What follows are six reasons why the wall should be opposed:

- \* In celebrating the Rising the Irish state celebrates its own birth; marking that birth through a 'non-judgemental' memorial in which the names of the rebels are intermingled with the names of the British soldiers who suppressed them suggests a collapse of faith in the Rising and in the state itself.
- \* The men and women who chose to participate in the 1916 Rising did so for political reasons. Their motivations were very different from the motivations of professional or conscripted soldiers in national armies. It is reasonable to deduce

that the rebels would want their sacrifice to be remembered in its political context.

- \* Many wars like the Great War of 1914-18 are rightly remembered as tragic events. While it had some tragic consequences, the 1916 Rising initiated a chain of events culminating in the extraordinary democratic triumph of the 1918 General Election. It is inappropriate to memorialise the Rising as a tragic event.
- \* In recent years there have been concerted efforts in academic and media circles to depict the Rising as a mistake. This revisionist campaign is controversial and ultimately reflects a desire to distort history in line with present day political preoccupations.
- \* The Government's attitude to the centenary changed tack as 2016 drew near. Initially members of the British royal family were to have been invited. Then a promotional DVD was launched which contained no mention of the Rising leaders. Both initiatives were cancelled in response to public criticism. In the light of this vacillation and controversy, Glasnevin Trust was ill advised in proceeding with a memorial that was always going to be contentious.
- \* Glasnevin Trust never sought the permission of the relatives of those who died before inscribing the names on the wall. This is strange behaviour from a body which describes itself as being "the heart of the nation as it embraces the remains of so many patriots and others, who have and will in the future,

frame the country's history and culture".

In protesting against this project it should be borne in mind that the Trust has most likely acted in good faith. The sensitivities of the issue should be respected. The most effective way of protesting against the wall is to express your opinion in writing to Glasnevin Trust and copy to your public representatives. You can also support an on-line petition on the issue by typing [glasnevin petition](http://glasnevinpetition.com) into Google.

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## In Irish Foreign Affairs March 2016

**TWO TREATIES:** De Valera's position in 1921 was similar to De Gaulle's in 1940 in many ways. Like De Gaulle he was declared to be a traitor. Like De Gaulle, he took over the country and re-shaped its political structure. What were the differences? (by Brendan Clifford).

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# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## THE IRISH TIMES AND 1916

*The Irish Times* has been surprisingly honest about its coverage in 1916 of the Rising. Perhaps the recent book by Terence Brown as well as a book by the Long Fellow (written under a pseudonym!) has made it impossible to explain away its blood-lust. But it was not always thus.

In his 1999 coffee table book, *The Irish Times Book of the Century*, Fintan O'Toole describes the newspaper's reaction in the following terms:

"...the paper unlike much of the nationalist press, did not directly demand the execution of the leaders. A leading article on 1 May rejoiced at the end of a 'criminal adventure' whose defeat meant that 'Ireland has been saved from shame and ruin, and the whole Empire from a serious danger.' It paid, however grudging tribute to the rebels. 'We do not deny a certain desperate courage to many of the wretched men who today are in their graves or awaiting the sentence of their country's laws.' But it certainly implied the need for stern measures..."

In O'Toole's fantasy world, the newspaper was "almost" a supporter of the Rising! He goes on to say:

"By 10 May, indeed, the paper seemed to be almost welcoming the rising because it had led to the imposition of military government on Ireland. 'The fact is that martial law has come as a blessing to us all. For the first time in many months Dublin and large areas in the provinces are enjoying real security of life and property'..." (p90).

But *The Irish Times Trust*, which controls the newspaper, has obviously decided that such distortions are no longer sustainable in 2016. John Horgan, in the newspaper's supplement (9.3.16), describes in a matter of fact way the newspaper's line at the time. Unlike O'Toole, he quotes this infamous blood curdling extract from an *Irish Times* editorial in the immediate aftermath of the Rising:

"The State has struck, but its work has not finished. The surgeon's knife has been put to the corruption in the body of Ireland, and its course must not be stayed until the whole malignant growth is removed" (*The Irish Times*, 1.5.1916).

This was no rush of blood to the head. Following criticism from the *Freeman's*

*Journal*, Horgan points out that *The Irish Times* editorial of 6th May 1916 was unapologetic:

"Our readers know that all this is wicked nonsense. We have called for the severest punishment of the leaders... It would be the worst kind of folly and the poorest sort of economy to shear the stalk of sedition and leave the roots uninjured."

Also, there is a reprise of the imagery of the editorial of 1st May 1916.

"We said, and we repeat, that the surgeon's knife of the State must not be stayed "until the whole malignant growth has been removed" (6.5.1916).

It takes a rare form of pedantry to assert—as O'Toole did in 1999—that the newspaper "did not directly demand the execution of the leaders". But what of his other claim that "most of" the Nationalist Press called directly for the executions?

## IRISH INDEPENDENT AND 1916

Certainly, the Redmondite *Freeman's Journal* did not call for executions, but it must be admitted that the *Irish Independent* did not cover itself in glory. Horgan, who is a former *Irish Times* journalist, suggests that the *Irish Independent* did not call directly for executions but urged the British Government not to be lenient, which some would say amounts to the same thing. Horgan reproduces extracts from two editorials. The first editorial urges the British Government not to be lenient because the Republican leaders will:

"...take it as an indication of weakness and may be more truculent than ever... we do not think that extreme severity should be generally applied, nor do we think that there should be extreme leniency all round... When, however, we come to some of the ringleaders, instigators and fomentors not yet dealt with, we must make an exception. If these men are treated with too great leniency, they will take it as an indication of weakness on the part of the government... Weakness to such men at this stage may be fatal... Let the worst of the ringleaders be singled out and dealt with as they deserve: but that there will be no holocaust of slaughter" (*Ir. Independent*, 10.5.1916).

Horgan points out that the second editorial was written before Connolly and Mac Diarmada were executed but did not appear on the streets until after they had been shot:

"We cannot agree with all those who insist that all the insurgents, no matter how sinister or abominable the part they played in the rebellion, should be treated with leniency. Certain of the leaders remain undealt with, and the part that they played was worse than that of some

of those who have paid the extreme penalty" (*Irish Independent*, 12.5.1916).

If we compare the editorials from the two newspapers, *The Irish Times*' editorials are far more vicious. The Republican leaders aren't even given the status of human beings, but are nothing more than "malignant growths".

However, it could be said that the *Independent* editorials, although milder, were more damaging. If the British were trying to gauge the effect of their actions on the general population the views of a pro-Home Rule newspaper would have given far more reassurance than those of a Protestant Ascendancy newspaper.

The Long Fellow concludes wistfully that the two newspapers most opposed to the seminal event in the foundation of the State, remain 100 years later the most influential newspapers in that State.

## THE FAI ON 1916

The Football Association of Ireland has decided to commemorate the 1916 Rising by commissioning special jerseys referring to the event (*Belfast Telegraph*, 3.3.16). Players will wear the jerseys in the forthcoming friendly matches against Slovakia and Switzerland.

And what could be more natural than a sporting organisation celebrating such an event? The Chief Executive of the FAI John Delaney thinks soccer is the people's game and is not just the sport of the garrison towns.

But, of course, such a gesture is only possible because the FAI is a 26 County organisation and therefore no offence could be caused. It would be inconceivable for our 32 County Rugby team to follow suit. The anomaly of having a 'national' team drawing from players of a Northern Unionist background has meant that the national anthem cannot be sung at away matches. There is a price to be paid for reconciliation and inclusiveness.

## IRISH WATER IN 2016

It's good to see Fianna Fáil has (ahem) watered down its policy on the public utility. Its current position is that Irish Water should be slimmed down rather than abolished.

The debacle of Irish Water is a classic case of a good idea botched in its execution. The strength of the opposition has been bolstered by weakness in Government.

The idea of a centralised authority is so obviously sensible that it hardly needs a justification. Can anyone imagine what our electricity service would look like if provision were left to a myriad of local authorities? That was the position up to

the foundation of the State.

Also, the management of water needs to be *quasi* independent of the State, with its own revenue stream and independent source of financing. In other words, we need a *semi-state* just like the ESB. The ESB is not at the beck and call of the Government and could therefore continue to invest in infrastructure and raise finance in the depths of the recession. Over the last 10 years it has paid out 1.5 billion euro in dividends to the State.

The Irish State has many achievements

to its credit, but the provision of water and the management of its discharge is not one of them. We have the highest consumption per capita of water in the EU. The level of "consumption", which includes waste from leaking pipes, is more than five times the level of Belgium. Water-borne E-coli in Ireland is 50% higher than the next worst affected EU State (*Eurostat*, November 2015 cited by James Nix in *The Irish Times*, 9.3.16).

Reverting to the old ways is not an option.

He probably knows the word "*genocide*" was not used until 1948, when the UN General Assembly adopted the "*Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*". There are no genocides recognised by Law before the Nazi one—presumably because a crime cannot be committed before a Law is in place. The UN made an exception to this practice with the Nazis, but has chosen not to extend its Law backwards in judgement of other events and against other countries. The reader should be able to guess why.

## Our Genocidal Allies (Again)

The *Irish Times* (20.2.16) has a book review of Stefan Ihrig's '*Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler*'. Its reviewer is a Law Professor from the US. Perhaps in this year of 1916 commemoration a book and a review vilifying "*our gallant allies*" of Germany and Turkey is called for by the paper who called for the execution of our patriots. Nothing better than muddying the waters when you can no longer poison them!

Lawrence Douglas, the *Irish Times* reviewer, starts off with the usual rubbish:

"On the eve of the Nazi invasion of Poland that began the Second World War, Hitler allegedly quipped, 'Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?' Today, the question has lost its rhetorical ring—indeed, a great many people speak of that annihilation."

Firstly, we have lazy history. The German invasion of Poland did not start the Second World War; it began the German/Polish war. The Second World War began when Britain decided to declare war on Germany.

It is often repeated by those who know better, or should make it their business to know better, if they are serious academics, that Hitler said: "*Who remembers the Armenians?*" It should be known that there is no valid evidence that Hitler actually said such a thing!

*The Times* of 24th November 1945 in an article entitled '*Nazi Germany's Road to War*' cites Hitler addressing his commanders at Obersalzberg on 22nd August 1939, saying: "*Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians.*" The article does not claim that Hitler is talking about exterminating the Jews but, in fact, creating *lebensraum*/living space for

German colonisation in Poland on the eve of his assault.

There was so much doubt over the authenticity of the document presented to Louis Lochner of the Associated Press containing the quotation, that it was discarded as evidence at Nuremberg. The original document containing it (L-3) was submitted to the Nuremberg Tribunal but withdrawn as evidence in accordance with Rule 10. The document was obviously a forgery since the original German was incorrect in a number of grammatical ways and it had unusual vocabulary. The typewriter used was not a German one, having no capacity for accents and suspicious spaces existed within the composition.

The Nuremberg Tribunal rejected the document as evidence against the Nazis in favour of two other official versions found in German military records. Neither of these, which have detailed notes of the address, contain the Armenian reference. One is authored by Admiral Hermann Boehm, Commander of the High Seas Fleet. In addition, an account by General Halder was used to prove consistency with the other two accounts used as evidence and this again makes no mention of the Armenians. This strongly suggests that the Armenian reference was added later by someone who wished to associate Hitler with the events of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire.

None of this has deterred historians, lawyers and various media commentators using the Hitler forgery ever since, however.

Lawrence Douglas is a Professor of Law, from Yale Law School no less. But for all his high-class Law School education he is remarkably ignorant of actual Law.

The UN defines what constitutes "*Genocide*" and it has not defined the Armenian events as such. Therefore an assertion that the events of 1915 constitutes a genocide is nothing but opinion. It is not Law even when opinionated by a Yale lawyer.

The word "*genocide*" was coined by the Polish Jewish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin, to deal particularly with the then recent systematic killing engaged in by the Nazis. I once heard a young Israeli historian, Tal Beunos, explain that Lemkin was something of a cypher, used to embed a narrative after the Vietnam War that would distract from US actions there. Lemkin is used to cover up the absence of a genocide law in 1915 by the assertion that he always had the Armenians in mind when he invented his special word for the Nazis.

There is a kind of creative imagining involved here. Lemkin was only a Professor of Family Law competence, I am told. His famous and complex book '*Axis Rule*' was written only two years after he came to the US, when he was a poor speaker of English. Who was the ghostwriter, one might ask? And yet it does not mention the Armenians at all, despite the fact that it is continually asserted since that Lemkin always had the Armenians in mind when he invented his word for what happened to the Jews. One can only conclude that Lemkin did not feel the Armenian example warranted/deserved the invention of a new word and he saved it for the Jews.

Lawrence Douglas says:

"2015 marked the 100th anniversary of the 20th century's first genocide, the killing of perhaps one million Armenians by Ottoman Turks. The centenary witnessed an outpouring of books and media attention devoted to the mass killing. Turkey's official refusal to accept responsibility for the atrocities—and even to acknowledge their commission—continues to make for political turmoil at home and to earn the nation opprobrium abroad."

Something like 650,000 Armenians died from all causes between 1914 and 1922. These deaths included those killed in warfare, through hunger, through disease, through old age, through young-age in war conditions, through Royal Navy blockade, through migration across the lines to the Russians, flight across mountains with the French Army in Winter, through starvation within the Armenian Republic, through massacre from those outside the state, including Kurdish bands and hostile Turks, as well as through Ottoman security measures. That number is from the work of the Irish-American demographer, Prof. Justin McCarthy. Moslem casualties in the same area were at a similar ratio and for similar reasons.

It is suggested implicitly that all these deaths were the result of death-marches and state action. That is a completely false view but it is advanced by not clarifying the causes of deaths. It is left to the reader to form the false impression. Therefore, it can only be described as propaganda.

If the causes of Armenian (and forgotten/ignored Moslem) deaths were clarified it would lead to the conclusion that responsibility for them would fall far more widely, and indeed primarily elsewhere. And, of course, that would mean the finger of accusation would fall elsewhere, on those who instigated the insurrection and then failed to assist it through to its objectives.

Douglas continues in the *Irish Times*:

"Now comes Stefan Ihrig's fascinating and highly readable account, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler*, which suggests that Hitler was wrong even at the time. Ihrig, a scholar at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, demonstrates that the mass killings of Armenians hardly had to wait the better part of a century to seep into the public's consciousness. Far from a crime long concealed in secrecy, rumour and denial, the genocide was widely known and reported on from the time of its commission—particularly in Germany, the nation that would soon build aggressively on the Turkish precedent. Germany and Turkey were allies during the First World War, with the Ottoman-German alliance ratified on August 2nd, 1914, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe. German diplomats stationed in Turkey knew about the 'deportations' of the Armenians from the get-go, and communicated much of what they knew to officials back home."

And yet weren't the Germans accused of the '*first genocide of the 20th Century*' themselves, in the massacre of the Herero in 1904-7 in what came to be called

Namibia? A book I have in front of me says that: "*Namibia was a prelude to what German Nazis later tried to implement on European soil*" (Andre Vltchek, *Exposing Lies of the Empire*, p.680). So really those Anglophile Germans who wanted to copy the example of the British Empire in Africa and elsewhere had nothing to learn from the Ottomans. They had done it all themselves, learning it all from the masters of extirpation, the Anglo-Saxons, within living memory.

The idea of knowledge begetting inspiration is also preposterous. There was nowhere that knew about the 'massacre of Armenians' more than Britain, through the Bryce *Blue Book*, as well as from Arnold Toynbee and the Wellington House propaganda department.

Douglas also writes:

"Notably, a great many German newspapers, particularly those on the political right, lined up against the Armenians. This was partly a case of nationalist publications defending the actions of an ally. But the nature of the defence was chilling, especially when read through the filter of German history to come. The killings, German pundits opined, took place during wartime, and were largely provoked by the Armenians themselves, who constituted, so it was claimed, a fifth column of backstabbers prepared to sabotage the Turks. Armenians were disparaged as a people without a homeland and any sense of national loyalty: clannish, greedy, shifty and committed only to their own power."

Of course, Douglas/Ihrig describe exactly how the British saw the Armenians, whether right or wrong, and if Mr. Douglas had bothered to read British accounts, like that of Mark Sykes (of Sykes/Picot fame or infamy?), he would find that is why the English saw the Armenians as such useful pawns in their Great War against the Ottomans. The "*fifth column of backstabbers*" were welcome additions to Britain's Great War everywhere whilst in Britain's Empire they were hung or shot as traitors, as was Roger Casement.

"Ihrig brilliantly lays bare the 'confluence' between German anti-Semitic and anti-Armenian stereotypes. Jews and Armenians were treated as 'Semitic cousins', with the latter playing the role of 'quasi-' or even 'über-Jews'. To his credit, Ihrig generally avoids drawing any straight line from German debates about the Armenian genocide to the Holocaust. The Nazis were not, he concludes, simple imitators of the Young Turks. But Turkey had introduced extermination as a way in which a modern

nation state could 'solve' problems posed by an unwelcome minority. In spirited fashion, Germany had debated the merits of this solution. And in the decades preceding their own, more ambitious campaign of genocide, many right-wing Germans had responded with understanding if not outright approval."

British state records are full of descriptions of the Young Turk "*crypto-Jews*" who were aiding the Germans in the War. The danger England saw in "*the Jew*" was one of the reasons for the *Balfour Declaration* of 1917. England was saturated with anti-Semitic understandings about the "*power of the Jew*" etc. The objective was to tame the "*Internationalist Jew*" and his liking for Socialism and International Finance by giving him a country and making a nationalist out of him. Turning the Jew away from Germany by giving him another allegiance, like instigating the Armenian into Insurrection against his state, inevitably had implications of a serious kind. But what did Britain care for either? The important thing was to win its War.

If there had been an extensive debate in Germany about "*extermination as a way in which a modern nation state could 'solve' problems posed by an unwelcome minority*", why was it that the extermination of the Jews took place in such obscurity, one might ask? Does Ihrig not know that the vast bulk of exterminated Jews lived outside of the Reich and if they had only constituted "*an unwelcome minority*" within Germany the Holocaust would never have happened?

The Armenian position in the Ottoman Empire was entirely different. Count von Moltke rather accurately described the Armenians as "*Christian Turks*". The Armenians served in significant positions within the Ottoman State throughout its history. Sultans took Armenian women as wives so the Ottoman line became mixed with Armenian blood—something the English saw as "*race suicide*". At least 12 senior Ottoman Ministers between 1867 and 1913 were Armenian. They also served as Ambassadors, Bankers, translators, consuls, and deputies in the Ottoman Parliament—14 in 1908. The Ottoman Foreign Minister in the year before the Great War was an Armenian. It is extraordinary that the belief exists about an Ottoman desire to destroy the Armenians: they were such an important pillar of the Empire and its functioning. Can it be imagined Hitler having a Jew as his Foreign Minister in 1938?



The Armenians only became an "unwelcome minority" when Britain started seeing them as a useful "fifth column of backstabbers" in its Great War, to destroy the Ottoman state.

Insurrections aimed at provoking British or Russian intervention prior to 1914 were dealt with in measured fashion that did not question the Armenian existence within the State.

The important statement made by Douglas is the one clear fact contained in the fog of impression management— "Ihrig generally avoids drawing any straight line from German debates about the Armenian genocide to the Holocaust". So we can conclude that, after writing a book of a few hundred pages, the German cannot draw "any straight line from German debates about the Armenian genocide to the Holocaust". Enough said, much ado about nothing. Another academic classic!

There is no straight line that can be drawn between the Ottomans in 1915 and the Nazis 1941-5.

For one thing, the Nazis do not have defenders like Edward Erickson of the US Marine Corp. Commander Erickson in his 2013 book, 'Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency', examines the relocation or forced migration of a large section of the Armenian populace by the Ottoman authorities in 1915 and comes to the conclusion that it was purely a military measure. He describes it as relocation rather than exile, deportation or ethnic cleansing because there is nothing to suggest, i.e. no evidence, that the Ottomans had any intention of permanently moving the Armenians and there is plenty of evidence, both from Ottoman and Armenian sources (e.g. Pasdermadjian, the Armenian Insurrectionist) that there was every intention of returning them after the war emergency.

Erickson, a military man with a practical understanding of such things, describes the relocations as an improvised military operation on the Ottoman part. He is aware of the adage that policy follows resources. The problem the Ottomans had in 1915 was that they were fighting a four-Front War, courtesy of British/French and Russian invasions. The Armenian relocations, although mainly conducted in the area where the Russian threat was, were not instituted until the Gallipoli landings in April 1915 produced an absolute existential threat to the state through complete encirclement. It is also

noticeable that, once the British invasion was beaten off at the end of 1915, the relocations were wound down.

The Armenian Insurrection had been in existence for 6 months at that point. The Ottomans, seeing the Insurrection as a significant but not existential threat, did not institute a relocation policy. Tens of thousands of Armenian young men had joined the bands of Pasdermadjian and Antranik or had deserted the Ottoman Army and gone over to the Russians with their rifles. But the Ottomans were aware that the general Armenian populace was not participating in the Insurrection and did not take action against it.

It was only with the Entente invasion at Gallipoli that a different kind of war began to develop as Britain put the Ottoman State in dire peril.

As Erickson shows, the problem of the Armenian population became acute as the Ottoman armies had to man the defences on the four Fronts.

The rising in Van in April 1915 was another important trigger to the relocations. This was orchestrated by the Dashnaks (Armenian revolutionaries) in conjunction with a simultaneous offensive by the Russians. It may have begun as a defensive Insurrection in the minds of the Armenian civilian populace but it resulted in a general massacre of Turks and Kurds and the handing of the city over to the Russian Army. It put an 80 mile dent in the Front in favour of the Tsar's armies and was a pivotal moment in the Ottoman response.

The Ottomans also found a serious threat developing to their lines of communication by early 1915. Armenian irregulars ambushed Ottoman reinforcements, attacked military supply columns, sacked military bases, cut important telegraph communications to the rear of the lines, and massacred Moslems in undefended villages.

In previous insurgent situations, the Ottomans had applied a straight military solution to such risings. They sent in their armies, the military dealt with the insurgents and there was often a retaliation against the civil population by locals to deter further trouble. However, the Great War context and the four-Front assault of the Entente meant a new strategy had to be adopted because of the lack of military forces, which were occupied on the Fronts, to carry out the traditional measures of internal security.

A hastily put together counter-insurgency measure, probably inspired by Spanish action in Cuba (1896), US action in the Philippines (1901), and British measures against the Boers in South Africa (1901), was instituted (The British relocation of the Acadians and the French population of Newfoundland in 1756 to Louisiana and elsewhere was probably the first example of this but the Ottomans were probably unaware of it.)

The Ottoman relocation of Armenians was not a general deportation of the Ottoman Armenian. At least 350,000 Armenians in Western Anatolia were not moved. Suspected Dashnaks were singled out by Ottoman Intelligence, arrested and detained but no relocations occurred of the general populace.

As Erickson notes, the British incited insurrection from all the groups that had formed the functional Ottoman State— Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Zionists, Greeks. Some came out of it more successfully than others. The Armenians paid the heaviest price.

"Stefan Ihrig's fascinating and highly readable" book 'Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler' is nothing of the sort. It is the standard fare by a guilty German attempting to deflect guilt from his Nazis to the Ottomans. The same writer tries to construct a narrative elsewhere (*Ataturk in the Nazi Imagination*) describing Ataturk as a prototype of Hitler. Enough said, the man is deranged and unbalanced by guilt.

YouTube shows Herr Ihrig doing his penance in Israel for the sins of his grandfathers. I will leave it to readers to make sense of that.

Pat Walsh

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## Northern Ireland Labour

Sinn Fein is the only Party in the Dail that knows what it is. It is an all-Ireland Party.

Some of the others were something once, but they have forgotten what it was. What they are now is This Party and That Party, Party! And Party B, Fine Fail and Fianna Gael. And, judging by the post-Election discussion on Radio Eireann, their shared hostility to Sinn Fein—their bewilderment about it—arises from the fact that it is an Irish political party.

Sinn Fein is an insular party and it is therefore beyond the comprehension of the sub-insulars. A political party which is viable in the two states that divide the island appears sinister to the sub-insular mind. So does the fact that the other state—the one in 'the North', is not a state, but only a part of a state.

They would like to convict Sinn Fein of applying contradictory standards, North and South, but when they condemn Sinn Fein over some measure in the North which conflicts with what Sinn Fein stands for in the South, what they hit in the North is usually the British Government which forces those policies on the North. And Britain is the last thing they want to abuse. Northern Ireland is a mystery to them.

Sinn Fein participates in the politics of the Six County part of the British state, over which the state whose capital is Dublin asserted *de jure* sovereignty until 1998. That clause of the Constitution was repealed in 1998 with the support of the IRA. But the Establishment parties of the South, when calling a referendum to legitimise the Partition of the island between the Irish and British states, made no attempt to clarify what Northern Ireland is, and how they stand with regard to it.

Northern Ireland is not a state—even though Professor Fitzpatrick of Trinity and Professor Keogh of Cork and Professor Lord Bew of Belfast, and all the other Oxbridge-mentored Professors say it is.

What it is is an undemocratically-governed region of the British state, with a locally-elected sub-government, which is responsible for such things as Westminster allocates to it.

The basic institutions of state in the North are run by the Government of the state, as they always were. The only major institution of State devolved to the

sub-government in 1921 was policing. It was, in substance, devolved to the Protestant community to control the Catholic community in 1921.

Policing was taken back under Whitehall control in 1969. It was notionally restored to the devolved system a few years ago, but on condition that an Englishman who is leader of the fringe Alliance Party should be Minister for Justice. This Minister has no control of the Intelligence services, whose operations have been greatly expanded in Northern Ireland since the GFA.

Sinn Fein participates in the politics of the Six County region of the British state. It does not participate in the political system by which the British state is governed. Nor do the politicians of the political system of the British state participate in the politics of the Six County region of the state.

The Tory, Labour, and Liberal Parties do not contest either of UK Elections or local elections in the North (apart from a token interventions by Cameron in 2014).

It isn't the case that they stopped contesting them because they were not getting votes. They decided at the outset, in 1921, not to contest them. They excluded the North from the political life of the state.

Needless to say, the local Northern Parties do not contest UK Elections in the North as aspirants to govern the state.

About seventy years ago, West Belfast elected Jack Beattie to Westminster with a mandate to take the Labour Whip. Labour refused him the Whip. MPs from the North are excluded from the political system of the state. They sit in Westminster as salaried spectators.

The North had everything British but politics. It had the welfare state but not the politics that brought about the welfare state.

What it had by way of politics was the local government by the Ulster Unionist Party, with the actively anti-Catholic Orange Order as its directing centre.

This was not something the Protestant community had asked for. What it asked for in the 1918 Election was Six County exclusion from the Home Rule Bill, with

the region to be governed just as Scotland and Wales were then governed. But Westminster would only agree to Partition on the condition that the Ulster Unionists should operate a regional political system, connected with Britain in many ways, but separated from the democratic political system of the state.

The substantial Catholic minority—a third of the population then—was consigned to political oblivion. It was cut off from the state being constructed by the national movement in which it had played a very active part: and it was excluded from the British political system, in which it had also been active until then. It had very close connections with the Liberal Party, and it would certainly have been involved in the development of the Labour Party, along with the Liberal movement to Labour in the 1920s following the Lloyd George split, if it had been open to it. But it was bottled up in the North, without any Constitutional option except mindless submission to the continuous aggravation of communal Protestant control in a set-up without anything that could reasonably be called politics.

That was undemocratic government. In the democratic era it is not reasonable to think that there can be undemocratic government with impunity. The penalty in the North was a 28 year War.

At the beginning of that War, in the early 1970s, the *Workers' Weekly* (the forerunner of this journal) advocated, as an alternative to war, that the North should be brought within the democracy of the state—the British state. One of the organisations formed for bringing this about was the *Campaign For Labour Representation in Northern Ireland* (CLR).

The initiative to form the CLR came from the Catholic community. It was balanced in membership during the twenty years of its existence. It was destroyed by some Protestants who joined it, tried to change it into a Unionist organisation, and split it on sectarian lines when they failed. The sectarian splitting was masterminded by Kate Hoey, a Labour MP from County Antrim (sitting for an English constituency), assisted by Jeffrey Dudgeon MBE, who is now a member of the Unionist Party. (Kate Hoey in 2015 addressed the annual conference of Unionist ultras, *Traditional Unionist Voice*.)

This was in accordance with the basic facts of the situation. Although the Protestant community was excluded from the democracy of the state along with the

Catholic community, it was placed in a privileged position over the Catholics in its exclusion. It was content with its position of top dog in the Northern Ireland set-up that was "connected" with Britain though excluded from British political life.

For the Catholic community the Northern Ireland system was a system of oppression and nothing else. Economic determinists felt that the Catholics should have been grateful to the Unionist regime in Stormont for the British Education Act of 1944 and the comprehensive welfare state established a few years later. But the Northern Catholics were not born yesterday. They knew perfectly well that it was democratic British politics, not Unionist politics in Northern Ireland, that established the welfare state. And they were cut off in Northern Ireland from the democratic system from which they benefitted.

The particular history of Protestant Ulster since the Plantation made the Northern Ireland system congenial to it. Whether Anglican or Presbyterian, it was much more actively religious than the Catholic community. And the Presbyterians were accustomed over the centuries to tending their own affairs without help or hindrance by the State. They were nominally subjected to the Anglican Penal Laws which sought to destroy Catholic existence, but the slight degree to which those Laws were applied against them was stimulating rather than damaging.

The Ulster Protestant community was actively religious in a way that by contrast made it seem that Catholics were virtual atheists. It seemed to me that they lived in the sight of God—even shopkeepers did—while Catholics lived largely in the sight of public opinion. A Protestant acquaintance of mine attended a Catholic wedding reception in the South and it seemed to him that even the priest bore the religion so lightly that he could make jokes about it.

The greatest religious event in Irish history—the one which got at the roots of Being, both individually and socially, with lasting effect—was the Ulster Revival of 1859. It may now be running out of momentum, but a generation ago it was still alive and well as far as I could see.

A historic Protestant complaint about Catholicism was that the "*Roman Catholic Church*" carried politics with it as an inherent part of itself. In the mid-1970s a Protestant who was an active Trade Unionist at a high level had a serious talk

with me. He understood what I was trying to do by means of the CLR, and he was agreed intellectually that it would be a good thing if it could be done, but he wanted to explain to me that it could not be done because the vital element in Protestant Ulster was strictly Biblical and, from a Biblical viewpoint, politics was a dirty business. (This man had been active in the first flush of Loyalist paramilitarism in the early 1970s, and he gave me an insight into Paisley's view of things that was amply borne out by later developments.)

Detachment from British politics while being part of the British state—Northern Ireland—would have suited Protestant Ulster perfectly if there had been no Catholics there. And it did its best to turn a blind eye to the fact that Catholics made up a third of the population, leaving them to their own devices as far as possible and roughing them up a bit when necessary.

That worked surprisingly well for half a century, but it was certain to blow apart in the long run.

Harold McCusker was, I think, the Unionist MP who best understood why Northern Ireland was, in Charles Haughey's phrase, "*not a viable entity*". Catholics could not be expected to continue indefinitely in the position of aggravating impotence in which they were placed in 1921. But it was a merely intellectual understanding. It was not something he felt—and feeling plays a considerable part in politics. He admitted frankly, in the middle or late seventies on BBC Radio, that he could never remember the old Stormont as anything but a lost paradise.

The BBC tried to prevent the matter of Northern Ireland exclusion from the democracy of the state from being discussed on its airwaves. But there was an occasion when a respectable middle class Protestant who seemed to have grasped the point was got into the audience of a TV discussion programme conducted by Olivia O'Leary. Discussion began with the usual Unionist/Nationalist argument and, when his time came to speak, he had been carried away by what he had heard and could only make a Unionist point. But Olivia helped him. Wasn't there something else he wanted to say? He made a valiant intellectual effort to recall what it was.

That's the kind of uphill struggle it was for twenty years, trying to get Protestant involvement with the issue of state democracy. Communal feeling was very much at ease with exclusion from the political life of the state. And, for most of those who joined the CLR on the basis of

intellectual understanding of the point, it was a matter of abstract injustice which had to be maintained by an effort of resistance of communal feeling. That was why Kate Hoey, Jeffrey Dudgeon and James Winston found it so easy to break up the CLR when it was becoming uncomfortably strong for the Labour Party leadership—and Boyd Black.

When Kate Hoey, with high level backing from London, launched Democracy Now at a Labour Party Conference, as a Unionist affair, the CLR said that the issue had been killed for practical political purposes and it would no longer be active. Democracy Now went through the motions of existing for a year or two and then withered. Its job was to break the CLR by taking up the same issue but doing it in Ulster Unionist terms, and that job was done.

Democratisation would have been of service to the Catholic community. But the Catholics had another issue—Irish unification.

The ICO in Belfast had started out with the incipient Provos behind the barricades in August 1969. Once the Provo War showed that it was viable, I saw it as the only practical alternative to the course Athol Street had taken. When giving up on British democratisation as hopeless because of the character of Ulster Unionism, I understood that this would contribute, in however small a way, to the alternative course. The CLR, as it became increasingly effective, had been seen by John Hume as an obstacle in one dimension of his multi-dimensional approach, and he expressed his appreciation of its dissolution. But the CLR dissolved only because Ulster Unionism made a democratic reorganisation of politics impossible.

Undemocratic British government was not felt as a grievance by Ulster Unionists in the past. Since the Good Friday Agreement it is not felt as a grievance by any group that I know of within the Catholic community. But, with the IRA in power within a drastically restructured Northern Ireland, and with Sinn Fein becoming a substantial political party south of the Border, it seems to have become a felt grievance within the Unionist community—because Boyd Black and others who destroyed the CLR then have now formed an organisation with the same nominal purpose.

It announced its existence with whole-page ads. In the Belfast dailies, with a petition to the Labour Party to organise



and a couple of hundred signatures of people living in various places. Some of those who were active in wrecking the CLR have signed, but none of those who resisted the destruction of the CLR.

The ad. is headed "*It's Time For A Change. It's Time For Labour In Northern Ireland*". Its message begins:

"We believe that there is now a need to move beyond the two "two communities" model that underlies the Belfast Agreement and tribal politics where political affiliation is seen a prescribed at birth..."

There would be little need to comment on it, but for the fact that many of those who destroyed the CLR are prominent in it, and that the impression is given that its organiser, Boyd Black (a lecturer in business economics at Queen's University) has been continuously active in the cause of Labour Party organisation for more than forty years.

It is true that Boyd Black was active in the CLR forty years ago. But it is also true that he took part in destroying it about a dozen years later, bringing to nothing all the work that had been put into constructing it by others.

I lived with him in Athol St. for a number of years, while he was settling back into Belfast after returning from Wall St (USA), and I know that he was very good on the issue until the culture of the community of which he was very much a part began to get through to him and make him uneasy to be campaigning for a Party whose formal policy was "*united Ireland by consent*".

In those years I addressed a great many Labour Party Branches and GMCs around England for the CLR, and when the policy of "*unity by consent*" was brought up, I replied that it was, quite obviously, not a policy at all. Would nationalisation of the coal-mines with the consent of the mine-owners have been a policy, or workers' control of industry with the consent of the capitalists? (Is it believable now that workers' control was a live issue then!)

Nationalists dismissed the *Unity by Consent* policy as a Unionist veto in those days. But the Good Friday Agreement changed many things. The IRA gained a Constitutional power-base in the North, which resulted in a rapid increase in Catholic prestige and population, and Republican policy is now that of *Unity by Consent*. And it is being pursued with an earnestness and ability that would never have been shown by the Labour Party.

The pressure exerted by the CLR, before it was destroyed, on the Labour Party

brought about the useless concession of the admission to individual Party membership of Northern residents, with no recognised Branches, and no contesting of elections.

Some years after the CLR was destroyed, Boyd Black made an appearance again, writing letters to the papers as Secretary of *Labour In Northern Ireland*, and it seems that Labour HQ began referring Northern applicants for membership to him, so that a sizeable paper membership was built up.

The *Irish Times*, which had never allowed the exclusion of the North from the UK democracy to be mentioned in its columns, decided to give publicity to *Labour In Northern Ireland*. Wee Frankie Millar wrote about it.

Wee Frankie had been Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Party. He over-reached himself on some issue. I forget what it was, and was sacked or resigned, whereupon the *Irish Times* employed him as its London Correspondent and he gave publicity to Labour In Northern Ireland, giving the impression that Boyd Black had been active on the issue of Labour Party organisation since 1970s.

David Morrison, who had organised the CLR from the start and, along with Pat Muldowney, Michael Robinson and Mark Langhammer, made it into a more influential organisation than I had ever expected, sent in a letter putting the record straight. The paper was obliged to publish it. That led to the correspondence given below.

#### **The following letters appeared in the Irish Times in 1995:**

Sir,—In his report from the Labour Party conference (October 3rd), Frank Millar gives the impression that the campaign to organise in Northern Ireland has been a continuous enterprise conducted by Dr Boyd Black from the mid-1970s up to the present time. That does not accord with the facts of the matter.

The case for the British Labour Party to have participated in the political life of Northern Ireland is a powerful one, and it was powerfully advocated from 1977 to 1993 by the Campaign for Labour Representation (CLR) during which time I was its secretary. But the practical power of the argument depended in considerable degree on its advocates being above suspicion of using it in the service of unionist politics, as a unionist ploy.

The CLR was above suspicion by virtue of the fact that its substantial membership was drawn from both communities in more

or less equal numbers, and that membership of it did not imply disowning of republican sentiment by Catholics. The trade union votes referred to by Dr Black in his letter to *The Irish Times* (September 7th) were gained through the influence of the CLR and it is certain that most of the Catholics who voted in favour of British Labour Party organisation did so while remaining republican in sentiment.

The care taken by the CLR to ensure that the advocacy of the principle that a party seeking a mandate to govern a state should submit candidates to the electorate in all regions of that state, did not degenerate into mere unionist lobbying made the CLR unacceptable to Dr Black and he resigned from it many years ago. In 1992 he was one of the enthusiastic supporters of Kate Hoey MP in establishing Democracy Now as a clearly unionist lobby using the Labour Party issue as a unionist device.

The character of Democracy Now was placed beyond doubt when Kate Hoey took an active part in Robert McCartney's ultra-unionist election campaign in North Down, and other founder members of Democracy Now have acted as Robert McCartney's campaign manager and parliamentary research officer. And during the McCartney election campaign a Democracy Now MP, Michael Conarty, even took part in the founding meeting of a "Unionist Labour Group" as a subordinate organisation of the Unionist Party.

The unionist character of Democracy Now was strangely absent from Frank Millar's report of their fringe meeting at Brighton on October 2nd.—Yours, etc.

**David Morrison.**

#### **Labour In NI**

Sir,—Labour in Northern Ireland, which I was representing at the Labour Party Conference, had its position on the border question clearly expressed in our literature. Our position is entirely in the spirit of the Downing Street Joint Declaration. We stress the principle of unity by consent, and contrary to the insinuations of David Morrison (October 9th) we make it clear that we are not persuaders for the Union, and that we welcome members with nationalist or republican views.

This was exactly the position on which I resigned from the CLR in 1992. My resignation letter (which is available on request) made it clear that I was resigning because of what I believed was undemocratic manipulation of the CLR by David Morrison as secretary, and not for any other reason.

Labour in Northern Ireland did not support any candidate in the North Down by-election. Nor, for that matter, did Democracy Now. This is a single-issue Parliamentary Labour Party lobby group, supported by 55 Labour MPs, which supports our demand for membership of the Labour Party.—Yours, etc.

**(Dr) Boyd Black,**

*Secretary, Labour in Northern Ireland.*

## Labour In Northern Ireland

Sir,—Dr Boyd Black's assertion (October 25th) that he resigned from the Campaign for Labour Representation in 1992 because of undemocratic manipulation by me as its secretary is groundless on all points. CLR meetings in the relevant period were chaired by an eminent trade union leader, Robert Gunn, and procedure was in accordance with the best trade union practice, so there can be no reasonable doubt about the facts.

Dr Black left the executive of the CLR in November 1990, following sharp political disagreement, and did not renew his membership for the incoming year. No letter of resignation was received from him. No charge of undemocratic manipulation was made by him.

Dr Black was carpeted by the CLR Executive in August, 1990, for taking part in a Paisleyite demonstration against Charles Haughey's visit to Belfast. I quote from the minutes: "A letter from Pat Muldowney was read, complaining vigorously about the behaviour of Boyd Black (Robin Wilson reported Boyd's active participation at a protest outside the Europe Hotel against the invitation to speak to Charles Haughey in the *Independent on Sunday*). Pat felt that Boyd should be expelled from the executive committee and this be made public knowledge. The executive noted Pat's letter and shared his concern on this sensitive issue. In particular the need to positively avoid involvement in issues which are readily identified as communal politics was vital to the success of local Labour groups.

"It was resolved that no member of the executive committee should, in the future, be publicly involved in issues or campaigns which can be readily identified as unionist or nationality. It was further resolved that if any member is in doubt about such issues, this should be brought to the attention of the executive before any comment or action is embarked upon. This was agreed unanimously." Dr Black did not dispute at the following meeting that this was an accurate record.

At a later executive meeting, in October

1990, he made a very strong objection to the following sentence in a pamphlet prepared for the 1990 Labour Party conference: "Few would argue with the goal of achieving Irish unity by consent", that is, with Labour Party policy. He found no support for this objection. He did not raise it at the AGM a couple of weeks later. He resigned by not renewing his membership.

In support of my contention that Democracy Now is a unionist pressure group, I refer to its secretary, James Winston, in the *Belfast Telegraph* of August 6th, 1995 ("We want the Labour Party to clarify its policy and move away from old fashioned Irish nationalism") and in the *Newtownabbey Times* of August 11th, 1994 (in which he described the Labour Party's united Ireland policy as "the last legacy of the hard-left Bennite lunacy in the early 1980s, and it's time to move away from that nonsense").

Even more conclusively, I refer to the high-profile campaign in support of the ultra-unionist "UK Unionist" candidate in the North Down by-election by the founder and leader of Democracy Now, Kate Hoey MP, who has never supported a Labour candidate in a Northern Ireland election. And in Radio Five Live's By-election Special, in the early hours of June 16th 1995, she said: "I'm quite honest about it... I support the union. I think it is in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland".

I can neither agree nor disagree with what Dr Black says about "Labour in Northern Ireland", because it has never made an appearance in actual politics.—Yours, etc. **(Dr) David Morrison.**

## Labour In Northern Ireland

Sir,—It is necessary to put the record straight following Dr David Morrison's selective and distorted account of events in the CLR in the period before its demise (November 21st).

David Morrison mentions executive meetings of the CLR held in August and October 1990 and claims I found no support for my position on CLR policy in the latter meeting. In fact, I was asked to put a motion to a special meeting of the executive, to be held on October 21st, 1990. That meeting has been conveniently forgotten by Dr Morrison.

The essence of my motion, which was carried unanimously (with David Morrison present) was: "The CLR should focus on the principle of consent when the border question arises. As an organisation, it should have no other views on the matter. The CLR should be run so that individuals

with different views on the border should feel comfortable in it..."

David Morrison claims I left the CLR in 1990. But what reason would I have had to leave? It was only when Dr Morrison and the GB Secretary of the CLR, Hugh Roberts, were quoted in the *Belfast Telegraph* (September 18th, 1991) saying the CLR supported a united Ireland, a position completely at odds with the agreed CLR policy of neutrality on the issue, that I reached the conclusion internal democratic procedures counted for nothing in the CLR and decided not to attend the October 1991 G.M. I still hold the notice of meeting and agenda papers for the 1991 a.g.m. circulated by Dr Morrison, which suggests he considered me to be a member at that time, whatever he says in his letter.

It may suit Dr Morrison to claim I wanted the CLR to be unionist, but the facts are otherwise.—Yours, etc.

**(Dr) Boyd Black**

**NOTE:** Boyd Black was written to by somebody who had been active in the CLR, who asked for a copy of his alleged letter of resignation. He did not receive it. And then the *Irish Times* closed the correspondence.

### **THE SEARCH FOR SHANGRI-LA** **CONTINUED**

The toxicated Ruth Dudley Edwards  
with many barbs  
carries the white man's burden  
for England and hints at  
Armageddon  
as if a free Ireland  
was of the damned  
wishing it had been a virgin  
birth  
devoid of that machismo girth  
a purely spiritual phenomenon  
like some god promising the Israelites  
ancient Canaan  
but promises led to killing  
with the occupation of land  
fulfilling  
much talk now of revisionism  
with severe reaction against the  
risen  
but this is not criticism a slap on the wrist  
but to a fifth column grist  
and kowtowing to a foreign power  
at this '16 centenary hour

**Wilson John Haire**

## Rock Against Bowie

David Bowie (né Jones) died a short time ago, as ever on such occasions, tributes ‘poured in’, and there is no doubt that Bowie was an artist who could produce very interesting material. He could also, it should be said, produce whole albums-worth of *dreck*. The person who first broke ranks on the adulation was the comedian (and sharp investigative television reporter), Mark Thomas.

He noted Bowie (*“the Thin White Duke”*)’s Hitlerian salutes and straightforward racism, shouting *“Keep Britain White”*, and *“Get the foreigners out”* in the course of early 1970s gigs. Such people don’t ‘do’ irony: the fact that he was using African-American music crudified for honkie consumption never seems to have ‘fizzed’ on him.

He was, admittedly, one of the few people who composed ‘concept albums’ worth listening to—one on the theme of travelling from Vladivostok to Moscow along the Trans-Siberian Railway. That’s the sort of thing ‘Rock Stars’ did in those days, when not molesting under-age girls or chucking televisions out of hotel windows. Bowie was a quite inconsistent artist and some of his stuff is worthless. The guitarist Eric Clapton, of the band *Cream*, joined in the racist fun at his own gigs.

A result of this dangerous nonsense was the founding of *Rock Against Racism*, at the instigation of a professional photographer ‘Red’ Saunders, in a letter to the ‘music press’, presumably mainly *NME*

(*New Musical Express*) a mass-circulation journal at the time. There already was a group called *Rock Against Racism*, an arm of the SWP (still the International Socialists then, becoming a ‘party’ in 1976). The SWP was very gratified at a sudden huge extension of its youth base.

It was less enthralled to learn that the great majority of the base thought their particular analysis of society was surplus to requirements. The SWP personnel were voted out of office in RAR, though the IS / SWP were allowed to sell their wares at RAR gigs—some of which were enormous. The racist Right slogan that *“there ain’t no black in the Union Jack”* stirred most teenagers to thump them rather than nod in agreement. Ska and reggae bands were ever-present at RAR gigs and rallies. RAR’s magazine *Temporary Hoarding* was first published on May Day 1977.

Despite that, the resist Right looked as if it was going to make inroads in electoral politics, it got 10% of the vote in the 1974 London’s Local Elections. It certainly seemed to be making determined efforts to monopolise the streets. Kevin Gateley was killed in Notting Hill in the Summer of 1976; prior to that Enoch Powell, in April, claimed that ‘Britain’ was being *“hollowed from within...”*, a portentous remark, if not a particularly clear one. England, or at least London, experienced a number of long, hot Summers. In August 1977 the National Front staged an *“anti-mugging”* march through Lewisham. It left the south London, largely plebeian, borough in a mess, but did very little to wipe out ‘mugging’ (street theft of purses and money off isolated, working class

people) mostly of women out shopping.

There can be little doubt that the rank and file of the police were sympathetic to the NF. The ‘blacks’ had suddenly become a majority, allegedly, in some London boroughs and parts of other cities and towns. The ‘Asians’ were a slightly more ambiguous matter: they didn’t look all that out of the ordinary, at least when they didn’t wear ‘Asian’ clothes. And they had the proper attitude to women: they should be seen and not heard, and stay in the kitchen. The ‘Blacks’, largely of West Indian origin have now become observably English. Some third, and fourth generation ‘Asians’ have reverted to wearing the sort of clothes worn in the Indian subcontinent. Given that even liberals can use phrases like *“fourth generation immigrants”*, possibly this is not too blameworthy.

*Rock Against Racism* rather fizzled out in the course of the 1980s, mainly because groups like the National Front did, and there had been nothing like an invasion (you’ll recalled Mrs Thatcher used similar language in the 1990s, when she was Prime Minister) or a ‘*deluge*’. It was for most towns and cities more of a trickle of immigrants. The people coming into the economy proved useful,—a large section of the Asians were middle class and educated and upwardly mobile. They were somewhat similar to the Poles of the ‘noughties’, nearly all of whom had skills. Despite which, the *Daily Mail* attempted to work up grievances against them—then many of them went home.

It is worth mentioning that Blair Peach, a New Zealander was killed opposing a National Front celebration of St George’s Day (April 23rd) in Southall (in far west London!), an area heavily populated by Indians—the biggest Hindu temple on the planet is in the area. Peach was part of a crowd of about 3,000—they were faced by an astonishing number of police, about 2,500. Peach was killed some streets away clearly trying to get away from a baton charge.

He didn’t manage to escape, and died next day of a physical trauma—a huge injury to the back of his head. The London Metropolitan Police took years to admit that they did it. And that they had been very heavy handed dealing with a crowd that was not being physically aggressive and was not much bigger than their own body of men. This was the socio-political ambiance that Bowie and Clapton decided to throw their tuppence worth of racist bilge around.

Seán McGouran

## Public Meetings

### Friday, 22nd April

20.00 The Irish Poets Rebellion Of 1916. Dr. Patricia Ó Siodach  $\Sigma$ ain

### Saturday, 23rd April

11.00 The 1918 Election—The Ignored Centenary: JACK LANE

12.00 The Irish Bulletin, the daily paper of the Irish Government, 1919-1921. Q & A: JACK LANE

14.30 The AOH and the AFIL, Bendan Clifford - Q & A.

This Feile, with music and dancing, starts with a Cheese & Wine Reception at 19.99 on Friday night and fanishes with a music session on Sunday night at 20.00 with many other events in between.

Eolas/Info 087 9484169.

Talks at:

Trades Union Hall, Strand Street, Kanturk



## That Redmond Banner!

Dublin City Council has hung out a huge banner at the Bank of Ireland (Grattan's Parliament) on College Green as its contribution to the 1916 centenary. The huge banner, covering the front of the building features: Grattan, Dan O'Connell, Parnell and ....Redmond, all sworn enemies of the very idea of a rebellion, and Redmond its immediate and bitter opponent!!!

This is on a par with the Glasnevin Trust's stab in the back to O Donovan Rossa last year and its appalling proposal for a "wall of memory" that mixes rebel, British Army and civilian dead of 1916 on a single monument.

Tellingly, the Dublin City contribution is reported to have come about as follows:

"Dublin City Council deputy city librarian Brendan Teeling said the idea for the banner had come from the Department of the Taoiseach. The council, the Department of the Taoiseach and the OPW have been liaising on how to dress the city up for the parade on Easter Sunday, which will be the biggest event of the Rising commemorations."

He made the following very curious defensive comment:

"...parliamentary nationalists had been supported by the majority of Irish people prior to 1916 and it would be "unhistorical" to leave them out. "It is not making a grand claim. It is not part of this revisionist stuff that's going on", he said."

So, he accepts there is "revisionist stuff going on", but this is not part of it!?

The article is at: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/dublin-city-council-defends-college-green-1916-banner-1.2571822>

The banner at College Green, Bank of Ireland building. It is on the front of what was the Irish parliamentary building before the Act of Union in 1800.

No one mentions the Treatyite cultural irritation that FG (and its hanger-on, the Stickyite "Labour Party") arouse in a substantial minority in Ireland through their bulldog Redmondism, and the role this played in their massive losses at the election.

This illustrates it more than anything.

Not a single one of the many posters and displays erected around the country in commemoration of 1916 was vandalised, with one exception: this banner. On the morning of the Easter Parade someone sprayed on the image the simple message "35,000". This refers to the number of Irishmen killed in the 'Great War' for which Redmond—the alleged 'peaceful alternative' to 1916—had so passionately recruited.

**Philip O'Connor**

· Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback

**Under the heading of "1916 banners on College Green", the following letter was submitted to the "Irish Times" on March 18, but was denied publication.**

### **A 1916 Banner For Trinity College**

On September 15 last, the Taoiseach chose the state funeral of the 1916 executed martyr Thomas Kent to announce a policy of "parity of esteem", whereby those who gave their lives for the Irish Republic, as well as those killed in action while suppressing the Rising on behalf of British imperialism, would be commemorated in common on a single wall in Glasnevin cemetery. Presumably, this includes members of the South Staffordshire Regiment, which was responsible for the North King Street war crimes, when that Regiment shot and bayoneted to death fifteen uninvolved civilians.

But has the Department of the Taoiseach been pussy footing as regards carrying that "parity of esteem" to its logical conclusion? I share in the dismay at the College Green 1916 memorial banner that has been erected on the front of the Bank of Ireland, to pay tribute to John Redmond, who unequivocally condemned the Rising that would be endorsed by the 1918 Election. But there is now a gap on College Green, the absence of any matching banner on Trinity College to commemorate those who went the whole hog on the "other side".

The Department of the Taoiseach's perspective should logically commemorate the names of W. H. M. Lowe, Sir John Maxwell, William Martin Murphy and John Edward Healy. Trinity College was the nerve centre of the British Army's suppression of the Rising, chosen by Brigadier-General Lowe from where to subject the city to relentless artillery bombardment. Lowe's "no prisoners" order led to the North King Street massacres, for which he was exonerated by General Maxwell, while the latter pursued the vengeful policy of executions. William Martin Murphy's "Irish Independent" and "Irish Catholic" newspapers called for those executions to be carried out to the bitter end. Likewise with the demand that "the surgeon's knife ... must not be stayed until the whole malignant growth has been removed", voiced by "Irish Times" editor John Edward Healy. Such a Trinity College 1916 banner would indeed be "parity of esteem"!

**Manus O'Riordan**

### **Unpublished letter to Sunday Independent**

#### **Ireland: A Failed State ?**

Pierce Martin (Sunday Independent 7-3-16) may have a point about the differences between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael being less than their similarities at this point almost a hundred years on from the Civil War. However the rest of his missive is a more straightforward return to his usual themes of 'Ireland, the failed state' and denegrating those who gave everything including their lives to achieve our freedoms.

Among the various figures he quotes to support his thesis, he describes 65% voter turnout as 'an appalling indictment of our dysfunctional polity'. This figure deserves some comment. It compares quite favourably with the UK where there was 66% voter turnout for the 2015 elections with the hotly contested issue of a Brexit referendum centre stage. Taking previous elections, Ireland was ahead of the UK, with over 63% of the electorate taking part (2011) compared to 61% in the UK (2010). In a survey conducted by PEW of countries ranging from Turkey to the USA to Switzerland, Ireland ranked 19th place compared to the UK's 22nd, the USA's 34th and Belgium's 1st place (89% in 2014) in voter turnout. It may just be that 65% voter turnout is more of an appalling indictment of Mr.Martin's rather jaundiced views on this country and his noted tendency to hyperbole.

Mr.Martin further argues that 65 countries allow expatriates to vote in home elections, but with 195 countries in the world, it also means the vast majority of 130 do not. The issue of whether people who leave a country to make their home and lives elsewhere should continue to have a say in the local affairs of their birth country is an open question and not necessarily resolved in favour of Mr.Martin's views on the same.

By the end of his missive we reach 1916 and the gloves truly come off with Ireland described as a 'perverse country' a 'barren polity' the preserve of the 'unenlightened'— in other words, the electorate that chose their own government over Mr.Martin's wishes.

Like all revisionist critics of Ireland, in implying this country to be a 'failed state', he completely fails himself to provide any criteria by which a contrastingly 'successful state' can be measured, whatever that might be, or show actual examples of such states around the world. If violent origins, 65% voter turnout and a two-party system are 'an appalling indictment of a dysfunctional polity' then neither the UK nor the USA have anything to offer us as examples.

**Nick Folley**

Does  
It  
Up

Stack  
?

### CROSSBARRY COMMEMORATION 2016

The ninety-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Crossbarry was commemorated at the monument at Crossbarry on Sunday 20th March 2016. The oration was given by the eminent Limerick historian and author, Tom Toomey, before a large crowd on a fine Spring day.

Before Mr. Toomey was introduced, there was a very appropriate commemoration of the 1916 Rising. Sixteen children from several National Schools in the Crossbarry area were present, to each represent one of the 1916 leaders who were executed under British martial law by the British Army. Each young person stood in turn before the crowd and displayed a photograph of the executed leader whom he/she was representing. It was a very touching and well-organised ceremony and great praise must be heaped on the children themselves and their teachers because the whole tribute to the fallen was carried off with such dignity and élan that a lot of time had obviously been put into the preparation for it. The whole crowd clapped enthusiastically and then the Bandon Pipe Band played a lament for all those patriots who died for Ireland in the War of Independence 1916-1921.

Mr. Tom Toomey in his Oration described the Battle of Crossbarry and how 104 volunteers under the command of General Tom Barry inflicted severe damage to 1100 trained British Army troops who, if they were not killed, ran away. The British troops were from the Essex Regiment, the Hampshires', and the Manchester Regiment. The Battle of Crossbarry was the most:

"devastating defeat suffered by British forces in Ireland during the War of Independence. Crossbarry was just one of a series of battles that made the Flying Column of the 3rd Cork Brigade a household name in terms of the Irish War of Independence.

The Flying Column of the West Cork Brigade came into being in September 1920. It was the brainchild of the Brigade O/C Charlie Hurley and when eventually he convinced an ex-British soldier Tom Barry, to take command and train the unit it was to prove a very fortuitous choice. Barry immediately

set up training camps throughout the Brigade area. He also developed a policy of "bleeding" the trainees immediately they had been trained.

The first major action of the Column was at Toureen, near Bandon, on 24th October 1920 when the column successfully ambushed a patrol of the Essex Regiment. On Sunday 28th November 1920 the West Cork Column was to write itself into history when they wiped out a patrol of British Auxiliaries at Kilmichael. The Auxiliaries, who were based at Macroom Castle, were all ex-British Army officers and they were regarded as super fighters but Barry and his men put paid to that notion at Kilmichael. ... Following the Kilmichael Ambush the West Cork Column was also involved in significant actions at Gaggin, Burgatia House near Roscarbery, Upton Railway Station and Roscarbery RIC Barracks which was captured and destroyed. In addition to the actions listed the West Cork Flying Column was also involved in numerous other smaller actions from the time of its inception in September 1920 until the truce in July 1921. At the time of the Truce it was universally acknowledged as the most outstanding unit of the IRA. There were definite reasons that set it apart.

Probably, the most important single factor was the quality and standard of its leadership. The man who conceived the idea of a flying column in West Cork, Charlie Hurley, has to be given great credit for identifying the future leader of the column—Tom Barry. Having appointed Barry he left him get on with the job. There was no petty egotistical interference as unfortunately happened in many less successful areas.

If Tom Barry was an outstanding leader and he was—then each of the seven section leaders that fought here at Crossbarry were also outstanding leaders in their own right. If they had been in any other county except Cork they would have been Flying Column commanders. To Barry's credit he listened to these men as was evidenced by his consulting with Tom Kelleher and Mick Crowley and using their local knowledge when deciding on the ambush site here at Crossbarry and also in deciding the departure route after the battle."

The Oration continued with a description of the support given to the West Cork Brigade by the people around even at great danger to themselves from the British forces. Mr. Toomey quoted the last words on the Monument at Crossbarry:

'Pray God that Ireland in her hour of need will always have sons like these to fight and die for her'.

And continued—

"This is an extremely powerful statement that is every bit as relevant today, in 2016 as it was in 1916, 1921 or 1966. Despite the fact that it has become fashionable among persons working in Irish State-funded institutions and organisations to deride and denigrate the ideals of the men of 1916-1921. Many of these same persons are the direct beneficiaries of the freedoms that were won by the men who fought and died here.

The example of courage and self-sacrifice of the young men who fought and died here 95 years ago is even more relevant today to the leaders of Irish society be they economic, political, financial, legal, judicial, public sector or trade union.

Greed,—a bigger salary and 'gold plated' pension packages away above and beyond what is reasonable by the standards of other countries, seem to be the norm in the Ireland of today.

The legal fees paid out by the various tribunals in recent years were only surpassed by the wages of English soccer players and the world knows only too well the standard and worth of those gentlemen.

When the American investor Warren Buffet was asked some years ago if he would consider investing in Irish companies and corporations—he was reported to have replied that 'Irish Corporations and companies are run for the benefit of those running them—not for those that invest in them.'

"These, our leaders, if such they can be called, should be brought here to Crossbarry to look on this monument and to reflect deeply on the powerful words here cast in stone."

The Commemoration concluded with prayers led by Rev. Monsignor O' Callaghan followed by the Bandon Pipe Band playing *Amhrán na bhFiann* which was sung enthusiastically by all present.

The gathering then adjourned to the Munster Arms Hotel at Bandon where a three course meal was served, after which Mr. Tom Toomey was again called upon to speak which he did to loud applause. An evening of *craic, ceol agus rince* followed in the traditional Irish way and a great time was had by all.

Michael Stack ©

## UNIONS continued

ensuring that the institutions of the Irish state work well. For instance, that the orientation of SIPTU (the old Irish T&GWU) still consciously derives from its sense of itself as **the Trade Union 'wing' of the national movement**.

**Charles Haughey** is a discredited figure these days in Ireland—widely seen as a venal and corrupt figure. However, under Haughey, Albert Reynolds and Ray McSharry and Fianna Fail, the programmes for National reconstruction from the late 1980s onwards constituted a conscious and thoughtful Partnership.

Through Haughey, a generation of Irish civil servants went back and forth to Europe, particularly to see how the German system worked. The Irish Social Partnership derived from that (so, too, did the initial Northern Irish peace funding processes) Ireland's orientation, briefly, departed from the shadow of the UK and plotted an independent course. Ireland became a partner in Europe, notably to Kohl and Mitterand.

And, through all the years of Social Partnership—when National Partnership Agreements required a vote at the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)—it was the British head-quartered Unions who voted against, almost without fail.

Part of our "British" problem is that inflexible, leftist, ideology plays a part in holding us back from practical 'workaday' solutions which put working people in the driving seat.

**Equally, however, our view of the British State is different.** The British State pre-dates the Trade Union movement. Indeed, it pre-dates British democracy. In Britain, we—as Unions—feel that **the State is somehow "not our business"—it is about something else—about a wider role in the world**—once an Empire, latterly an unwise global adventurism—through financial speculation and foreign intervention. Either way, our Trade Union movement has not felt that our role was to second guess the State—and not to "run things".

\*

The relevance of today is that we don't often discuss such things. **But the time is now. In every crisis, there's an opportunity.** The economic crisis wrought by the failure of "*casino capitalism*" gives us an opportunity. Despite the return of Cameron and Osborne, they don't have the answers. Get the City back up and running, running the same scams, with inequality widening exponentially. It's the

same old tunes, and it won't work.

**It may not seem so, but things are fluid now, in flux.** We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make Trade Unionism relevant to the new world that we build. But we can only do so, if we understand the past, and can orientate clearly within a changed—utterly changed—environment.

Looking forward, for current solutions we could do worse than to look North, to

Scotland. **The Mather Report, "Working Better Together"** in 2014 provides a template that will—given fair wind—move Scottish industrial relations away from the British adversarial tradition and towards to Co-Determination and Social Partnership of Scandinavia. Unlike Northern Ireland, Scotland doesn't yet have control over employment law—but it will. And it's answers are very encouraging.

We can, perhaps, pick that up in discussion later.

## Iran and the Middle East

On 10th March the Iranian Ambassador, Mr. Javad Kachoueian, addressed a meeting at Dublin City University. He spoke very confidently about Syria. He went on to describe the international agreement on Iranian nuclear enrichment. Regarding the latter, he waved around the book, *Dangerous Delusions* by David Morrison and Peter Osborne, as the definitive authority on the issue and urged the attendees to read it.

He said many interesting things, eg (paraphrasing him):

- When IS was at the gates of Baghdad Iran came to help on the invitation of the Iraqi Government, and threw it back. Similarly when IS was at the gates of Damascus, Iran intervened at the invitation of the Syrian Government.
- When Iran developed 20 centrifuges for enriching uranium for civil use, George Bush said it could not have one, and sought to strangle the country with sanctions. In Iran there is a *fatwa* against nuclear weapons. So young engineers and scientists developed and built 18,000 centrifuges and made plutonium from heavy water, which could be used for weapons, so the Americans came looking for an agreement;
- Iranians have been solving problems with diplomacy for 4,000 years and Iran has not invaded any country in 200 years. Iranian foreign policy is "*friendship with all neighbours*". (This is a play on the former Turkish slogan—PO'C);
- Iran wants good relations with Russia as a neighbour which has legitimate interests in the region.
- The agreement on nuclear enrichment took 6,000 hours of negotiation. If any new US regime rejected the agreement, it would not matter as Europe, Russia and China have signed up to it, and Europe said it is final and non-renegotiable;

- The Saudis, Qatar and other countries are Allies of Britain and the US, and created and encouraged IS in agreement with their allies;

- Saudi is finding itself isolated locally and will have to talk with Iran. When it closed its Embassy in Tehran, Iran kept its Embassy in Riyadh open. Iran wants peace in Yemen (a country destroyed by Saudi) and knows this is only possible in agreement with Saudi agreement.

- Ditto when Ireland closed its Embassy in Tehran, Iran kept its Embassy open in Dublin. The Irish Government claims the closure was for economic reasons, like that of the Vatican embassy (smile), but the Government has assured the Ambassador that it now wants to re-open it (Irish-Iranian trade has grown by 100% in the last year).

Further noteworthy points made by Mr. Kachoueian were:

"EU sends weapons to Middle East, and gets migrants in return"

"Sitting beside German ambassador at the Dail opening on 16th March, [the Ambassador] asked him why they were arming terrorists, German ambassador replied that politics is a dirty business"

He skated round the question of Russia and Kurds

The Iranians have essentially beaten the West on the nuclear issue, in that the West has been forced to accept their right to uranium enrichment, though the full fruits of their victory have been postponed for 10 or 15 years until the present limitations on enrichment imposed by the West (which are in breach of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty) are lifted. The Ambassador would not express it like that: Iranians are very modest about their remarkable achievement.

**Philip O'Connor**

## UNIONS continued

workload, ridiculous levels of accountability, scrutiny and measurement. Ceaseless examination, testing, reporting and recording—a high incidence of stress, and poor management cultures—**these are top of any casework league tables** that ATL deal with.

Now, we are seeing wider moves towards **standardisation** and **de-professionalisation** not just of teaching but of other professions including law, opticians, pharmacists and medical profession is seeing a '**Taylorism**' in previously rewarding, high-discretion jobs.

We find that traditional Trade Union adversarial posturing, and the **rhetoric** of "**struggle**" and strife simply doesn't connect with the modernity of our members lives in today's world. Our members are however, resentful about widening inequality—that middle and low earners are bearing a disproportionate tax burden, with rich corporates and super wealthy individuals ducking their tax responsibilities, with the tax gap estimated by some as close to £123 billion!

Our members usually care more about "**getting on**" than "**getting even**" and have little appetite for fighting ideological battles. Our members want a Union that is aspirational (a fraught word, I know) and modern, not stuck in the mud.

Notwithstanding this desire to "get on", there is a general understanding that **the relationship between individual and employer often remains an unequal one**. And, whilst the public perception of Trade Unions is not overwhelmingly positive, there remains a strong, innate instinct to seek collective solutions to problems in the workplace.

\*

Union membership, however, **has gone up** in societies, such as Belgium, Denmark and Sweden—societies in which Unions are **implicated** directly in **running important social welfare systems**.

Union membership remains highly valued in Germany where Unions are a part of the **intricate "co-determination" system of industrial and economic planning**.

And Union membership has stabilised in Ireland where a social pact, through successive National Agreements, has entrenched the role of Unions in national life since the late 1980's.

**Taking responsibility for running things—this has to be our direction of travel!**

\*

The founder of British Socialism as a mass ideology was Robert Blatchford. He began with the ideal of restoring an English way of life that was being destroyed (**Merrie England**). But he soon came to see that the standard of life of the English workers, poor though it was in many respects, would become much worse if the fruits of Empire were lost.

He therefore became an Imperialist and a strong supporter of the dominance of the Royal Navy in the world. I think the slogan, "**My country right or wrong**" was attributed to Blatchford.

Blatchford understood the dangers of England moving away from production, **being unable to feed itself, for a start**, and (on a "There is no Alternative" basis) set in place a course followed by the socialist and Labour movements since—**which has relied on England's role in the world, rather than self-sufficiency**, as the best strategy to follow.

That strategy, I believe, has had **fundamental and lasting impacts** on the "stony ground" that we all feel today in trying to promote, industrial strategy, a productive economy and Industrial Democracy.

It is within that context that I would like to look at some lost opportunities for the Trade Unions over the past 70 years.

### LOST OPPORTUNITIES

In Britain, there have been significant opportunities, in the post-War period, for the Union movement to take a strategic role at the heart of running the state and the economy. After the 2nd World War, **Ernest Bevin offered the TUC a central role in administering the National Insurance system**. I learned this from John Monks, formerly General Secretary to the TUC and then the ETUC. The minutes and records of this are in the TUC Library archive. Incredibly, the TUC found itself to be too busy with other things—too busy, in effect, to take responsibility for running the country! Had it taken up Bevin's offer, the TUC would have put practical Trade Unionism at the heart of the British social and economic life—central to peoples' lives—and "locked in" the Unions to an influential position for generations.

When, by the late 60s, the **post war welfare and full-employment consensus was running out of steam**, Barbara Castle sought to harness the enormous 'negative' or 'blocking' power of the Trade Union movement to positive effect. She wanted Unions to contribute to running the economy, but Castle's "**In Place of Strife**" failed.

**Edward Heath also failed, in**

proposing a tripartite, partnership style, corporatism in the early 70's.

And in the late 70's the Bullock Report on Industrial Democracy (which I learnt about under David Bleakley) sought to put Trade Unions in an indispensable position in every Board Room in the country, private or public.

**In the late 70s, we rejected all of these possibilities—rejected Bevin, Castle, Heath, and Bullock.** In doing so, we opened the door to the neo-liberal Thatcher experiment which has only just run out of steam itself.

In the late 70s, **we thought we could go on as a simple, negative, blocking force. We couldn't!** The failure of our Union movement to take responsibility for the economic logjam of the 70s forced the electorate to clip our wings. And our movement has become peripheral in the interim.

Nor has the UK's membership of the Common Market (EEC, now EU) helped the Union movement. Britain's orientation in Europe after Heath has been disruptive, **focussed on what Churchill called the "unconscious tradition" of balancing powers**. In particular, after the fall of Communism in 1988-90, Britain's key role was to subvert the deepening of Europe, (the desired path of Kohl's Germany and Mitterand's France) in favour of a loose, shallow, liberal free trade zone. **Who, today, can say Delors "Social Europe" won out? It didn't.**

To the current day, Britain's role in Europe has successfully disabled movement towards the Fiscal Compact necessary to defend the Euro currency.

The issue, however, is not that we should "beat ourselves up" about past failures—but that we learn from them to take advantage of the current flux.

### THE IRISH UNION TRADITION

In finishing, perhaps **the understanding that I can bring today** is that the Irish Trade Union tradition is different. In Ireland, we are coming up to the various centenary celebrations—the Battle of the Somme, a key centenary for the Protestant community in particular. There is also the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising. In a real sense, **Trade Union orientation in Ireland, derives from the Easter Rising in a fundamental way.**

Irish Trade Unionism, **through Connolly's Citizen Army, played a role in the setting up of the state—and it rightly feels proprietorial about it.** Irish Trade Unionism sees no contradiction in

continued on page 20



## UNIONS continued

Jones, Hugh Chapple, Scargill . . . We knew all about Ken Coates, the opportunism of Neil Kinnock, all of it.

It was our introduction to an orientation within British Trade Unionism—a blocking or negative instinct—to collaborative economic partnership. Historically, as I will argue today, this instinct has not delivered for our movement.

\*

As well as through David Bleakley, I learnt about British industrial culture in work. Methodist College lay between the Malone Road (Belfast's posh area) and the working class Lisburn Road, with its loyalist strongholds in the "Village" and Sandy Row areas.

In those days, it was possible to get a job by just walking around and calling into the myriad of engineering businesses in those areas. I walked out of school in my blazer at the end of the 1977 Lower Sixth school term and walked straight into work in the **Ulster Tin Box factory**. They made biscuit tins for Jacobs and oil drums for Duckhams. It was an old fashioned production line factory.

Within five minutes of starting work, I joined the Union, the T&GWU from memory. It wasn't a choice, you were told! And, within that same plant, you had the two broad traditions within Trade Unionism.

You had the **"fuck the bosses" tradition**—adversarial by instinct—that tradition that had, effectively, seen off Bullock. But you also had, less often, from time to time, a collaborative instinct, which kicked in when the bosses were under time pressure (and over a barrel) to complete an order.

At the Ulster Tin Box Factory, within half an hour, the shop steward handed me a Red Top paper and said *"Take a shite break!"* The factory shop steward, then, was a very powerful figure.

I said *"I don't need a shite."* He looked me in the eyes and said *"Are you fuckin stupid, kid, you're on a shite break!!"* It wasn't a question. *"And don't come back for at least 15 minutes"*

My going to the toilet meant boxes backed up and production had to halt. The production line got a break which, handy enough, could be pinned on a callow, naïve, 17 year old who didn't know the score.

Another way to mess up things was to "stop" the machine. Again, the shop steward would demand *"Stop your machine, kid"* The drill then was to slide

your box into the machine and then, just when you kick-started the machine, to skew the box leftwards—which had the effect of temporarily wrecking the machine. With **demarcation** agreements rigidly in place, the machine engineer had to be called. Again, 15 minutes respite, whilst the production line came to a halt. Out came the cigarettes, or the mail-order books which many of the women in the factory ran as side-lines.

Whenever the bosses were late with an order, or against time pressures or late delivery penalties, the Union would negotiate either overtime or a *"job and finish"*. Another side came out then. The workers didn't take shite breaks then, the time was theirs to lose—they were in control of the productive process, calling the shots, and they became co-operative, ingenious even, to get the order finished. **You saw a step change in productivity.**

\*

The only recent example of co-determination in English industrial relations was probably the Social Partnership in Education.

Some you here will know—or have heard of—the late Eamonn O'Kane (he passed away at 58 in 2004). As many here will know, Eamonn O'Kane was both President and General Secretary of our sister union the NASUWT. In Northern Ireland, he was also known as an activist within the civil rights movement, involved with the Peoples Democracy in the late 60s, the Newtownabbey Labour party in North Belfast and, subsequently, with the British and Irish Communist Organisation—a political tendency and publishing house, with which I have had a long association. I was campaigning for Eamon (as a Labour Representation candidate) in the 1989 European election when he secured a national role in the NASUWT. Effectively, he dropped out of the race and I was stuck as the replacement, sacrificial, candidate. For those that knew him, Eamonn was a political writer and thinker of some depth and flexibility.

Eamonn was also central to the negotiation, with New Labour's David Miliband, of the 2003 "National Agreement" in England and Wales. This established a rare form of Social Partnership in Education which was, for close to 10 years, unambiguously successful for all parties in Britain—Unions, Government, teachers and schools.

Eamonn's grasp of the political and Trade Union context were vital in establishing and embedding the Social Partnership (neither was Miliband wedded to old

Labour and Trade Union *mores*). At the time, the education partnership was the **only substantively "corporate" arrangement** in the British industrial relations landscape—outside of the industrial relations practices of some foreign owned firms.

This Social Partnership, a fragile outbreak within our movement, was stamped out by Gove early in the Tories first term. **Gove, of course, knew well what he was doing. Social Partnership, of course, is not just anathema to Tories,** it can be a dirty word in our movement, too—and I'll come back to this in a second.

\*

ATL participated consciously in the education Social Partnership. Under Mary Boustead, the instinct towards **involvement in the work process**—a European instinct—is part of our Union's philosophy, our "DNA" if you wish. **"Done with", not "done to"** is an ATL watchword.

ATL have long thought that the decline in Trade Union membership is not related to having more benign Employment and Union Laws in place. Of course, the Trade Union Bill will see further diminution, and won't help. However, the New Labour era from 1997-2010 saw moderately benign legislation in individual employment law, but Union membership continued to decline in Great Britain. It may have picked up a little since the Crash, but the point holds—that **public policy is not the key factor** in Union decline or resurrection.

The modern economy has changed—with some highly trumpeted, high autonomy, high skilled jobs—or **"MacJobs"**, but with many more low-discretion, low-value added, service and care sector **"McJobs"**.

The labour market has polarised to a great degree, with fewer "middling" jobs—the **'blue collar' skilled trades, technical or white collar associate professional jobs which were the very backbone of craft Trade Unionism**. This trend is evident in Northern Ireland too, where relatively skilled full-time (and largely male) manufacturing jobs are fast disappearing to be replaced with part-time, often low-skilled (and largely female) service and care sector jobs.

The imperative for Trade Unions is that we adapt to these changed circumstances.

Within the teaching profession, we know that the terms of the debate are at least as much about the **quality of work, involvement** in the work, and the **quality of life**, as about pay. Long hours, high

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## SHAW continued

dealt with accordingly, it will never be believed that the document was not genuine. Can England confide so absolutely in the stupidity of her scoundrels or the virtue of her clever men as to feel safe from a similar ruse and a similar result?

Six. If you wish men to be good citizens, you must teach them to be good citizens.

Whose fault is the dense ignorance and romantic folly which made these unfortunate Sinn Feiners mistake a piece of hopeless mischief for a patriotic stroke for freedom such as Shelley sang and Byron took arms for? Were they taught citizenship in their schools? Were their votes bought with anything but balderdash? Granted that their heads, like their newspapers, were stuffed with ultra-insular patriotic conceit, is this a time at which England can with any countenance throw a stone at them on that score? Has not the glorification of patriotism, of reckless defiance, of superior numbers and resources, of readiness to kill and be killed for the old flag, of implacable hatred of the enemy and the invader, of the sacred rights of small nations to self-government and freedom, been thundered at them for more than a year by British writers who talk and feel as if England were still the England of Alfred, and Socialism, the only alternative to Sinn Fein, were sedition and blasphemy? Is it not a little unreasonable of us to clamor for the blood of men who have simply taken us at our word and competed for our hero-worship with the Belgians and the Serbians, who have also devoted their Sackville-streets to fire and slaughter in a struggle at impossible odds with giant empires?

I can speak my mind freely on this matter, for I have attacked the romantic Separatism of Ireland with every device of invective and irony and dialectic at my command. As it happens, my last onslaught on Sinn Fein reached Ireland, through the columns of *The Irish Times*, two days before the insurrection. It was too late; and, in any case, the Volunteers had plenty of assurances from the most vociferous English patriots that I am not a person to be attended to. But exasperating as the mischief and folly and ignorance of the rising are to my practical sense, I must not deny, now that it is crushed, that these men were patriotic according to their own lights, brave according to our lights, public in their aims, and honourable in their Republican political ideal. I notice, also, that the newspapers which describe them as personally contemptible contradict their correspondents by pictures which exhibit them as well-set-up, soldierly men.

What is to be done with them? As to many, the answer is simple: bury them. But what about the others—the prisoners of war? It would be hardly decent to ask them to take the oath of allegiance to the English King. They are Republicans. But the notion that they are any fonder of the Protestant monarchy of Prussia is nonsense. Why not make a present of them to Joffre, with a hint that his right wing is the safest place for them? He needs good Republicans, and France knows of old the value of an Irish Brigade.

\*\*\*\*\*  
1 "When he wrote *"Neglected Morals of the Irish Rising,"* Shaw was unaware of the death sentences and of the executions which had already been carried out.

2 Moritz Ferdinand von Bissing, the German General in command of occupied

Belgium, instituted the practice of reprisals against the civil populace for acts of violence against the German military regime.

3 General Manager of the *Daily Citizen*, imprisoned in World War I as a conscientious objector.

4 The "*fabricated document*", headed *Secret Orders Issued to Military Officers*, was ostensibly a Government order for the round-up of nationalist leaders and the suppression of nationalist organisations, circulated for the purpose of creating in the populace a sympathetic attitude to the projected insurrection. The document was actually in the handwriting of Joseph Plunkett, one of the leaders subsequently executed for his part in the rising. The English government in Dublin Castle immediately repudiated it as a forgery. The texts of this document and of Sheehy Skeffington's letter of warning were published in the *New Statesman* adjacent to Shaw's article.

5 Sheehy Skeffington had written to Shaw from Dublin on 7 April, 1916, enclosing a copy of the letter of warning which he had sent to several London newspapers:

"I think it quite likely that none of them will publish it; so I am sending you a copy for your personal information, that you may understand how critical the position is here. It will require all the efforts of all men of goodwill to avert bloodshed in Ireland; and perhaps you, having the ear of the press, may be able to intervene effectively." (Unpublished letter in the Shaw archive, British Museum, by permission of Owen Sheehy Skeffington.)

(From *Bernard Shaw: The Matter with Ireland. Hitherto uncollected writings* edited by David H. Greene and Dan H. Laurence. Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1962).

## Industrial Democracy and Social Partnership

**Speech of Mark Langhammer (ATL) to the Seminar Series of the seminar "Communicating and Implementing Industrial Democracy and Social Partnership" run by the PESGB (Philosophy of Education Society, GB) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers in London on the 29th January 2016**

Today's seminar, on Industrial Democracy, would be an important topic for the Trade Union movement at any time. It is more important that we reflect on the challenges facing 'Partnership working' in the midst of the current economic crisis—a crisis of financialised capitalism.

With our productive economy in crisis, the generation of "*laissez faire*" in freefall, the State as an economic player could be back in fashion.

I learnt about Industrial Democracy, in principle and in practice, whilst attending Methodist College, a prestigious grammar school in south Belfast.

Our "A" level politics teacher was Methodist lay preacher, David Bleakley, who was best known as a stalwart of the Northern Ireland Labour Party. He was elected to the old, Unionist-run Stormont Parliament—winning the East Belfast seat in 1958 at the third attempt. He stayed in

Stormont until 1965. When the bubble went up in 1969, it became impossible for Labour people to get elected, although Bleakley still got around 40% of the vote in the 1970 Westminster Elections and was appointed as Minister for Community Relations in the Faulkner Government in 1971—the last gasp of Stormont before direct rule in 1972.

In class, David took us "*off piste*"—off curriculum—in a way that couldn't happen today. Industrial Democracy and the Commission of Lord Bullock was one issue that animated him. And it animated us, too, because it was all around us. We learnt all about Bullock, the view of the Trades Unions, the influence of the CPGB, the Plowden Inquiry, the views of Jack

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## Neglected Morals Of The Irish Rising

(The New Statesman, 6 May, 1916)

### Bernard Shaw

*One.* Be very careful what political doctrine you preach. You may be taken at your word in the most unexpected directions.

I wonder how many of those who have made such a resounding propaganda of Sinn Fein for small nationalities for twenty months past have died heroically for their principles in the burning ruins of the General Post Office in Sackville-street! (1). Will *Punch* give us a cartoon of Mr. Connolly, in the pose of the King of the Belgians, telling his conqueror that at least he has not lost his soul by his desperate fight for the independence of his country against a foe ten times his size? Probably not; and yet the parallel is curiously close in everything but the scale of the devastation and the number of deaths. It may become still closer, if the Government gives way to any clamor for frightfulness from the people who were so shocked by it when von Bissing was its exponent. (2)

*Two.* Do not give way to an intemperate admiration of patriotism, or make an inconsiderate use of the word Traitor.

No wise man now uses the word Traitor at all. He who fights for the independence of his country may be an ignorant and disastrous fool, but he is not a traitor and will never be regarded as one by his fellow countrymen. All the slain men and women of the Sinn Fein Volunteers fought and died for their country as sincerely as any soldier in Flanders has fought or died for his. Their contempt for pro-British pacifists, like myself, was as fiercely genuine as the contempt of our conscriptionists and military authorities for Mr. Clifford Allen. (3). As a Republican forlorn hope, their ideal cannot be insulted without insulting our ally France and our friend America; and by the time the whole world has become Republican and Romance has covered their graves with its flowers, the

last of the Irish rebellions will be a stock subject of British heroic verse.

*Three.* Do not rashly assume that every building destroyed by an enemy is a palatial masterpiece of architecture.

It is greatly to be regretted that so very little of Dublin has been demolished. The General Post Office was a monument, fortunately not imperishable, of how extremely dull eighteenth-century pseudo-classic architecture can be. Its demolition does not matter. What does matter is that all the Liffey slums have not been demolished. Their death and disease rates have every year provided waste, destruction, crime, drink, and avoidable homicide on a scale which makes the fusillades of the Sinn Feiners and the looting of their camp-followers hardly worth turning the head to notice. It was from these slums that the auxiliaries poured forth for whose thefts and outrages the Volunteers will be held responsible, though their guilt lies at all our doors. Let us grieve, not over the fragment of Dublin city that is knocked down, but over at least three-quarters of what has been preserved. How I wish I

had been in command of the British artillery on that fatal field! How I should have improved my native city!

*Four.* To delay overdue legislation for the sake of a quiet life may make more trouble than it saves.

Had Home Rule been in operation, not only would both the Sinn Fein and the Ulster Volunteers have been technically traitors (both are on precisely the same footing as to that), but the Irish Parliament would have introduced compulsory military service to get rid of them, if it had found itself too weak to prevent such armed forces being raised.

*Five.* Do not forget that a rising may be induced in England and Scotland at any moment by the same means.

If the party which openly aims at the destruction of British Trade Unionism were to fabricate and circulate an elaborate military plan of campaign for seizing all the Trade Union offices, cordoning the mining villages and unionist quarters, and capturing the secretaries, the result, though it would be called a series of local riots and not a rebellion, would cost more lives and burn more buildings than the Dublin affair. That was the trick by which the Dublin rising was precipitated. I have a copy of the fabricated document (4) which Mr. T.W. Russell has repudiated on behalf of the Castle. I have a copy of a letter which Mr. Sheehy Skeffington vainly tried to induce the London press to publish, (5) warning us that the Sinn Feiners believed that there was a Castle-cum-Carsonite plot to disarm them and seize their quarters, and that there was the gravest danger of a defensive-offensive movement. Whoever forged the document was a clever scoundrel; but clever scoundrels have never been lacking in Ireland, where unless this particular scoundrel is detected and

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