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Ireland On Auto-Pilot

Two months after the Election the state is still without an elected Government. But life goes on as usual. Could there be a more convincing proof of the durability and maturity of Irish democracy?

The Election came close to breaking up the party-system by which the state has been governed for about three-quarters of a century.

The final result meant that Fine Gael, with 50 seats of 158, could not hope to form a Government. Neither could Fianna Fail with 44 seats. All the other TDs together have 64 seats. This meant that, should FF abstain, the other TDs could bring down the Government by 50 votes to 64. However, with the support of 7 TDs from amongst the Independents and smaller alliances, Fine Gael could survive a Vote of No Confidence, so long as FF abstained. Indeed, it is so that FF can have the luxury of abstaining that Kenny had to negotiate for the support of Independents

Fascination with the intricacies of the situation has virtually eclipsed the Northern Ireland Assembly Election of 5th May.

The routine operation of a party system, in which one party gives way to another in response to slight changes in the mood of the electorate, requires that there should be nothing at issue between the major parties that is fundamental to the functioning of the state. It requires substantial consensus, within which the parties denounce each other in extravagant terms but hardly anybody takes it too much in earnest.

That was the case in the Irish state after 1938, when the Fianna Fail Government established *de facto* independence by taking command of the Ports which had been under British sovereignty under the Treaty, and 1939, when Fine Gael supported Irish Neutrality in Britain's latest Great War.

From 1922 to 1938-9 substantial consensus on fundamentals had been lacking. During the 1920s the Party put in power by Britain had tried to exclude the very large body of Republican opinion from representation in the Dail by making the swearing of

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Britain At The Crossroads!

England is now mulling over its destiny. Is it to become European, or should it remain insular and universal?

The United States has ordered it to become European, and has threatened to damage it economically if it strikes out on its own.

The United States has always been "*exceptionalist*" in its world affairs. President Obama did not invent American *exceptionalism*. He is only the first President who expressed it bluntly.

The USA has, from an early stage in its existence, taken it to be its destiny to dominate the world. Until now it has preferred to state that ambition diplomatically and euphemistically while realising it by direct action at every opportunity. The fact that it now asserts it brazenly possibly indicates a growth of uncertainty about it. It is a sign of desperation rather than confidence. The best way to marginalise the world is not to tell it that its existence is marginal to the existence of the United States.

Sixty years ago the USA broke the British Empire by threatening to wreck

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Brexit: United States Enters War (of words); widespread collateral damage feared . . .

Quite apart from all the indignant spleen he has aroused for venturing an opinion on the subject, President Obama has given the 'Leave' campaign perhaps one of its strongest and most concrete arguments to date: Brexit will exempt the UK from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

As he said during his recent press conference with David Cameron,

"I think it's fair to say that maybe some point down the line there might be a UK-US trade agreement, but it's not going to happen any time soon because our focus is in negotiating with a big bloc, the European Union, to get a trade agreement done. The UK is going to be in the back of the queue."

For Eurosceptics on the Left who are inclined to Leave, this should be rather

welcome news, as it would preclude any Investor/State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism being imposed on the UK and allow the continuation in the UK of some degree of state sovereignty and therefore regulatory capacity over the corporate world.

The British Labour and Trade Union movement however, while strongly opposed to TTIP, has mostly come down on the side of Remain. But the only certain way of avoiding TTIP at the moment is by leaving the EU before it has a chance to come into effect. This therefore poses something of a conundrum.

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the Imperial Oath a precondition of contesting elections and entering the Dail and, when it lost its Dail majority in 1932, it tried to displace the system of Parliamentary democracy with a Fascist or Corporatist system. It was only when Fine Gael in 1939 accepted the accomplished fact of the independence of the 26 Co. state, and supported the practical assertion of that independence in September 1939, that routine democracy began in Ireland.

But, if consensus is the ground of functional democracy by parties, how could it be that the party system came close to disintegration at a moment when there was hardly any discernible difference between the two major parties, beyond the fact that there were two of them?

Consensus is not identity. There must be some identifiable difference between the parties—other than fine print in Election Manifestoes which hardly anybody reads—for the system of party-conflict to be functional: and a system without party-conflict at its core is not considered to be democratic nowadays.

Civil War origin, which was taken to be indicative of a difference of disposition or sentiment, was the identifier of difference within the consensus for three-quarters of a century. That ground of difference was then frivolously rejected as pre-historic and divisive by Fianna Fail. Under the influence of Micheal Martin and the party intellectual, Martin Mansergh, it disowned its anti-Treaty origins and adopted the Fine Gael position that the imposed 'Treaty', briefly submitted to by the electorate under threat of all-out Imperial reconquest, was the foundation document of legitimate statehood and democracy.

The process began with Bertie Ahern, who made Fianna Fail the party of managerial astuteness. And so the electorate in 2016 was presented with a choice between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. And, faced with a choice of nondescript parties, it voted heavily for individuals against parties.

The notion that Civil War politics must be rejected because the 'Civil War' happened almost a century ago is not a lesson one learns from British experience. It is a Civil

War that happened over three and a half centuries ago that is the source of the British party system. The Tories are Cavaliers, the Whigs came from the Roundheads. And, insofar as Labour is coherent, it is on the basis of Roundhead sentiment.

We have said repeatedly that the 26 County political system became destructive of itself because it went into denial about Northern Ireland under Jack Lynch. It is therefore appropriate that the only party that emerged with credit from the election is the all-Ireland party from the North, which dealt effectively with the pernicious Northern Ireland structure to the extent that it is now in government there along with Paisleyites.

In the Southern Election it forfeited votes by refusing to take the stand of encouraging people not to pay water charges, and it made the practical proposal of taking the matter out of politics to be dealt with by a State Commission to make recommendations.

Insofar as the Election was about something in particular, it was about the water charges. Half the people have paid them and half the people have refused. It was proposed that, while waiting for a Government to be formed, the Dail should debate the issue. Micheal Martin rejected the proposal. He would have had to say something definite in it. Should those who refused to pay have their debts written off, or should those who have paid be refunded? It is a nice problem for the law-and-order parties—who are very and law-and-orderish about the North—who have reduced themselves to the position that neither can govern and that, in one way or another, they are faced with the necessity of operating a Government together.

Proportional Representation!

April 1917—

"Lloyd Geprge opened fire on me the moment we sat down on the subject of Proportional Representation... Evidently his mind had hardened since he spoke on the subject in the House and said he had 'no opinion' about it. He argued very strongly that it was 'a device for defeatong democracy'(.), the priciple of which was the majority should rule(.) and for bringing faddists of all kinds into Parliament and establishing groups and disintegrating parties"... "I argued the matter and chaffed him with his autocratic tendencies..."

From The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott

We are indebted to Donal Kennedy for drawing our attention to this quotation.

Corbyn, Livingstone And The Semites

A campaign has erupted in the British Labour Party to label Jeremy Corbyn an Anti-Semite on the eve of local elections in which the anti-Brexit and anti-Socialist majority of the Parliamentary Party need the Party to do badly, so that they can get rid of Corbyn and snuff out the socialist revival which he has brought about amongst the greatly increased Party membership.

The occasion of the campaign seems to be a social media message, posted by a Muslim girl in the North of England a number of years ago, when Israel was engaged on one of its "mowing the lawn" exercises against the Palestinians. She suggested that the Zionist Jewish population imposed on Palestine by Britain, for the purpose of establishing a Jewish State which might be used against the Arab nationalism that Britain had stirred up against Turkey in the Great War, might be transported to the United States so that the Middle East might live in peace. Nothing was made of that comment at the time, or when the Muslim girl, Naz Shah, went on to help Labour defeat George Galloway and become a Labour MP. Her electronic posting all those years ago was dredged up, or had been saved up, for use at an appropriate moment.

She had long since retracted the comment and apologised, and had established friendly relations with the Jewish community of the Bradford Synagogue, whose leader, a refugee from Nazi Germany, has said that she is not an anti-Semite.

But the anti-Corbyn PLP would not let the matter rest and stirred up a big media furore, with front-page stories and copious TV coverage. Corbyn suspended her from Party membership.

But that was not enough. He was condemned by his Party opponents and the BBC for not suspending or expelling her as soon as it was alleged that she was an anti-Semite. *Anti-Semitism* appears to have become one of those things regarding which suspicion is proof of guilt—as was the case under the *Law Of Suspects* in France at the height of the Terror in 1793-4.

The matter would probably have declined into a continuous rumble if Ken Livingstone had not intervened to say that he saw no good reason why Naz Shah should have to apologise for what she said, still less been suspended from Party membership.

We have only heard such snatches of

Redmondism at Laochra

I purchased 8 tickets for last Sunday at Croke Park on behalf of all the members of my family and a number of members of our extended family. It was a big occasion for us and as GAA fans it was to be the highlight of our centenary year celebrations.

We were deeply disappointed to see the name of John Redmond appear on the big screen along with footage of soldiers fighting in the Great War.

Many of the leaders who contributed to the process of achieving Irish independence considered the Great War to be primarily an unjustifiable war by Britain against its trade rival, Germany. These include: Roger Casement, James Connolly, Patrick Pearse, Bishop Edward Dwyer, Eamon de Valera and Kevin O'Higgins. When Redmondism was swept into the dustbin of history by the Irish electorate in 1918, that view of the war became the accepted view of the Irish democracy.

The popularity of the commemorations of 1916 throughout this year shows how little weight has been given to the anti-1916 propaganda of recent years by the majority of Irish people. It is indeed disappointing to see the GAA kow towing to the historical illiterates of Dublin 4.

I would be obliged if you would forward this email to the Aogan O'Fearghail, President of the GAA.

I should add that apart from the genuflection to Redmondism we enjoyed the games and the spectacle.

Dave Alvey

The above complaint was sent to Ms Hoare, Croke Park, on 26th April. So far, no reply has been received

what he said as the BBC and Channel 4 chose to broadcast, and we do not know how it came about that he mentioned the fact that Hitler supported Zionism when he came to power and that the Zionist organisation had dealings with him regarding the transporting of Jews to Palestine. But he said it—and the Anti-Corbynites thought they had struck gold. The *Daily Telegraph* led with the story *You Are A Disgusting Nazi Apologist* while the *Independent* headline was *Now Labour Really Does Have A Jewish Problem* (29.4.16). John Mann MP went ballistic, and television gave him ample coverage as he screamed denunciation of Livingstone as a liar and a Nazi apologist.

BBC's *Newsnight*—its late-night programme for calm intellectual consideration of the events of the day—said Livingstone "invoked Adolf Hitler" in his support of Ms Khan, but all it broadcast him as saying was that Hitler collaborated with the Zionist organisation for a while about transporting Jews from Germany to Palestine.

Anthony Beevor—a historian for whom one might have had some respect—was brought on to adjudicate on the facts of the matter. He condemned Livingstone's statement as "preposterous". And then, since he cannot have failed to know that there was Nazi/Zionist collaboration—he mumbled something incoherently to cover himself.

Corbyn then suspended Livingstone's Party membership. But it was suggested that he also considered, for a moment, suspending John Mann's membership too. And it is suggested that that is evidence of the Anti-Semitism which he finds it difficult to overcome, and which is spreading throughout the Party under his leadership.

BBC Radio 4 (Today Programme) came up with a statement by Seamus Milne, Corbyn's adviser, that "*Hamas will not be 'broken'*", and it asked if it wasn't time for Corbyn to distance himself from Islamism. Hamas is the elected Government of Gaza—a region of Palestine under permanent Jewish siege.

Ken Livingstone has over the decades been a political associate of Corbyn, but he is not a political innocent like Corbyn. He has been active in the big, bad world, and has achieved something in it. His basic political outlook may be largely illusory, but he has an aptitude for practical politics, and has had the defensive ideological skill to see off many media campaigns against him. He refused to treat Provo Sinn Fein as criminal, and still got himself elected Mayor of London. And we assume that he defended Naz Khan, who was not defending herself, because he had a basic respect for the truth of history in these matters and would not let it go by default. And so he presented his friend Corbyn with a test that Corbyn,

who had only been engaged in protest politics until he was suddenly elected party leader, could not cope with.

English politics is a combination of finesse and brutality. That combination is taken for granted on the Tory side. Livingstone is the only politician on the Socialist side for a couple of generations who had it. (Blair's successes were not Socialist. He merely took over the Thatcher programme when the Tory Party became stale through having been too long in Office.)

Something not mentioned at all during the hounding of Livingstone is the statement only a few months ago by the extreme Zionist Prime Minister of Israel, Netanyahu, that extermination of the Jews was not Nazi policy in the 1930s. Hitler only wanted them out of Germany.

The Zionist movement wanted Jews transported from Europe into Palestine so that it could build up a population on which to base the Jewish State which Imperial Britain had projected with the *Balfour Declaration* in 1917. The *Balfour Declaration* was adopted by the League of Nations on Britain's behest and the project of establishing a Jewish State in a territory where there were very few Jews was set in motion.

Anti-Semitism is a slippery concept. Before the *Balfour Declaration*, it was Anti-Semitic to assert that Judaism was not just a religion but was a distinct nationality, and that the Jews therefore would not assimilate to the nationality of the various states in which they lived, as they had a separate national purpose of their own. That meaning was reversed in the development that followed the *Balfour Declaration*.

The great Anti-Semite of the period following Hitler was the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin. Bevin was a powerful Trade Union boss in the 1930s. He held the Labour Party together, committed it to a war policy, laid the basis of the welfare state as Churchill's Minister of Labour, 1940-45, and was made Foreign Secretary in 1945. He found that Labour policy, adopted at many Conferences, was Zionist, and he saw that implementation of Zionist policy required him to do things which the Nazis had been condemned for doing—clearing the native population out of a country to make way for a colonial population. And the colonial population was a religion, as he understood it.

As a Trade Union boss he had stamped on anti-Semitism, taking it to be a reli-

gious matter. And now he was being asked to establish the Jewish religion as a state, and suppress the native population in order to do so. He refused. He was branded an Anti-Semite.

Richard Crossman, a Socialist academic, was appointed by him to a Commission to investigate the matter. In the course of Commission work Crossman became an enthusiastic Zionist and subverted Bevin's policy.

Crossman became closely associated with the Zionist leader, Weizmann. He said it was Weizmann's view that all Gentiles (non-Jews) were anti-Semites, and the best thing they could do was confess it. So Crossman confessed to being an anti-Semite, and was honoured in Israel.

The Zionists in Palestine, a small minority, launched an unrestrained terrorist war against the British administration. Bevin, who would have been treated as the new Hitler if he had seriously fought it, gave way to it. Britain washed its hands of the development it had set in motion. Communist Russia and the USA took up the cause of the Jewish state. Britain allowed the matter to be referred to the UN General Assembly for decision and the USSR and USA whipped their client states into authorising the establishment of a Jewish State (which was ready to go), and an Arab State, for which no preparation had been made.

The Jewish state immediately set about driving Palestinians out of the territory awarded to it and over-ran part of the territory awarded by the UN for an Arab state and annexed it. And then, as opportunities arose, it began encroaching on and colonising the rest of the Palestine, protected by the US Veto at the UN. The work is ongoing, and the Government of Israel refuses to set limits to the territory of the Jewish state which it is still engaged in expanding. (And if it is held to be anti-Semitic to refer to Israel as a Jewish state, as is now suggested, then the Israeli Government is anti-Semitic.

The position with regard to Anti-Semitism and criticism of Israel was officially stated by the British Chief Rabbi about ten years ago: it is theoretically possible to condemn Israel without being anti-Semitic, but it is virtually impossible to do so in practice.

Under bombardment by that position, Livingstone would not maintain a prudent silence—Burke would have called it a *reptile* silence. And he would not let his

friend and colleague, Corbyn, be cravenly silent either.

If the British Labour Party has a conscience today, Livingstone is it. And it is not the first time that the Labour Party expelled its conscience.

Ireland since the Rebellion has had no part in this murky business. But Redmondite Ireland was present in the Commons at the time of the *Balfour Declaration*, and we do not learn from the Redmondite author of the recent two-volume biography of Redmond, that the Home Rule Party dissented from the Imperial award to the Jewish Agency of national rights in Palestine where there was not a sufficient population to sustain a state, while denying national rights to the Irish. And we assume that there is some significance that this author, Dermot Meleady, is himself an active Zionist.

Richard Crossman, who rose high in the Labour Party as it became anti-Bevinite—and who adopted a supercilious attitude towards the Northern Ireland region of his state as a Government Minister in the late 1960s (washing his hands of it as Bevin did of Palestine but with much less reason—was of the opinion that the responsible thing for the British Empire to have done after 1945 was to ethnically cleanse Palestine of Palestinians instead of leaving it to the Jewish colonists to do it messily for themselves. This opinion at least had the realistic merit of acknowledging that the imposition of the Jewish state required extensive ethnic cleansing.

Rosamund Unwin, a journalist on the London *Evening Standard* who says she is half Irish Catholic, wrote on April 28th: "*A Jewish friend, who's also a Labour member, remarked yesterday about Shah's comments; 'Would an MP have said this about any other group?'...*"

Naz Shah did not make the comment about a "*group*", e.g., the Jews in England. She made it about a *state*. And the state she made it about is the only one that was ever established in principle, and given standing internationally, before there was a population in the designated territory to base it on. The transportation of Jews to Palestine was essential to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. We do not know how many Jews got to Palestine by grace of the Zionist/Nazi collaboration. It was certainly only a fraction of the Jews transported there by the British Empire. And it was Britain, not Nazi Germany, that made war on the Palestinian populace

in the 1930s to break their resistance to the alien population, gathered from Jewish groups around the world, that was being imposed over it. Does Rosamund Unwin not know that?

Depopulation was the British policy for Ireland in the 19th century, and in 1918 statehood was refused to the remaining Irish in Ireland—still the great majority—who had voted for it, while Britain was conferring Jewish statehood on a Palestine that lacked a population to sustain it. On Britain's insistence, Irish elected delegates were refused a hearing at the Versailles Peace Conference, while Zionist representatives participated along with the other Victors.

The Jewish State was not projected on a territory where there was a Jewish population to sustain it. The building of a Jewish State in Palestine required the mass transportation of Jews to Palestine. And it required that the natural resistance of the Palestinian population should be broken. Golda Meir denied that there was any Palestinian population, but Jabotinsky insisted that there was, and that it would be natural for it to resist, and that it must be broken. And that is how it was done.

The Jewish State could not have been made without the active support of the British Empire, and then it would not have been viable without the financial and propaganda support of the Jewish "groups" around the world.

Unwin cites an opinion poll which does not support her case, showing:

"the way Israel is entwined with Jewish identity. Not for every British Jew of course... but a 2015 study by the City university... found that 93 per cent felt Israel formed part of their identity and 90 per cent supported its right to exist as a Jewish state".

This means that a foreign policy element is basic to the make-up of the vast majority of Jews in Britain. They are committed to the expansionist construction of a Jewish State a thousand miles away—a state which refuses to lay down territorial limits for itself, and is actively engaged in Jewish colonisation beyond the borders that the United Nations recognises as Israel. And we have often heard Israeli citizens say, without embarrassment or fear of criticism, of the Palestinians in the territory subject to Jewish colonisation: *Why don't they transport themselves somewhere else? If they are Arabs, there are plenty of states for them.*

Jews, *en masse*, became victims of oppression in Europe after Britain and

France broke up the Hapsburg Empire in which they felt at home. Soon after that, they became oppressors in Palestine under the Balfour Declaration. Their oppression in Europe ended in 1945 or soon after, just as their role as oppressors in Palestine increased. The Europeans then decided to make the Palestinians scapegoats for their own crimes against the Jews, supported Zionism against them, and described them as anti-Semites for resisting marginalisation by Jewish colonisation.

Is it reasonable to characterise non-recognition of the Israeli state as anti-Semitic while the Israeli state refuses to lay down borders for itself, and continues to engage in active colonisation far beyond the territory that the UN General Assembly awarded to the Jews for a state 69 years ago?

And is there any serious doubt that it is those activities of the Jewish State that give rise to the views that Corbyn's Labour Party seems to be intent on classifying as anti-Semitic?

NOTE. Livingstone's statements, as far as we have heard them, are amply supported by Jewish sources. But of course the Jews who dabble in the factual history of the construction of the Jewish state are self-hating Jews whose morale has been subverted by Gentile influence! ■

All postfree in Ireland and Britain:

Memoirs Of My Jewish Great-Grandfather, Karl Holzer, with *Reflections On The Fate Of A Jew/Arab Family* by Angela Abukhalil-Clifford. Appendix examines the exodus of Arabs from Palestine in 1947-8, with maps. 144pp. €14, £11.50

Britain, Zionism And The Holocaust by John Smith. 32pp. €6, £5

Serfdom Or Ethnic Cleansing? *A British Discussion On Palestine.* Churchill's 'Dog in the Manger' Evidence to the Peel Commission (1937). €6, £5

The British Legion And Hitler—"Lest we forget". How the British State shaped ex-servicemen's associations into its own instrument by Eamon Dyas. €6, £5

Union Jackery: the pre-history of Fascism in Britain: by Brendan Clifford. €8, £6

Britain At The Crossroads!

continued

the British economy if Britain did not desist from its attempt to control of Egypt by making war on Nasserite nationalism.

The US had the power to wreck the British economy at that time because the post-1945 capitalist world was American. All capitalist money was ultimately the dollar, and capitalist economies functioned on American loans. Britain had bankrupted itself and its Ally across the Channel by its reckless declaration of war on the German state in 1939 after it had spent the preceding five years helping that German state to build itself up into a Great Power.

After it lost the decisive opening battle in France in 1940, it was enabled to keep the War going by putting itself in hock to the United States. By keeping the War going on the margins of Europe with American money and American arms, it succeeded in spreading it to Communist Russia. Russia then defeated Germany, and established its own system in the region of Eastern Europe that it occupied in the course of defeating Germany.

The United States hustled Britain back onto the Continent in 1944, in time to occupy France, Benelux, Italy and the Western part of Germany. Capitalist states were restored in these regions by means of American capital, and money systems that were disguised forms of the dollar. And post-War European Capitalism functioned increasingly on credit-money, controlled by

the USA. And so Washington could stop the British war on Egypt by the stroke of a pen.

The British welfare state, constructed in 1945-50, was a kind of socialism made possible by American capitalism at a moment when the US was preoccupied with the threat posed to world capitalism by the Russian Communism that had defeated Nazi Germany.

America had played a secondary part in destroying Nazi Germany, and it had to allow deviations towards socialism to its capitalist proteges during its Cold War with the Communist Power that had played very much the primary part in defeating Germany.

In those times it did not need to assert a right of possession over its post-1945 capitalist dependencies in Europe. The dependency was obvious.

The Cold War ended 26 years ago. The Communist threat to world capitalism disappeared. Washington become intolerant of socialist deviations on the part of its dependencies.

In 1965 Indonesia was finely balanced between the two world systems. President Sukarno, the liberator, and constructor, of the Indonesian state, was inclined towards Communist China. A military coup backed by the West was launched against him by General Suharto, in which a million of Sukarno's supporters were killed by direct action. But Suharto could not establish a

stable regime in a medium of *laissez-faire* Capitalism and Washington allowed a substantial degree of Socialist deviation. But, when the Cold War ended, it overthrew Suharto in a campaign organised against 'corruption'—corruption meaning anything that interferes with free market activity.

The ending of the Cold War set off many local developments around the world. Ultimate dependence on the dollar, in all its metamorphoses, began to be lost sight of. The world began to think that it was free to do as it pleased. And so President Obama was obliged to tell it the facts of life—it was an offspring of the USA and it remained a US possession insofar as it was capitalist, and it was not allowed not to be capitalist.

The first blunt assertion of this fact that we noticed was directed at FIFA. FIFA used the Dollar and therefore it was under US sovereignty. Most of the world was happy with the way FIFA had made football a world sport, but Obama told I that it must change in the way demanded by England or he would crush it financially.

And he now tells England that he will damage it seriously if it does not remain a member of the European Union—possibly an idle threat, as he won't be in power for much longer, and there is a Joker in the pack of Presidential hopefuls.

The world is now a substantially different place from what it was 26 years ago. The Soviet Union has gone. Russia has become a capitalist state. For ten years it operated a free-enterprise capitalism of 'oligarchs'—billionaires who had not made their billions in the capitalist jungle, but had got them through the privatisation of State enterprises, and who offered no resistance to the take-over of the economy by US capital. The life expectancy, and the standard of living, of the mass of the people plummeted under this system of oligarchic anarchy, until an effective political movement to restore a national interest in the direction of the economy was brought to power by Vladimir Putin.

The United States was displeased by the restrictions placed on its economic penetration of Russia. It decided to destroy that new national capitalist regime in Russia by use of the financial sanctions by which it had brought Britain to heel over Suez sixty years ago. And it appears to have failed.

It seems that, for the first time since 1945, there is a capitalist state in the world which is not a dependency of the USA.

The excuse for the sanctions was the active Russian response to the anti-Russian *coup* in the Ukraine, that was brought

about in large part by European Union subversive activity in Kiev, directed by Washington. When some members of the EU were having second thoughts, Obama's Minister said "'fuck the EU"—such language for a lady—and the EU got the message.

Lest it be forgotten, the reason for the *coup* was that the Ukrainian Government negotiated a trade deal with Russia which would have provided a market for its industry in preference to an Association Agreement with the EU which would have destroyed it. This decision threatened the eastward expansion of NATO.

The *coup* was enacted on the ground by a revival of the Fascist movement which had acted with Nazi Germany against Russia in 1941—a fact which the EU has done its best to hush up. Putin responded by indicating that he would accept the return of the Crimea to Russia. The population of the Crimea voted for unity with Russia. The EU took the view that a valid referendum in the Crimea could only have been held with the approval of the anti-Russian *coup* Government in Kiev, and that the decision of the Crimean populace to rejoin Russia was therefore a conquest of the Crimea by Russia, and a breach of the 1945 settlement of Europe.

The settlement of Europe following the defeat of Germany in May 1945 was presented, for the propaganda purpose of demonising Putin, in idealised terms, which bore little resemblance to the reality of the settlement, which was carried out by means of ethnic cleansing and genocide on the authority of the United Nations.

The main Russian Fleet was based in the Crimea by agreement with the Ukrainian Government when Russia was recognising Ukrainian independence. If the anti-Russian *coup* had been accepted without response by Moscow, the presence of the Russian Fleet would have been a flashpoint between NATO (i.e. the USA) and Russia.

Russian action with regard to the Crimea triggered the US/EU attempt to break Russia economically—but it is probable that such a thing would have been attempted anyway because the existence of a strong capitalist state which acts independently spoils the world for the US.

Obama's assertion of US *Exceptionalism* came after Russia had acted independently, and when it seemed likely that it would not be broken by US financial instruments.

Under the UN structure of the world, there are actually five states which are recognised as being *Exceptionalist*—as not being subject to UN Rules. The five Veto states are exempted from UN law—and UN

law only applies to any of the hundred and sixty other states if the five Veto states agree that it should. But that nominal position did not reflect the reality in 1945. The UN was set up by the two indisputably Exceptionalist states, the USSR and the USA. France did not exist at the time and China was a US client state run by warlords.

Britain thought it was one of three, but in 1956 it was made to understand that it wasn't, not quite.

China became effectively Exceptionalist when it became Communist. After a period of delay imposed by the USA, it inherited the Veto from the Kuomintang because it made itself an unbeatable military Power, but it has been more concerned with its own politics than with international affairs.

The Exceptionalism asserted by Obama—an Exceptionalism of universal dominance—was on the agenda of the USA since about the 1820s. It seemed to have been realised in 1990. It now seems to be in imminent danger of being lost. And that is possibly the source of the revival of the British sense of destiny that has forced the referendum on membership of the EU.

If the world is becoming multi-polar, should Britain be one of its poles, or should it accept that it is its fate to be a mere tinge within a wobbly European melange which is only capable of acting as a destructive instrument of the United States?

That is choice that has to be made now by the residue of the old British ruling class that built an Empire and that still has a tenuous existence within the Tory Party. That residue is divided and therefore the British populace is divided. And the Irish Establishment, horror-stricken at the prospect of finding itself alone in the world—of being alone in the EU without Britain—is urging the Irish in England to vote against Brexit.

The British Labour Party has played no real part in the matter.

Forty years ago, in the era of Harold Wilson, it had the illusion that it had become "*the natural party of power*" in Britain. It certainly had the opportunity to become so. But it threw that opportunity away. It showed in the late 1970s that it is in essence a protest party.

It opposed British entry to Europe on national and socialist grounds, seeing the two to be interconnected. British national independence had to be preserved in order to protect British socialism from European capitalism. But in the late seventies it

balked at the further development of socialism proposed by the Royal Commission on Workers' Control. After that it did not know what it stood for. Margaret Thatcher did not know what she stood for: she stood for the freeing of capitalism from the petty restraints of the Socialists. She dominated the 1980s, broke the political power of the Trade Unions which had refused Workers' Control, and played havoc with Europe.

The Labour Party returned to Office by adapting to Thatcherism so as to become indistinguishable from it. The Blair Government had a Minister for the Capitalist Development of Europe. It had some other name—something like Ministry for the Development of Competition in Europe—but that is what it was. And the Minister was Kim Howells, who in the late 1970s had been a radical Socialist opposing Europe because it was too capitalist.

The present Labour leadership has attached itself to the Tory group which is against Brexit. The isolated Party Leader, Jeremy Corbyn, a lifelong opponent of the EU, has made an anti-Brexit speech because otherwise the Parliamentary Party would probably have repudiated him, but it is the Blairite Alan Johnson who usually appears for Labour in arguments with the Brexit lobby.

Johnson is the only Trade Union survivor in the Labour leadership. He was leader of the Post Office Union when the first measures of privatisation were being implemented and he made little effort to resist them. He then joined the post-Socialist Blair Government. And he now argues desperately for remaining in Europe as the only means of warding off unrestrained capitalism. He has gone as far as comparing a vote to remain in the EU with the 1945 vote to establish a socialist system.

The message is that the British working class is helpless and can only be saved by the Christian Democracy of Europe which British Labour once despised as capitalist.

But the "*social market*" of Christian Democracy is no longer quite what it was when British Labour despised it as capitalist. It has been greatly weakened by the unrelenting pressure applied against it by British Governments since 1979, both Labour and Tory.

And what force brought about the drastic decline of the British working class movement, which leaves the only working class figure in the Party leadership desperately hoping for salvation by the remnants of the Christian Democracy which Britain has not yet succeeded in wiping out completely? ■

Brexit: United States Enters War

continued

The geopolitical effect of TTIP is to lock the EU into the United States' maritime trading empire and its sister agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), performs the same function for the Pacific Rim. The rising continental Eurasian powers of Russia, China and India are excluded from both, and an arc of geopolitical instability has been created from Ukraine in the West, right through the Middle East to Central Asia in order to constrain the continental trading development of China and Russia in particular.

But the US has not had things all its own way. The effective Russian interventions in Ukraine and Syria have stymied the project to some extent, and the growing interdependence of Russia and China has led the US and its allies to embark on a massive propaganda war, particularly against Russia, which has shattered the credibility of much of the tame mainstream media. The somewhat surprising, and for the US highly irritating, breaking of ranks by the UK in becoming a founder member of the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in March 2015 led to a rush of other European states, and normally docile US clients like Australia and South Korea, doing the same. The 'special relationship' seems to be not quite so special when the fundamental interests of the City of London are in conflict with it.

There seems to be a view, albeit a minority one, within the City that Brexit is survivable and that it would free the UK to make trade deals on its own with the rising powers in the East. This is at odds with the Establishment view in both the UK and US that the UK's fundamental role is to continue to be part of the straitjacket that binds the EU into being an arm of US foreign policy even when, as the sanctions against Russia demonstrate, this is against the interests of the EU as a whole.

Many European states are already chaffing under this sanctions regime which has led to depressed economic activity throughout the bloc in consequence of reduced trade and the counter-sanctions imposed by Russia. The carefully orchestrated migrant crisis, which began when Turkey allowed refugees to move *en masse* towards the coast rather than restricting them as before, has driven support for the European far right, much of which is pro-Russian. The Dutch have just rejected the EU-Ukraine Association agreement and there is an approaching train wreck in the

form of the EU/Turkey visa waiver scheme which will give millions of Turks, including the oppressed Kurds, visa-free travel to the Schengen area. Once in the Schengen area they will be able to claim, with considerable justification, asylum from Erdogan's increasingly authoritarian rule. The deadline for a decision on this is 30th June 2016, conveniently after the Brexit referendum on 23 June.

A vote for Brexit in these circumstances will have an electrifying effect in Europe and will necessarily lead to a reordering of relations within it. A decisive long-term shift towards Eurasia, which would be very much in Europe's interests cannot be ruled out in such a case, so it is no wonder the US has felt obliged to intervene so strongly.

Just prior to Obama's intervention in the debate, another front had already been opened by an article in the *Times* (April 20) signed by eight former US Treasury Secretaries, ranging from George Schulz (1972-74) to Timothy Geithner (2009-13), and including all surviving Treasury Secretaries from the years in between, with the exception of James Baker (1985-88).

Their arguments are a mostly a repetition of the already well-worn Remain talking points, but they include the following curiosity:

"Europe has more work to do to complete its economic and financial union, but it is more likely to be successful with Britain inside rather than out."

It is hard to imagine that they could actually mean this seriously, and even more difficult to imagine that anyone will take them seriously. After all, collectively, they have been responsible for growing the US national Debt from just over 20% of GDP in 1972 to something like 104% today and overseen a massive off-shoring of its industrial base with the disappearance of tens of millions of well-paid jobs. The influence they can expect to have on a British electorate fed up with US-inspired endless war and endless immigration caused by the combination of EU membership and endless war, is minimal.

HM Treasury's report was released in the same week as Obama's visit and was somewhat overshadowed by it. As might be expected, it came down heavily against Brexit, but was criticised by Open Europe

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Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

1916 AND THE CULT OF EQUALITY

In politics there are very few words that are more powerful than the word "equality". No practising politician can be seen to be against that word. And yet its meaning can be elusive. Some people think income equality is important, while others place greater emphasis on equality of opportunity. In general, "equality" in some shape or form is considered to be a good thing.

But what about values and political beliefs? Have all political beliefs and values equal validity? It would appear not. Societies tend to have a hierarchy of values and political beliefs. They have ideas about right and wrong as well as political preferences. The State (whether reflecting the society or not) openly discriminates between one set of values as against another. While some societies appear more diverse than others, even liberal societies have a tendency to converge around a core set of values. If this were not the case, society would cease to exist.

1916 VALUES

If the 1916 celebrations are anything to go by, most Irish people do not feel the need to cherish equally two mutually exclusive political positions. When presented with a choice between the might of the British Empire and the Irish Republican garrisons in 1916, their sympathies are with the latter.

The State, in some of its manifestations, is more ambivalent. The Taoiseach Enda Kenny laid a wreath in Glasnevin Cemetery at a "Remembrance Wall". The wall displays

Brexit

continued

among others for not giving sufficient weight to possible upsides for the British economy following Brexit. These upsides would follow increased deregulation, and the freedom to make trade deals without the EU. The problem is that the countries that it would be most advantageous to do trade deals with, China and Russia spring to mind, are politically impossible to advocate in favour of at the moment. Brexit opens the possibility of a change in that dynamic.

Sean Owens

"chronologically" the names of all who died during the 1916 Rising "without distinction between the various categories" (RTE News, 3.4.16). So, British Soldiers, civilians and Irish Republicans are lumped in together. The private, self selecting Glasnevin Trust "has insisted that the memorial is an attempt to present the historical facts, without hierarchy or judgement".

So, it appears that anyone who thinks that the oppressed should be valued differently to the oppressor is in favour of "hierarchy" and against "equality"! The "Remembrance Wall" is not, as the Glasnevin Trust claims, a presentation of "historical facts"; it is a presentation of "historical data" (data being information in its raw or unorganised form). It is an attempt to rob the 1916 Rising of all its meaning.

Now whose interests does that serve!

1916 CELEBRATIONS

But, overall, the State conducted the celebrations in an appropriate manner. The Army (*Óglaigh na hÉireann*) was to the fore in distributing the 1916 Proclamation at Schools and giving talks. At the main ceremony there was an impressive display of the Army carrying the colours of the different Irish garrisons in 1916. It was inspiring to see the Irish Air Corps jets fly past the GPO to the strains of the National Anthem.

The celebrations demonstrated the Irish State's substance and the strong allegiance of the people.

1916 BLOOD SACRIFICE?

The great virtue of the celebrations was that it made people think about the 1916 Rising. In the Long Fellow's opinion, the Rising was a substantial military operation. The Battle of Mount Street Bridge was a spectacular success. 220 British soldiers lost their lives while attempting to seize strategic positions held by less than two dozen Republicans. British Officers showed a reckless disregard for the lives of their subordinates in this bloody battle.

Fifteen Civilians were murdered in North King Street when British Troops went on a rampage. This was sanctioned by British officers. No one was charged.

Even the most committed Republicans were shocked at the indiscriminate shelling of buildings by the British Army. The 1916 leaders surrendered in order to avoid further civilian casualties.

The 2,000 volunteers put up a decent fight against the 20,000 from the British side. It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if Eoin McNeill had not countermanded the order for a Rising. Could the War of Independence have been brought forward by three years?!

1916 CLASS POLITICS

The Long Fellow finds that "celebrity economist" David McWilliams either hits the "bullseye" or misses by a mile—sometimes in the same article. His piece on the 1916 Rising (*Irish Independent*, 30.3.16) is a case in point.

His thesis is that the British had more or less given up on integrating Ireland into the Empire by the 1880s. Their policy, nevertheless, was to ensure that it remained at least a semi-detached part of the UK. With this in mind they wished to cultivate a new ruling class drawn from the upper echelons of the Professions. This class would run the country with very little autonomy on behalf of Britain and would ensure Ireland would support the Empire.

McWilliams suggests that the fly in the ointment was the Northern Unionists, but he thinks the British Ruling class thought ("naively"!) it could manage them. (The Long Fellow would add that the British saw the Unionists as a means of mitigating Republican tendencies. Indeed, that was why the North was kept in a semi-detached form after Independence in the 26 Counties. The British have always been prepared to use the North as a bargaining counter to ensure less autonomy in the South.)

McWilliams points out that the leaders of the Rising were largely drawn from the petty bourgeois: teachers, drapers, clerks, a pawnbroker!, grocers, shopkeepers, a silk weaver! This was in contrast to the British-designated future ruling class drawn from the upper professions. So, *per* McWilliams, the 1916 Rising can be seen as less a movement for Independence as a class conflict among the Irish. He rather pithily describes it as a conflict between the Christian Brothers and the Blackrock/Clongowes boys. The backgrounds of subsequent Taoisigh suggests that the Christian Brothers boys won (McWilliams considers de Valera a Christian Brothers' boy since he only was able to attend Blackrock on a scholarship).

(Philip O'Connor, a contributor to this magazine, thinks that McWilliams misses the Irish Citizen Army/Trade Union element. But could this be subsumed under the Christian Brothers!? He also thinks the victory of the Pro Treaty side represented a temporary reassertion of the Blackrock/Clongowes element until the "Christian Brothers boys" returned in 1932.)

The Long Fellow thinks McWilliams' theory is quite ingenious, if flawed. In substance the 1916 Rising was the seminal event in the achievement of Independence. The class makeup of the insurrection might have determined the nature of our Inde-

pendence, but was not a significant motivating factor.

Nevertheless, the theory adds to our understanding. The Long Fellow always wondered why John Bruton (a Clongowes boy) continues to denounce the 1916 Rising. It could not really be for pacifist reasons, since his hero John Redmond was prepared to sacrifice tens of thousands of Irish men in the First World War.

Could Bruton be reflecting the resentment of a class who had been 'robbed' of its birthright by the 1916 Rising?

1916 AND YANIS VAROUFAKIS

As far as the Long Fellow is aware, the former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis has never said anything about the 1916 Rising. But could he be another John Bruton?!

It was noticeable that one of his first acts as Finance Minister during the Euro crisis was to visit London, rather than Berlin. An interview in *The Irish Times* (9.4.16) suggests that London remains the centre of his universe.

He begins by excoriating the EU. Ireland only received better treatment than Greece because she was a "model prisoner". He will be leading a political movement called *Democracy in Europe Movement 2025* (DIEM25). The aim is to re-invigorate the EU "as a Union based on democratic consent rather than technocratic governance within the next decade".

It might be thought that with such a lofty ambition he would not be unduly concerned with the prospect of Brexit. But nothing could be further from the truth. He thinks:

"... it is imperative, independently of whether we're on the right or left, as long as we're democrats and we believe that there is a rational, common sense way of stabilising Europe in order to stabilise our own countries, to keep Britain but at the same time to confront the mindset of Brussels without being model prisoners".

It's difficult to know where to start. The "imperative" of Britain remaining in the EU supersedes divisions between the "right or left"?! It might be thought that a development that de-stabilises an entity that makes countries prisoners might be a good thing. But no, it seems that Britain remaining within the EU is self evidently an "imperative". No explanation is given as to why Brexit might be a disaster for the EU. He does say that "it will create awful deflationary forces that will eat Britain up". Poor Britain! She knows not what she does!

The Long Fellow thinks that Alexis Tsipras is well rid of him!

Remembering Thomas Kent

With all the publicity and programmes dedicated to 1916 these days, one could be forgiven for thinking it was an event that touched Dublin only. April 21st however saw at least two events to remind us otherwise. The first was President Michael D. Higgins' excellent speech on Roger Casement, delivered at Banna Strand in Co. Kerry. A second—more low key but as important in its way—was the launch of Meda Ryan's *Life of Thomas Kent* as part of O'Brien Press' *Sixteen Lives for 1916* series.

Thomas Kent has sometimes been called "the forgotten volunteer"—the one who was executed for his part in 1916 but rarely mentioned as the event was overshadowed by the executions in Dublin of so many people, the 1916 Signatories.

The launch was hosted by Collins Barracks, Cork, and the guest speakers were introduced by Lt. Col Dunne of the Defence Forces, Southern Command, who reminded the large audience that, far from being "the forgotten volunteer", the Defence Forces had always recognised the contribution of the Kents and had conducted a local memorial ceremony on or close to May 9th every year in honour of Thomas Kent. The Barracks also has a close association with the Kents, as Thomas was executed on premises nearby that at the time formed part of the Barracks complex, then known as Victoria Barracks.

Michael O'Brien of O'Brien Press then explained to the audience how, when O'Brien Press approached Meda Ryan to write this book, her first reaction was that there would be insufficient material to produce such a book, so little being known about his life. In the event, her research turned an initial 50,000 word project into a 110,000-word volume, much coming to light about this, one of the least 'famous' of the 1916 Rebels.

Following this Meda spoke briefly on the same theme, adding some basic biographical information on the subject's life. As several members of the Kent family were killed or wounded that fateful day in 1916, when the RIC went to arrest them, it begged the question—'why Thomas, in particular?' Meda answered that question by noting, first of all, that he has been

known as "the forgotten volunteer", and that this was an opportunity to rectify the situation. But, placed in a larger context, he was one of only two 1916 Rebels executed outside of Dublin, the other being Roger Casement, executed in London; and as we earlier noted, the subject of a speech the same day by President Higgins. Between them these two men remind us that the events of 1916 involved a wider world outside the more well-known fighting and subsequent executions in Dublin.

The guest speaker was Cathal Mc Swiney Brugha, who had learned more about his own grandfather because of this book, and of the many connections between the McSwiney (of Terence McSwiney fame) and Kent families. Speaking about how Internet publishing was squeezing even the larger global publishers, Cathal commended O'Brien Press for performing an almost-community service in publishing such material of historical importance in hard copy format. He added that we now realise, despite all the material already published, the history of the War of Independence is only half-told and another half remains waiting between the release of Witness Statements, military archives and perhaps forgotten family papers. Thankfully, he said, we have authors of a calibre to rise to the task, and cited Meda as such an example, given her many years of dedicated hard work and diligence writing biographies of figures such as Tom Barry, Michael Collins and others. He echoed Meda's reflections on why a book on this particular member of the Kent family, adding that Thomas Kent had inspired the people of Cork as much as figures like Pearse had in Dublin, being one of their own.

While the Civil War has been characterised at times as a war between 'two tribes'—those who acquiesced in Britain's subjugation of this country and those who did not—he felt it more a war of ideals, a "conflict of two desires", as he put it. On the one hand, was the mundane pragmatism of those who recognised power and desired tranquillity in which to build their lives and maybe eventually, possible political freedom; the other, idealists who wanted the best for their families, which

for them meant from the outset an Ireland free to decide its own course. In some way these sentiments seemed to echo Tom Barry's comments that, while his men were fighting for their brothers, sisters, mothers, families; the British army fought for their wages.

By 1916 the British Empire had "gone too far": Ireland had lost half its population between 1845 and 1900; it had lost over 50,000 of its men in a war fought by Royal cousins (i.e King George V and Kaiser Wilhelm II) over control of global colonies. The 1916 Rebellion and War of Independence which followed, the overthrow of the British Empire at least within Ireland, was both reasonable and justified. Cathal noted finally that today, in an age where an Anglo-American politic pursues neo-colonial wars around the globe, we can reflect on the lives of people like Thomas Kent to keep that dream alive.

A special mention should go to the Cork Prison Officers male choir who gave a beautiful rendition following the launch.

*

A number of upcoming events to commemorate the life of Thomas Kent were announced at the launch:

At 11 o'clock on April 23rd 2016 a wreath will be laid at the statue of Thomas Kent at Kent Station, Cork, simultaneously with wreaths laid at the other principal train stations around the country named after 1916 Rebels.

On the 2nd of May the main bridge in Fermoy over the river Blackwater will be renamed the Thomas Kent Bridge in a ceremony in his memory.

On the morning of 9th May a ceremony will be held at the now decommissioned Cork Prison—the site of Thomas Kent's execution—for immediate family descendants and select guests. This will be followed by an open day at Collins Barracks, Cork from 10.30am onwards with military displays. In the afternoon, the public will also have a rare opportunity to visit the decommissioned Cork Prison and see the cell where Thomas Kent was held prior to execution.

On the same day, 9th May, the Everyman Theatre, Cork, will host the opening performance of a play on the life of Thomas Kent.

On the 15th of May there will be a march and ceremony in memory of Thomas Kent in Castlelyons, Fermoy, Co.Cork.

Nick Folley, April 2016

That Other Anniversary

The *Irish Independent* had a supplement on 20th April on the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and the leading item was by Michael Dobson, Director of the Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Professor of Shakespeare Studies, University of Birmingham. While he, like all those commemorating the event, heap superlative upon superlative on the plays and sonnets, they can never avoid completely the little matter of the biographical credibility of the author.

Dobson asks: "*What gave Shakespeare the ability to imagine and to share the range of human experiences dramatised in the plays we'll never really know.*" If Mr. Dobson said no more that would be fine but he cannot leave at that. Without any evidence he starts inventing immediately because he knows some explanation is needed. Otherwise we are dealing with miracles and that does not do in the modern world. We are told that: "*His glove-maker father's position as an alderman in Stratford-upon-Avon gave the young Shakespeare access to a solid grammar-school education and indeed to live theatre*" but there is no evidence whatever for either. If he had such schooling, he would surely have learned how to write his name properly.

But Mr Dobson makes a virtue of knowing practically nothing about this William Shakespeare—but that does not prevent him telling us:

"Luckily for us, despite the local allegiances and investments revealed by his biography, Shakespeare is the least local of writers: instead of burdening us with his opinions or anecdotes about his provincial childhood, he has an extraordinary talent for empathy, getting his ego out of the way so that his characters can be themselves."

So this genius was able to ignore all his human experiences and dispense with his ego into his bargain. He would be the first and last genius to have done so. The sonnets alone hardly indicate a man without an ego. We are presented here with a disembodied brain.

Empathy is surely based on some actual experience and involves some familiarity with, knowledge of and interest in the subjects/situations in question. In the 70 odd bits of information available about this William from Stratford there is nothing that confirms any such empathy with the myriad subjects in the plays. A picture

emerges of an entrepreneur whose main interest in life was making money and like all true entrepreneurs he was not that concerned with how he did so and sailed close to the wind legally and morally. He hoarded grain when people were starving in Stratford.

And he got himself a coat of arms and the biggest house in Stratford. Which would indicate some bit of an ego? There is a term that comes to mind—"a *cute hoor*". Fintan O'Toole is enamoured of the plays and sonnets but I doubt if he would be enamoured of the presumed author. But then to Fintan theatre is more real than life, so the real man does not really matter.

While making his pile between London and Stratford and before retiring there, William needed to have all the time and resources necessary to empathise mentally into the situation of 10 plays based in Italy, 3 in ancient Rome, 10 in English history, 2 in ancient Britain/Wales, 10 set in various places such as Vienna, France, Ephesus, Navarre, Illyria, Troy, Athens, Scotland, Denmark, Egypt and England—and write 154 Sonnets.

Poor Stratford, surely it deserved a part, or at least a mention!

AN IRISH DOUBTER

In the Irish literary firmament one Shakespeare doubter seems to be emerging—Frank McNally in the *Irish Times*. He writes concerning a new argument put forward by Alexander Waugh:

"It concerned Ben Jonson's much-quoted tribute to the "Sweet Swan of Avon", published in 1623, not quite in time for the funeral, but soon enough afterwards to be an impressive argument for Shakespeare's reputation. Except that, according to Waugh, Jonson's reference was not to the Avon that flows through Stratford. On the contrary, it was to a stretch of the Thames that runs past Hampton Court Palace, west of London, where the name "Avon" (a Celtic cousin of 'abhainn') was also applied to the river, and where many plays were performed." (27 April 2016).

There is much more reason to be suspicious of Ben Jonson's reference. It is odd in the first place to compare a man to a swan as it is usually reserved to compliment a female, and also unusual to address a man in the 17th century as 'my beloved' even if he was!

Jonson had a very aristocratic, very talented patron and poet, Mary Sidney

Herbert and she treated him very well at a literary salon she ran at her house for all the literary figures of the day. On the estate there was a river Avon and across the river there was a town called Stratford. Her personal emblem was a swan and in her portraits she is bedecked with them. And another poet now in Westminster Abbey, Michael Drayton, referred to her

as the "*The Thames' fairest Swan*". She is buried on the Avon and the First Folio is dedicated to her sons.

Jack Lane

The Shakespeare Conspiracies, untangling a 400-year old web of myth and deceit, by *Brian McClinton*. 516 pp **€36, £30**

Puritanism And The Theatre, by *Brendan Clifford*. 156pp. **€15, £12**

'Murderess' Markievicz Or Malicious Misogyny?

From April 20th to May 2nd of last year a Show Trial took place in the Headquarters of the Communist Party of Ireland. A year later, during this past month of March, the Show Trial resumed in CPI HQ, with the defendant scheduled to be extradited to Paris for the final day's Court sitting on April 23rd. On trial for "*murder*", and undoubtedly scheduled for a death sentence, gender considerations nonetheless signalled commutation.

But no, the CPI has not been seeking to emulate any of the Show Trials that characterised Leninist rule in Eastern Europe. Indeed, the CPI has no responsibility at all for *Madame de Markievicz on Trial*. For understandable commercial reasons, the CPI shares its premises with the New Theatre. But just as I found it incongruous to pass through Connolly Books en route to finding out just how nauseating the theatrical character assassination of Connolly's comrade-in-arms would turn out to be, I am sure CPI personnel found it even more nauseating to witness, on a daily basis, those audiences en route to lap up that Show Trial authored by one-time CPI-archivist Ann Matthews.

There is little doubt in my mind that Constance Markievicz has been the target of systematic misogyny, irrespective of whether the character assassins be male or female. Professor John A Murphy, University College Cork's Emeritus Professor of History, had certainly been prepared to play the role of nasty little man in the *Irish Times* of 22nd October 2004 when, under the heading of "*Markievicz and the Rising*", he gave vent to the following piece of misogynistic West Brit character assassination:

"The argument in your columns about Countess Markievicz's activities in Easter Week 1916 recalls W.E. Wylie's interesting account of her demeanour at the courts martial. Wylie was appointed to act as prosecuting counsel. He was impressed by some of the prisoners, notably Eamon Ceannt and John MacBride, but not by Constance Markievicz. According to him,

the court expected she would make a scene and throw things at the judge and counsel. 'In fact', said Wylie, 'I saw the General (Blackadder, court president) getting out his revolver and putting it on the table beside him. But he needn't have troubled, for she curled up completely. *'I am only a woman'*, she cried, *'and you cannot shoot a woman. You must not shoot a woman.'* She never stopped moaning, the whole time she was in the courtroom.' Though she had been 'full of fight' in Stephen's Green, 'she crumpled up in the courtroom'. 'I think we all felt slightly disgusted. . . She had been preaching to a lot of silly boys, death and glory, die for your country, etc., and yet she was literally crawling. I won't say any more, it revolts me still.' Wylie's memoir of 1916 was written in 1939 when he was 58. But is there any reason to think he was lying about Markievicz, or that his recall was defective?"

In my then capacity as SIPTU Head of Research in Liberty Hall, I submitted the following reply, which was published that 28th October:

"In the *1916 Rebellion Handbook*, first published in that year by the *Weekly Irish Times*, there is a self-revealing observation on the Irish Citizen Army from '*The Steward of Christendom*' himself, Dublin Metropolitan Police Superintendent Dublin Metropolitan Police Thomas Dunne. (This is the title of the play penned in his memory by Dunne's great-grandson, Sebastian Barry—MO'R). He complains that '*it is a serious state of affairs to have the city endangered by a gang of roughs with rifles and bayonets, at large at that time of night with a female like the Countess Markievicz in charge*'. Constance Markievicz's reputation has indeed been bedevilled by a combination of misogyny and contempt for her association with the working class that this union set out to organise, and whom Superintendent Dunne chose to christen '*the disorderly class*'. All the more reason, then, to expect professional rigour to be applied when UCC's Emeritus Professor of History, John A. Murphy, intervenes (October 22nd) in what he calls the 'argument in your columns' concerning Markievicz's role in 1916.

Surprisingly, however, he has nothing to say on the actual issue in dispute: that either Markievicz had shot Constable Lahiff at Stephen's Green, as maintained by Kevin Myers (October 14th), or that she could not possibly have done so, being at that time at the City Hall, as evidenced by Claire McGrath Guerin (October 19th)."

"Prof Murphy has instead chosen to open up a new line of attack, by endorsing, without any qualification, the character assassination of Markievicz offered in his memoirs by the death penalty prosecutor of the 1916 leaders, W.E. Wylie. It is a pity that Prof Murphy has not kept abreast of more recent scholarship in this area, most notably Brian Barton's *From Behind a Closed Door: Secret Court Martial Records of the 1916 Easter Rising* (2002). Writing of Markievicz, whose record had been kept a close secret by the British government for 85 years before they finally agreed to its release in 2001, Barton observes: 'In fact the official record of Markievicz's trial shows that she acted bravely and with characteristic defiance throughout. . . When speaking in her own defence, she retracted nothing, stating simply: *'I went out to fight for Ireland's freedom and it doesn't matter what happens to me. I did what I thought was right and I stand by it.'*"

"Barton further comments: '*Wylie's wilful and scurrilous distortion of her response at her trial is difficult to interpret. It may reflect a personal sense of irritation at her self-assurance and boldness, which he may have considered an insult to the court. Perhaps it reflected deep-rooted sexual prejudice and rank misogyny on his part. More likely, his fictitious account sprang, above all, from a feeling that the Countess had by her actions betrayed both her religion and her class (she had been presented at court to Queen Victoria in her jubilee year, 1887). Such considerations certainly influenced the Trinity College Provost's daughter Miss Mahaffy's assessment of her. . . (as) 'the one woman amongst them of high birth and therefore the most depraved. . . She took to politics and left our class.'*"

"She did indeed. Appointed Minister of Labour in 1919 in the democratically elected Government of the Irish Republic, Markievicz had previously been Vice-President of the Irish Women Workers' Union. She was also made an honorary member of the ITGWU, in tribute to her outstanding work during the 1913 Lockout in organising—with Delia Larkin—the provision, here at Liberty Hall, of 3,000 meals a day to our suffering members and their families. And for that commitment the name of Constance Markievicz will always be an honoured one in the annals of the Irish trade union movement."

Mysogynist-in-chief Kevin Myers has been to the fore in accusing Constance

Markievicz, second-in-command of the College of Surgeons garrison of the Irish Citizen Army during the 1916 Rising, of the gratuitous, triumphalist "murder" of Constable Michael Lahiff at St. Stephen's Green. He was at it again in the *Sunday Times* this March 13th, and yet again on April 3rd. But before that, over a sixteen year period, having been provided with a grip on the "Irishman's Diary" column, Myers had been facilitated by the *Irish Times* in mounting a sustained campaign of character assassination against Markievicz on no fewer than twelve occasions—in October 1990, December 1991, May 1995, March 1996, October 1996, May 1999, August 2003, October 2004, December 2004, October 2005, November 2005 and January 2006.

On only two occasions did the *Irish Times* letters page tolerate exposure of the factual fault line in that Myers campaign. On 19th October 1996, Natasha Mac a' Bhaird pointed out:

"Kevin Myers shows a biased and subjective view of Irish history. That Countess Markievicz murdered an unarmed policeman in Stephen's Green is a myth which thousands of Irish people have grown up believing... PC Lahiff, the unfortunate man in question, was shot within five minutes of the occupation of the Green, according to one of the few accounts which mentions the incident, Max Caulfield's *The Easter Rebellion*, and to the *Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook*. If this was the case, Constance could not have shot him. She did not march to the Green with Michael Mallin and the Citizen Army contingent. Instead, she and Dr Kathleen Lynn, after seeing the companies march from Liberty Hall, drove off in a car packed with medical supplies.

They unloaded part of the supplies at City Hall at 12 noon the time at which PC Lahiff was allegedly shot. Dr Lynn remained at City Hall, while Constance drove to Stephen's Green with the rest of the supplies... By the time Constance arrived, the rebels had gained control of the Green, and at this stage PC Lahiff could not have tried to prevent Constance entering it."

On 19th October 2004, Claire McGrath Guerin restated similar logistical facts, and further argued:

"Kevin Myers recycles the allegation that Constance Markievicz murdered Constable Lahiff on Easter Monday, 1916. This story first appeared in print in Max Caulfield's *The Easter Rebellion* (1963). Caulfield's account does not state the evidence on which it is based... Diana Norman, who collected the evidence in her book *Terrible Beauty—a Life of Constance Markievicz* (1988), states (p. 140): 'What is significant is how willingly

the story that she shot an unarmed man has been received and the tenacity with which it has been remembered since. It may be that some flawed, unconscious logic has been going on in the male Irish mind. Two rules of gentlemanly warfare were broken at Stephen's Green on Easter Monday: a helpless man died and a woman displayed a joy in battle; therefore the woman broke both rules; QED, Constance shot PC Lahiff.' The former keeper of State papers, Breandán MacGiollaChioille, informed Ms Norman that he had come across no evidence in his research among the State papers to indicate the truth of the rumour. If Mr Myers has some compelling evidence to indicate the contrary, I will be pleased to follow it up. If not, as this is a matter of justice, I hope he will acknowledge his allegation is baseless."

Max Caulfield had written:

"Countess Markievicz arrived in the Green (at the Grafton Street corner—MOR) by Traitors' Gate (the gate that had been erected as a memorial to Irishmen who had lost their lives fighting for Britain against the Boers), almost as if she owned the entire Park... Here, in these few acres of city park, in accordance with James Connolly's ideals, women were entitled to stand shoulder to shoulder with men; and if it came to it, she herself had no scruples about shooting the enemy. She even looked forward to it and as things turned out she would not have to wait long. Within five minutes Constable Michael Lahiff attempted to enter the Green at Traitors' Gate. He was told to go away, but obstinately, if courageously, refused. Informed of his attitude, the Countess rushed to the railings and took aim with her Mauser rifle-pistol. As she fired two men beside her also shot. 'I shot him!' shouted the Countess delightedly. 'I shot him!'" (*The Easter Rebellion*, 1995 edition, p 66).

In his 2002 book, *From Behind a Closed Door—Secret Court Martial Records of the 1916 Rising*, Brian Barton not only nailed the private narrative of Prosecutor William Wylie as a "fictitious account", completely at variance with the Court record, and as "wilful and malicious distortion" reflecting "rank misogyny" (p 80), he found the same misogyny present in the contemporary diary entries of one particular female:

"This (Wylie's fictitious) account clearly circulated widely in Dublin at the time. Miss Mahaffy, daughter of the Provost at Trinity College ... referred to 'the evidence of a little boy ... who saw her shoot a policeman ... (Markievicz) could not frighten or confuse the child who remained clear.' (Diary, 6 May 1916)... She (Miss Mahaffy) writes of Markievicz that she was 'the one woman amongst them of high birth and therefore

the most depraved... She took to politics and left our class.' (Diary, 30 April and 1 May 1916)."

The actual facts of the case, however, were that at the Markievicz Court Martial, held on 4 May, the 17 year old "little boy" witness, Walter McKay, had said nothing about her shooting any policeman at all, but of her shooting towards a building on the Green's Northside:

"Between 1 and 2 o'clock that day I was standing at the University Club door (where he lived and was employed as a page boy). From there I could see Stephen's Green, and I saw a few rebels dressed in green uniform; they were pulling the civilians out of the Green and as they were doing this the accused drove up in a motor car, blew her whistle and leaned out of the car. She gave orders to a Sinn Feiner after he had shut the gate of Stephen's Park. She then drove up towards the Shelbourne Hotel—I saw her again about 1.15 P.M.—she was then behind one of the monuments in the Green, she had a pistol in her hand and which she pointed towards the Club and fired. I ran upstairs and saw where the bullet struck. After firing she walked up towards the Shelbourne Hotel dressed in knickers and puttees."

Lauren Arrington, author of a newly-published biography entitled *Revolutionary Lives, Casimir and Constance Markievicz*, appeared to address more updated material earlier this year in a blog on the "Irish Historians in Britain" site, entitled "Did Constance Markievicz Shoot the Policeman?". She mused:

"No one ever seems to ask whether MacDonagh and MacBride, Connolly and Pearse (never mind de Valera and Collins) happened to fire shots at an unarmed individual, policeman or otherwise. But whether Constance Markievicz shot an unarmed constable at St Stephen's Green is the question on which the public judgment of her character hangs. By the afternoon of the first day of the Rising, six policemen had been shot, two fatally, and at least two of them were unarmed. The young Abbey actor Seán Connolly—who was the first among the rebels to die, and whose last moments have been recounted by witnesses and historians in tragic detail—shot an unarmed constable who stood guard at Dublin Castle. The righteousness of this act seems to be unquestionable. Yet, partly because she had the audacity to survive the Rising and its aftermath, Markievicz's identical sin has plagued the public imagination."

Arrington went on to quote more recently-trumpeted "evidence", attributed to the diary of a nurse, Geraldine Fitzgerald, and what she was supposed to have seen and heard from the Nurse's Home located at the South-West (Harcourt

Street) corner of St. Stephen's Green (in contrast with previously published accounts which maintained that Constable Lahiff had been shot at the North-West (Grafton Street) corner):

"A lady in a green uniform, the same as the men were wearing (breeches, slouch hat with green feathers etc.) the feathers were the only feminine feature in her appearance, holding a revolver in one hand and a cigarette in the other, was standing on the footpath giving orders to the men. We recognised her as the Countess de Markievicz—such a specimen of womanhood. There were other women, similarly attired, inside the Park, walking about and bringing drinks of water to the men. We had only been looking out a few minutes when we saw a policeman walking down the path from Harcourt Street. He had only gone a short way when we heard a shot and then saw him fall forward on his face. The Countess ran triumphantly into the Green saying 'I got him' and some of the rebels shook her by the hand and seemed to congratulate her."

This account has now been accepted as Gospel by media *cognoscenti*. The RTE "docudrama" broadcast on March 20th, and entitled *Seven Women*, featured Elsie Mahaffy, daughter of the Trinity College Provost, adding her enthusiasm for the British Army artillery shelling of Liberty Hall, from within its Trinity College base, to her incorrigible loathing of Constance Markievicz. The programme accepted, without qualification, the Geraldine Fitzgerald "eyewitness document" concerning Markievicz's alleged killing of Lahiff, while providing a "dramatisation" at odds even with that account itself, not to mind any other. This did not deter the programme's male historians from embracing such an account with unquestioning alacrity, with Padraig Yeates to the fore in pronouncing that "What shocked her as much as the killing itself was the FACT (my emphasis—MOR) that Countess Markievicz then shouted 'I got him!', and other members of the Citizen Army contingent around her then congratulated her on the killing."

There had been a prompt response to the Arrington blog from Dr. Ann Matthews who commented: "A robust defence of *Madame de Markievicz*." Matthews must have issued a sigh of relief that it had been anything but a "robust defence". Rather than question the Fitzgerald 'evidence', Arrington rested content with gender special pleading:

"The facts of the incident and a rational explanation of Markievicz's denial of the shooting may do little to influence public opinion, which continues to be governed

by emotive and fallacious accounts. If Markievicz's death sentence had been carried out, would historians or the general public view her actions with more sympathy? Possibly. But probably not. Her execution would not have affected the account offered by W.E. Wylie of her Court Martial, which holds so much sway. Nor would it have stymied O'Casey's vitriol or changed Yeats's verdicts. A clue to the reason lies in nurse Fitzgerald's diary: "the Countess de Markievicz — such a specimen of womanhood."

Matthews had now been given *carte blanche* to blow her own trumpet:

"Interesting that my work *Renegades* (2010) is the only one not mentioned, especially as it is the first publication to use Nurse Geraldine Fitzgerald's statement. My play *Madame de Markievicz on Trial* is going on a national tour of Ireland during March and April 2016. It received terrific reviews in 2015 when it was first staged. My play is interactive theatre where the audience is the actual jury, thereby removing this tale from the usual two dimensional story."

Under the heading of "Was Countess Markievicz a hero or a cold-blooded killer?" the *Irish Sun* reported:

"Countess Markievicz was not Michael Mallin's second in command during the Easter Rising, a top historian has insisted. Dr Ann Matthews said the 'eccentric' suffragette with a 'strong sense of self-importance' gave herself the job title. The NUI Maynooth lecturer said: 'Madame de Markievicz was a chaotic person, slightly out of control, believed she was entitled to be in charge and nobody ever questioned it.' ... Dr Matthews, who has written a number of books on Irish Republican women, told the *Irish Sun*: 'We are told that she was a sharp shooter but she was not. Constance de Markievicz was short-sighted from birth. At the age of 48 she couldn't have possibly been a sharp shooter. That's a myth.' It is also believed that she shot and killed Dublin Metropolitan Police officer Michael Lahiff at Stephen's Green on April 24, 1916... Dr Matthews has written a play about Markievicz's trial for the murder of Michael Lahiff."

Aside from other considerations, this play is not, of course, about the trial of Markievicz that had actually taken place. It is Dr Matthews' fictitious imagining of the trial she maintains should have taken place. Under the heading of "*Markievicz—a stupid, arrogant snob*", Emer O'Kelly reviewed it for the *Sunday Independent* on March 6th:

"The piece is more drama-documentary than play: there is no action as such, and the audience is addressed throughout. The text is based on witness accounts,

memoirs, and official papers from the time, and is set in 1917, after Constance's release from prison under the amnesty for those arrested after the Rising, and during her incarceration for subsequent seditious speech-making. A fictional Queen's Counsel conducts a 'trial', in which he calls various witnesses to the Countess's life and work. They range from the aunt of the unarmed Catholic policeman she shot at point blank range on Stephen's Green during Easter Week, to the adoring and dazzled Helena Molony (the Abbey actor who also took part in the Rising) to Dr Kathleen Lynn, the feminist and humanitarian, to the young nurse who attended the dying policeman. The picture is built up relentlessly, if in a slightly stilted form: the story of her life 'presented' in the form of questioning from prosecuting counsel. And Constance Markievicz emerges as what can best be described as a total cow: stupid, arrogant, snobbish, posturing, insensitive and manipulative, a far cry from Yeats's lines about her and her sister Eva: 'two girls in silk kimonos, both beautiful, one a gazelle'.... Constance was very much the *grande dame* patronising the poor and under-privileged as she flitted through Dublin, although she did found and lead Na Fianna, a boy-scout type organisation with a deadly purpose: to indoctrinate and train the youngsters to become armed revolutionaries."

This provoked a letter from Anne Haverty in the issue of March 13th, which walked a legal fine line in her description of what exactly Dr Matthews was at:

"It is sad that Emer O'Kelly ... should swallow without question the untruths currently being circulated in a play about Constance Markievicz. Nothing of what she asserts is true. In the forthcoming revised edition of my biography of Markievicz, the real facts about these issues are made plain."

And a week later, on March 20th, Anne Haverty addressed these "untruths" in greater detail:

"Who was Constance Markievicz? It's odd that the question has to be asked about someone who had such a significant part to play in the making of the Republic. Without the Fianna for instance, the corps of well-trained erstwhile boy scouts, Easter 1916 would probably have been another of those hopelessly amateurish attempts at rebellion the Irish went in for. It might not have even happened at all. It was Markievicz who founded the Fianna ... as a nationalist alternative to Baden Powell's imperialist, and no less militaristic, boy scouts (and who ended up in Flanders fields)... So why is she not recognised as a hero of the independence movement? Why is she absent from the roll-call of the famous? Why, when she is mentioned, is it as a peripheral figure,

and then often sneeringly, as little more than an attention-seeker? Why is her contribution so often reduced to the—false—charge that she shot a constable during the Rising?..."

"But it is the matter of the constable's death at St Stephen's Green on Easter Monday that most commonly now excuses her vilification. There are at least three versions in circulation. I think it's true to say that most of her detractors know next to nothing about the facts; and the few who do prefer to ignore them. The constable was Constable Lahiff, shot, according to the official report by the DMP—the Dublin Metropolitan Police—at 12pm or thereabouts, as the rebels were taking possession of the Green via the Fusiliers' Gate. At this time Markievicz was at City Hall..."

"The only source for the allegation is 'testimony' from a Miss Geraldene (sic) Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald's account, said to be from her diary of that day, is kept in the British National Archives at Kew, marked *Evidence Against Countess Markievicz* and stamped July 14, 1917. That it's from her diary, 'kindly supplied' by her mother who lived in Birr, can't be verified however, as it consists only of two type-written pages. In fact, it reads more like a deposition, taken down by someone tasked with gathering incriminating evidence. Geraldene Fitzgerald, a trainee public health nurse, tells how she was on her way back to the Nurses Home on the Green after her morning rounds. At 12.30 pm she was in High Street and took a longer route home to avoid Jacob's where the Sinn Feiners were in possession. Making her way to the south side of the Green she saw the Sinn Feiners inside, digging trenches while others 'were ready with rifles to fire on anyone in military or police uniforms who passed that way'. She sat down to dinner in the dining room with some colleagues. It would now be approaching 1 pm, if not later. From the window the nurses saw a policeman coming from Harcourt Street. 'He had only gone a short way when we heard a shot and then saw him fall forward on his face. The 'Countess' ran triumphantly into the Green, saying 'I got him' and some of the rebels shook her by the hand and seemed to congratulate her...' Apart from the crucial matters of the timing and the location of the shooting, which are totally at odds with the DMP's report, there are other extremely questionable aspects to this account. Among them are that the likelihood of a remark, as Fitzgerald relates it, carrying from the west side of the Green and across a wide stretch of road noisy with the activities of the rebels, onlookers and the traffic still going up and down, is small... It's hard to know what to make of Fitzgerald's account or to say what she saw or did not see—only that it seems at the very least fanciful and based more on a year's worth of rumours than on reality. It could not

stand up in a court of law, which may be why it did not appear on Markievicz's charge-sheet when she was tried on various grounds in 1920. Only the obstinately mischievous—to put it kindly—can continue to cite it."

Some months back, Dr Ann Matthews had been as disingenuous as she remained "*obstinately mischievous*" in her response to the Arrington blog, when she boasted:

"*Interesting that my work Renegades (2010) is the only one not mentioned especially as it is the first publication to use Nurse Geraldine Fitzgerald's statement.*" But I, in fact, find it far more interesting that the more recent book from Matthews, *The Irish Citizen Army* (2014), repeats (pp 93-96) her earlier use of Fitzgerald without, however, making any reference whatsoever to the forensic examination of such 'evidence' that has occurred in the interim. The methodology employed in the latter book was criticised as follows in the November-December 2014 issue of *History Ireland*:

"Matthews's approach to oral testimony demonstrates a lack of consistency. A number of witness statements are rightly questioned. Much less rigour is employed, however, when it comes to the question of Constance Markievicz's character and behaviour during her court martial in the wake of the 1916 Rising. A passage from the prosecuting counsel's memoir is quoted in full and without question. In this Markievicz is described as having pleaded for her life—behaviour that disgusted the memoirist. Matthews does not note that the memoir was written decades later (as she does with a number of witness statements), nor does she acknowledge the existence of a transcript of the court martial proceedings that completely contradicts the memoir (p. 143)."

With all due respects to *History Ireland*, its criticism of Matthews, although valid, is old hat, doing little more than repeating my own demolition twelve years ago of Emeritus Professor John A Murphy's attempt to "Wylie" Markievicz. *History Ireland* failed to notice that the most glaring omission from the 2014 Matthews book is any acknowledgement of the direct 2012 challenge to the Lahiff 'murder' charges against Markievicz in her earlier book. Ray Bateson is a historian of the 1916 Rising, the sheer depth and comprehensiveness of whose research and expertise has either been scandalously neglected or left uncredited by others. The fact that he is self-published—under the imprint of *Irish Graves Publications*—is no excuse; his books, at the very least, are easily accessible through the public library system. His 2010 book, *They Died By*

Pearse's Side, was followed in 2012 by *The Rising Dead: RIC & DMP*, which his no less marked by the sensitivity he shows in respect of all deaths. But the failure of Dr. Matthews even to mention Bateson, either in her own 2014 book or in the propaganda for the 2015 and 2016 productions of her "*Show Trial*", is not merely neglectful. It is scandalously unconscionable. For, in that 2012 book, Bateson devoted no fewer than 14 pages—pp 39-52—to a meticulous forensic examination of all the pros and cons of the real, imagined or false evidence surrounding Lahiff's death. He noted that, even before the Rising was over, the character assassination machine was well in place, with Markievicz as the prime target. And so it has continued, with Bateson commenting:

"Myers's source for the killing seems to be Caulfield's book but the problem with Caulfield is that he himself did not give any sources."

Bateson continued:

"Markievicz's detractors, either then or now, are not just confined to the male of the species. Ann Matthews in her book, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women 1900-1922*, quotes from the diary of a student nurse, Geraldine Fitzgerald... As this diary is one of the few sources for the actual shooting, it is essential to examine the diary in greater detail. But this is not possible. Despite extensive enquiries in the (British Public Records Office) archives in Kew, no diary could be found. There are however a couple of typed pages dated and stamped '14th July 1917 Headquarters Irish Command Parkgate Dublin'. It is entitled 'Diary of the Rising written by a Birr Lady'... In the absence of the original, its standing is questionable. Was the diary written on the actual day or afterwards and how long afterwards? Were the pages a verbatim account of what was in the diary or were they an elaboration of the entry in the diary with further memories coloured by other accounts sent in over a year later? Were there other pages or was that all she saw of value during the week? Or was it a deliberate attempt to blacken the reputation of Countess Markievicz?"

"Even if the 'diary' is taken at face value, it requires further detailed reading... The general consensus about the shooting of Constable Lahiff is that it took place within five minutes of the Green being occupied around midday. The timing of the shooting according to the Fitzgerald narrative would make it some time around or after 1.00 p.m. As regards the shooting, it is surprising that Matthews omits from Fitzgerald's account the direction in which Lahiff was walking—from Harcourt Street—for it is crucial to the understanding of the shooting, and might even support her contention that he was shot at

close range... Why did he continue in that direction? Was the shooting a warning that he disobeyed? Was his devotion to duty so strong that he was prepared to die there and then? Was he gathering information to be passed on and therefore was considered a legitimate target? After all, it was an hour since the Green was occupied and most of his colleagues had vanished at the first sign of trouble."

Bateson highlighted another omission by Matthews from this July 1917 document that was at variance with an eyewitness account published a year earlier, in July 1916. He also quoted from the police authorities' own *Constabulary Report* of August 1916 which placed the death of the policeman at the Grafton Street / Traitors' Gate entrance to the Green. I do not know where Lahiff was killed, nor the identity of the one or more who might have shot him. But one thing I know: There is no basis for believing in the veracity of the identical words and actions ascribed to Markievicz by both Caulfield and Matthews, but supposedly occurring at two quite distant corners of the Green. Such are the contradictions of Markievicz's character assassins. Of much greater significance is the reproduction by Bateson of a letter from the most honourable and conscientious British Army officer to have served in Dublin during the 1916 Rising, Sir Francis Vane. For it was Sir Francis who had so readily come to the assistance of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington in exposing the 'execution' of her pacifist husband, Francis Sheehy Skeffington, as having been nothing less than murder most foul, and as but one of five murders committed by Captain Bowen-Colthurst in his orgy of bloodshed. But Sir Francis Vane also wrote the following in a letter published by the *Irish Independent* on 31st July 1916:

"It is baby talk to complain that a few policemen were killed or a few officers or soldiers in uniform, unarmed, were shot. No soldiers should be unarmed. And how were the enemy to know they were so. Yet I wonder, thinking of those times in my native city of Dublin, if an impartial tribunal, a Royal Commission, or whatnot, to enquire into the shootings of innocent civilians by rebels and by the military was instituted, whether the opposition to such an enquiry would come from rebels side or from that of the military?"

Whoever—whether a he, she or they—shot Constable Lahiff, or wherever it might have happened, one thing should be beyond reasonable doubt. Murder it most certainly was not.

Manus O'Riordan

McKenna's Fort a play about Roger Casement reviewed

McKenna's Fort a play, billed as being about Roger Casement's role in the 1916 Rising, had its world premiere recently at the New Theatre in Dublin's Temple Bar. It ran from March 21st to April 2nd. Arnold Thomas Fanning, the author, is from Ireland. Michael Bates played Casement. The play consists of a one man monologue. Such a production suits the small, intimate environment of the New Theatre.

The title refers to the *rath* or remnant of an Iron Age circular dwelling enclosure where Casement hid out after landing by rowing boat from a German submarine with two companions in April 1916. The boat had capsized before reaching the shore and all three aboard tossed into the sea. After they had made the safety of Banna Strand, wet to the skin, they decided Casement would wait at McKenna's Fort. Meanwhile the two others went to make contact with somebody who hopefully could bring him to Dublin to meet with the leadership of the planned rebellion. Casement believed the rebellion as planned would result in a bloodbath which could not lead to military success. He hoped the arms consignment from the ship *the Aud* could be landed, distributed and stored but not put to immediate use. He believed the time was not opportune for an insurrection.

The action of the play, such as it is, consists of what might have gone on in Casement's mind as he hides in the rath waiting for his associates Monteith and Bailey to return with the required assistance needed to get him to Dublin. At first his thoughts are on the possible rebellion which he feels to be "*ghastly folly*". Then he remembers the cramped, foul environment he endured on the U-boat. The crew "*hate me*" and snigger as he holds a bucket to his chest.

Then his thoughts go back to when he arrived in Germany in 1914 and what he considered his great diplomatic coup when he persuaded the German Government to make a declaration of goodwill towards Ireland and Irish independence.

Then he is nine years old and he is slowly coming to realise his mother has died. His father is then remembered as a man who died penniless in a hotel in Ballymena and as being "*famous*" for conducting séances. The suggestion is of a childhood marred by tragedy and parental inadequacy.

The play then becomes a potted history of Casement's life up to his submarine voyage from Germany. What we get is a canonical Casement; the canon being that of *Irish historical revisionism*.

Some incidents are contrived from the imagination. Others are based on the extensive trove of Casement-associated archival documentation which has found an outlet in the printed output of various authors.

An irritation is the anachronisms which crop up from time to time. These are mainly Americanisms which would have been unheard of a century ago. Casement once describes his sister Nena as "*feisty*". Irish prisoners of war he refers to as "*POWs*".

The play has Casement exhibiting egomania. After he recalls listening to the Africa explorer Stanley speak in London, he remarks with enthusiasm "*a whole continent was there; needing me*". An aspect of his walks is looking out for and evaluating what he called "*types*"; men of a younger age group who he might find attractive and who could possibly be potential sexual partners. One of the invented scenes has him go down an alleyway in Paris with a young man he expects to experience some intimacy with only to be robbed at knife point.

In another invented incident Casement is staying in Stanley pool in the Congo and has gone out for a walk with John, his bulldog. John barks at the village boys and Casement beats him repeatedly with his stick until it is broken across his back. The dog whimpers the whole time, not understanding what he has done wrong. It is a scene with a sinister nuance; a man out for a walk with his dog, the anonymous village boys, the dog barking, then whimpering, and the frantic assault with the stick. This vignette is at odds with the reports we have of Casement in regard to animals, especially dogs, which relate his kindness and sympathy.

Casement's alleged lover Millar Gordon crops up. They fall out because Gordon has signed the Ulster Covenant! There are reminiscences of various sexual encounters with young males in Peru and Brazil.

The text gives the impression not a single man answered Casement's call to enlist in his Irish Brigade when in fact about 50 did so.

As he hears people coming towards him in the rath, he muses he had always expected to have a role in Irish history given a chance. He is thinking that the people arriving are going to help him get to Dublin to complete his mission.

The Casement that emerges is a disjointed personality, compassionate yet with a violent streak, idealistic yet madly vain, capable yet delusional, desirous of doing great deeds yet lacking depth of character. His views on Ireland or on Germany and the war are not explained save for the suggestion of mild psychosis which in the script hovers over and about the main character.

Michael Bates proves a versatile and effortless mimic. In the 75 minutes or so of the production he speaks German, French and Irish as well as rendering a variety of accents and characters more or less flawlessly. The way he rendered Casement lacked the passion one would expect for a historical personality known to have been deeply emotional. The script required the actor to render a combination of the soulless automaton of the infamous diaries and the historic personality known as Roger Casement. Such an effort can not avoid a certain touch of lifeless incoherence.

McKenna's Fort runs as part of the 13th International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival 2016 at The Teachers Club (Studio), Parnell Street West, Dublin, from May 2nd to May 7th 2016 at 7.30pm.

Tim O'Sullivan

Roger Casement: The Crime Against Europe. With *The Crime Against Ireland* Introduction by B. Clifford. 184pp. . £18, £15

Roger Casement: A Reassessment Of The Diaries Controversies by Mairead Wilson. 32pp. £6, £5

The Casement Diary Dogmatists. by Brendan Clifford. 68pp. £8, £6

Traitor-Patriots In The Great War: Casement & Masaryk by Brendan Clifford. 56pp. £6, £5

Casement, Alsace-Lorraine And The Great Irredentist War by Brendan Clifford. With extracts from Casement's *Crime Against Europe*, and works by Rene Bazin, Coleman Phillipson and Nicholas Mansergh. 48pp. £6, £5

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Account Of Meeting held in Kanturk on 23rd April, addressed by Jack Lane

The 1918 Election: An Ignored Centenary

We have just had numerous events to commemorate the Rising and rightly so. But 1916 without the 1918 Election result would be almost a non-event and this election is not listed as one of the events that's highlighted for commemoration during 'the decade of Commemorations.' In fact it is never commemorated. It was the endorsement of 1916 by the electorate in 1918 that made 1916 the event it was. Otherwise it would have been a failure like '98, 1803, '48, and '67. It therefore deserves a fairly prominent commemoration. Up to a few months ago there were 974 books listed in the NLI on 1916, and well over a 1000 by now, but not a single one on the 1918 Election! I wonder will there be at least one book published on it before 2018?

It is impossible to understand subsequent events such as the War of the Independence and the so-called 'Civil War' without appreciating the 1918 Election. That was the seminal event of the period. It endorsed the Rebellion and was the basis for Interdependence.

All the critics of 1916 about the lack of a mandate should be lauding 1918 but they are strangely muted about it. The results of any General Election can hardly be ignored but that is exactly what happened in 1918 and the more one thinks about it the more extraordinary it becomes.

Not responding to, and ignoring, such an event is not a case of there not being a policy—that is a very definite policy.

Here was a British General Election which produced in Ireland a unique result that I don't think has ever been matched in what are usually called democratic countries. Ireland was treated as one unit, as it had always been, and the Sinn Fein party got 73 and other nationalists 6 of the 105 seats, over 70%. It gave a clear mandate to withdraw from Westminster and set up an independent Government in Dublin.

It was a first in many ways.

It was an interesting Election. It was the first to be held on one day and counted all together on another day. The Electorate had increased from 31% of the population to 75% with all males over 21 and many women voting—those above 30. Women got the vote because of how they participated in WW1, not by the suffragettes convincing everybody. The suffragettes

who invented the '*white feather*' did more than most to win the vote. Like some hard-faced MPs, women 'did well out of the war'.

The election itself was held in the widest franchise ever, in which a British election was ever held. The self-proclaimed '*mother of Parliaments*' never had more people voting for it.

The result gave democratic sanction to the 1916 Rebellion and was therefore as important as the Rising itself. If that election had not happened, the Rising would be a footnote in our history and classed as a failure. It was the real origin of the state as we know it. The Rising was an aspiration for Independence. This was the aspiration become reality. Therefore it is the founding event of our state, of what we are.

No doubt the electorate as a whole thought that in these circumstances 'of democracy all round' that they only needed to vote for freedom to get it. And their message could hardly be clearer.

Critiques of the election result

There has been a series of critiques of the Election and I should briefly mention these as they keep being repeated.

Intimidation

The word *intimidation* is thrown about and it's always directed against Sinn Fein. Indeed, there was massive intimidation. Sinn Fein was banned, about 100 leaders were in jail, all Republican publications banned, and the rest of the press censored. Several candidates were in jail, giving rise to the wonderful slogan "*Put him in to get him out!*" Only 29 of the elected Sinn Fein MPs were present at the opening of the Dail—the others being on the run or in Jail. Instead the Dail was proclaimed, i.e., outlawed and later suppressed.

Sinn Fein canvassers were fired on in Waterford and Sinn Feiners had to fire back. Sinn Feiners were viciously attacked in Belfast—by Redmondites in both cases.

It was a British General Election held under strict rules. Nobody lodged a complaint of malpractice—no Unionists or Home Rulers and the RIC did not do so either. But such complaints were often made in the past and MPs were sometimes forced to resign. It was a pretty regular occurrence.

The Government put forward no

candidates—were they intimidated as well?

Sinn Fein got a minority of votes

Because there were so many unopposed seats, 25, the suggestion is that Sinn Fein might have been defeated in these seats. All of Kerry and all Cork County seats were unopposed. Were Unionists and Home Rulers likely to win in these? And there is no record of people being stopped from standing. In fact there were more contested seats than was normal in Irish elections. For example in the 1910 Election there were 46 uncontested seats, compared to 25 in 1918. And there were 74 in 1906 and 64 in 1886. It was only in 1892 that the majority of seats were contested. By this logic the Unionists represented Ireland for decades!

They did not understand what they were doing

Ireland's claim to be recognised by the Versailles Conference, in this new era of democracy and national self-determination poses problems for our modern historians. After all, several countries were recognised: Finland, Poland, Baltic States, Czechoslovakia. But not Ireland (or Vietnam.)

One argument is that the Irish did not understand the issues because they were not educated in the matter of politics. In *'Controversial Issues in Anglo-Irish Relations, 1910-1921'* (2004), Professor Cornelius O'Leary and Dr. Patrick Maume say:

"The mission [to Versailles] was a failure, the new regime was not admitted to the League of Nations and the report of the Paris Peace Conference made no mention of Ireland. In spite of earlier optimism, it ought to have been clear to Sinn Fein that the delegates at the Conference were most unlikely to take any action that would antagonise Britain, and this was particularly true of President Wilson.

"It might be appropriate at this stage to advert to the ignorance of foreign (apart from British) politics on the part of Irish politicians generally. (Even in the days of the Irish Parliament Party John Dillon was alone among the leaders with both a knowledge of and interest in foreign affairs.) The reasons are not far to seek. In both Great Britain and Ireland the academic study of politics was then in its infancy. The first holder of a chair of Politics at an English university was Professor W.G.S. Adams, who as a member of Lloyd George's "Garden Suburb" played an important role in Anglo-Irish relations between 1916 and 1918. (It was not until 1948 that a lecturer in Political Science was appointed at a university in Dublin, Trinity College.)

Moreover, serious students in Ireland did not have access to comparative works on political systems, the first of which in English was Herman Finer's *The Governments of the Greater European Powers*, published in 1931" (p.80).

So if they had read the right books they would have forced the Victors at Versailles to accept them. But the books were not written at the time! So there was an insuperable problem here.

Of course the US and French Republic were the Irish model—especially for the Fenians who led the Rising. There was no need to consult books about what they wanted—it existed already in a real sense in France and the USA.

Was it a fluke?

Did the Irish just get carried away? This was definitely the British view. But not only did the people defend the new Government elected in 1918, they voted several times for it during the War which was made on it. This again is something extraordinary. Britain cancels elections during wars. Here we kept voting. Those elections were the January 1920 Municipal Elections where Republicans got 77%; the June 1920 Rural Council Elections where they got 83%; the June 1920 County Council Elections where they got 80%; and the June 1921 General Election where they had 100% success in the 26 Counties. And they got these massive majorities despite the sudden introduction of PR which was an attempt to maximise divisions amongst the electorate and dilute support for Sinn Fein. These results show that it was a people's war in a real sense and fought on full democratic grounds and the people had no regrets about their 1918 vote.

I doubt if you will find anything similar happening anywhere at any time—4 elections confirming support for a war to defend a government at war—in this case to defend the Republic.

Was it legal?

Joost Augusteijn argues that "*recognition by the international community is a central element in the debate on legitimacy, and in international law, the Irish state was created by the 1921 Treaty, and not through the vote of 1918*".

Peter Hart made a lot of this: that it was not legal because the Versailles Conference said so. WWI had been fought for the freedom of nations yet it was illegal to claim that freedom after fighting and voting for it!

In case people need reminding, Hart's thesis is:

"... the Dail had no legal standing and was never recognised by any foreign government. Nor did the IRA, as a guerrilla force acting without uniforms and depending on their civilian status for secrecy, meet the requirements of international law. The British government was therefore within its rights to give courts-martial the power to order executions" (Irish Times, 23 June 1998).

"Nor were members of the IRA protected by the Hague Convention, the basis for the law of war on land. The British government and its forces were not at war in this sense. To be recognised as belligerent soldiers, the guerrillas would have had to be fighting for a responsible established state, wear a recognisable uniform or emblem, carry their arms openly, and not disguise themselves as civilians. None of these conditions applied. It is of course true that international law favours established states, but if any group can claim belligerent status when using political violence, then so can the INLA or the UVF. The Oklahoma bombers would also conceivably have a right to POW status" (Irish Times, 22 July 1998).

The Hague Convention was drawn up by the Empires of the world in 1907 and was based on a sort of ideal version of two armies lined up like toy soldiers obeying laws. The Irish Republic did not exist so was not a member. The Irish met all the conditions of Convention in the 1916 Rising but the British broke the first rule of the Convention in not taking prisoners of war of the entire enemy after the surrender.

All the rules were ignored in WWI and developments in spying and Intelligence made the Hague Convention even more redundant than it was originally. With the invention of concentration camps, the British did not fight the Boer War according to the Hague Convention and the Black and Tans hardly met the rules. And the Convention could never be interpreted by anybody to prove that war against an elected government was legal. The UVF, INLA or the Oklahoma bombers did not win general elections.

The Context

To put the election in context. It was held after WWI, which was fought, allegedly, "*for the freedom of small nations*". That was why a quarter of a million Irishmen joined up—and killed and were killed by the tens of thousands for this alleged freedom. The Bolsheviks in Russia had left the war and were encouraging in every way they could national liberation and self determination in all the colonies across the world.

By the end of the war the USA had

joined in on the basis of Wilson's 14 points, which essentially meant for the rights of nations to self determination.

So everyone, quite literally everyone, was for national independence.

The League of Nations was set up to promote this new world of free nations.

It was the flavour of the era.

A vote for war!

This has been put about for a long time. In 1979 Professor Cornelius O'Leary from Cork wrote a book "*Irish Elections 1918-77*", which says that: "*As is well known, the meeting of the first Dail inaugurated a two-and-a-half year period of military repression and guerrilla insurgency (the War of Independence.)*" p.8.

But it was not the Dail that 'inaugurated' or instigated the repression. The Dail was a victim of this. And that resistance to that repression could not be called an *insurgency* as it was an elected government being suppressed and defending itself.

This needs to be emphasised because a constant refrain is that *people voted for a war*: That the election and the result in themselves led to war. Professor Diarmaid Ferriter, who is one of our top pop historians, says in his latest book, "*The war evolved from being one characterised by attacks on the RIC to being a war waged against British troops and 'it remains very unclear as to whether this was the kind of war that people voted for at the general election of December 1918, indeed whether they had voted for any kind of war at all'*". ("*A nation and not a rabble—the Irish Revolution 1913-23*").

The electorate did not vote for any kind of war, they had had enough of that in WWI and had been persuaded that it had been a war for national freedom. Unless they were crazy, the electorate would not have voted for another war for the same purpose after the dreadful experiences of WWI. The mass of people thought they had fought their war for independence!

There is an attempt to give credence to this notion by the coincidence of the Soloheadbeg ambush on the day the Dail met. The impression given is that this started the war. But a full scale war did not result and the Dail condemned the ambush and Dan Breen and his friends were advised to leave the country—or go to Cork. They did not choose that date for the ambush—the RIC did when picking the day to move some gelignite. There was no war unleashed by this incident that year. A few, a small minority like Dan Breen (and Sean Moylan here), had always thought the

election would be ignored but they were a very small minority view. They turned out to be right but it was the British Government that proved them right. The people, millions of them, were not led by Dan Breen to engage and support a war. People anywhere do not act like this. It takes quite a lot to get a whole people to engage in war at every level.

The fact is that there was a simmering ongoing war going on at the time. The situation was described as one of being at war by John Redmond himself who said on 12th July 1916 that the terms of the proposed Home Rule Act amount "*to a declaration of war on the Irish people, and to the announcement of a policy of coercion*".

There was in effect military government under DORA with censorship, break up of printing presses, raids, arrests, banning of meetings. Volunteers were shot trying to acquire arms; Thomas Ashe died after forced feeding.

The British Government passed a Conscription Act to apply to Ireland on 12th April 1918. Representatives of all Irish political parties, with Éamon de Valera joining John Dillon. They met at the Mansion House on 18th April 1918, and declared that the Conscription Act "*must be regarded as a declaration of war on the Irish nation*".

Mulcahy went to London to kill Cabinet Ministers to stop conscription, supported by Ernest Blythe. The latter also advised the shooting dead of soldiers who would engage in conscription.

This situation was made very clear when Sir John French accepted appointment as sole Lord Lieutenant in May 1918 on condition it was as a "*Military Viceroy at the Head of a Quasi-Military Government*".

French was one of the top military men of the day up there with Kitchener, Haig, etc.

There was the German Plot with arrests of all the leaders which was an excuse for war on republicans.

All this was a reaction to growing support for Sinn Fein as shown in bye elections that were encouraging non-violence.

The situation could not go on—it was bound to explode. But Soloheadbeg was not the beginning of the war. There was a war situation already. Though of course officially according to the British there was never a war in Ireland. It was only police action.

But what happened?

The Government totally ignored it. The attitude was that the Irish would come to

their senses. They treated the result and therefore the electorate with total contempt. And contempt was the consistent view, even when the Government was forced to concede a Truce two and half years later with what they had constantly described as a '*murder gang*'.

And the strangest thing is that among our modern historians and commentators this ignoring of the 1918 Election result is treated as normal and there is no surprise at this. We are constantly lectured, and outrage is constantly invoked about awful the '*terrorist*' past and present here and elsewhere among those who have no respect for democracy and the rule of law, etc. etc. but there is no such outrage expressed about this blatant disregard of an election result and no awareness that such disregard has consequences. In this case it caused a war—the War of Independence. The vote and result did not cause the war—it was the reaction to it. That was the cause and effect in this case.

The British reaction was to ignore the result and hope that the Irish will forget it. That's what they are like. The Irish have never fought us before and had never been able to make a rebellion succeed so why would they now do so? And even when Home Rule was suspended they fought *for* us by the hundreds of thousands. After all, this was Britain at the height of its power: toppling states, creating others as they wished. The world was at its feet. They could ignore this little hiccup.

But of course doing nothing is also a very definite policy and as deliberate a policy as doing something. In this case it meant continuing to rule the country militarily as before and treating the attempts by those elected to do what they were elected to do as a criminal activity, with martial law, censorship, raids, court-martials etc.

What explains this attitude? In a word—utter contempt for the Irish.

And if the Irish had no self respect and did not have the courage of their voting convictions, this policy of contempt would have succeeded.

So why was this clear result ignored and opposed? Ignoring the result and contusing as before was a very definite policy based on contempt for the Irish electorate.

This would never be made explicit of course, such is the not the way with sophisticated Britain politicians. So we have to go 'behind the scenes' to judge their policy.

Joe Devlin

One of the few members of the Irish Parliamentary Party who was returned to

Westminster demanded that the Government explain what its policy for Ireland was in this new situation. He kept asking over and over again, but they would not even deign to say they had a policy. And of course he was not a Sinn Feiner or Republican. A typical exchange went as follows:

Mr. DEVLIN asked the Leader of the House when the Chief Secretary for Ireland will be in his place, and when he proposes to make a statement on the Government's Irish policy?

Mr. BONAR LAW As soon as the Re-election of Ministers Bill has received the Royal Assent—which I fancy will be to-day—my right hon. Friend will be able to take his place. But he is at present in Ireland.

Mr. DEVLIN When will he be able to make a declaration on Irish policy?

Mr. BONAR LAW I am by no means satisfied that the time has come when a declaration would be useful.

Mr. DEVLIN Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us if the Government has an Irish policy?

Mr. BONAR LAW That must be evident.

Mr. DEVLIN What is it?

Back to COAL INDUSTRY COMMISSION"

(House of Commons, 26 February 1919 vol. 112 cc1752-3).

Devlin was physically assaulted in the House of Commons at one point when he persisted to asking these questions.

Because of this official contempt there is a need to go behind the scenes to get an understanding of the reaction.

A good source for this attitude of contempt is dairies of leading figures of the time and I will give them in chronological order to show the consistency of this attitude. These record attitudes that could not be expressed publicly but they were the real informal opinions of the Government and its supporters. And these sources also show that the election was treated as if it never happened right across the board.

Lord Haldane

Tom Jones was the 'go to' man or Lloyd George's 'gofor' and he records a talk he had with Lord Haldane. Haldane was a longstanding Establishment figure and former War Minister in the Liberal Government and a confidante of all who mattered. Jones records:

"He talked next of Ireland. Lord French has served under him for six and a half years, and having some regard for his old chief, he had invited Haldane to the Vice-Regal Lodge. Haldane went there on 16 January, (1919), stayed in the lodge for about three days, found Lord French very worried in the midst of some thirty-six

departments, many of them on hardly speaking terms with each other. During his visit Haldane disappeared from the Lodge and got in touch with some Jesuits and Sinn Feiners and evolved some scheme for conciliation by which a Committee would be set up with Haldane as Chairman whose duty it would be to do for Ireland what the Machinery of Government Committee had recently done for England, i.e., work out some scheme of administration for Ireland, on the assumption that there would be some day some Home Rule Act and some goodwill behind it. On this Committee Haldane would have put an Ulster man and De Valera himself, and he was certain from his enquiries that their co-operation could be secured. Haldane wrote a memorandum to French on these lines and French wrote to Walter Long, who in reply told him to 'go to Hell' or words to that effect. Then French was taken ill. (It was at this time that French tried to persuade the Cabinet to release the prisoners but was overruled by the Cabinet.). Since January the situation has become worse but Haldane thinks that his scheme might still be attempted and wants 20 minutes with the P.M. on the subject preliminary to a lunch with him, P.M., French and Macpherson. ("*Whitehall Diary*", 10 April 1919.)

Walter Long was in the Cabinet and considered an expert on Ireland and head of a Cabinet Committee on Ireland. Haldane's suggestion was the least that should have happened. Some sort of Home Rule, as Ireland had been promised would happen at the end of the war. But suddenly the people could 'go to hell'. It would be no 'skin off their nose' to have listened to Haldane's proposal. But they would not and the Government would not even consider releasing from jail those who had been elected as MPs. The attitude was—just tough it out and we will be tougher than them and they got tougher with the Tans and the Auxiliaries when other Government forces began to lose ground. A well known and influential propagandist and Intelligence officer, Major C.J.C. Street, put it very succinctly in one of his books: "*The history of Ireland teaches that firmness on the part of its rulers is the first steps towards winning the trust of the population*".

But to everyone's surprise the Irish took themselves seriously. And I think the Irish surprised themselves as much as they surprised everybody else. They did have the courage of their convictions and had enough self-respect to defend the mandate they had voted for.

Lloyd George

C.P. Scott, Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* for about 60 years, as well as

owner, was a close friend of Lloyd George and he took a big interest in Ireland. On 21st February 1919, he met Lloyd George and talked about a letter they had both composed earlier:

"As to Ireland he stood by the terms of the letter "which you helped me to compose in this room" which contained, along with the offer of the Convention, a far-reaching scheme of Dominion Home Rule minus Customs and Excise. The Tories had agreed to that and were surprised now as to how far they had gone. But he could take no action while the condition of Ireland remained as at present....." (21-22 Feb 1919).

This means that Lloyd George knew that some kind of response was necessary but just found an excuse not to do so. He just did not consider it in any way serious to ignore the Election. But this was before the war really got going and a couple of months after the Election. There could not have been a better time to do something.

On 4th June 1920, nearly a year and a half after the election, Scott records:

"Breakfasted with Lloyd George. The archbishop of York also there. Rumoured that he (LG) was casting about for a new Irish policy and I wanted to test this, but found him entirely occupied with plans for repression. There must, he regretted to say, be stronger measures....He proposed to set up a special Tribunal—a Judge to try murder cases without a jury. "What about evidence?" I asked. We have got evidence he said. "Of informants?" Yes, but not government agents, men who have turned King's evidence in order to save their own lives."

Scott referred to people he knew in Ireland who wanted a settlement and:

"He (LG) replied that the first need was to break up the murder gang. It had been done in previous cases, e.g. in the case of the Phoenix Park murderers. Governments always succeeded in the end and would succeed again...."

So, a year and half after the Election, Lloyd George thought he was dealing with something like the Invincibles of forty years earlier!

He went on to talk about the Polish war against Russia and said:

"Nothing is to be got by encouraging the attack of Poland (Russia). The Poles are a hopeless set of people—"very like the Irish", he incidentally remarked. They have quarreled with every one of their neighbours—German, Russia, Czechoslovaks, Lithuanians, Rumanians, and Ukrainians—and they are going to be beaten. Trotsky extremely able and would win."

It was some arrogance for a British Prime Minister to accuse any country of quarrelling with its neighbours when his country had quarrelled with and invaded practically every country on Earth. But any argument would do when it came to dealing with the Irish and this arrogance clearly ensured that war escalated.

Lloyd George's policy of repression led to the rather amazing situation where the future leader of the British Fascists, Oswald Mosley crossed the floor of the House of Commons on 3rd November 1921 and became one of the most effective critics of the Government. He set up a *Peace with Ireland Council*. He was no Republican sympathiser but recognised that the Government's policy of using Black and Tans, reprisals etc. was increasing support for Independence. Even a potential fascist could see there was an alternative to this policy. He set up a *Peace with Ireland Council* and was praised by T.P. O'Connor, a long-standing MP as doing more than anyone else, to "break up the Black and Tan savagery".

Even before the Election Lloyd George had expressed the following view to Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary, who noted in his diary of 2nd May 1918:

"...We met refugees on the road, carrying their household goods piled up on carts away south of the Somme. I had a walk, during the repair of a tyre, with the P.M. and talked about the Irish question. He seems to contemplate a massacre with equanimity, provided the English do not shoot first..." (Vol. 1, p.538)."

Everything indicates that he always held that view.

Why is it important today?

For my sins I got engaged a few years ago with Joe Duffy on RTE over the events in Coolacrease. He kept referring to the Government at the time and I asked him which Government was he talking about and he said *the Government*. Then I realised he meant the British Government and just did not acknowledge that there were two Governments at the time—a legal one and an illegal one. I think this is a widely accepted attitude. In other words the 1918 Election result means nothing to them.

Then I realised the importance of this election result because, if it not fully taken on board, the War of Independence becomes meaningless at best and a criminal campaign at worst. It was people attacking the Government! That was the British view that justified to them the terror waged against the legitimate government.

But also, without fully acknowledging that election result, it makes everything surrounding the called the 'Treaty' and the 'civil war' impossible to understand either.

The Republic, democratically established and defended by the people was never recognised by the British. That was the cause of the war. And all their negotiations and actions had one constant aim—how to get rid of the Republic. The negotiations and threats associated with the so called 'Treaty' were to break the Republic. Then all talk about freedom to achieve freedom and stepping stones is nonsense. Freedom was voted for and existed. The whole point of the 'Treaty' was to abolish that freedom. If that is ignored or explained away then the subsequent history and the so called 'civil war' becomes meaningless. Modern Irish history becomes meaningless.

That is why the 1918 Election result and the response to it the most important event in modern Irish history.

The determination not to allow separation at all cost was well expressed in 1922 when the Free State was being set up was well expressed by Lord Birkenhead:

"The near future will show whether there is the slightest chance that moderate opinion in Ireland can even at the eleventh hour reassert itself. If it cannot; if the last word of an overwhelming majority in the South and West of Ireland is to be the pistol of the assassin, combined with a resolute adherence to the claim for separation, then indeed dark and bloody days await us. If the attempted settlement succeeds, the friends of this country will everywhere rejoice. If it fails, through no fault of ours, we shall resist secession as the United States resisted it that is to say, to the last man and the last sovereign. And the test of our ability to maintain order in Ireland may well prove to be the test of our claim to be the trustees of civilisation in the world" (*"Points of view"*, Vol. 2, 1922).

This shows that the Free State was not to be a stepping to freedom. It was stepping stone back into the Empire.

Lessons for today

This election and the war that followed raise interesting questions—it set one democracy against another. Democracy did not solve the problem then and cannot solve such problems today. Some democratic states today set themselves against governments elected democratically—see Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, etc. When that happens it is only Bismarck's 'blood and iron' that will resolve the matter. The British style

reaction to Irish democracy in 1918 has not disappeared from the world—with similar results.

Next Month: report of *Irish Bulletin* launch in Kanturk

Major C.J.C. Street: The Administration Of Ireland, 1920; with a substantial extract from his *Ireland In 1921* and a review of his other writings on Britain's world role, and inter-war Europe.

Introduction by *Dr. Pat Walsh*.

Intelligence Officer Street produced this exceptionally informative justification of the Black and Tan War in Ireland, using the secret archives of Dublin Castle (with many captured IRA documents and officials statistics of incidents.) 192pp (9.5" x 6").

€18, £15 postfree in Ireland and Britain

Coolacrease. The True Story of the Pearson Executions in Co. Offaly, an Incident in the War of Independence by *Paddy Heaney*, Pat Muldowney, Philip O'Connor and others. 427 pp. €30, £25 postfree in Ireland and Britain

THAT WALL

That Wall
can be the razor-wire of the
Balkans
where chickens
come home to roost
fit as falcons

That Wall
confirms Belfast apartheid
and
destroys
Palestinian pride

That Wall
in the Stone-Breakers Yard
is where
heroes were shot
by cowards

That Wall
in Glasnevin Cemetery
was normal in
its asymmetry

That Wall
where beneath gold leaf
on black marble
now lurks
the names of an invading rabble
with their surrogates
equal
equal only
equal
in the feast of maggots.

Wilson John Haire
8 April 2016

“And a Rout upon the Galls”

The cruelty inflicted in Kilmainham Gaol broke many an Irish rebel. It broke Anne Devlin, too, though not her spirit: Many of her clan, the Devlin/O’Dwyers, died horrific deaths there. Eventually released, Anne refused the King’s Shilling, multiplied. She existed afterwards in the Liberties, still a rebel. Perhaps the greatest; her resolve unbroken. She died in a cold hovel, without a crust of bread. Alone, unaided. She was buried in a pauper’s grave, later to be re-interred by the kind intervention of Dr. Madden. Her loyalty to Robert Emmet was incomparable. She was the forerunner of others, of course: Elizabeth Farrell, Margaret Skinneder, Kathleen Lynne, Gobnait Ní Brúdaí (aka The Honourable Albinia Broderick, a sister of Lord Fermoy, who erected a small hospital in Castlecove, South Kerry.

Kilmainham Jail looks menacing. Shouts of celebration are never heard. Many have been incarcerated behind its walls. Hope sometimes springs there, though despair is more prevalent. In the Stone Breakers’ Yard come the sounds of sledge-hammers. Silence, too, is sometimes broken by the clang of steel on steel, as locks, doors and gates are opened and closed. The gangways are patrolled by armed British soldiers. Turn-keys go their silent way. All is solemn. There is an air of expectancy. Disaster is never far off, it would appear.

Now it is approaching three a.m. The dawn would soon break. In the distance, sniping could be heard. The Easter Rising was petering out. Nearby some hundreds of rebels were being held in Richmond Barracks as prisoners. The system had been reactivated. Life went on. The city lay in ruins, recklessly pounded and pulped by British artillery, consumed by flames.

Patrick Pearse, the President of the defeated Irish Republic, stood uniformed in his narrow cell. He had written his last letter to his mother. He was calm and at peace. He had just finished his last poem, *The Wayfarer*. He had put aside his pen. He had but a short while to live. There was increased activity about. It was coming to execution time. Prison staff and military entered his cell. They tied his wrists together behind his back. He was marched out, moving in unison with the military escort. He could see outside. As he marched, he whistled. Deliberately, he appeared casual. He seemed debonair.

*“Oré, ‘sé do bheatha a ‘bhaile,
Oré, ‘sé do bheatha a ‘bhaile,
Oré, ‘sé do bheatha a ‘bhaile
Now at Summer’s coming!
Gráinne Mhaol is coming from over
the sea,
The Fenians of Fál as a guard about
her,
Gaels they, and neither French nor
Spaniard,
And a rout upon the Galls!”*

Before being blindfolded, he was staring back, defiantly. He would show no fear. Major Harold Heathcote was waiting in the Stonebreakers’ Yard. Here rocks were broken by sledges. He was confident. This was his domain. A Sherwood Forester, noted for his efficiency. He had overseen arrangements. Things now revolved about him. The Firing Squad stood by. Twelve soldiers. Six kneeling in the front rank. Six standing in the next rank. Each armed with a rifle. Eleven rifles each loaded with one live round. One loaded with one blank round. Which was which, was random. A stop-butts (sandbags) was in front of the Yard wall. The firing-squad was ten paces from the butts.

There were four firing squads (Foresters) on duty. Supernumeraries stood about. A clergyman, a medical officer, staff (prison and military). Personnel from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were in the Gaol, though not employed in the executions. They had beaten some prisoners taken early in the week. During the Rising they had pursued their duties with gusto. Lieut. Dickson was Officer in Charge, Firing Parties. After the Great War he became a Quaker.

The President was marched into the Yard. A white aiming mark was pinned over his heart. He was blindfolded. Orders rang out. A volley was fired. Then silence. He slumped to the ground. The Major marched to his body, drew his revolver and fired one round, as a *coup de grace*, into the head of the President of the Republic. They tied up the dead body, and placed it in a shed, nearby. The bodies of Tom Clarke and Thomas MacDonagh would follow, in a short while. Later all their bodies were brought by vehicle to Arbour Hill Graveyard, one mile distant. There they were put into a quick-limed

pit. Day by day more followed (fourteen, in *toto*, to Arbour Hill). All went bravely to their deaths. None blinked. In fairness, none of the Brits intimidated otherwise.

The dispatch of it all was unseemly. British military like to put things to bed early. Pearse was not given any time to say good-bye.

The British had only added to the mystique. It was unproductive from their perspective. Their callowness contrasted with Pearse’s resignation. It all added up to the inevitability of the Rising’s eventual success. As he had said, *“The fools, the fools, they have left us our Fenian dead!”* To a man, the British military had discharged their grisly duty. This they do unquestioningly. Theirs not to reason why!

On the same day, Wednesday, May 3rd, three hundred rebel prisoners were transferred to the North Wall from Richmond Barracks. A motley crew, becaped, bedraggled, they marched in *“column of route”*. After the Surrender, they’d been harangued and abused by angry bystanders, on their way to Richmond. Their British Army escorts saved them on occasion, from the mob. Branchmen, sneaking about amongst them, were pointing fingers, whispering, giving chapter and verse. Some were having their goose cooked. Tom Clarke and Willie Pearse had been made strip naked, so that female nurses in the Rotunda Hospital might peek and mock.

At the North Wall, prisoners were marched aboard a cattle-boat’s hold. They sailed out of Dublin Bay, destination unknown. They crossed the Irish Sea. They entered Liverpool Port and disembarked. Deported, defeated, unwanted. Not knowing who was dead or who was alive. Rumour was rife. Cold and hungry, they stood about; like cattle awaiting the drover’s stick. Bewildered.

Most were transported to Knutsford Prison, in Chester. There they were held for some weeks, before being transferred to Frongach in North Wales, near Bala, in Merrienshire, near Colwyn Bay. There they were interned. There was a North Camp and a South Camp. They were billeted in huts (30-40 per hut). Unwittingly, the British had established a military training depot. Playing fields were about. The countryside was beautiful, likened to the mountainous regions of Kerry. It was spacious, though the unspecific nature of internment with no time allotment, challenged.

As the first three executions took place,

those deportees were taking their first journey abroad. They would be held until December 1916, when they were released and returned to Dublin. The less recalcitrant had been released earlier.

Nothing awaited. There was no work. Prospects were not good. But they had survived. Ironically, the only fatality was the Camp Medical Officer, a Welsh doctor.

In Frongach the IRB had begun to re-organise. Its leadership had been decimated after the Rising. A new leadership emerged. The Black Hand took control. It secretly became active. Ambitions grew. Criticism emerged in a notorious missive. Deliberately perhaps. Or maybe motivated by jealousy. It had been penned by an ambitious one. In the GPO, Collins had been unpopular amongst Volunteers, being harsh in his demeanour. In Frongach, this was added to. There he earned an unkind *soubriquet*. After a fast race he refused the victor's hand: "*F-off, you little Dublin gurrier!*". His indiscreet letter singled out Pearse for criticism. (He may have been censored by Pearse for his hardness, some feel.) Otherwise it is difficult to comprehend his lack of security in a letter sent out of prison. It must have been a God-send to the British. Its message was loud and clear. It has implications, so far ignored for no apparent reason by historians.*

The President, in any event, lay dead. The Republic would live on. The struggle would continue, though one major objective remained unresolved. Pearse's shadow hovers.

"Oré, 'se do bheatha a bhaile
Now at Summer's coming.

And a rout upon the Galls!"

Subsequent to the fourteen executions in Kilmainham, Thomas Kent was executed, by firing-squad also, in Cork. Roger Casement, as if as an exclamation mark, was hanged in Pentonville, London. The British Prime Minister called a halt. But was it too late?

Pearse, Clarke, MacDonagh, Ceannt, Plunkett, Connolly, MacDiarmada, Hanrahan, Daly, Colbert, Pearse, Heuston, MacBride, Mallin. (All executed in Kilmainham.)

Kent. (Executed in Cork.)

Casement. (Executed in London.)

John Morgan (Lt. Col. Retd.)

* See *The Yellow Limousine*, by John Morgan, *Irish Political Review*, April 2015.

Political machinations behind the Glasnevin Wall and the history of Glasnevin Trust

On April 3rd of this centenary year a Necropolis or Memorial Wall for the 1916 Rising was unveiled at a State ceremony in Glasnevin Cemetery. The idea of the wall was apparently conceived by, and is the sole responsibility of, Glasnevin Trust, the body charged with managing the cemetery. As can be deduced from other articles in this and previous editions of *Irish Political Review*, the Wall, which lists the names of all who died in the Rising—civilians, British soldiers and rebels—all intermingled, is viewed in this publication as a deliberate attempt to downgrade the public standing of the Rising and to portray it as a tragic mistake.

This article will evaluate the political machinations behind the Wall and investigate the history of Glasnevin Cemetery with a view to questioning its authority to usurp control over how the Rising is commemorated.

To establish that the Wall is a deliberate political ploy we need go no further than the forthright pronouncements of ex-Taoiseach John Bruton. Here is Bruton in the *Irish Independent* on 10th March 2015:

"I recently learned from the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, that the Government is already moving in a similar direction [memorialising all who died in the Rising as a means of removing violence from Irish politics DA]. He told me that a commemorative wall is to be erected in Glasnevin cemetery bearing the names of all who died in the 1916 Rebellion, regardless of the side (or none) they were on, or whether they were bearing arms or whether they were killed accidentally or deliberately."

While Glasnevin Trust are spinning the line that the Wall is entirely their initiative, it is clear from the above and from the unveiling ceremony itself that the memorial was the centrepiece of the Fine Gael/Labour Government's plan to counter any efforts to positively celebrate the Rising. During the Easter Sunday ceremony outside the GPO in Dublin, Enda Kenny, as caretaker Taoiseach, was careful to use the phrase, "*all who died*". And the idea of listing the names of all the dead on a plaque in Glasnevin will not be confined to the Rising; those who were killed in the War of Independence and the 'Civil War' are to be added when those centenaries come round. So the names of

all the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries who died in the Irish conflict will also be included.

The tenor of the coverage in the four main newspapers over at least the last ten years should indicate to anyone familiar with the way government is conducted in this media age, that a State campaign to disparage 1916 has been in the works for years. The flow of anti-nationalism has barely abated in the Centenary Year. An article appearing in the *Sunday Business Post* (28.02.16) under a headline, '*British who fell in the Rising are not properly remembered*' pushes out the boundaries of national self-vilification another few inches. Penned by an academic named Mike Cronin, it is noteworthy for the credentials of its author as much as its contents. It states:

"The one group that has so far failed to emerge into general consciousness as worthy of remembrance are the British soldiers who died. This is in spite of the mission statement for Ireland 2016 which states that there should be a full recognition of 'the complexity of historical events and their legacy... and the multiple identities and traditions which are part of the Irish historical experience.'"

Cronin's big insight later in the article is that, in the first few days of the rebellion, the fighting was between Irish rebels and Irish soldiers in British Army uniforms: Irish against Irish. Further on he shows that many of the British casualties later in the week were young working class recruits who enlisted to fight in World War One. All of this misses the point. The rebels needed to defy the claim of British sovereignty over Ireland at a time when the limited democracy obtaining before 1914 had been suspended, when the Unionist opponents of Home Rule had been granted positions in the British Cabinet, and when Irish youth were being sacrificed in the carnage on the Continent with Irish conscription threatened. In order to assert a rival claim to sovereignty they needed to do so in arms: a matter in which they had no choice given that British rule was maintained by force and the threat of force. The nationality or social background of those charged with suppressing the revolt is irrelevant, tragic though the circumstances may be in personal terms. Cronin is shamelessly using the personal

tragedy angle to discredit the political purpose of the Rising, even though the political purpose was successfully achieved and ultimately won democratic approval.

Cronin is the Academic Director of Boston College Ireland, the Irish outpost of a Jesuit university in the US. He was educated in the University of Kent before graduating to Oxford University. It matters little that he seems to have a British background; most of the Irish experts employed by the State take a broadly similar line on the Rising that would meet warm approval in Oxford and Cambridge. What is interesting about Cronin is that his College is the force behind *Century Ireland*,

“an online, real-time historic newspaper which covers events from the period 1913 to 1923 with a specific focus on the 1916 Easter Rising”.

This online resource is presented in partnership with RTE, with the aim of providing background materials and lesson plans for teachers who need to feed their charges a narrative of 1916 that is politically correct. There really is a significant amount of official effort being expended in doing down the Rising.

My thanks to Mike Cronin for drawing attention to *Ireland 2016*, the Irish Government’s programme to mark the centenary. The mission statement referred to by Cronin is mysteriously absent from the website but under a News tab the website contains a colour panel about the unveiling of the Glasnevin Wall. One paragraph is worth quoting:

“The Necrology Wall, as it is officially titled, was inspired by the International Memorial of Notre Dame de Lorette in France. The French memorial records in alphabetical order without any distinction of nationality, rank or religion the names of soldiers from all sides who lost their lives in the battlefields of Northern France during World War I. The memorial has been organised by the Glasnevin Trust.”

The Memorial of Notre Dame de Lorette, containing the names of 580,000 participants who died, is a fitting monument to the futile carnage of the Great War. It memorialises the tragedy of an immoral conflict and, by listing the dead from both sides, rightly suggests that the soldiers from both sides had more in common with each other than with the militarist elites, especially the British imperial elite, which instigated and prosecuted the mass violence. Ironically

the 1916 Rising, indirectly, was a protest against that supremacist militarism. The two conflicts are not comparable.

A European conflict that could be compared to the Irish rebellion is that between the French Resistance and the Nazis during the Second World War. It would be inappropriate to intermingle on a memorial plaque the names of dead Resistance fighters with those of the German soldiers against whom they chose to fight. No such memorial exists. Glasnevin Trust, with the backing of the revisionist Establishment, is using the example of a meaningful and commendable War Memorial in France to advance its tawdry campaign to sanitise Irish history.

HISTORY OF GLASNEVIN TRUST

Regarding the history of Glasnevin Trust, the first point to be noted is that membership of the Trust is determined by an unusual system called *perpetual succession*. A former Labour TD who stood as an Independent in the last election, Eamonn Maloney, explained the system during the course of a Dail debate on the 2013 *Cemetery Management Bill* as follows:

“In 1846, during the reign of Queen Victoria, a committee was established to maintain Glasnevin and Goldenbridge cemeteries. I am happy to say it was a very worthwhile committee given the particular problems at the time. Set up during the Victorian times, it was a trust with very special powers. Not surprisingly, the original trust was all male but what is more interesting, and was a feature of the time, was that the committee was based on perpetual succession—in other words, certain named persons and their successors. Effectively, it was a closed shop or, to put a stronger slant on

it, a secret society. If someone died, the existing members decided who would replace them. All of their business, financial or otherwise, was exclusively private. That aside, it served a very useful purpose and I do not wish to take anything from the work it did.

Interestingly, the status of having perpetual succession, which was introduced in 1846, continues to this day. It might have been a feature of Victorian times but it should not be a feature of modern Ireland that we have a body or an authority which can exercise perpetual succession because of the secrecy attached to it.”

The perpetual succession arrangement used by the Trust is supported in law, specifically by the *Dublin Cemeteries Committee Act, 1970* which replaced an earlier 19th century Act. The relevant paragraph is headed, ‘*Appointment of members*’ and reads:

“6.—The Committee shall have power at any time and from time to time to appoint any person to be a member of the Committee either to fill a vacancy or as an addition to the members of the Committee for the time being but so that the total number of members of the Committee shall not at any time exceed the number fixed by this Act.”

It is one thing for a Cemetery Trust that is conducting its business in an uncontroverial manner to have an unusual system of appointing its members, and another for Glasnevin Trust, a body that is spearheading an assault on the way the Rising is commemorated, to have such a system. The actions of Glasnevin Trust are already, mired in controversy and the subject of acrimonious public debate. In the circumstances its perpetual succession system is an affront to democracy and



should be challenged. Whether this should be done through the courts or from the floor of Dail Eireann through Parliamentary Questions is a moot point.

A second point to note is that Glasnevin Trust by its own lights has an obligation to protect the “*historic national legacy*” of its main cemetery. According to a document presented by John Green, Chairman of the Trust, to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht on 17th November 2015, his organisation, “*maintains and preserves the considerable heritage assets in Glasnevin cemetery*”. The mission statement of the Trust is “*to preserve the past for future generations*”. Through its initiation of a memorial project that has become a central plank of the anti-national revisionists, Glasnevin Trust is undermining the historical legacy it is supposed to be protecting.

DANIEL O’CONNELL

Glasnevin Cemetery is famous for the important Irish historical figures that are buried there, (Daniel O’Connell, C S Parnell, Constance Markievicz, Eamon de Valera, Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, Maud Gonne McBride etc.—presumably the heritage assets referred to above), but also because it was founded by Daniel O’Connell. The following paragraph from Wikipedia neatly sums up the circumstances that caused O’Connell to found the cemetery.

“Prior to the establishment of Glasnevin Cemetery, Irish Catholics had no cemeteries of their own in which to bury their dead and, as the repressive Penal Laws of the eighteenth century placed heavy restrictions on the public performance of Catholic services, it had become normal practice for Catholics to conduct a limited version of their own funeral services in Protestant churchyards or graveyards. This situation continued until an incident at a funeral held at St. Kevin’s Churchyard in 1823 provoked public outcry when a Protestant sexton reprimanded a Catholic priest for proceeding to perform a limited version of a funeral mass. The outcry prompted Daniel O’Connell, champion of Catholic rights, to launch a campaign and prepare a legal opinion proving that there was actually no law passed forbidding praying for a dead Catholic in a graveyard. O’Connell pushed for the opening of a burial ground in which both Irish Catholics and Protestants could give their dead dignified burial.”

The founding of the cemetery in Glasnevin was an event in the emancipation of Catholics from the century-long persecution that followed

defeat in the Williamite war. Through the Penal Laws the British State had attempted to eradicate Catholicism as a functioning religion in Ireland. Glasnevin Cemetery is a monument to the survival of the Irish Catholic Church in defiance of British persecution, even though it was deliberately established by O’Connell as a place of burial for people of all religions and none.

The Memorial Wall that will mix in the names of people who died fighting for Irish independence with the names of the Black and Tans and British soldiers whom they fought against, has the clear purpose of making history meaningless. The idea is that people can walk around historical sites free from any ‘partisan’ or ‘judgemental’ thoughts; Irish history, after all, in revisionist eyes, is one long meaningless tragedy for all involved. That Glasnevin has been chosen as the site for such a device is the last word in crassness.

JOHN GREEN AND REVISIONISM

John Green, the Chairman of Glasnevin Trust, showed his support for the revisionist project when he rehashed a discredited British slur on O’Donovan Rossa at the commemoration in Glasnevin (01.08.15) of Rossa’s funeral. He claimed that the Fenian renounced his belief in armed struggle towards the end of his life. The claim is completely untrue. Some days earlier the lie was stated in an article by Dermot Meleady published in the *Irish Independent*. The relevant paragraph in Meleady’s article is:

“By the end of his life, however, Rossa had become, according to the ‘Daily Telegraph’s’ New York correspondent, a ‘mild and genial old gentleman’ who had ‘long ago lost all hatred... against the British government’. And the paper produced a telegram from him expressing sympathy with the Allied cause” (Irish Independent, 30 July 2015).

This bears the unmistakable hallmark of an Irish revisionist: uncritical use of British sources. Meleady is the author of a two-volume biography of John Redmond and a long term critic of everything in the Irish nationalist tradition. That Green chose to repeat Meleady’s smear is a reliable indicator of his political alignment.

Glasnevin Trust, by virtue of its origins in the struggle for Catholic Emancipation, and as the burial place of key nationalist leaders, has a responsibility to uphold in historical memory the Irish national revolution in the traditional judgemental manner. Through its sponsoring of the

revisionist Memorial Wall project it has shown itself to be unfit for discharging that responsibility. In the circumstances the perpetual succession arrangement, by which the membership of its Board are appointed, is indefensible and urgently needs to be replaced by a democratic governance system.

Enda Kenny’s Government has done all in its power, allowing for the upsurge in patriotic sentiment, to prevent the Rising from being commemorated as a meaningful historical event. Its tactic of choice has been the mealy mouthed use of the personal tragedy angle for civilians and British soldiers to undermine the political significance of 1916, thus the importance of using the phrase, “*all who died*”, in the commemorative ceremonies. In backing the Glasnevin memorial plaque, the Government, a caretaker Government that was defeated in the recent General Election, tied its colours to the revisionist mast in a more tangible way than has been done before.

Having surrounded Glasnevin Cemetery with a massive security presence, the caretaker Government enabled Glasnevin Trust to stage its unveiling before an invited audience. I am informed that the ceremony was ‘edgy’. It will be interesting to observe how the story of the Glasnevin Wall unfolds in the coming years.

Dave Alvey

Glasnevin Petition

The petition against the Glasnevin wall has so far reached 2,454 names which is not near enough. Here is the link again in case you have not signed and/or passed it on. Please do so.

This is the link:

<https://www.change.org/p/info-glasnevintrust-ie-remove-glasnevin-memorial-wall-insult-to-the-men-and-women-of-1916>



Civil War politics over Eh, really?

On becoming Taoiseach, Enda Kenny replaced the portrait of Padraig Pearse that had hung in Bertie Ahern's office with one of Redmond. And in the picture above we see the reading provided by the Kenny administration for visitors in the lobby of the Department of the Taoiseach: Professor Horne's *Our War* and Fintan O'Toole's *Irish Times History of Ireland in 100 Objects*. By their deeds shall they be known!

Letter, *Irish Independent* 6.4.16

Memorials

The unveiling of the Memorial Wall in Glasnevin Cemetery, which includes the names of British soldiers alongside Irish rebels killed during the Easter Rising, appears to be an act of atonement and state apology to opponents of Irish independence for our audacity in commemorating our political and cultural independence and our revolutionary heroes of 1916.

To memorialise those that prosecuted Britain's war in Ireland in attempts to prevent the establishment of the Irish state alongside those who gave their lives fighting for Irish independence is carrying political ecumenism to extremes.

Does the British government memorialise those Luftwaffe bomber pilots brought down while on bombing missions over London and Coventry? British forces killed while enforcing colonial rule around the world are not commemorated by the former colonised.

Those killed fighting the Mau Mau aren't commemorated in Kenya. Indeed, as the recent apology extended by the British government to Kenya for the brutality inflicted on the Mau Mau during their war for independence demonstrates, it is now common for the British to make

apologies and reparation for their past colonial atrocities. In Ireland, bizarrely, we honour and memorialise our former colonisers.

Tom Cooper

Unpublished Letter to
Irish Times, 4.4.16

Protest Over Glasnevin Wall

A report by Sorcha Pollack and Conor Lally (Scuffles near Glasnevin cemetery after protesters try to burn Union Jack, April 4th, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/scuffles-near-glasnevin-cemetery-after-protesters-try-to-burn-union-jack-1.2596727>) conveys a false impression that the Glasnevin protest was supported exclusively by dissident republicans. Actually a significant minority of those present could not be so described.

One such person, Niall Ring, was interviewed for RTE and the interview was broadcast on news bulletins throughout the day. I distributed a leaflet critical of the remembrance wall on behalf of the Irish Political Review Group. During the protest I spoke with a number of 1916 relatives and with representatives of at least three different strands of Irish political

opinion that are not dissident republican. I also spoke with a number of people whom I know to have no political affiliation.

Your reporters may be surprised to learn that the unprecedented idea of remembering the Rising in a non-judgemental manner, as promoted by Glasnevin Trust with the backing of the state, will be viewed by many Irish people as a betrayal of the men and women who made a political decision in April 1916 to fight in the national cause.

Dave Alvey

Editorial Note: Surely, if British soldiers' names are to be listed, it should be at the British War Memorial Garden at Islandbridge: along with the civilians they recklessly killed?

**Look Up the
Athol Books
archive on the Internet
www.atholbooks.org**

Last month we published a leaflet, to be distributed at Glasnevin Cemetery. However, it was subsequently amended. Below is the final version of the leaflet as given out

Why the Glasnevin 1916 wall is indefensible

We are handing out this leaflet today as part of a peaceful demonstration against the 1916 memorial wall that is being unveiled at Glasnevin cemetery. We consider that by mounting a plaque containing the names of all who died in the Rising—rebels, civilians and soldiers of the British army—Glasnevin Trust is denigrating the memory of the insurgents. This plaque will memorialise the rebels in isolation from the political and historical context in which they fought; it will portray the Rising as a tragic event.

The Easter Rising is important for the Irish people in a way that might be described as 'spiritual'. Downgrading it under the guise of humanitarian reconciliation is a misconceived project that is already having an opposite effect to the one intended.

What follows are six reasons why the wall should be taken down (many more could be added):

∑ 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 loss of faith in the Rising and in the state itself.

∑ The men and women who chose to participate in the 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

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

Remembering the forgotten female heroes of the 1916 Rising

The following letter is based on notes and memories from discussing the Rising with some relatives which you may find interesting:

On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, when hearing that the Rising had started, Clan Na Gael Girl Scouts Margaret Fagan, Mary Jane Stapleton, Annie Tobin and Mary McLoughlin, under Captain May Kelly, reported for duty at their outposts at the GPO. At the Four Courts: the two Healy sisters, Kathleen and Teresa (their younger brother, Sean Healy, a 15-year-old Fianna boy, was shot at Phibsboro after calling to his mother to say he was all right while carrying dispatches).

At Jacobs: Annie O'Hagan and Cecilia Conroy. Captain Kelly had already sent the younger members of Clan Na Gael on a hike up the Dublin Mountains to keep them away from the city.

On Monday evening, Captain Kelly and the other girls were sent to watch troop movements from Collins Barracks. They did this and reported back to James Connolly.

They were then sent to Drumcondra to collect ammunition, which they brought back while avoiding checkpoints.

That night, they helped the doctor with the wounded.

On Tuesday, Captain Kelly was ordered to report to Commandant Thomas McDonagh in Jacobs. For the rest of the week, she was sent on missions to the College of Surgeons to find ammunition and report on the dead. She had to be careful, as there was a lot of sniping from the Shelbourne Hotel.

Captain Kelly and the other Clan girls, when the spirits of the volunteers started wavering with fatigue, started singing 'The Rising of the Moon' and other uplifting ballads, and in a lull in the fighting, they held a céilí.

When the surrender took place, Commandant McDonagh praised them for their service to Ireland. The girls took letters home to the wives and mothers of the volunteers.

As the GPO was in flames, the Clan girls helped carry the stretchers of the wounded under the protection of the Red Cross flag to Jervis Street Hospital.

They were arrested on the North Circular Road, brought to Broadstone Station for interrogation and then released.

After the Rising, when pensions and medals were being given out, the authorities didn't want to recognise them. But because the Volunteers held them in such high esteem, the authorities had to give in.

Captain May Kelly's uniform is on display at the Museum of Decorative Arts and History at Collins Barracks, Dublin. It's a small uniform—she was only 17 years old in 1916.

Toirbhealach Lyons
Grand-nephew of May Kelly
Letter, *Irish Independent* 21.4.16

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

supposedly conservative body which has custodial responsibility for the cemetery.

The most effective way of protesting, after today's demonstration, 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 into Google.

Published by Dave Alvey for Irish Political Review Group, 1 Sutton Villas, Lower Dargle Road, Bray, Co Wicklow.

Editorials from back issues of *Irish Political Review* can be accessed on <http://www.atholbooks.org/>

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

HISTORIC SPEECH REGARDING "REAL INCLUSIVENESS"

William Orr (1766- October 14th 1797) gave this speech from the dock shortly before his execution in Carrickfergus, County Antrim. Orr was a member of the United Irishmen and had been found guilty of administrating the group's oath of membership to a soldier by the name of Hugh Wheatly. Despite Wheatly immediately recanting his testimony against Orr, and the fact that several jurors claimed to have been persuaded by either threats or the influence of alcohol, the verdict held.

"My friends and fellow countrymen— In the thirty-first year of my life I have been sentenced to die upon the gallows, and this sentence has been in pursuance of a verdict by twelve men who should have been indifferently and impartially chosen. How far they have been so, I leave to that country from which they have been chosen to determine; and how far they have discharged their duty, I leave to their God and to themselves. They have, in pronouncing their verdict, thought proper to recommend me as an object of humane mercy. In return, I pray to God, if they have erred, to have mercy upon them. The judge who condemned me humanely shed tears in uttering my sentence. But whether he did wisely in so highly commending the wretched informer, who swore away my life, I leave to his own cool reflection, solemnly assuring him and all the world, with my dying breath, that that informer was foresworn.

The law under which I suffer is surely a severe one—may the makers and promoters of it be justified in the integrity of their motives, and the purity of their own lives! By that law I am stamped a felon, but my heart disdains the imputation.

My comfortable lot, and industrious course of life, best refute the charge of being an adventurer for plunder; but if to have loved my country—to have known its wrongs—to have felt the injuries of the persecuted Catholics, and to have united with them and all other religious persuasions in the most orderly and least sanguinary means of procuring redress—if those be felonies, I am a felon, but not otherwise. Had my counsel (for whose honourable exertions I am indebted) prevailed in their motions to have me tried for high treason, rather than under the insurrection law, I should have been entitled to a full defence, and my actions have been better vindicated; but that was

refused, and I must now submit to what has passed.

To the generous protection of my country I leave a beloved wife, who has been constant and true to me, and whose grief for my fate has already nearly occasioned her death. I have five living children, who have been my delight. May they love their country as I have done, and die for it if needful.

Lastly, a false and ungenerous publication having appeared in a newspaper, stating certain alleged confessions of guilt on my part, and thus striking at my reputation, which is dearer to me than life. I take this solemn method of contradicting the calumny. I was applied to by the High Sheriff to make a confession of guilt, and the Rev. William Bristow, sovereign of Belfast, who used my entreaties to that effect: this I peremptorily refused. If I thought myself guilty, I would freely confess it, but, on the contrary, I glory in my innocence.

I trust that all my virtuous countrymen will bear me in their kind remembrance, and continue true and faithful to each other as I have been to all of them. With this last wish of my heart—nothing doubting of the success of the cause for which I suffer, and hoping for God's merciful forgiveness of such offences as my frail nature may have at any time betrayed me into—I die in peace and charity with all mankind."

TERRORIST ATTACKS ON EUROPE.

After the recent bomb/shooting attacks in Brussels and Paris there was an immediate political reaction from European politicians but particularly from President Francois Hollande stating that "*we*" can never give in to the Islamic terrorists and "*we*" had to protect our "*European values*" at all costs. This assertion was trumpeted from not only Paris but Brussels, Berlin, Stockholm *et al*. What I found frankly surprising was that several of the attackers (if not all—we cannot be sure as some have still to be found) were in fact European-born and bred. So, given that fact, how then do the politicians extrapolate that these Europeans do not—in their opinion—possess the values of Europe? And what the politicians do **not** state out straight is: what actually do these precious European values consist of? We simply cannot work here on a 'nod and wink' basis because we—and that is the true "*we*"—the people—need to have a firm grasp of what is really going on.

"*La casta*", as the political elite have been dubbed by one very astute commentator, cannot surely mean that, while it can go on bombing and killing its way around the world from Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Mali, Yemen etc, without some young Europeans looking at this savagery being incentivised by these dreadful deeds

upon their fellow co-religionists—in this case—Muslims—and move to act accordingly. So, to get the West's attention, these young men carry out similar attacks upon their European homeland but on a tiny scale in comparison to what the US/UK France/Germany is doing to their former homelands. But suddenly "*they*" are the terrorists and the European politicians, with their own hands bloody, declare themselves outraged—and an obliging media confirms them in their outrage. What a debacle! What a deceit! What a conceit! And on it goes, with Governments now saying that these young men are somehow "*radicalised*" into action by various agents, whom they denounce as key players, into skewing the reality of these same young men and sure enough our Governments hold up the treacherous offenders as "*Islamic social media sites*" or sometimes "*local imams*" in the mosques.

But here's the thing—these young Muslims are *no goms*—in fact—they are for the most part very educated—and the idea that they could be manipulated into giving up their lives against the West for the perverse notion of it—well that is one absurd idea too many. Now our Governments are calling upon their own communities and even families to spy and monitor them to catch "*early radicalisation*", so that the State can step in and offer them courses in deradicalisation! Honestly, one could not make this stuff up if one tried.

So this brings us to the question—does the electorate prefer politicians who are devious and cunning? Does our education system and our growing-up experience teach us to behave like lemmings or sheep which will all jump off a cliff if those in front are doing it? Or does our education teach us to be individuals capable to making our own personal moral and ethical decisions? We condemn the terrorist activities in France and Belgium where a number of people were killed. We were quite right to condemn the killings. We should also equally condemn the killings in Iraq, Syria *et al* caused by the aerial bombing by the Western Powers. We agree with President Francois Hollande that killing people in our streets, our theatres and our airports is against our European values, but so also is the indiscriminate killings by our own Governments in all the foreign countries where this is happening on a daily basis in the streets in Mali, Libya, and Yemen etc. But the problem for us all is that the Western Powers think it is really OK to kill right, left and centre in all these countries and even President Hollande thinks it is perfectly legitimate for French forces to continue with this

killing in Mali e.g. but not in France. Are these bombings in Mali etc the "European values" of President Francois Hollande? It just does not stack up!

IRELAND

It is not often that we have to sit down and meditate on the matter of our own values. Which sort of conduct do we hold in high esteem, which sorts do we approve of and which sorts do we merely tolerate, such as lying politicians, and which sorts of conduct do we absolutely condemn? Our meditations will, if we are fair to ourselves, yield up a very curious mixture. In the 31st Dáil, for example, we had one politician who lived in Dublin and refused to draw his legally permitted expenses and he was rejected by his Party (Labour), by the electorate, and not least by the media also, except in fairness—*The Irish Daily Mail*, which was the only paper to be impressed by his honest and decent approach to public life and it reported upon his actions—for five years he took only his Dáil salary and not one penny of his legally entitled expenses which he allowed the State to lay claim to. So this man took an ethical position and as he was not re-elected—it is clear that the voters did not approve. I mean you'd have to be a bit of an eejit not to take the money and run—yeah? [The reference is to Eamonn Maloney, who stood as an Independent in Tallaght, after not being reselected by Labour, and lost his seat. Ed.]

ARABIC AND THE KORAN

There is no excuse for the deep ignorance of a Leaving Certificate examiner who sets an exam paper in Arabic with questions on the Koran. Not only that but very ignorant members of the State Examinations Commission have stood over this religious bias for years past and have furthermore insisted that the exam questions on the Koran are **mandatory**.

This means of course that the Department of Education was insisting, in effect, that study of the Koran is mandatory for all students learning Arabic for the Leaving Certificate!!!! That the Department of Education and its Examinations Commission and its Arabic examiners could display such ignorance is appalling. The Arabic language is used by Buddhists, by Christians and by many people other than Muslims who have no need or desire to learn the Koran which is the Muslim religious text. The Department's conduct is the equivalent of making mandatory the study of the King James Bible in English language classes or having to answer mandatory questions on Bedell's Bible in the Leaving Certificate

Irish language paper. The Department's conduct displays either extreme ignorance or religious prejudice—either of which are completely inappropriate for a Department of Education.

The State Examinations Commission has stated that it is powerless in the matter because, it says, the Syllabus is mandated by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). This bureaucratic attitude does not absolve the Examinations Commission from a charge of racism and religious bigotry. The Commission should refuse to set papers under such a bigoted syllabus. In any event, the minute such an awful matter was brought to the attention of the NCCA there should have been immediate action by NCCA to alter the syllabus with immediate effect. It just does not stack up that this state of affairs is allowed to continue for one day after it has been brought to the attention of the NCCA and the Minister of Education.

Michael Stack ©

RECONCILIATION

Perhaps I
will forgive
one day
the slow corrosive crib
the threatening order to obey

Perhaps when
when they
are dead
but they still live
and lodge in my head

And
they have
friends out there
supporting their past sins
for us they don't care

The crimes
our revolts
they compare
with their Niagara of blood
our rose garden
with their Flanders mud.

Wilson John Haire

6 April 2016

TAX concluded

emerged via the reporting of transactions with a subsidiary called Google Netherlands Holdings BV.

Financial accounts for Google Netherlands Holdings, which has no employees, show it paid royalty expenses of €10.7 billion to Google Ireland Holdings in 2014 and €9.2 billion in 2013."

This allocation of profits made in the UK to Google's Irish unit, its headquarters for large tracts of the world, was raised as a concern by the HMRC and noted by the PAC. Noted too was the fact that Google further minimised its tax via internal company transactions with units in the Netherlands and Bermuda. Unfortunately none of this is illegal under the current tax rules and although the Irish Government agreed in 2014 to phase out this 'loophole', it allowed companies already availing of it to continue with the arrangement up until the end of 2020.

A FISH ROTTS FROM THE HEAD DOWN.

There is a maxim that a fish rots from the head down. It is not surprising then that Google's tax advisors are Ernst and Young, (now just EY). Again thanks to Private Eye, we know that in common with the other major accountancy firms, EY deploy tax efficient arrangements involving similar 'transfer pricing' in their own affairs. The Partners in EY have thus established themselves as self-employed directors of limited liability partnerships (LLPs). This company vehicle allows them to separately employ thousands of staff in specially created 'service companies'. The Limited Liability Partners then reimburse the costs of the service company and add a 'mark-up' that gives a taxable profit. The key thing is this profit is taxed at a lower rate than the partners would be liable to as income tax. What does this mean? Quite simply from figures available in 2013 it emerged that Ernst and Young LLP 'transferred' more than £90m taxable profit to Ernst and Young Services Ltd, saving the Partners £18m in tax.

Another of the Big Four Accountancy firms, Deloitte, employed the same arrangement with its partners transferring £38 million saving its partners around £7.5 million. To close the less than virtuous circle, one of Deloitte's Partners is Dave Hartnett, former Head of HM Revenue and Customs!

Michael Robinson

4 March 2016

NIPSA News, April 2016

TAX continued

flags during 'due diligence', but at this point PFI was still regarded as a magician's trick that existed outside of rational economics.

The HMRC portfolio consists of 147 freehold properties and 454 leasehold properties with a 20 year sale and leaseback arrangement. Mapeley state that they—*"own the freeholds and manage the leaseholds occupied by HMRC as Principal (we take the risk of rising rents and we benefit from falling costs), provide full facilities management and carry out construction fit-out works on behalf of HMRC to a pre-agreed price."*

PROBLEM AT HEART OF PFI

The first and most obvious problem that arises with this, is the problem that lies at the heart of all PFIs. For the private sector body to get the lowest interest rate on the cost of borrowing to finance such schemes, it is best to borrow over an extended period. But then unlike a straightforward mortgage for a house, PFI contracts which 'bundle' such different elements, require that complex requirements are accurately assessed, then projected over a 20 year period, taking account of the ramifications and risks of any policy commitments given by future governments on matters such as the location of offices, the impact of new technologies on working arrangements and often, a change in demographics. The contract will then be delivered without any further competitive process or ability to benchmark with any similar contract, as all are cloaked in 'commercial in confidence' protection. It will essentially remain in a steady state, typically over a 20 year period, other than if amended terms are negotiated, which as we have learned from experience, will be done at considerable cost.

The reality is that PFI does not even work in theory and it has proven impossible for the State to accurately draw specifications to any sufficient extent to tie down contractors and guarantee that services are provided as actually required. That there is a secondary market, trading in PFI shares, indicates that there is something of the lottery about such contracts.

MAPELEY'S MAGIC CIRCLE.

The particular financial magic trick that avoids tax in this PFI contract goes like this—

Mapeley Steps Contractor Ltd receives rent from HMRC, which it then "pays" to **Mapeley Estates Ltd** to manage the

properties. Both companies are UK registered, but each has a separate parent company—**Mapeley Steps Holdings Ltd** and **Mapeley UK Co Ltd**. Both of these companies are registered off-shore. Mapeley then borrows money from within its own structure at 'adjusted rates' so high, that the repayment of interest on the "loan" made, prevents it from making a profit in the UK. A less than virtuous circle. But, Abracadabra—no Corporation Tax due.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

The Public Accounts Committee at Westminster which examined the contract, produced a report titled **"HM Revenue and Customs Estate—Private Finance deal eight years on."** In it they note—

"While HMRC got a good price for the contract, it has not obtained key information on Mapeley's financial position or profitability and has not monitored overall costs or Mapeley's viability, even though it could incur substantial costs in the event of contractor default."

Dealing with the off-shore nature of the arrangement, they noted it *"had not only been damaging"*, but *"it is also unlikely that the arrangement delivers any overall benefit to the Exchequer as any reduction in contract price is accompanied by lower tax revenue."*

HMRC AND GOOGLE'S TAX

Given the HMRC's evidently relaxed attitude to its principal mission ie. gathering tax, the deal recently made with Google shouldn't be such a surprise either. In their 'settlement' with HMRC, Google paid £130million to cover back-tax owed since 2005. The settlement involved no additional penalty for its somewhat tardy approach to tax compliance, as would be levied against smaller fry in the ocean of tax avoidance. The settlement was certainly modest given that Google earned over £7 billion, amounting to 10% of its global revenues, from its activity in the UK in 2015 alone.

ENTER THE PAC—AGAIN.

Reporting on the settlement, the PAC recommended –

"HMRC should consult widely, including with other tax authorities, on the case for changing the rules that protect corporate taxpayer confidentiality to make the tax affairs of multinational companies open to public scrutiny."

The Committee noted that the French and Italian authorities were seeking to extract more tax from Google than the UK has settled for. And because of the apparent

generosity of the HMRC brokered deal, the UK Government is vulnerable to challenge under EU State Aid rules. These are defined in Guidance published by the UK Government which states—

"State aid is any advantage granted by public authorities through state resources on a selective basis to any organisations that could potentially distort competition and trade in the European Union (EU).

The definition of state aid is very broad because 'an advantage' can take many forms. It is anything which an undertaking (an organisation engaged in economic activity) could not get on the open market.

State aid rules

State aid rules can (among other things) apply to the following:

- * grants
- * loans
- * tax breaks
- * the use or sale of a state asset for free or at less than market price."

TITANIC—"UNSTEADY AS SHE GOES"

Interestingly, the NI Assembly breached EU State Aid rules in the commissioning and assistance given to Titanic Belfast, with millions of pounds in anticipated EU grants having to be written off and made up from the Block Grant. This was reported at an Assembly Committee, but as there was no argument between local politicians about it, journalism simply ignored it.

GOOGLE AND "DOUBLE IRISH"

On 20th February 2016, the *Irish Times* reported that—according to company documents filed to the Dutch authorities, *"Google's main Irish unit handled transactions worth €28.7 billion over three years as part of an international tax avoidance scheme."*

Its Economics Editor explained—

"Google employs more than 2,200 people in Dublin, which serves as its headquarters for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It deploys a scheme known as the "double Irish" to reduce the ultimate tax bill."

Under the scheme Google exploits the different tax regimes and rates between Ireland and other jurisdictions *"such as the tax haven of Bermuda"*. Just like Mapeley as described above, Google has created a structure of separate companies with the main Irish entity being Google Ireland Holdings, owned by Google in Bermuda. It is an unlimited company for which financial information has not been available since 2006. However as the *Irish Times* reported—

"the scale of its operations has now

continued on page 28

LAW continued

In the last few years, cameras have been let into the British Supreme Court and now there is to be a pilot extension to some other areas and locations of Crown Court. Yet the British courts have never explained how the first appeal by the Guildford Four in the 1970s or how two appeals failed to get justice in the case of the Birmingham Six. It has also been the case that judicial Public Inquiries in Britain rarely get to the bottom of how abuses or gross failures carry on for years and that senior administration heads rarely roll. Few would hold out a lot of hope in the recently announced investigation covering Lord Janner and, of course, examination of the past in Northern Ireland has ground to a virtual halt.

In Ireland, ordinary people pieced together the eventual narrative of the Mothers' and Babies' Homes as well as the dodgy Adoptions from here to Australia and other locations. There needs to be a citizens initiative to gather facts and in a cross-political party (and non-aligned) mass effort to demand access to determining what we as a Republic require from a legal system: also what way our courts should function.

SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT

Interestingly, in our recent General Election campaign, the issue of the Special Criminal court arose. As a non-Sinn Feiner, I was shocked that no other party, apart from the Trots, opposed this legally appalling arrangement. As far as I am concerned any socialist or social democrat or human rights campaigner should be out in force to abolish said court.

Some liberals here complain about the Patriot Act in the United States yet ignore this home grown distortion. It is clear in dangerous criminal cases it is the witnesses and not jurors who are most at risk. The Special Criminal court has failed to take out our Spanish-based drug cartels for twenty years or is this because of a failure to make a link even in a fantastic way of a political nature? Witness protection does not really work here. The trouble has been upon us for a long time before the recent events at the Regency Hotel in Dublin.

Residents in some areas see a court system that is no friend of their community and have not developed a good relationship with the Gardai. So thorough research of the lack of consideration for key witnesses needs to be pursued.

SECTION 31-R.T.E.

At this time the Irish Campaign for

Civil Liberties (though imperfect) is at least honourably opposing the Special Criminal Court. Also, there are a few isolated Trade Unionists who have made a positive contribution. It is an issue that should be championed by the Congress of Trade Unions. No longer can we in Ireland give a *carte blanche* to Government or the court system where in the past we have experienced internment, Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, as well as in the North the suspension of *habeas corpus* on several occasions. The thinking behind Section 31 and the actions of the Garda heavy gang still percolates the corridors of RTE and the Law library. It is extraordinary that we are not hearing about this in academic circles outside Ireland and Britain. The people who have undermined the European Union are not interested. Those that support the further expansion of Anglo-American military influence do not care. Joining the dots for social justice may not be so hard after all.

UNITED STATES

In the United States only the superior courts can finally settle the constitutionality of new taxes. In New York state, when a new sugar tax was introduced a couple of years ago, it was struck down on appeal to the court. It is a paradox that the country that led the way in class actions: sometimes resulting in awards of tens of millions of dollars, and at the same time a public health policy can be struck down without ruffling any judge's feathers. It is also the case that criminal law in the United States has become so driven by plea bargaining and special deals that it may be time to question even more, the adversarial system as a whole. This is a topic we might return to in the future. While I might see many flaws in the European courts it must be said that there is nothing to support any theory that they are somehow inferior to the traditions built up in the Anglo-sphere.

SLOW PROGRESS

There are areas of law and the courts where there has been progress. Children in very distressful cases can now give evidence by video link-up. Victim impact studies are now common in the Irish courts. Legislation is catching up in areas like surrogacy, the custody of stored eggs and genetic material. There is supposed to be the destruction of forensic records of people after a number of years in all but the most extreme cases. However the latter must be considered to be doubtful in practice in a climate where we see police

trying to obtain footage from journalistic camera people in a highly arbitrary manner. There are categories of stored data on computers that leads to the question as to whether security forces should have so free and easy access. Search warrants are not what they used to be.

Seán Ó Riain

HMRC—The Sleeping Game Keeper

Channel 4 News recently 'revealed' that HMRC had so far paid Mapeley £2.7 billion for rent and maintenance of its properties, but that the company has yet to pay any Corporation Tax in the UK, because it has not yet declared a profit.

Corporation Tax is an important issue to Northern Ireland, because it is part of the UK Government's General Revenue, which it sets against its Expenditure. When this is not in perfect equilibrium, the Government calls this situation a "Deficit". The "deficit" to George Osborne, the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, is a thing of terror. But it is a terror he doesn't understand. And so he has committed to reducing it by means of further public expenditure cuts, so severe, that even the OECD has cautioned that he is in danger of running the productive economy into the ground. For Northern Ireland this will have a negative impact on the future allocation of the Block Grant to the Assembly under the Barnett Formula, which crudely balances out public expenditure allocation across the UK.

OFF-SHORE, BUT IN PLAIN VIEW

However, the Mapeley tax "avoidance" is less of a revelation than it appears. The *Sunday Express* reported a similar concern about this contract in 2013. But it was *Private Eye* magazine which has challenged the contract from its inception in 2001, when Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, signed over the bulk of HMRC's property estate in a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) deal for 20 years at a headline cost of £3.3 billion. It was known at the time that Mapeley, the successful bidder, had an off-shore structure and was 50% owned by George Soros, the famous Hedge Fund manager, who did more than a little damage to Sterling at a point in his investment 'career'. Soros subsequently sold on his share to another shareholder, the USA-based Fortress Investment Group in 2004.

That alone should have been raising

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SHAW continued

clever scoundrels have never been lacking in Ireland, where unless this particular scoundrel is detected and 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)

The Law and the Citizen

There is a lot of talk about Dail reform at the moment but there is certainly also a need to look at the judiciary. The ability to hold a judge to account in our society is extremely limited. Those not willing to soft soap the main political parties will find it hard to get an appointment on the bench. Yet when judges are in situ they have the whip hand over politicians and the people in the main parties fear them as horses fear thunder.

The courts are an alien environment to most people. Many people on limited means (excluding those on social welfare) can find it hard to access the courts. The welfare dependent often become the best customers of the courts system : thus the theatre and pageantry of said courts continue with old traditions at enormous expense particularly in regard to the processing of petty crime.

BARRISTERS

When we get down to Barristers we enter the world of personal injuries, civil cases, defamation, breach of contract or compensation for loss of expected profits or income. Only a small number of people can afford to fight these kinds of cases. Once in a blue moon a voluntary group might fund an individual's case so as to be able to fund a brief.

Occasionally, a Barrister takes on a case *pro bono*. Appeals are many. The profession certainly know how to charge people. Those who can afford the best team of lawyers might be individuals who are hard to pin down regarding where their genuine domicile is or in relation to principal beneficial ownership or where responsibility lies in terms of companies and concerns.

Neither European or Irish law is in the ownership of the people. The courts do not require approval. Rarely does any of it's modes of operation come before the citizens to adjudicate : though in recent years in Ireland there have been referenda on Judges pay and the conditions of bail law. The legal system is designed in such a way that it protects itself first and last. It is difficult in this country and in Britain to get a good lawyer to take a case against another lawyer for negligence or failure to fulfil responsibilities.

MISCARRIAGES

In this area of the globe there have been some superficial alterations in the courts.

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Neglected Morals Of The Irish Rising

Bernard Shaw

(The New Statesman, 6 May, 1916)

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

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