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## Civil Rights: A Retrospective!

The 50th anniversary of the start of the Northern 'Troubles' is upon us. Radio Ulster celebrated it on October 5th, which was ten months early if by the 'Troubles' is meant the War.

What happened on 5th October 1968 was that a demonstration, in support of what in retrospect seems to be a trivial reform demand, was attacked by the local police force. There was nothing unusual in those days about a demonstration being attacked by police. It was a normal British practice.

What happened ten months later, in mid-August 1969, was different in kind. The routine associated with the Apprentice Boys celebrations in Derry was disrupted when the police were barricaded out of the Bogside and were kept out over a number of days. The routine was that the Protestant Apprentice Boys commemorated their heroic deeds of 1688 by aggravating the Catholics in the Bogside, that the Catholics should be provoked and that police should shepherd them back into the Bogside and calm would be restored. That was just how things were.

But in 1969 the police were barricaded out of the Bogside, and the barricades were effectively defended against them, and the world was astonished by such a turn of events in what it took to be the foremost Liberal Democracy.

The forceful exclusion of the forces of the State from the Bogside was an act of insurrection. But it was not the purpose of those who organised it that it should be the first action in the war against the State. Its effective organisers were Catholics who had served in the British armed forces, some of them English. They had retired to Derry, were affronted by the blatantly anti-Catholic character of the Apprentice Boys routine, and applied their British military expertise to stopping it. When it was stopped, Free Derry asserted itself. And there was a *de facto* insurrection.

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## Sinn Féin Presidential Poppcock And Armistice Attacks

As the *'Irish Times'* reported this October 16:

"Sinn Féin presidential candidate Liadh Ní Riada would wear a poppy to commemorate those who died in the first World War, the presidential debate heard on Monday night. The candidate said wearing a poppy would be an internal struggle and she 'wouldn't be jumping up with joy about it' but felt it would be an important gesture. She was greeted with applause from the audience after saying it would offer a hand of friendship to Unionists. Ms Ní Riada added some in her party might not be enamoured with the gesture. Sinn Féin has traditionally eschewed the wearing of a poppy, the symbol of the Royal British Legion, on both sides of the border although there is no formal policy against it. Ms Ní Riada also said President Michael D Higgins showed 'contempt' and 'disrespect' for the Irish electorate by not participating in the debate."

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## Budget Reflects Ideological Paralysis

Budget 2019 is a political Budget if the word '*political*' is misused to mean the narrow pursuit of electoral advantage by the Government parties, Fine Gael and the Independent Alliance, and by Fianna Fail through the Confidence-and-Supply arrangement. It is a holding operation that has avoided causing any major revolts — a *boring* Budget compared to the *exciting* Budgets that Charlie McCreevy liked to introduce in the early 2000s.

The idea that a minority Government paying close attention to all sections of opinion represented in the Dail would deliver good government can now be seen to be unfounded. The Government has an insecure grip on power, is dependent on a grouping of volatile Independents and only survives because of the support of its main rival, Fianna Fail. The threat of a sudden General Election is ever present and militates against long-term policy making. In

the circumstances, both Government and Opposition are making a reasonable fist of it but there is no real advantage to the so-called '*new politics*'. Its one success, the Slaintecare policy in health, is being stymied as it is being praised.

A separate problem is that the perspective informing Government policy continues to be neo-liberal, even though that doctrine has lost all credibility. As the key statement of Government policy, the Budget should map out strategies for

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Organised Republicanism was in a blighted condition in that period. But it did not seem credible to Unionists that the insurrection in Derry could be anything other than the first instalment of an assault by the IRA on the Union settlement. Feelings began to run high in Belfast. Loyalists prepared for action. And the Chief of Staff of the pre-Split IRA in Dublin issued a press announcement that he had given marching orders to his Belfast Brigade.

The outcome of all of this was an assault on Catholic West Belfast by a mixture of Unionist/Loyalist forces.

The Unionist assault was not met by the Belfast Brigade of the IRA. There was no Belfast Brigade. There was no IRA, other than a small force used by the Chief of Staff for disciplining Republican resistance to his disarming of the IRA for the purpose of reconstructing Sinn Féin into a kind of Marxist/Constitutional body.

The IRA was a myth in 1969. But it had mythical existence. And the Ulster Unionist Party, which operated the devolved government at Stormont, was not the Government of a State. The Government of the state—the British Government—must be presumed to have known very well what the condition of the IRA was. Intelligence was its speciality. But it was not involved in the immediate

governing of the Six County region of its state. And the Northern Ireland Government did not operate the governing apparatus of a State. It had no political connection with forty per cent of the Six County electorate. It had no Intelligence Service. And it had no patronage system for encouraging civil society tendencies favourable to itself.

In August 1968 the IRA had no existence as an Army, and its leadership was trying to dispel it as a myth. (It aimed to bring the movement over to direct action in support of leftist causes—a move of which London was well aware and deeply disapproved.) Then the Chief of Staff, all his schemes undermined by the turn of events in Derry, told Belfast Unionists that he had ordered his Belfast Brigade into action. And the Unionist masses cannot be faulted for not knowing that this was all a shadow-play.

The popular forces of the Stormont Government assaulted Catholic Belfast. Catholic Belfast extemporised a defence of itself without the IRA.

The Army of the State was put in by the Government of the State to restore order. The forces of the local Government were excluded from large areas of Belfast. The Government of the State had no political forces to accompany its military forces into West Belfast and Free Derry. This

was the result of the decision of the Tory, Labour and Liberal Parties in 1921 that they would not operate politically in the Six County region of their state.

The absurdity of the situation seemed to strike the Labour Home Secretary, Jim Callaghan, on a visit to Derry early in 1970. He indicated an intention of doing something about it. But the British apparatus of State soon got him to understand that there was a reason of State for the bizarre structure of the British state in its Six Counties, and he dropped the matter.

Whitehall deployed its Army in August 1969 in order to prevent a war between its devolved Six County government and the forty per cent Catholic population with which it had come into physical conflict.

The two sides to the conflict were separated by the British Army. One side was the devolved Northern Ireland Government, which was the immediate form of the British state. Its police force, the RUC, was excluded *de facto* from the main Nationalist areas. 'Peace Walls' were set up between Unionist and Nationalist areas. The major Nationalist areas effectively lay outside the coercive power of the State for eight or nine months, while continuing to be provided with the social services of the state. It was under these conditions that the defensive insurrections of August 1969 became base areas from which a War was launched in the Summer of 1970.

The Army of the state was deployed in August to stand between the forces of the devolved Government and the Catholic populace. The devolved Government was an institution of the Protestant community. It had never been anything else and, under the terms set for it by Whitehall, it could have been nothing else. It had no representative political connection with the Catholic community, but it had a considerable degree of intimidatory moral authority, due to decisive action it had taken in the past. That moral authority was dispelled when the Army of the state was deployed against the devolved system in August.

If Whitehall's military intervention against its subordinate Belfast Government in August, and its hostile Inquiry into the conduct of that Government which had led to violent conflict, had been accompanied by political action to establish a functional political connection between the Six Counties and the governing system of the state, it is extremely improbable that a war between the Catholic community and the State could ever have come about.

What irritated the Catholic community was the subordinate Government. It was avidly interested in the politics of the state, Socialist and Conservative, but that politics had no existence in the Six Counties. And in the vestigial political life of Northern Ireland there was nothing but the conflict of community.

The Unionist Party comprehensively misrepresented the Union in that conflict. It was a Unionism that lay outside the Union and caricatured it. Devolved Unionist politics was no politics. Political life within the Union state consisted of the party-political conflict of the Tory and Labour Parties. This did not happen in Northern Ireland. The Tory and Labour parties decided not to operate in Northern Ireland. Political life in Northern Ireland was therefore excluded from the political life of the state.

The Labour Party pretended to be a United Ireland Party, while the Tory Party pretended to have the policy of treating Northern Ireland as an integral part of the Union state. But it was essentially the Tory Party that in the early 1920s decided to exclude Northern Ireland from the political life of the Union state, and the Labour Party when in Office never did anything to advance the cause of the unification of Ireland. And it was a Labour Government that in 1948, when Fine Gael launched an Anti-Partition campaign, reinforced the Ulster Unionist position against it.

And so it happened that, when the British Army was deployed within the British state to suppress a conflict in a subordinate region of the state, it destroyed such moral authority as the subordinate government exerted over the Catholic or Nationalist two-fifths of the population, without having any political authority of its own to take its place.

Governments of the state had the political and moral means of action in every other region of the state, but they had none in Northern Ireland—except the passing sentiment of the moment. It subverted its own Northern Ireland system, and effectively established a condition of anarchy—of statelessness—in the major Nationalist areas.

A new Republican Army was forged in those areas, in the first instance under the protection of the British Army. When, after eight months, Whitehall decided to stamp on this development, it put the Falls area of Belfast under curfew in order to

## Eddie Spence

Jack Lane was right about Eddie Spence. (*Irish Political Review*, Oct. 2018). He was the Secretary of the West Belfast branch of the CPNI. I knew him because I was in the youth wing, the CYL.

We were expelled for being an anti-party group i.e., Maoist. Madge Davison, who was pro-Soviet, quipped you had to have shanty eyes to be in the West Belfast branch. She was a nice girl who didn't take things personal. She was on the National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland in the 1970s and was the first general secretary of the Connolly Youth Movement after it became an all-Ireland body in 1970.

Last time I met her about 1972 she bought a copy of the Workers' Association's *The two nations* I was selling in central Belfast. Eddie got in contact with the ICO.....we had our own CWO group....but Eddie must have been too dogmatic for the ICO because I was the only one in the group who ended up in it. I was back in Newry by then. But before that Eddie put me up in his house in Dickson Street (so he must have moved to the East side when you knew him).

I was unemployed because the special branch had notified my Protestant employer that I was a communist. Eddie married a Catholic called Kathleen which angered Gusty....according to Eddie, Gusty was going to kill him for it.

Eddie's son was at the famous 1968 civil rights March in Derry which politicised him. According to Willie McDermot\* a friend of Eddie's I met in London some years after, the son was interned as a Stickie. Eddie, I think had a brother called Robbie who was, I believe, in the NILP. None of this was in the Gusty Spence book. They all made up in the end.

**Bill McCamley**

\* Willie was the man I had remembered as McDiarmada. **Jack Lane**

### Minor footnote:

I was in USA those years, until 1971. That year I was recruited into "Two Nations" campaign by Paul Bew—I happened to be friendly with his then girl-friend Anne Devlin, daughter of politician Paddy Devlin. Through Bew I knew of the ICO/BICO (or whatever it was), but that was about all. Anyway Bew seemed to be attached to ICO/BICO, but at the same time scathing or dismissive. Once when Anne mentioned they were involved in siege of Falls (can't remember if she said she was there herself—probably still just a child), Bew in characteristic condescending mode said, yes—that was probably Len Callender armed with his pen-knife. He was a supercilious p----, can't understand what Anne saw in him, and his airs.

**Pat Muldowney**

search it for arms. The result was to accelerate the development of the new Republican Army (the Provisionals), and to revive the old Republican Army (the Officials or Stickies) which had been busy dissolving itself in August.

The conflict that came to a head in Derry and West Belfast in August 1969 occurred in the medium of an agitation of a very confused Civil Rights movement, which was attempting to operate 'Constitutionally' in the pressure it was exerting on the substantially unconstitutional subordinate Government. It was a conflict within the Northern Ireland facade of the British state. Demands were

made on the facade, as if it was the state, on which it could not deliver because it was not the state.

The facade was blown away for all practical purposes by the deployment of the Army of the state in August. The conflict that was launched a year later was a war between an Army claiming to represent the Nationalist community (and making good its claim) and the State, with the Northern Ireland facade relegated to the sidelines.

The effective cause of the War lay in the conditions that made it possible. Those conditions were the abdication by the Tory and Labour Parties of the responsibility to provide normal government and normal

politics, as far as possible, for the Six County region of the state; the farming out of Six County government to a local communal institution while continuing to provide the major state services from Whitehall; and the subversion of that subordinate system in August 169, with the consequence of anarchy (statelessness) in the major Nationalist areas.

Internment was sometimes given as a cause of the War, but it was an incident in the War. The War had taken root in 1971 and Internment was one of the measures with which the State tried to cope with it.

When it was introduced—and some of the people associated with the magazine were randomly picked up in it—a leaflet was written explaining it as a measure adopted by the Government in the actual war with which it had got involved: and to that extent defending it. The war was not supported as it was not apparent how it could be sustained. But it was clear in Belfast that there was a war in progress. And, since it existed, there must be sufficient reason for it.

Internment was a war measure adopted in wartime. Constitutionalists opposed *"Internment without trial"*. Naturally it was *"without trial"*. With trial it would have been imprisonment for criminal action after conviction. The implied demand was for criminalisation. When this was introduced, the Provisionals raised an effective agitation for political status—for prisoner-of-war status, or internment. Every action of the Government was countered, and with every turn the authority of the Provisionals was strengthened.

Eoghan Harris makes some effort (*Sunday Independent*, October 14) to recall how it happened that a very modest demand for Constitutional reform led so quickly to a major war. But memory is problematic for the ever-changing chameleon, who does not know from moment to moment what appearance he is giving off.

He praises John Hume for not demonstrating on October 5th, lest Eamon McCann should demonstrate too vigorously and upset NICRA plans for *"peaceful marches to reform the state of Northern Ireland without challenging its constitutional position"*.

This suggests that the constitutional position was so fragile that demands for its reform must be made so moderately that they escape notice if they are to be achieved peacefully. And that is pretty well how it was. So clearly it would be better not to march at all, because marching is noticeable.

But Harris praises McCann for dismissing an attempt by Declan Kearney (of Sinn Fein) to *"claim a role in the civil rights for the Provisional IRA"*. The Provisionals, of course, did not exist in the Civil Rights era, and therefore could have played no part in the failure of NICRA to deliver on its confused and ambiguous agenda.

Harris comments that—

"radicals like McCann... and Michael Farrell of Peoples Democracy... believed the state was sectarian and wanted to bring it crashing down".

If by *"the state"* Harris means the subordinate government at Stormont, which did not exercise a shred of sovereign authority, then it was beyond all question sectarian. The Ulster Unionist Party, with the Orange Order at its core, was an all-class, all-politics assembly of the Protestant community.

That community had once taken part in the political parties of the state but, when required to operate a subordinate Six County system outside the political system of the state, it functioned as an all-class, all-politics alliance. It embraced the workers, middle class, and aristocracy of the Protestant community, and those who would otherwise have been Tories, Liberals and Socialists became simple Protestant Unionists for the sole purpose of keeping themselves as far as possible within the British state. It was sectarian. So was the Catholic community. Nothing else was practically possible under the arrangements made by the British State for the running of its Six Counties.

McCann and Farrell pressed the 'state'—the subordinate system—too hard and brought it *"crashing down"*! And yet everything that was administratively necessary to a modern state continued without interruption!!

McCann and Farrell had little to do with the decisive events that changed everything: the barricading out of the RUC in Derry and the invasion of the Falls and Ardoyne in Belfast.

Harris contrasts McCann and Farrell with Cathal Goulding (Officials Chief of Staff):

"McCann rightly recalled that the republicans who promoted a peaceful path to civil rights were those led by Cathal Goulding who loathed those who became the Provisionals: 'It's simply a matter of historical record that people like Eoghan Harris and the then chief of staff of the IRA, Cathal Goulding, were advocating the three-stage theory of the Irish revolution—the first stage of which

was winning democracy in the North', he said.

"Cathal Goulding was a major presence at the meeting of Wolfe Tone Societies in August 1966 at the farm of Kevin Agnew in Maghera... At the meeting I [Harris] read a document setting out the strategy for the civil rights campaign that would not challenge the constitutional position of Northern Ireland so as to secure progressive unionist support. Goulding warned that this peaceful strategy would fall apart 'at the first sound of a bomb or a bullet'..."

This impossibly complicated *"three stage theory of the Irish revolution"* was blown away by events before ever a shot was fired. The barricading out of the RUC from the Bogside changed everything. And it was done peacefully in the sense that the physical force involved did not include guns.

Cathal Goulding had nothing to do with the Derry event, nor had any other theorist of the Irish revolution. But Goulding introduced the gun a few days later. It was only a rhetorical gun—but how was the enemy to know that the Chief of Staff's Belfast Brigade had no actual existence! The enemy responded to the imaginary threat issued by Goulding, and it was left to others to cope with the situation.

When the battle was over and the Peace Lines were drawn, the IRA was reactivated in support of a complete fantasy of revolution. Guns poured into West Belfast—and were used in an attempt to prevent the formation of a new Republican Army out of the experience of the August events.

A revolutionary situation was brought about within the Northern Ireland facade of the British state by the August events. The new Army that was formed during the Autumn/Winter/Spring of 1969-70 consisted increasingly of people who had not seen things in a Republican perspective before those events. But there was a leadership ready and waiting in the form of people who had been expelled from Goulding's Army for militarism. This new Army, which came to be known as the Provisionals early in 1970, had the object of fighting the State for the ending of Partition. And, unlike Goulding's IRA, it knew what the State was. The State had taken over from its subordinate instrument at Stormont when the British Army was deployed in August.

Goulding's IRA went into rivalry with the Provisionals, after failing to snuff them out at birth. It declared war on Britain within a medium of fantasy ideology and

committed a few politically irrelevant atrocities before retiring to become an anti-Republican voice in the Free State Establishment.

Most of Harris's half-centenary article is devoted to mulling over the futile Civil Rights bodies that never got a grip on the Northern Ireland situation because they never faced up to what its 'Constitution' was. The state was always the British state. Northern Ireland was never anything but an undemocratically governed region of the British state but they insisted on seeing it as a kind of Irish state, an institution of the Irish nation: The Ulster Unionist section of the Irish nation had been led into antagonism with the rest of the Irish nation by an unfortunate survival of 17th century Protestant bigotry combined with feudalism—or, alternatively, it was antagonised by the Catholic bigotry that had overcome the majority of the nation. The former view predominated in 1970. It gave way to the latter view in the course of the next generation. The new remedy then was that the Nationalist Ireland that achieved statehood should melt itself down and remake itself on anti-Catholic lines so that the Ulster Unionists would merge with it!

Harris says that Desmond Greaves (who ran the Connolly Association front organisation of the British Communist Party), and Tony Coughlan—

"educated the British Labour Party on the case for civil rights. The result of their patient lobbying was seen when Gerry Fitt... was welcomed to the House of Commons by a large cohort of Labour MPs who wanted Stormont reformed, not abolished".

Gerry Fitt was elected as "Republican Labour", and in practice was Republican rather than Labour. His case for reform hinged on the threat that, if there was no reform, the IRA would take over. And his speeches were couched in a form that raised cheers at the prospect of the IRA taking over.

That was in the years when he might have exerted influence on the course of events. After 1969, when events were set on a different course, Fitt became a kind of weird Nationalist Unionist in the House of Lords.

If the Labour Party—as one of the governing parties of the state—had been in earnest about reforming the Northern Ireland system, it would have dropped its rhetorical Anti-Partitionist policy and extended its organisation and electoral activity to the Northern Ireland region of the State. It did not do so. And when

James Callaghan, Home Secretary, saw it as the thing that needed to be done, it prevented him.

Political parties seem to need a dimension of radical rhetoric to which they can give heartfelt expression without requiring any action. Ulster Unionism served that purpose for the British Labour Party. It relished denouncing them as Ulster 'Tories'. The fact that the reason there were no Labour MPs from Northern Ireland was because Labour did not contest elections there was never mentioned—and the fact, though obvious in published election returns, seems to have been genuinely not seen. It could even be said that it was actively not seen.

In the Radio Ulster programme on October 5th, it was asked by the Protestant workers voted *en masse* for a party that never did anything for them. That was the rhetoric of Anti-Partitionism back in 1969. What caused the Protestant working class, the main body of the industrial working class in Ireland, to vote for the Tory/Unionist Party, which never did anything for them?—instead of voting for the Nationalist Party!!

The answer was obvious enough—because the Unionist Party ensured that in the matter of social welfare the Six Counties, though excluded from the democratic parties of the British state, were included within the welfare state.

That issue came to a head in the 1920s. The Unionist Party gave Whitehall an ultimatum—either maintain social welfare in the North on a par with Britain at the expense of the British Exchequer, or Unionism would no longer operate the Northern Ireland system for it, and would revert to Carson's programme of having proper British Government of the Six Counties. Whitehall needed the Northern Ireland system for the manipulation it was practising on Southern Ireland, so it agreed to maintain an integrated social welfare system.

If the economic motivation of either side is to be questioned it is that of Catholic workers voting Nationalist—to leave the welfare state!!

But Catholics who voted Nationalist and Anti-Partitionist ran no risk of winning. They could not vote for the Unionist Party, with the Orange Order at its core, even though it had gained them the British welfare state, so they voted for the Nationalist Party in the certain knowledge that it would not win.

The Civil Rights slogan, *Tories Out*,

*North and South!* was comprehensively false in its implications. Fianna Fail was not in any sense a Tory party. It was in those days very much the reform party of the Republic. And the Ulster Unionist Party was most certainly not a piece of the Tory party. It was an alliance of all the classes and political creeds of Protestant Ulster and its only object was to keep the Six Counties as much part of the British state as possible.

At Westminster the Ulster Unionists voted with the Tories because the Tories role-played the part of Unionists while the Labour Party role-played United Irelanders. But the reality was made very clear in 1948. Jack Beattie, a Protestant, was elected to Westminster by West Belfast during the War on a policy of taking the Labour Whip. He was refused the Labour Whip, but went into the lobbies with Labour on the welfare state legislation while the Unionist MPs voted against it with the Tories.

Beattie was also a Stormont MP and he looked forward to doing battle there with the Unionist Party. But the Unionist Party at Stormont re-enacted on the nod all the legislation it had opposed at Westminster.

Northern Ireland was governed undemocratically by being disconnected from the party-political system that governed the state, but it was included in the legislative outcome of the party conflict in the democracy of the state.

How did Cathal Goulding plan to democratise this Byzantine Northern Ireland system as the first stage in his three-stage Irish revolution? Perhaps by telling the Protestant workers that the Unionist Party never did anything for them!

And what could "*democratisation*" mean as applied to a subordinate system in a state? A democracy is a kind of state but Northern Ireland was no more than a dependent region of a state. It was undemocratically governed by being excluded from the system of government of the state. The Official Republicans were fanatically opposed to its democratisation in that regard, and threats were freely uttered against those who advocated it.

Some of the local arrangements of the devolved Government were described as undemocratic. The main one was the gerrymander of Derry Corporation so that the Unionist minority gained a majority. This was done because Derry, encouraged

by the Free State, refused to function under the Stormont system in the initial period. In the circumstances the choice lay between transferring Derry City—or part of it—to the Free State or rigging the system.

The gerrymander was undone in 1970 and a Commission was installed, leading to a restoration of proportionally representative government.

The very popular slogan, *One Man, One Vote*, referred to the practice of businessmen having a Business Vote in Local Government as well as a personal vote. It applied to Catholics as well as Protestants, and was an arrangement that had been abolished in Britain a decade or two earlier. It was scarcely noticed when it was abolished in the North in 1970. If Stormont had abolished it when first raised, that would have changed nothing of substance, and would have given no satisfaction to the feeling that lay behind the slogan.

Another popular Civil Rights slogan was *British Rights For British Citizens*. What lay behind this slogan, and gave it wide appeal, was the feeling that the atmosphere of Northern Ireland politics was abnormal in British terms and that it should be normalised. But the cause of the abnormality did not lie in the Ulster Unionist Party, which governed as best it could in the system that was thrust upon it. The cause lay with the governing parties of the state which boycotted the Northern Ireland region of the state without ever explaining why.

The slogan was double-edged and was therefore not pressed hard. Most of those who used it did not want the North to become a normal part of the British state, and it was therefore problematic for them to specify the British Rights that were withheld.

(In those times Britain knew little about abstract systems of rights, detached from politics, such as existed in Europe. Its *de facto* rights were the products of political activity, and were upheld by politics rather than by Courts. It had to learn about abstract rights when it gained entrance to the EEC (for the purpose of curbing it), and had to incorporate them in the British legal system under European monitoring. A will to restore the primacy of politics is evident in the Brexit movement.)

Much ingenuity went into the devising of ways of creeping up on Unionism that it wouldn't notice—or oughtn't notice—and getting around it. They all came to

nothing because the conditioned reflex of Unionism to see that behind all slogans and demonstrations was a nationalist will to subvert it.

We proposed the only way in which Unionist suspicions might have been lulled, which was to recognise that the Ulster Protestant community, founded in the early 17th century as a distinct colony, had undergone a coherent development of its own, different from that of the other peoples on the island, both native and Anglo-colonial, and that it did not in fact form part of a common national body with the people which had compelled Britain to concede the formation of an Irish state.

This seemed to us to be an undeniable fact of the situation, but it was denied vehemently by Harris and Goulding, as well as by Fine Gael, Fianna Fail, Irish Labour and the SDLP. And, when the leader of Official Sinn Fein, Tomás MacGiolla, undertook to demonstrate that Unionist Ulster and Nationalist Ireland had a common national culture, the common elements he listed were elements of British culture.

There were some realists in the Civil Rights movement who saw that the difficulty was that Unionist Ulster did not share any element of national sentiment with Nationalist Ireland, but they stayed silent because they knew that acknowledgement of the "two nations" reality would bring denunciation.

The Unionists were part of a common nationality with the Nationalists but they suffered from the delusion that they weren't—that was the view of the matter that lay behind all the careful formulations of the phase of peaceful scheming in 1968-9. And it was obvious to Unionists that that was the case.

We put it to those who asserted the existence of a common national sentiment that they should discover it and draw it out and thus solve the problem. But we could not see that that was even attempted.

The Unionists were told that they had made a fundamental existential mistake about themselves—that they were not what they thought they were, and that they were what they were certain they were not. Dialogue was not possible on those terms. And since peaceful development required dialogue the alternative came into play.

Harris, after going round the houses, asks in conclusion:

"Could civil rights have been conceded without bloodshed? Probably not: neither side wanted peace enough. The Peoples

Democracy got it wrong. The society, not the state was sectarian."

To the very end he must resort to evasion about "*the state*". Stormont was not the State. The State was Whitehall/Westminster. The State excluded the Six Counties from its political life, and set up a devolved system that could have no political life of its own because all the substantial things that a State does continued to be done by Whitehall. The only real political business for the devolved system was to keep itself within the state by bringing out the Protestant majority at every election.

"*The society*" was intensely "*sectarian*" at the moment when it was excluded from the political life of the state. Catholics and Protestants were at war with each other as part of the Anglo-Irish War. The Unionist leader, Edward Carson, said they did not want to have to govern Catholics in a subordinate system, but wanted both to be governed within the British system—which had proved itself to be very effective at overcoming sectarian conflicts. But Whitehall—the State—insisted on putting the Six Counties out of its political life and relinquishing it to the apolitical conflict of local communities. Communal attrition is what has been going on ever since in the 'peaceful' sphere.

The least that must be said for the war effort of the Provisionals is that it was directed at the State, and that the attempt by the Labour Government in 1974-5 to reduce it to a Catholic/Protestant war was warded off.

Dublin Governments all through the War operated under a Constitution which asserted Irish state sovereignty over the Six Counties and held that Northern government under British sovereignty was illegitimate. At the same time they all condemned the IRA for making war on a regime which they were Constitutionally obliged to consider illegitimate. And they never criticised that regime for being grossly undemocratic by its own terms of reference—from which it is reasonable to conclude that they preferred undemocratic government in the North, which kept it unsettled, to democratic government within the British state which might have caused it to settle down.

And they never acknowledged that what went on in the North from 1970 to 1998 was a War. They insisted on treating it as an unaccountable mass outbreak of criminality.

The exception, of course, is Charles Haughey, who said Northern Ireland was not "*a viable entity*", who indulged in no internal Northern initiative but treated the issue as a matter for the States to sort out, and who helped the Adams leadership of the Provos to make a settlement advantageous to the Nationalist community.

The process of communal attrition continues. It is all that is possible in the Northern Ireland system. The complaint that the Good Friday Agreement has not worked properly, because it has not overcome the communal antagonism, is groundless. It was carefully designed to give structured expression to that antagonism, setting aside the spurious democracy that preceded it.

With regard to the sudden concern of the Dublin Government that the restoration

of a customs border by Brexit would revive the War, we can see no ground for it. The removal of the customs border by the joint entry of Britain and Ireland into the EEC had nothing to do with the ending of the War, which continued for a further quarter of a century.

The cause of the War—the conditions under which it was launched and which kept it going—was the spurious democracy in which the Nationalist minority was confined. The conditions on which the War was ended was the recognition that the Six Counties were inhabited by two peoples with conflicting national sentiments, over which a common government operating by majority rule could not be established. The process of attrition between the two communities was formally provided for by the GFA, and therein lies its effectiveness.

storey and now had a converted roof space that produced two small bedrooms. To look out of the window you had to get down on your hands and knees. Much banging of heads on the sloping tongue and grooved ceiling and a lot of cursing.

This was for a family of seven. No running water (a well in the front garden was also used by other people nearby), and a dry lavatory outside.

Applying for one of these new housing estate houses brought out a civil servant who filled out a form which included the religion of the would-be tenants. Then a wait of six months.

Our new house was on the Sunnylands Estate in Carrickfergus, County Antrim about 20 miles away. It was on the edge of the town. We had a house with four bedrooms, a bathroom, two toilets, a living room and a parlour in the old style. There was a garden back and front, and on one side we had a Catholic neighbour and on the other side a Protestant neighbour. The estate was said to be 50/50 Catholic/Protestant. There was no religious or sectarian tension. Back in Carryduff it had been 24/7 in this hardline loyalist area, with attacks on the house and with the well-water poisoned.

This house then was almost unbelievable. A younger sister of mine wore her Catholic school uniform through the estate without any problems while travelling to a convent school on the Falls Road, Belfast.

The only problem was the air pollution caused by the huge artificial fibre factory of Courtauld. A lot of people on the estate worked there so there was no protest about it. Occasionally the sky above would turn yellow from the belching chimneys, pumping out waste chemicals. The rooms of our house was filled with fumes on regular occasions. A number of English and Welsh also worked there. I presumed they had been offered a house as a lure in getting these key workers to Carrickfergus from similar factories in Wales and England.

We moved across Belfast Lough to an estate in Holywood with view of the Lough and a golf course behind us (where McElroy was to practice, for anyone interested in golf, which I'm not). There was the usual garden back and front, the 4 bedrooms, the bathroom, the two toilets, living room, large kitchen and still the old parlour, the Catholic and Protestant neighbours, the 50/50 Catholic/Protestant mix.

(When I left this estate to go and live in

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## Unionist Social Engineering In Northern Ireland

It's not popular with the Catholic population of Northern Ireland to bring up the subject of Unionist social engineering post WW2. The built-in communities of Catholic West Belfast, the Ardoyne and Short Strand weren't always aware of other Catholics living in isolation in the Diaspora, and in mostly in poor conditions.

It was these Catholics who were collected for the Unionist social-engineering.

But before I enlarge on that subject the same collectives of Catholics were not to know that Catholics were being employed in the Belfast shipyard of Harland & Wolff. It didn't suit Nationalist interests to make this known. It is true there weren't a lot of Catholics in the shipyard except when there was a skills shortage and they couldn't recruit sufficient workers from the Scottish shipyards. WW2 saw thousands of skilled workers, coming from what was then the Irish Free State, to meet the needs of a voracious war need of ships, both commercial and Royal Naval. Shipyard numbers at that time reached to over 70,000 workers from the normal 30,000 or under, depending on the number of ships to be built. Harland & Wolff were also producing the Stirling bomber plane in great numbers.

When central Belfast and the shipyard was bombed during WW2 by Germany, the huge inferno brought fire engines from

across the border. That could have been in gratitude of their workers being employed in the North.

Apprenticeships for young Catholics would have been very difficult to get in Harland & Wolff. But some made it just the same as overt Catholics, unlike some others, including myself, who went covert.

By 1950 a large number of housing estates had been built under the auspices of the Northern Ireland Housing Trust. Rathcoole, about five miles outside Belfast, was once the biggest housing estate in Europe. It was the flagship of all estates and was visited by housing representatives from Western and Eastern Europe. It was surprising how fast these estates had been built and it would have required every building worker around.

Most Catholics, not being able to work in the heavy industry monopolised by the Protestant worker, monopolised the building trade so they would probably been employed in great numbers on the building of these estates. The UK was building houses and flats rapidly under the Attlee Government so I can only guess the money was coming from London.

As one of those forgotten mainly Catholic families in the Diaspora, Carryduff, County Down to be precise, we lived in an old house that had once been a one-

London my standard of living fell by 100% in a bombed-out London)

Then one of my sisters got what seemed to be a permanent illness at the time—tuberculosis, and had to be hospitalised for seven years. The hospital was at the other side of the Lough which meant travelling to visit her was a journey into Belfast and from Belfast another journey to the White-abbey Chest Hospital outside the city. The nearest estate was Rathcoole. It was at one time the biggest in Europe and was the flagship of all estates in NI. It was visited by housing representatives from both Western and Eastern Europe.

It had the same type of house with garden back and front and the mixed 50/50 Catholic/Protestant, the four bedrooms, the bathroom, the two toilets the living room and the old parlour. A Catholic school had also been built on the estate.

The 12th of July, Orange Day, didn't affect the Catholic population of the estate very much. They just let it pass over their heads. You could hear the Lambeg drums in the distance but they weren't on the estate. The Catholics there held no demonstrations nor held meetings with Catholics only in attendance. Tenants meetings were always well mixed. On summer days the doors were kept open to air the houses. Pre-school children would wander in and out of the houses at will without any problems. On a visit there I noticed a three year old with a croaky voice who had wandered in. My mother said he was a *fenian*. It was the young Bobby Sands.

Other estates were being built in West Belfast but they were going to be Catholic estates because the area was Catholic. Social engineering couldn't be attempted here though I felt Unionism expected some gratitude for providing new modern houses.

I have often wondered who in the Unionist circle thought of what I saw as social engineering, though I doubt if the term was around then post-WW2. Did the Attlee Government have a hand in this, in exchange for vast amounts of building money? If so the Unionists did carry it out and brought about an almost idyllic peace for a time on these estates. A sort of an oasis of peace of mind.

Carrickfergus, which was always rabidly anti-Catholic now had a social experiment on their turf in the form of the Sunnylands Estate. The public library in Carrickfergus also had its stock of books upgraded considerably to the left because of the estate I would think.

I was able to get out works on Mao Zedong and various books on Irish history.

Even the local paper became non-sectarian and published various bi-national points of view in its letter's column. It even criticised the local Orange order for spending a lot of rate-payers' money on new robes for re-enacting the ceremony of King William landing at Carrickfergus in 1688.

Being a member of the Young Workers' League, I and others from the CPNI, knocked on every door on the estate, in a series of Saturday visits, to recruit. We got about half a dozen to join. The main thing was we encountered no hostility.

Then came the late 1960s with the loyalist pogroms in West Belfast and the Bogside in Derry. Paisley was tearing things apart and Unionist social-engineering became a victim. The Catholics on these estates were bothered that their lives could be disrupted by these events. If left alone, they may not have been influenced by Republicanism. Some of us had always been on the brink of taking part in some action but most people just want a quiet normal life.

Rathcoole had a number of well-organised anti-Catholic pogroms. Well organised in the sense that the loyalist organiser knew the religious tendency and names of everyone on this huge estate. There had to be collaboration from officials like civil servants to get this knowledge.

First groups of men reading from notebooks, and carrying tins of paint and brushes, would start out to read each street number. When they came to the right house the letters *BW* or *BO* would be painted on the driveway of the house. *BW* meant *Break Windows*. This was a warning that the Catholic tenants had to go eventually. *BO* was for *Burn Out*. This was notice to leave right away. A gang would follow them up with stones and petrol bombs.

My parents spoke of the screams of women throughout the estate and the sound of desperate scrubbing as they tried to eliminate the letters. Promises of leaving immediately by the *BOs* to the gangs brought furniture vans. called by the same gangs. (There's nothing like a bit of business on the side.) The *BWs* were just Catholics and not suspected of having Republican sympathies. They were in the majority. They went too within a few days.

The Sands family fled for their lives

with Catholic mother and Protestant father. On the windows of the empty house was painted: *INFESTATION*. it was only after this outrage that Bobby Sands sought action.

Wilson John Haire

15 October 2018

## Sinn Féin Presidential Poppcock And Armistice Attacks

continued

What on earth was she at? On October 17th, she was hailed in the editorial of the 'Times' (UK) Ireland edition, titled: "*The Sinn Féin presidential candidate Liadh Ní Riada's commitment to wear the poppy should be seen as a gesture not only to unionists but to all Ireland's war dead*". That edition's lead story, however, also reported:

"Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, a Sinn Féin senator, said that it would not be appropriate for the president to wear a poppy because it was still a divisive symbol in Ireland. 'Ms Ní Riada spoke in a personal capacity, that's her own position. I have a different view and I think most people in Sinn Féin would, too. I have no problem commemorating the First World War... but the poppy commemorates all British war dead in every conflict. The poppy, at present, is still a divisive symbol', he said. Daithí Doolan, a Sinn Féin councillor in Dublin, 'completely disagreed' with Ms Ní Riada but said that he would campaign for her."

Not good enough. For what on earth was Sinn Féin doing in nominating Ní Riada for President in the first place? Until her poppy 'gesture', her only claim that she could be a better President than Higgins relied on the argument that he is "*too old*".

She showed precious little understanding of the Office of the President itself. Higgins and his two predecessors, while attending Remembrance Sunday services in St. Patrick's Cathedral, remained fully aware of the fact that the President of Ireland is also Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Army—this Republic's Óglaigh na hÉireann that has certainly not "*gone away*". As the poppy is the symbol of a foreign army, that alone should rule out a President ever donning it, apart from all the other reasons.

The issue arose this time seventeen years ago, as reported in the 'Irish



Independent' on 6th November 1997:

"The Irish president-elect Mary McAleese yesterday said she would not be wearing a memorial poppy at her inauguration on Armistice Day next week... Mrs McAleese, who was elected as Ireland's head of state last week to succeed Mary Robinson will be attending a Remembrance Day service on Sunday in Dublin. But she said she had decided 'after long deliberation, apart from the shamrock, the president should not wear emblems or symbols of any kind'. That included the poppy. Her decision outraged many Tory MPs, and Ulster Unionists. Andrew Mackay, the Tory spokesman on Northern Ireland, said 'It's obscene for Mary McAleese to confuse the poppy with any sectarian issues...' David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, said: 'If she had wanted to make a significant contribution, that was her opportunity. It is a missed opportunity.' Mrs McAleese... was responding to requests to wear the poppy from the Royal British Legion and other groups. She was advised against it by Irish ministers, including the Irish Defence Minister, Michael Smith ..."

Irish soccer international James McClean has advanced other reasons for not wearing a poppy. Since moving to play in English clubs since 2011, he has been subjected to an annual torrent of abuse from the terraces, as a result. In 2015, McClean explained his stance in the West Brom matchday programme.

"People say I am being disrespectful but don't ask why I choose not to wear it. If the poppy was simply about World War One and Two victims alone, I'd wear it without a problem. I would wear it every day of the year if that was the thing but it doesn't. It stands for all the conflicts that Britain has been involved in. Because of the history where I come from in Derry, I cannot wear something that represents that."

And in this centenary year, it is also worth recalling what Armistice Day meant for Ireland on 11th November 1918. In his 2011 book, *'A City In Wartime—Dublin 1914-1918'*, social and labour historian Pádraig Yeates related:

"The end of the war on 11 November 1918 no doubt provided countless occasions of sin, but it is unlikely that public health concerns were uppermost in anyone's mind. The 'Irish Times' reported: 'Dublin gave itself over to rejoicings. The feelings that had been pent up for years were suddenly let loose and the whole city seemed to go mad with joy.' Flags of the Allies 'were profusely displayed from the principal buildings... the Union Jack being, of course, in largest request'. In the afternoon a dense crowd filled the area from College Green to St Stephen's Green 'and cheered themselves

hoarse... (while) military wagons bedecked with flags and carrying scores of happy 'WAACs' (members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps) pushed their way through the crowds...' The only reference to local political differences was a mock funeral for the Kaiser organised by students from the Royal College of Surgeons. They wheeled an effigy through the streets wrapped in 'a Sinn Féin flag' (by which the 'Irish Times' meant the Irish national Tricolour-MOR)..."

"Sinn Féin was caught on the hop by news of the armistice. It had organised a meeting in the Mansion House that night, addressed by Alderman Tom Kelly and Harry Boland, when all the speakers could do was to declare that the Allies' victory would not deflect them from the campaign for independence. To raise morale, Boland predicted that the party would win 'between seventy-five and eighty seats' in the general election that must follow the ending of the war. (No particular exaggeration or false optimism here; SF would win seventy-three seats—MOR)... Serious trouble erupted in the evening. Staff members in the Sinn Féin offices at 6 Harcourt Street received a last-minute warning that a group of Trinity students were planning an attack at 7 pm. They barely had time to bar the doors before the building was bombarded with stones. The besieged workers retaliated with lumps of coal from the cellar but were finding it hard to hold out until two Irish Volunteer officers, Simon Donnelly and Harry Boland, arrived and dispersed the students by firing over their heads. The appearance of Donnelly and Boland marked the beginning of a counter-mobilisation by the Volunteers... (who) 'acting on orders from GHQ proceeded to clear the streets of the British Military and their supporters.' The main confrontation came when a group of soldiers decided to hold an impromptu victory march from St Stephen's Green to Sackville Street at about 7:30 pm... approaching the GPO, where a large number of Volunteers and Sinn Féin supporters had gathered with flags. The soldiers turned into Middle Abbey Street to avoid a confrontation, only to be set upon by a fresh crowd. They were driven back across the river, and a rush of young men and youths waving Tricolours pushed through a DMP cordon on O'Connell Bridge and reached Grafton Street before being dispersed by a baton charge... The 'Independent' stressed that most of the soldiers and sailors involved in the disturbances were from 'England, Scotland and Wales', while the 'Irish Times' played down the scale of the trouble and pointed out that 'soldiers and civilians mingled in harmony' in many parts of the city that night. But Volunteers claimed that they had control of the streets by 11 pm, having defeated the 'military, Dublin Metropolitan Police and loyalists'..." (2012 edition, pp 285-7).

Yeates gave an extremely sanitised account of how the Imperialist War's Armistice, and Britain's victory in what Connolly had named as *"The War Upon The German Nation"*, had been 'celebrated' in Dublin, a century ago this month. Nowhere did he mention the 'celebratory' attack on Union HQ at Liberty Hall, a significant omission on the part of a SIPTU Historical Consultant, since even the *'Irish Times'* had reported that attack. On September 6th, last, I attended an excellent centenary lecture by historian Liz Gillis, entitled "1918: A DECISIVE YEAR FOR MODERN IRELAND: The first Dáil, the conscription crisis, Countess Markievicz, votes for women". One slide, in particular, grabbed my attention—the front page of the Dublin *'Evening Herald'* for 14th November 1918, and, at my request, she kindly forwarded me a copy. The banner headline at the top announced *"General Election on Thursday, December 14"*, a bare month down the road, when this Nation's Democracy in waiting would give Sinn Féin an overwhelming 26 Counties victory. But its lead story, consisting of a compendium of reports, carried the headlines:

"RIOTS IN DUBLIN. Mansion House and Liberty Hall Attacked. Harcourt St. Melee."

"Violent scenes were again witnessed in Dublin ... as demonstrating soldiers attempted to wreck the Sinn Féin Offices in Harcourt street, the Mansion House, and Liberty Hall... (AS PASSED BY THE CENSOR). The chief points of attack \_\_\_ (censored) were: The Mansion House; Sinn Féin Headquarters; Liberty Hall (Transport Workers' Union Headquarters); Emmet Hall, Inchicore (Meeting Place, Irish Transport Union)..." (Emmet Hall had also been the home of the executed 1916 Irish Citizen Army Chief-of-Staff, Michael Mallin, and his family—MOR).

"Lord Mayor's Statement. I was sitting in my study about 7.15. Looking out I noticed a \_\_\_ (censored), numbering two or three hundred, waving sticks and Union Jacks... Some came to the door ... with the object of forcing it in. They broke the windows with stones and used sticks to break the lamps outside. They looked very dangerous... There were three or four civilians in the crowd.' An attempt was made, it is alleged, to set fire to the door of the Mansion House. 'Having vented their spleen', the Lord Mayor said, 'they went away singing 'God Save the King'."

"Attack Beaten Off. At about 7 pm, the same time as the attack on the Mansion House, a crowd of soldiers and civilians appeared in Harcourt street and proceeded

to attack the headquarters of the Sinn Fein Organisation. There were about 30 Sinn Feiners inside the premises, who defended the place against the assailants, and a fierce fight ensued. The defenders with sticks and bare knuckles beat back the attackers... One of the defenders was injured by a bayonet in the forehead and the bayonet was captured..."

"Liberty Hall Battered. 'Shortly after 8 o'clock', the 'Freeman's Journal' states, 'a large number of young soldiers, accompanied by members of the W.A.A.C., and several male and female civilians... (came) from the direction of College Green. Most carried sticks... and other weapons, and were headed by a bugler. As they marched along they called upon soldiers standing on the sidewalk to join them in the attack on Liberty Hall... When they reached Beresford place, they assailed the offices of the Transport Union, Liberty Hall, with sticks, stones and other missiles.' The 'Irish Times' states: 'The occupants of the building at the time were mostly clerks and officials connected with the I.T.G. Union, and a meeting was being held representative of a women's branch of the organisation... Some of the crowd attacked the main entrance, but did not succeed in breaking it in. The lower windows were all broken, as was the glass in the door on Eden quay. The sounds of several shots were heard, apparently from the roof of Liberty Hall, and the crowd then scattered, very few remaining in Beresford place.'"

"Hit and Run. 'Another outbreak occurred at Inchicore ', the 'Freeman's Journal' states, 'when a body of 30 or 40 soldiers congregated outside the Emmet Hall (Headquarters of Inchicore Branch, I.T.W. Union) and threw stones at the building. The windows were smashed' ..."

The 'Herald' compendium carried further commentary on the Liberty Hall attack:

The Dublin 'Daily Express' states: 'A large part of the attacking force is stated to have been composed of soldiers who were erstwhile members of the Irish Transport Workers' Union, and who took exception to the attitude taken up by a section of the union's members during the war.' Mr. T. Foran, President, Irish Transport Workers' Union, who was at Liberty Hall at the time of the assault, said they were taken completely by surprise. He designated the attack as a most cowardly and wanton one upon a non-political and purely trade union organisation."

The 'Herald' lead story concluded:

"KEEP COOL! To the Editor, 'Evening Herald': 'A chara—Please insert the following in your issue of this evening—The Executive of Sinn Fein appeal to the

people to remain 'calm, steady, and confident'—using the words of Commandant de Valera—notwithstanding the intense provocation.—Sinne, T. KELLY, H. BOLAND, Runaidhe."

But perhaps the greatest failure in the Yeates narrative of the events of one hundred years ago was his omission of even the name of a fatality of the British Army 'celebration' in Dublin of its Armistice triumph—Seamus O'Kelly, journalist and author of 'The Weaver's Grave'. With a long career as an 'Irish Times' journalist behind him, this glaring gap in his history of World War One Dublin has been further put to shame by a fellow 'Irish Times' journalist Frank McNally, whose "Irishman's Diary" of this October 17th carried the heading "Last Post—Seumas O'Kelly, writer, journalist, and victim of the 1918 Armistice". McNally continued:

"Among his many other distinctions, the writer and journalist Seumas O'Kelly (circa 1880-1918) was one of the few Irish people who could be said to have been a victim of both the Troubles and the first World War. He wasn't a combatant in either, exactly. But of the manner of his premature passing, 100 years ago next month, one admirer later commented: 'He died for Ireland as surely and as finely as if he had been shot by a Black and Tan'."

"On the other hand, the events that killed him were a direct result of the 1918 Armistice, making him also, arguably, one of the last casualties of the Great War. Aged only 38, but weakened by rheumatic fever and a heart condition, O'Kelly had been working as usual that November day, deputy-editing the Sinn Féin newspaper 'Nationality' in place of

Arthur Griffith, in jail in England. Meanwhile, Dublin's loyalists were celebrating, some of them riotously. Amid the union jacks flying everywhere, the tricolour on Sinn Féin's offices was considered a provocation. So a group of off-duty soldiers, Trinity students, and 'separation women'—so-called because of the Separation Allowance that supplemented whatever their army husbands sent home—stormed the building."

"Harry Boland, who was also there, turned a hose on them, while the editor defended himself with the walking stick to which he had been reduced. O'Kelly suffered either a cerebral haemorrhage or heart attack—accounts differ—or both. Whatever it was, he never recovered. His funeral in Glasnevin became a show of force by republicans, to whom he was now a martyr. As PS O'Hegarty, author of the 'Black and Tan' comment, put it: 'He died at his post'."

On the 'Irish Central' website, this 16th October Pauline Murphy further related:

"One hundred years ago, on Armistice Day November 11th, 1918, Seamus was in the Sinn Fein offices at No. 6 Harcourt Street, Dublin, when a group of drunken British soldiers raided it. Seamus was sitting at his desk when the loutish soldiers kicked in the door. They proceeded to smash windows, break furniture and assault anyone who stood in their way. Seamus tried to defend himself with his walking stick, but he was roughed up by the rampaging soldiers. When the soldiers left, Seamus was on the floor clutching his chest. He was brought to Jervis Street hospital where three days later, on November 14th, he lost his life at the age of 38."

Lest we forget!

Manus O'Riordan

## Was The First World War Ireland's War? How Should We Commemorate The Armistice?

Two of my mother's four brothers, and the husbands, or future husbands of both her sisters, fought in British uniform in the 1914-1918 war. Ours was not an atypical Irish family.

But I would reject the claim that the war was Ireland's War.

It was foisted on Ireland largely by a back-bench member of England's House of Commons, John Redmond, without consultation with his party colleagues in the Commons or a mandate from the Irish electorate.

In those days if a back-bench MP was nominated by the Prime Minister for a Cabinet position he had to resign his seat and present himself to the electorate for re-election. When the Back-bencher Winston Churchill was first offered a Cabinet post (in 1910) he had to go through that exercise, and he lost the ensuing by-election.

No General Election had taken place between 1910 and Redmond's commitment of Irishmen to the Great Slaughter, an act of gross presumption. No General

Election occurred until after the 1918 Armistice. When it did, Redmond was dead, and the Irish electorate repudiated his war and his successor as leader of his party, John Dillon, and all but 6 of his party's parliamentary candidates.

In doing so the electorate endorsed the 1916 Rising as Ireland's Battle.

The Irish Labour Party was founded by the 1916 Insurgent leader James Connolly, Fine Gael by W.T. Cosgrave, and Fine Fail by Eamon de Valera. Connolly was executed by the British for his part in the Rising. Cosgrave and de Valera were sentenced to death for their parts in it.

Strange though it may seem some current members of those parties would have us believe that the 'Great War' was Ireland's War and the 1916 Rising an ill-considered and embarrassing irrelevance.

These thoughts arise because Brendan Howlin TD, Leader (of Ireland's!) Labour Party, insists that the inauguration of our next President, which the Constitution stipulates must be held on November 11, must be postponed so that Ireland may commemorate the Centenary of the 1918 Armistice, and the Fine Gael Taoiseach, while not wishing further to amend the Constitution (for the moment), is equally adamant that the State commemorate the Armistice, as if the 'Great War' were Ireland's War.

I do not know how or if Ireland's Literary and Journalistic Establishment plans to remember the Armistice.

At the time most of the men who were chosen by Irish voters to govern them, were in British prisons—arrested, but never tried, for an invented "*German Plot*". One of the prisoners, who had already won a Parliamentary by-election, was Sinn Fein's founder, Arthur Griffith, Editor of the party's paper, "*Nationality*".

A brilliant journalist, poet, dramatist, and author of the acclaimed Novella—"*The Weaver's Grave*"—was editing "*Nationality*" in Griffith's absence, and on the evening of 11th November 1918 he was alone in Sinn Fein's Headquarters in Dublin's Harcourt Street.

A mob for whom the 'Great War' was "*Ireland's War*" broke into the Sinn Fein office and sacked it. They set upon its lone occupant, the unarmed Seumas O'Kelly, who died a few days later from his injuries.

**Donal Kennedy**

**BOOK LAUNCHES**  
**Friday, 9th November**  
**Pearse House, Pearse St. Dublin**  
**7.30.pm**  
**ALL WELCOME**

**" Blockading The Germans!**

**- The evolution of Britain's Strategy during the first World War with an overview of 19th century Maritime Law."**

**By Eamon Dyas**

This is the first volume of a Trilogy examining overlooked aspects of the First World War and its aftermath from a European perspective.

Comprehensively sourced with scholarly research, it explains how Britain used a continental blockade to force the capitulation of the Kaiser's Germany by targeting not just military, but also civilian, imports—particularly imported food supplies, upon which Germany had become dependent since its industrial revolution.

After joining the European War of August 1914—and elevating it into a World War—Britain cast aside the two maritime codes agreed by the world's maritime powers over the previous almost 60 years—the Declaration of Paris in 1856 and the Declaration of London in 1909. In defiance of these internationally agreed codes, Britain aggressively expanded its blockade with the object of disrupting not only the legitimate trade between neutral countries and Germany but trade between neutral countries themselves.

Britain's policy of civilian starvation during the First World War was unprecedented in history. Whereas it had used the weapon of starvation against civilians in the past, in such instances this was either through the exploitation of a natural disaster to bring about famine (Ireland and India) or the result of pre-conceived policy against a non-industrial society (France during the Revolutionary Wars). Its use against Germany was the first time in history where a policy of deliberate starvation was directed against the civilian population of an advanced industrial economy.

This volume traces the evolution of Britain's relationship with international naval blockade strategies from the Crimean War through the American Civil War and the Boer War culminating in its maturity during the Great War. It also draws out how the United States—the leading neutral country—was made complicit in Blockading The Germans during the war and brings the story up to America's entry into the War.

Eamon Dyas is a former head of The Times newspaper archive, was on the Executive Committee of the Business Archives Council in England for a number of years, and was Information Officer of the Newspaper Department of the British Library for many years.

**"England's care for the truth"**

**by Roger Casement**

These articles by Sir Roger Casement, originally published in *The Continental Times* of Berlin, have lain forgotten for over a century. Now, for the first time, they are published as a collection by Athol Books to bring the authentic Casement to the general public.

They take up the theme of his only published book, *The Crime Against Europe*: British Foreign Policy and how it brought about the First World War. They reveal Casement as a consistent Liberal when English Liberalism failed its great test in the ultimate moment of truth in August 1914. They show Sir Roger as a consistent Irish Nationalist when the Home Rulers collapsed into Imperialism. The ground shifted under his feet but he remained solid.

For Casement action was consequent upon thought and knowledge. Remaining true to his principles he attempted to forge an Irish-German alliance. Not for Casement "*my country right or wrong*" but who was *right* and who was *wrong*.

This collection explains why Casement did what he did and how it led him to Easter 1916. It shatters the British narrative of the Great War by "*one who knew*". It shows why Casement was the most dangerous Irishman who ever faced up to Britain and why they had to hang him and attempt to foul his memory.

They have not succeeded.

# es ahora \*

'Neutrality' by Louis MacNeice.

The neutral island facing the Atlantic,  
The neutral island is the heart of man,  
Are bitterly soft reminders of the beginnings  
That ended before the end began.

Look into your heart, you will find a County Sligo,  
A Knocknarea with for navel a cairn of stones,  
You will find the shadow and sheen of a moleskin mountain  
And a litter of chronicles and bones.

Look into your heart, you will find fermenting rivers,  
Intricacies of gloom and glint,  
You will find such ducats of dream and great doubloons of ceremony  
As nobody today would mint.

But then look eastwards from your heart, there bulks  
A continent, close, dark, as archetypal sin,  
While to the west off your own shores the mackerel  
Are fat—on the flesh of your kin.

*Collected Poems, 1925-1948*, Louis MacNeice. Faber & Faber. London. 1949.

"In 1968 the Irish Republic plays an individual role in international affairs. An alert, small nation with a long civilisation and a distinctive anti-Imperial history, it is peculiarly well placed in the world of emergent states. At the United Nations and in the trouble spots of the world, Ireland's voice and participation belie its small size and recent freedom. Its authority, indeed, corresponds more to the wide-flung community of Irishmen who in the past helped to build the United States of America and the several Dominions of the British Commonwealth. Today the Republic of Ireland is as consciously and undeniably independent as any nation, in a world of interdependent economies and major ideological blocs. Sovereign and free it plays its hand more or less according to its own decision."

*The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1921-'31*, D.W. Harkness. Macmillan. London. 1969. Preface.

## Clair Wills And The Story She Tells (Part 5)

Professor Clair Wills in her book '*That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second World War*' introduced us to that wandering poet from Ulster looking for a job in Dublin (though he had left a quite good post lecturing on Classics in Birmingham University—with unseemingly haste) and he quite naturally fell into the company of the Palace Bar in which Smyllie, Editor of '*The Irish Times*' held court. But the person there who caught MacNeice's attention was Walter Starkie, Professor of Romance Languages at Trinity College, Dublin—who promised the former to put in a good word for him at the university and assured him—according to MacNeice—a good post. But it was what Wills found out about Starkie that intrigued me more than anything else.

Starkie had an old friendship with W.B. Yeats through their association with the Abbey Theatre from the early 1920s onwards and they both had great admiration for the Cumann na nGaedheal Government/State. Indeed, Starkie had become a "key advisor" to the latter "on

educational policy". There follows an account of Starkie's politics which drew from the eminent professor a minor aside to the effect that the former "was a complex character". Having met Mussolini and being "greatly impressed", he became—

"a kind of unofficial Italian spokesperson in Ireland. Inspired by special audiences with *il Duce*, his work of the 1930s is often barely disguised propaganda ... In 1935, Starkie was sent on a two-month trip to Abyssinia as a guest of Mussolini's forces, and he wrote up six articles for the Irish Independent the following year, arguing against de Valera's position on sanctions. A later book, published in 1938 as 'The Waveless Plain' and paid for by a grant from the Italian government recounts his growing interest in Mussolini's transformation of social life in Italy extolling the virtues of his revamping of politics and education. This mattered, because Starkie had been a key advisor to the Cumann na nGaedheal government on educational policy."

"Ten years before the publication of 'The Waveless Plain', Starkie contributed an article to the International Fascist Organisation's *Survey of Fascism Year-book*, entitled 'Whither is Ireland Heading

—Is it Fascism? Thoughts on the Free State" (All the italics are by Wills.) And Starkie found that:

'it is quite possible that Ireland may come to assimilate a great deal of fascist doctrine, properly understood'."

Starkie also liked the ideas of Hungarian "*fascist sympathiser*" Odon Por who liked the ideas of AE (George Russell).

"Por's weighty volume 'Fascism' published in 1923 includes a long chapter entitled 'Motives and Tendencies of the Dictatorship' in which AE's corporatist thought features, rather surprisingly, as the very foundation of fascist ideology. Por also contributed several articles to AE's short-lived journal, '*The Irish Economist*' in 1922 and 1923."

Starkie had married an Italian woman in the '20s and thereafter moved back and forth between Ireland and Italy. It is from here that Professor Wills seemed to get into confused mode when speaking about Irish politics as she recounts:

"It was during this period that Irish politics most closely echoed the turmoil on the Continent, as parliamentary parties forged links to Ireland's fascist group, the Blueshirts. The movement had grown quickly. The birth of the Army Comrades Association (later to be known as the National Corporate Party) in 1932 was largely the result of old civil-war animosities, and suspicions arising from de Valera's election success. There were fears that under the new dispensation the IRA would be given free rein to attack former members of the Free State Army, or those who had acted against gunmen during the Cosgrave administration. After all, de Valera, who less than ten years previously had been in arms against the parliamentary state, was hardly a convincing champion of constitutional norms." (Underlinings –JH)

Wills then goes on to write about General Eoin O'Duffy—

"who had been sacked by de Valera as Commissioner of the Civic Guard... By the following year the Blueshirts had attracted over a hundred thousand members under its new leader. In September 1933 O'Duffy's movement (then called the National Guard) merged with two main opposition parties in the Dáil, Cumann na nGaedheal and the National Centre Party, to form a new political movement, United Ireland—or as it was to be known, Fine Gael. The Catholic hierarchy gave its blessing to ideas that, after all, echoed papal teaching. Professor James Hogan, a historian at UCC accused by Peadar O'Donnell of being the 'theoretician of Fascism in Ireland'—and Professor Michael Tierney, a classicist at UCD and a senator, cranked out articles and pamphlets extolling the ideal of a corporate society."

## It Is Time

What is interesting about Wills' account here is that, though de Valera founded Fianna Fáil in 1926, there seems to be an almost wilful attempt to corral him and his party into this whole fascist set-up. It is my contention that Wills is being deliberately disingenuous—precisely to taint de Valera's political credentials. And she herself knows this as further down the page she acknowledges:

"Despite the glaring absence of any plausible left-wing menace (though the IRA did launch a short-lived radical initiative, Saor Eire, in 1931) Hogan published a series of articles, and later a celebrated pamphlet, '*Could Ireland Become Communist?*' in which he expiated on his fears of the 'communistic' IRA..."

MacNeice—ever the *scuit*—wrote a farce called '*Station Bell*' for the Birmingham University Dramatic Society in 1935 with the witless character based on O'Duffy but whose gender was a female called:

"Julia Brown, Ireland's would-be dictator... In the final scene O'Halloran, a defeated de Valera figure, belatedly grasps his mistake in unleashing fascist forces, and tries unsuccessfully to call on help from the United States; stranded alone in the station buffet, he resolves instead to 'complain to the League of Nations'..."

But by 1935 the Blueshirts had faded as a mass movement—an indication of the strength of Ireland's fledgling democracy."

And what of the fascist Starkie, Mac Neice's "*close friend*"—well, he was tasked in 1940 to be the Head of the British Council in Franco's Madrid and he never got MacNeice that cushy job in TCD. Even though the latter also applied for Starkie's old job, that too was denied him. Now MacNeice was "*tormented by the ethical problems of war*" and he turned on the Palace Bar set, who had been good friends to him and used crude language to describe them:

"Dublin was hardly worried by the war; her old preoccupations were still her preoccupations. The intelligentsia continued their parties; their mutual malice was as effervescent as ever. There was still a pot of flowers in front of Matt Talbot's shrine. The potboy priests and the birds of prey were still the dominant caste; the petty bureaucracy continued powerful and petty."

But the dislike wasn't all one way and MacNeice was "*ridiculed by the Palace Bar crowd*" with the probably apocryphal story of a row between the former and the latter which was immortalised by Patrick Kavanagh with this lovely couplet:

"Let him go back and labour/For Faber and Faber."

But, for all of MacNeice's "*ethical problems of war*", he took off for another neutral country—America—and there met up with his friends and fellow poets, Auden and Isherwood: who many felt had turned their backs on their home country at a time of peril. But eventually MacNeice did return to London, but certainly not to fight like his fellow Palace friend Brian Inglis who joined the RAF. After much scrounging around, MacNeice got a friend, E.A. (Archie) Harding, to get him an interview with the BBC who gave him a job. But he was put on three month probation even though he came through his M15 vetting with flying colours. After some time, he was offered a staff position with a salary of £620 a year and he worked there for the next twenty years.

During the war, MacNeice was trained to be a propagandist, as were other writers like William Empson and George Orwell—it was a six-week crash course and they called it '*The Liar's School*'. MacNeice, like his friend Elizabeth Bowen, would later say they had a "*good war*" and who could blame them? They partied, they drank, they smoked and they made contacts—especially Bowen whose contacts were to be very useful to her later on in life—especially in 1940 when she met and fell in love with the Canadian diplomat Charles Ritchie (who was to become her life-long lover).

Professor Wills, according to all the reviews, used a lot of writers and their perceptions about the war and sometimes in this she fails badly. I was, by a complete coincidence, looking at back issues of '*The New York Review of Books*' and I opened one—the September 27th 2007, Vol.LIV, No14, and there within a full page spread of Harvard University Press was Clair Wills's book '*That Neutral Island*' which revealed that it was brought out in HB in the US by that entity. Which meant that it was seen as a very important book to both the UK and the USA and their particular world-view.

Wills never fully utilised Bowen's brilliant *Reports*, which I thought was a great failing of hers in this endeavour. Instead she uses quotations that I know to be from Bowen's novels, though she doesn't source them. For example, in trying to denigrate the Irish and show how cut off they were—rather like the Platonic cave of F.S.L. Lyons's imagination—Wills attributes to Bowen the suggestion that—"*there is no elsewhere, no other place*" for the Irish at home. But this is a line out of one of Bowen's own short stories, '*Summer Night*'. And it is about a Big House lady who is off trysting with a lowly neighbour

while her poor cuckolded husband is alone! The fuller piece reads thus:

"There is not even the past; our memories share with us the infected zone; not a memory does not lead up to this. Each moment is everywhere, it holds the war in its crystal; there is not elsewhere, no other place. Not a benediction falls on this apart house of the Major: the enemy is within it, creeping about. Each heart here falls to the enemy."

And the enemy is his own wife. And we now know that indeed Elizabeth Bowen thought of having an affair with Jim Gates, the lowly manager of the creamery in Kildorrery, Co. Cork. But the joke was on Bowen because Jim Gates, her ever faithful friend who let her guests use his bathroom when she had none, was of the famous Cow & Gate family: yet he was still seen by the Big House lady as (God forbid!) "*middle-class*" and how she hated them!

In her biography of Bowen, Victoria Glendinning finds her in 1948 more than a bit peeved at the new Labour Government and the expulsion from office of her great hero Winston Churchill. Bowen wrote to a friend:

"I can't stick all these little middle-class Labour wets with their Old London School of Economics ties and their women. Scratch any one of those cuties and you find the governess. Or so I have always found."

Another time Wills uses Bowen's novel-esque phrase "*a ban on feeling*" to express how the neutral Irish were "*anaesthetised*" due to de Valera's use of censorship. Seán O'Faolain complained that:

"The result is a queer feeling of unrealism... This perpetual silence, this guarded reticence, he likened to the atmosphere of a genteel tea party, where the topic ends up being the weather—though in fact even the weather was censored, as possibly helpful to invasion plans."

Wills knew of course that the weather was very strictly censored in the UK but here she wants to come to a conclusion which fits her narrative. All this adds up to a—

"state of suspension which represented the triumph of euphemism—the very term 'Emergency' was a refusal to name the war explicitly."

And there you have it—Wills with all her time in the archives, national and local papers, letters, diaries, official reports and all the rest wants to have her propaganda victory and she gets it. And the purpose—well the road from Skibbereen to Princeton has to have a price and this academic shows us clearly what that is.

**Julianne Herlihy ©**

# Budget

continued

confronting the big challenges facing society. What we have instead is an outbreak of ideological paralysis affecting the centre ground of the body politic and all regions to the right of it. In his speech on October 9th, Pascal Donohoe talked about the problems in housing, health and the challenge of climate change, but he failed to propose credible measures for dealing with any of them.

O'Donohoe's prescriptions were not all bad. His plan to run a surplus in Budget 2020 and in subsequent years if the economy continues to grow is sound, given that he proposes to use it to pay off small amounts of the State's alarming level of public debt. The proposal to increase VAT on the hospitality sector back to its pre-Crash level of 13 per cent is also welcome, as are the provisions for an extra five euro per week for Social Welfare recipients and Old Age Pensioners, and the full reinstatement of the Christmas Bonus. As a defence against the effects of Brexit, the allocation of €700 million to a Human Capital Initiative and a cheap loan scheme for the agri-food sector, makes sense.

Donohoe introduced a modest tax package worth €300 million which will increase the entry point to the higher rate of PAYE by €750. He also reduced the lower rate of Universal Service Charge to 4.5 per cent. Both measures will give a small increase to workers on low and middle incomes and are welcome. A statement by Minister Donohoe that "*the increase in current expenditure I am committing to today is lower than the rate of economic growth forecast for next year*" testifies to a welcome sophistication in fiscal planning at the Department of Finance.

Total capital expenditure for next year covering public investment in schools, universities, public transport and other important infrastructure, including the ports and airports, will amount to €7.3 billion. This is 3.5 per cent of national income compared to an EU average in recent years of 2.7 per cent of GDP. Investment in these areas and at this scale will almost certainly increase the

economy's productive capacity. As the Finance Minister expressed it:

"This Government has made the clear national choice in Project Ireland 2040 to prioritise increases in capital spending to address the infrastructural deficits that emerged during the recession. Project Ireland 2040 foresees population growth of 1 million people supported by massive investment in our national infrastructure. This means we will build more houses, hospitals and schools, climate proof our economy and invest in our energy and communications networks."

I will come back to some of these issues later, but, in principle, the strategy of investing in infrastructure with a view to the expected population increase of coming decades is sound.

A measure that is debateable is the creation of a *Rainy Day Fund*. This is to be capitalised with €1.5 billion from the Ireland Strategic Fund and will be supplemented by an annual €500 million from the Exchequer, starting with this year's Budget (Budget 2019). Sinn Fein has criticised the measure on the grounds that it can only be for future Bank Bailouts. However, the EU's Banking Union policy, including the Economic Stability Fund, has been created to ensure that national Governments never again have to bailout banks. So the question remains what is the Rainy Day Fund for? One use might be to pay off the large fines, starting with €300 million in 2020, that the Government will owe the EU for failing to meet its carbon reduction targets. It would, of course, be cheaper to simply meet the targets on time but that would mean upsetting industrial, agricultural and motor industry interests.

## HOUSING

As Pearse Doherty of Sinn Fein has argued, this should have been a housing Budget. The housing provisions, however, merely underline how the Government's ideological orientation is pulling it deeper into a boggy morass. The best critique of Government housing policy following the Budget is to be found, surprisingly, in an analysis provided by the *Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice*. In a letter to the *Irish Times* (16 October) Eoin Carroll of the Centre shows that €729.5 million of public funds were spent in 2018 on rent subsidy schemes. This compares with €7.8 million spent under the same heading in 1990. A massive stream of funding is running from the State to private landlords—yet the end result is impossibly high rents and a dire shortage of rented accommodation.

Carroll cites a 2006 report from the

Comptroller and Auditor General questioning the provision of long-term housing need by private landlords. The authors of the report argued that building local authority housing would be a better use of public funds. Other reports since 2006 have suggested that leasing and the use of housing assistance payment (HAP) were cost-effective but Carroll considers that "*these claims can no longer be made*". Carroll concludes his letter in the following paragraphs:

"The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's own report, *Current and Capital Expenditure on Social Housing Delivery Mechanisms* (July 2018), ultimately comes to this conclusion too. It points out that when '... prices within the general housing market are higher' it is more cost effective to construct than deliver units through mechanisms such as HAP and leasing.

In the major urban areas, this has been the reality for some time. This continued provision of public housing through private landlords, with public money, is not only more expensive, it has not added a single unit to the public housing stock and needs to stop.

Now it is time for a public housing building boom."

A theory propagated by the economics profession in recent decades is that the State should not provide services that the market can provide, which sounds plausible. The reality is very different, however. In the Irish rented sector what you are getting is an increasingly large parasitic dependence on indirect State funding by private landlords—a dependence, moreover, which is failing to meet housing needs. State provision is not being replaced by the market; a section of a dysfunctional market is simply becoming dependent on the public purse while the service provided is woefully inadequate.

The problem is ideological: Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy explained on RTE radio that after the 2008 crash, the State could not build public housing because houses were in negative equity. The implication is that the supply of houses had to be held back to encourage price rises. But surely that was the very thing that extra public housing was needed: when many were no longer in a position to depend on the market for a place to live?

## HEALTH

The problems in the Irish health service are of such magnitude they are almost too much for the political system, as it currently stands, to cope with. That is true in 2018 and it has been true since at least the

2000s. This state of affairs is evidenced by the practice of assigning politicians to the health portfolio as a punishment for past misdeeds: 'Angola' is the short hand term used to describe the Department of Health in political circles. Not all recent Ministers for Health have been sent there as a punishment but the current incumbent, Simon Harris, certainly has.

Harris was given the Health portfolio when Enda Kenny was Taoiseach. During the leadership contest that Leo Varadkar won Minister Charlie Flanagan accidentally released an email in which he mentioned that Harris wanted out of Health. During the contest it was known that Harris was a firm supporter of Simon Coveney but it was also asserted in the media that relations between Varadkar and Harris were strained. In that context it was surprising that, as Taoiseach, Varadkar kept Harris in Health. However, if it is accepted that the Department of Health has sometimes been used as a punishment destination for politicians that are out of favour, the appointment makes sense.

The cost to the Exchequer of running the health service next year, as announced in the Budget, is €17 billion, an enormous sum. Judging from what happened in this and previous years, that sum will be exceeded before 2019 is out. The level of dysfunction in the service is such that the basic task of keeping expenditure within the bounds of its Budget allocation is rarely met; health expenditure is out of control.

There are two underlying reasons why this is so, one stemming from the days of Catholic Church power, the other from the recent emergence of private hospitals. Antipathy to State control was a deep seated preoccupation of Catholic interests in the health system from the 1920s onwards, and this gave rise to a culture of deference towards the various interest groups in the system on the part of the State. More recently we have had the neo-liberal revolution and a number of private hospitals have sprung up around the country. In a nutshell, the old deference to Catholic interests has been replaced by a new deference to the private hospital lobby. Taking charge of the health service on behalf of citizens would be considered anathema in the culture of the Irish Department of Health.

An article by John McManus published on 28th September illustrates how the problems of the health service are being dealt with in the political system. In 2016

a 34-year old woman died during surgery for an ectopic pregnancy at the National Maternity Hospital (NMH). Following the death an internal NMH report was drawn up followed by a coroner's inquest and a HSE inquiry. Notwithstanding these investigations which seem to have been thorough, Minister Simon Harris indicated in late 2017 that he wanted a Section 9 inquiry to be conducted by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA). The hospital authorities argued that they were happy to cooperate with a fourth inquiry if it was by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists but Harris insisted that a full HIQA inquiry was necessary. The NMH took the Minister to court and won its case outright. McManus writes:

"But the bottom line has to be that it is not tenable for the Minister for Health to order a massively disruptive and damaging inquiry into the country's largest maternity hospital when he has three other reports on his desk telling him pretty much what he needs to know if wants to go about fixing the problem.

By the same token, he has enough information at his disposal about what went wrong at CervicalCheck to start fixing the problems there.

But once you have started fixing the problem you start to own it. And it's tricky to be the people's tribune on social media and also do your job as Government Minister in charge of a broken system that makes mistakes with lethal consequences" (IT, 28 September 2018).

(Regarding the cervical cancer check problem: here the outsourcing of the testing of smear tests to the private sector, including American laboratories, has proved to be a false economy with unacceptable human costs.)

Harris, an inexperienced Minister more concerned with public relations than political management, was a bad choice for one of the most difficult jobs in politics. Responsibility for appointing him lies with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

The one positive development in the health service in recent years, *Slaintecare*, received a passing reference in O'Donohoe's speech. The Slaintecare initiative is the outcome of an all-party Report that proposed that health reform should be centred on separating public and private health resources and shifting usage from expensive hospital care to more cost effective community care. O'Donohoe said: "*The allocation I am announcing today will facilitate a range of additional services including initiatives proposed*

*under Slaintecare.*" Such a fleeting reference reflects the fact that it arose from an all-party Dail Committee, rather than from Government. What is happening to Slaintecare is typical of the ideological paralysis at the heart of the present Government. Having finally appointed a Slaintecare lead executive, Laura Magahey, the Taoiseach announced in July this year that funds were not available to fully implement the recommendations of the all-party Committee. This prompted the Irish Medical Organisation to release a statement in which it all but gave up on the initiative. It seems that Slaintecare is simultaneously being supported and undermined by the Government and key players in the health service.

There is a lot more that could be said about Budget 2019 but the central problem is that economic liberalism continues to have a hold on too many political leaders and officials at the heart of Government. Seemingly the list of disasters produced by economic liberalism—the banking collapse, the privatisation of Telecom Eireann, the Carillion collapse, the housing crisis, dysfunction in the health service, the CervicalCheck scandal, the failure to provide rural broadband—is not long enough yet to induce a re-think of economic policy. Until such a re-think begins, and it may happen sooner in Fianna Fail than Fine Gael, paralysis will continue to mark Government policy.

Dave Alvey

**The final instalment of Dave Alvey's 'Ireland, Brexit and the future of the EU' is held over to the December issue of Irish Political Review**

**Further references for Leslie Price:**  
from page 22

See [www.independent.ie/regionals/corkman/news/does-tom-barrys-wedding-photo-reveal-veiled-tensions-27072882.html](http://www.independent.ie/regionals/corkman/news/does-tom-barrys-wedding-photo-reveal-veiled-tensions-27072882.html) on the 1921 wedding of Leslie Price and West Cork War of Independence hero Tom Barry. See [www.rte.ie/archives/2014/0409/607504-remembering-leslie-de-barra-of-cumann-na-mban/](http://www.rte.ie/archives/2014/0409/607504-remembering-leslie-de-barra-of-cumann-na-mban/) and [www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1993-easter-1916/portraits-1916/799553-portraits-1916-leslie-de-barra/](http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1993-easter-1916/portraits-1916/799553-portraits-1916-leslie-de-barra/) for more on Leslie Price de Barra.

## A Blockbuster!

Britain was by far the strongest Naval power in the world when it launched a World War in 1914. Its guiding principle was that the Royal Navy must always be stronger than any other two Navies combined. The Navy was its most powerful instrument of war and it did not intend that its use should be restricted by the body of conventions called the Law of the Sea.

During the American Civil War, Washington tried to prevent neutral countries from trading with the Confederate States and it asserted a Law of the Sea for that purpose. Britain rejected that American Law of the Sea and it continued trading with the Confederacy because it had the power to do so.

The British idea of the Law of the Sea at any given moment depended on whether it expected to be a neutral or a belligerent in the next major war. If it expected to be neutral, it reserved the right to trade freely with the countries at war. If it expected to be a belligerent, it asserted the right to prevent neutrals trading with its enemy. And at all times it expected security for its essential imports and particularly foodstuffs. Its idea of the Law of the Sea was shaped accordingly.

What is the use of being the greatest naval power in the world if it is to be constrained by petty international regulations and agreements? Such restrictions are for the lesser Powers, not for Great(er) Britain! This book shows how Britain developed its strategy of circumventing and blocking international attempts to regulate sea trade between neutral and belligerent countries, culminating in a food blockade on Germany—enforced on neutrals—during the First World War in breach of international naval conventions.

In fact, the Northern States in America had also justified naval 'exceptionalism' in the course of putting down the attempted secession of the Southern Confederacy, as Eamon Dyas shows. It enforced trade sanctions to cut off supplies—but did not have the naval resources to block access to Southern ports: what was known as a 'closed' Blockade, the only legitimate kind under recognised naval practice. Instead it stopped ships at sea.

As a neutral with commercial interests in the Confederate South, Britain flouted

the Union ban on trade, while failing to give the Southern States the military assistance which might have enabled them to prevail over the Union forces. For this it was punished with a heavy fine by the victors, even though it was not in breach of international naval law as it was then understood.

It might be remarked to talk of a 'Law of the Sea' is misleading. There can be no *law* unless there is a means of enforcing it. Maritime good behaviour was observed by the strong only when it suited.

In *Blockading The Germans!* Eamon Dyas traces the evolution of the International Law of the Sea from Britain's blockade-breaking in the American Civil War through its enforcement of an American-type Blockade against the Boers, right through to the culmination of its Blockade policy against the German People during World War One.

Britain's object in the Great War was to prevent Germany importing not only military or trade goods, but also food of any kind, classifying the civilian population as combatants for this purpose.

Not only was German trade interfered with: there was an ancillary policy, to police the trade of neutral states who might go on to export to Germany. So far did this policy go, that Britain stationed a commission in Holland to oversee its trade.

A striking feature to emerge from this book is the supine attitude towards British interference with American commercial interests by President Wilson's administration, which reads strangely in this era of US dominance. American cotton growers, grain producers and other merchants were at a loss, because of Britain's embargoes—illegal under international maritime law—but Wilson's administration preferred to ignore the business lobby than face down Britain. This can be contrasted with the heavy-handed way in which the Union Government had treated Britain during its civil war.

In the end, the solution found to satisfy American business interests was to virtually turn over US productive capacity to supplying Britain and its allies—bankrupting them in the process and leaving the post-War victors in dire financial straits.

One of the most interesting sections in this book sets out the huge cost of the war, the mammoth debts incurred and the

desperate straits to which Britain and its allies were reduced.

The upshot was to bring about a fundamental shift in power, from Britain and Europe to America—though that was not to become manifest immediately.

All of this is set out in convincing detail in Eamon Dyas's book along with much else—including the 'dirty tricks' of Britain's navy which countered Germany's submarine warfare with armed vessels disguised as commercial vessels. (The idea was to trap submarines attempting to control British trade. They would be fired on when they surfaced to check a ship's cargo.) Other stratagems included sailing under neutral flags—with a consequent loss of life amongst genuine neutrals—and the use of passenger ships to carry military supplies: the *Lusitania* was one of many ships to suffer the consequences of this tactic.

Also brought out is the fatal division between the Kaiser and the heads of his armed forces. The latter wished to fight a full submarine campaign in order to bring Britain to Peace negotiations, while the Kaiser put his faith on President Wilson brokering a peace. To this end, he restricted submarine warfare for a crucial period. By the time he realised that he had been hoodwinked and gave the go-ahead to the navy, Britain had developed an effective counter to the submarines. The continentals have never understood Britain, which treats reasonable behaviour as weakness and only yields to force.

This 650-page blockbuster is to be followed by a further volume bringing the story from America's entry into the War to the signing of the Versailles Treaty and the intensification of Britain's Starvation Blockade on Germany. A third volume will examine the grim consequences for Europe of the reckless Versailles 'Agreement', not only in the conditions imposed on a broken Germany, but also in breaking up the ancient Hapsburg Empire—then evolving into a federation—into nation-states that were not viable due to inadequate national development, too many national minorities and economies geared to the all Hapsburg Empire free trade area.

Readers who might consider 650 pages inordinately long might remember that, if the severity of the charges levelled against Britain are to be sustained, scholarly research has to be cited to support every assertion and justify every conclusion. This Eamon Dyas has done in abundance.

**Angela Clifford**



**On the 100 anniversary of the Armistice it is important understand what it actually was—the means to render Germany militarily incapable of resisting the destruction of its infrastructure and food distribution network, a matter dealt with in the forthcoming *Starving The Germans! (Volume 2 of The Evolution Of Britain's Strategy During The First World War)*. The extract from this forthcoming book below, however, deals with the signing of the Armistice and shows how the British and French stone-walled the German request for an immediate ceasefire, resulting in thousands of unnecessary deaths.**

## **World War I Armistice: The Allies Refuse To Stop The Killing**

The German armistice delegation departed from Berlin in the evening of Wednesday, 6th November 1914, in a special train destined for Spa in Belgium. Arriving at Spa early on Thursday morning the delegation was given instructions from the French Army commander, Marshal Foch, to travel in five cars escorted by French officers across the Franco-Belgian border and—

"At Tergnier, south of Saint-Quentin, the delegates left their automobiles and were transferred to a railway coach that the French had deliberately chosen because it had once belonged to Napoleon III, whom the Germans defeated in the Franco-Prussian War. In the early morning hours of November 8, the train backed into a siding near Rethondes in the Forest of Compiègne, forty miles from Paris. As daylight filtered into the car, another coach could be seen on a parallel siding.

At 9 a.m., Foch's aide, General Maxime Weygand, came to lead the Germans to the other car on duckboards placed over the rain-soaked ground. The delegates, still in the clothes they had slept in, were hungry, rumped, unkempt, and on edge. They entered dining car 2419D, converted for the occasion into a makeshift conference room. Before them stood a small, erect man who fixed them with a withering gaze, Marshall Ferdinand Foch. After cool introductions, Foch opened the proceedings with a question that left the Germans agape. 'Ask these gentlemen what they want', he said to his interpreter. When the Germans had recovered, Erzberger answered that they understood they had been sent to discuss Armistice terms. Foch stunned them again: 'Tell these gentlemen that I have no proposals to make'. The French-speaking Count Alfred von Oberndorff, second man in the German delegation, sought to mollify Foch. They were there, he said, as a result 'of a Note from the President of the United States'. Then he proceeded to read a message that Wilson had sent to the German Government two days before, stating that Foch had the authority to set Armistice conditions. Foch cut him off and insisted that the Germans admit it was only they who sought the Armistice. After the delegates assented to this

humiliation, General Weygand [General Maxime Weygand, a member of Foch's staff—ED] read aloud the Allied conditions, each of which struck the Germans like a hammer blow..." (*11th Day, 11th Hour. Armistice Day 1918: World War I and its violent climax*, by Joseph E. Persico. Published by Arrow, London, 2004, pp.306-307).

It seems that Foch took exception to the German delegation including civilians and low-ranking military men. There were no civilians on the Allied side and, besides Foch who represented the Allied armies, the German delegation were met by Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, representing the Allied navies. Foch appeared to target General von Winterfeldt who had been a military attaché to the German embassy in Paris before the war and had been awarded the Legion of Honour. Von Winterfeldt was a Francophile and made the mistake of wearing his insignia at the meeting, despite the fact that it had been revoked after the start of the war. Foch was indignant and refused to return the military courtesy of a salute from von Winterfeldt and instead addressed him with the instruction, "*Monsieur, I authorise you to remove that cross at once from your breast*".

When they had recovered from the initial shock at the hostility of their reception and the severity of the Armistice terms, General de Winterfeldt announced that he had been instructed to bring a proposal from the German High Command and the German Government—the same proposal that had been radioed to the Allies two days previously on the early morning of 6th November but which had received no reply from the Allies at that time:

"The Armistice conditions which we have just listened to demand careful examination. In view of our intention to reach a settlement the examination will be made as rapidly as possible; all the same, it will require a certain amount of time, so much the more since it will be necessary to consult with our Government and the High Command.

During this time the struggle between our armies will continue and will demand necessarily numerous victims among the troops and the people who will have fallen uselessly at the last minute and who might be saved for their families.

In these circumstances the German Government and the High Military Command have the honour to revive the propositions they made day before yesterday by radio telegram; to wit, that Marshal Foch might agree to fix immediately and for the entire front a provisional suspension of hostilities, to begin today at a certain hour and the details of which might be arranged as soon as possible" (The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, vol.4. The Ending of the War June 1918-November 1919, arranged as a narrative by Charles Seymour. Published by Ernest Benn Limited, London, 1928, pp.140-141).

This time the proposal had been put in person and could not simply be ignored by Foch and so he formally rejecting the request—a decision supported by Clemenceau.

The German delegation had been treated in a humiliating manner from the time they entered French territory and that humiliation continued in Foch's railway carriage. Once the terms were made known to them, they were given 72 hours to decide for or against an acceptance of the Armistice. At the outset and under instructions from their Government the German delegation requested an immediate cessation of hostilities, in order to avoid the ongoing waste of life while the Armistice terms were being considered and, on being informed of the seventy-two hour deadline, Erzberger pleaded:

"For God's sake, Monsieur le Maréchal, do not wait for those seventy-two hours. Stop the hostilities this very day" (Persico, op. cit., p.308)

But the appeals from de Winterfeldt and Erzberger fell on deaf ears. In denying this request which would have resulted in thousands of lives being "*saved for their families*" the Allies showed a level of callousness consistent with the manner in which the war had been fought by them since the start. The lives that would have been saved by an immediate cessation of hostilities were not only German lives but French, American and British lives at a time when the war had intensified over a wide front. Only a few days earlier, during the discussions between the Allies on the Armistice terms, Lloyd George had admitted that:

"At present each of our Armies is losing

more men in a week than at any time during the first four years of war. We must not lose sight of that" (quoted in *The Truth About the Treaty*, by André Tardieu with a foreword by Edward M. House and an introduction by Georges Clemenceau. Published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1921, p.69).

There was no good reason to refuse an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Germany was in turmoil, desertions and mutinies in its armies were growing and even Foch admitted that there was little doubt that they would sign the Armistice despite its onerous demands. Then, even what little doubt that may have remained was abolished on the Sunday evening, 10th November.

"On Sunday evening, the tenth, at 7:30 p.m., with scarcely sixteen hours of Foch's deadline left, Erzberger was informed that French monitors had intercepted a message from the new Government in Berlin, stating that 'the plenipotentiaries are authorised to sign the Armistice.' The instruction was confirmed by a message from Hindenburg suggesting that Erzberger should still try to wring a few concessions from Foch, but failing that, it 'would nevertheless be advisable to conclude the agreement.' The war, in effect, was over, except that the killing must go forward until a fixed time, even after a handful of men in a railroad car affixed their signatures to a piece of paper" (Persico, op. cit., pp.318-319).

In effect the Allies had official confirmation that the Armistice was agreed by the German Government at 7.30 pm on Sunday, 10th November, but even then the Allies did not agree to a cessation of hostilities and determined that the killing would continue. This would remain the position of the Allies, even after the actual signing of the Armistice by the German delegation in railway car 2419D at 5:00 am on the morning of 11th November. They were determined that the killing would continue until 11 am on Monday, 11 November when finally it was to end.

None of this made any military sense whatsoever and can only be explained by a vainglorious pursuit of history or vengeful callousness on the part of the military leaders of the Allies, despite the human cost—

"According to the most conservative estimates, during the last day of the war, principally in the six hours after the Armistice was signed, all sides on the western front suffered 10,944 casualties, of which 2,738 were deaths, more than the average daily casualties throughout the war. Putting these losses into perspective, in the June 6, 1944, D-Day invasion of Normandy, nearly twenty-six years later, the total losses were

reported at 10,000 for all sides. Thus the total Armistice Day casualties were nearly 10 percent higher than those on D-Day...

Had Marshal Foch accepted Matthias Erzberger's plea to stop the fighting on November 8 while negotiations were under way, likely, 6,750 lives would have been spared and nearly 15,000 maimed, crippled, burned, blinded, and otherwise injured men would instead have gone home whole. All this sacrifice was made over scraps of land that the Germans, under the Armistice, were compelled to surrender within weeks" (Persico, op. cit., pp.378-379).

The above estimate of unnecessary deaths is very much a conservative estimate. Based on the accepted average of 2,088 daily deaths on the Western Front on both sides for every day the fighting went on (see Persico, p.308), the refusal of the Allies to immediately respond to the German request radioed to Foch during the first hour of 6th November cost the lives of over 11,000 men and at least three times that number severely injured. As the final hours between the signing of the Armistice and the formal ceremony elapsed, the mentality of the Allied commanding officers defied all logic or concern for the welfare of their soldiers or the civilians that continued to be caught up in the conflict.

"Allied commanders, fully aware of the looming peace, demanded more war. They sent orders through the trenches for troops to advance, to take towns, to root out German machine gun nests. In some cases, orders for attack were rescinded and reinstated within an hour of the war's appointed end. Some troops thought their commanders were playing cruel jokes on them as the clocks ticked toward 11" (*The sad, senseless end of Henry Gunther*, by Dan Rodericks. Published in Baltimore Sun, 11 November 2008).

Glory-seeking officers, on realising that the war was about to end, sought out targets that would enshrine their military careers.

"To the British high command the appropriate place to end the war was obvious. The war had begun for Britain with its retreat from Mons. What better way to mark victory than by retaking the city? And who better to avenge the defeat than the cavalrymen of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, who had been driven from Mons in August 1914? The 5th Lancers were currently attached to a Canadian infantry division" (Persico, op. cit., pp.8-9).

But the Americans were not without their own vainglorious generals:

"While pressing the fight at full throttle, armistice pending, or not. Pershing [General John Joseph Pershing, head

American Expeditionary Force in France —ED] had his eye on the prize of Sedan, located at the northern tip of the Meuse-Argonne sector. Sedan would be the largest French city liberated by the AEF. The appeal of Sedan was sharpened for Pershing by the fact that the Germans had held it since 1870, and he knew that Foch was eager to retake the city himself" (Persico, pp.313-314).

Then there were those officers who, fuelled up by tales of German atrocities, were eager to bring their own kind of retribution to the Germans and who felt that the Armistice was letting the Germans off the hook. General Pershing was one such officer as was future President of the United States, Captain Harry S. Truman:

"Truman wanted the war to end, but not like this. The enemy, he was convinced, had purchased peace too cheaply. When he had first heard about the Armistice negotiations, he had written Bess [his future wife, Bess Wallace—ED], 'I'm for peace, but that gang should be given a bayonet peace and be made to pay for what they've done to France.' In the letter he was writing on the war's last day, the mild-looking Truman revealed a surprising venom. 'It is a shame we can't go in and devastate Germany and cut off a few of the Dutch [German] kids' hands and feet and scalp a few of their old men,' he wrote, revealing a hardness that would manifest itself long years later, when he would have to make profound decisions to end another war" (Persico, op. cit., p.158).

The final sentence refers to Truman, as President of the United States, authorising the only ever use of atomic bombs on civilian targets when he authorised the dropping of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6th August 1945 and on Nagasaki on 9th August, followed by a massive conventional aerial bombing of Tokyo on 13th August 1945.

However, it was during the First World War that he first drew attention, as the artillery battery he commanded became one of the last to cease shelling enemy targets, just before the 11:00 am deadline for the ceasefire set by the Armistice.

Besides those officers seeking some kind of glory before the Armistice deadline approached, there were also those with personal issues to resolve. The last soldier to be killed in action was an American soldier. He was Henry Gunther and his story is symptomatic of the irrationality that predominated during the last hours of the war. Gunther was born into a Catholic German-American family in Baltimore, Maryland, and, because of his German heritage, was reluctant to sign up for the war. However he was drafted in September 1917 and was quickly promoted to the

position of supply sergeant in charge of clothing in his military unit. After arriving in France in July 1918 he wrote a letter home critical of conditions and advising a friend to avoid being drafted. The military censors intercepted the letter and he was demoted to private. From that point he became an over-zealous soldier trying to prove his mettle at every opportunity in order to regain the respect of his superiors. Because of his German heritage he was also made to feel that he had to prove himself as an American soldier who was prepared to kill Germans.

On 11th November 1918, Gunther and his company learned at 10:30 am of the impending Armistice half an hour later. As the appointed time drew near, Gunther and his squadron were ordered to advance on a German position in the village of Chaumont-devant-Damvillers, near Meuse, in Lorraine. As he and his squad approached the village, they were stopped

by a German road block manned by two machine gun posts. After a short while and with the 11 am deadline approaching, for no reason, Gunther charged the German position. The German gunners, astonished at this senseless act and momentarily stunned by what they were witnessing, shouted at him in broken English to stop. But, despite the voices of his comrades and the German gunners screaming at him about the imminent Armistice, he continued to charge, firing off shots. Then, when he was virtually on top of them, the Germans were forced to fire a short burst at him and he was killed. The time was 10:59 am, one minute before the Armistice came into effect. The German soldiers laid his body on a stretcher and took it back to the American lines—the last life lost among many in a manner that depicted the mindlessness of a human catastrophe that had been kept going more by Allied determination than German intent.

**Eamon Dyas**

## 100th Anniversary Part 11

# The Russian Revolution

Russian society was substantially pre-capitalist at the moment of the socialist revolution in 1917. Landlordism was abolished by the Revolution—by the action of the peasants supported by the socialist State. The immediate post-Revolution economy—if it can properly be called an economy—consisted overwhelmingly of private owners of farms of various sizes, none of them very big. As private owners of small property, the farmers were classified as petty-bourgeois.

There was no bourgeoisie. To the extent that there had been a bourgeoisie it had been abolished by the Revolution. The form of the State was a dictatorship of the proletariat, but without the bourgeoisie—without capitalism—there was no actual proletariat. The proletariat, in Marxist usage, which was destined to abolish capitalism and bring about a classless society in which the State would wither away, consisted of the wage-workers of advanced capitalism, who made up the great majority of the population, were as employees doing most of the business of running things, and could supersede the capitalist framework in which it had developed and go on to better things.

Something like that might conceivably have happened in Germany if the victorious Western Entente in 1918-19 had not

been determined to use its power to punish, plunder and disable Germany on the pretext that it had caused the World War, and if the Marxist revolutionaries had not agreed with them in substance, and engaged in random revolutionary activity that missed the point—instead of rallying the proletariat to the defence, against the Entente, of the Germany for which it had fought for four years.

It was not a possibility in 1918 Russia, where the Revolution had not carried the economy forward from capitalism, but, insofar as capitalism had existed, had aborted it. I don't think it could be said that Russia had any form of national economy at all after the Revolution.

What the Revolution did was brush aside a Provisional Government, based on a pre-War Parliament elected under Tsarist restrictions, which had done little or nothing to replace the Tsarist State—which had not been overthrown but had merely collapsed—with an actual State structure of some other kind.

It has usually been described as bourgeois, and perhaps it was implicitly so, but it had not asserted itself as bourgeois and taken decisive measures to establish bourgeois structures of State. The bourgeois ideal had gained very little purchase in Russian culture. And it seems that

Kerensky was ideologically—or even morally—afraid to be bourgeois.

The Provisional Government which neglected to become a State was replaced by a Socialist Party which applied itself earnestly to the work of constructing a State.

The Bolshevik Party took power—or asserted itself as the only real power in the situation—in alliance with a wing of the Peasant party, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. But that Coalition only lasted until March 1918, when the Left SRs rejected the Treaty with Germany. After that the Bolshevik Party and the State were effectively the same thing, and through the civil wars of intervention Bolshevism drew to itself all the vigorous and purposeful social elements in Russia.

In 1918 Russia had a purposeful State, but it had no economy. And economy and society are closely bound together.

Property-owners constituted the vast majority of the population. But what is the use of property without a market in the era of world capitalism?

The problem of the market was delayed by war. The purpose of the wars launched against the Bolshevik State was the restoration of landlordism along with the Tsarist State.

The Bolshevik State supplied itself in this war by what was called War Communism. That meant that it took/was given what it needed from the peasantry without any buying or selling. The peasants had an interest in preserving their ownership of the land and therefore they supplied the State which was defending it.

But, when the War ended with a decisive victory for the Bolshevik State, the problem of the market asserted itself very quickly. The farmers had to be supplied with the means of doing something else with their produce besides eating it. A network of market relations had to be restored—in fact a more extensive market network than had existed before the Revolution abolished the market. That was called the *New Economic Policy* (NEP). And little capitalists, called *Nepmen*, soon began to appear.

The substance of the market relationship was to be the exchange of agricultural produce for industrial goods, and it was assumed that in that relationship industry would be dominant in the long run, and that this would somehow enable the mass private property set up in the country to be ironed out somehow.

The State industry to provide the country with industrial goods was inadequate in the first instance and some manufacturing capitalism was allowed. But that was a minor problem. The development of industry without capitalists was seen as practicable. Workers would do, without capitalists, under the direction of the Party, what capitalism had failed to do before the revolution. They would industrialise Russia.

They would do this by exploiting themselves? The case against capitalism was that it did not return to the worker as wages all that he produced, but siphoned off part of it to the capitalist, a part of it for his luxury consumption and part for capital accumulation. And that was exploitation. Would not industrialisation without capitalists also be a process of exploitation, since that too would involve the siphoning off part of what the worker produced for something very like capital accumulation? Was it not necessary to industrialisation that it should be so?

Socialist industrialisation no less than capitalist required managers, experts, accountants, inventors etc. To begin with, under Lenin, a "collegiate" form was applied in the conduct of socialist enterprise. It soon had to be abandoned. A degree of division of labour necessarily asserted itself. Managers had to be allowed the authority to manage. And Lenin said frankly that "dictatorship" in socialist enterprises was a necessary part of the system.

Left to itself this would no doubt have evolved into a class system. But it was not to be left to itself. Everything was to be done under the authority of the State, which meant under the guidance of the Party.

The State consisted of a vast network of committees, which was paralleled by a system of Party committees. The Party was a hierarchy of committees under the control of a Central Committee, which came effectively under the control of its Political Bureau.

The committees were drawn from those they were directing, and there was upward mobility through the hierarchy. There was of course a tendency for the whole thing to settle into a routine and become bourgeois. What prevented it from doing so was the arbitrary power exercised from the centre, the Politburo, which had the ability to make itself felt in every part.

All of this was gone into in the intensive discussions at King's Cross that led to the

formation of the B&ICO. The basic Trotskyist view was that the system established by Lenin and Trotsky was destroyed or perverted after Lenin's death by Stalin, that the Revolution was betrayed, and that the outcome was either a degenerated workers' state, or a Bureaucracy that was a virtual bourgeoisie, or State Capitalism.

The State Capitalism idea came from Tony Cliff, whose International Socialism played some role on the fringes of the Northern Ireland eruption a few years later. Cliff was delivering a series of lectures at that time in which he argued, from economic data, that Socialism was impossible in Russia in 1917. But he still held with the slogan of *Revolution Betrayed*, which implies that it was possible. And nobody in our discussions, or in Russia in the mid-twenties, argued that the Revolution should be abandoned, and the admittedly necessary task of industrialisation be handed over to capitalism.

It was easy enough to demonstrate from Trotsky's own writing that what he described after 1924 as a *Stalinist perversion* of Leninism had been predicted by him before 1917 to be a necessary outcome of Leninism.

But, leaving that aside, why had he not taken over the leadership of the Party when Lenin died? Lenin had, in effect, asked him to, and had provided him with ammunition for use against Stalin, but he refused to act.

My impression was that, during the year when illness forced Lenin to retire from political direction of the State, he reflected on the implications of what he had set in motion, saw his will to carry it through reflected in Stalin, and had second thoughts.

Trotsky's refusal to take over was less complicated. He was not a Party man. He had been hostile to the Party until shortly before the Revolution. He had not become a Party man since 1917. He must have known that he was unfit to take over the running of the Party, on which everything depended. And so, lacking the will to act, he engaged in displacement activity.

I also recall remarks of his about the uncouth character of Stalin's associates. He had been steeped in the culture of bourgeois intellectuals both in Europe and in Russia. The future did not lie with the disappearing stratum of bourgeois intellectuals. The Russian populace was utterly uncouth by his standards—but it was out of this uncouth populace that the State which was to transform the world had to be constructed.

Culture was to be a major force in the socialist transformation of all things. For Trotsky this was to be the bourgeois/socialist culture of the intelligentsia of advanced European capitalism that was ripe for socialism but somehow was not doing what scientific socialism knew that it must do.

The culture of effective socialism that would establish a functional dictatorship of the proletariat in peasant Russia had, therefore to be forged in Russia out of Russian materials. It was unacceptable to Trotsky that this should be so, and the 'Stalinist' aberration consisted of an acceptance that it was so.

Stalin, he said, was willing to go down to the level of Russian social realities and foster as proletarian literature "*something pock-marked but our own*", instead of insisting on the best.

Lenin could be quoted in support of this view, but he was removed from the scene before the matter became pressing. He did not have to decide between a socialist literature produced within advanced capitalism in Western Europe where socialism had failed, and a socialist literature that would be read with interest by a proletariat that was being constructed out of a peasantry, in a situation where capitalism had failed—in order to become the ruling class in a process of industrialisation without capitalists.

Proletarian literature—literature designed to cultivate a ruling proletariat—was produced on a mass scale, along with a wide range of reprinted Russian classics and some foreign translations. But I seem to remember that Dostoevsky was published very sparingly.

In political theory Stalin published *The Foundations Of Leninism, Problems Of Leninism* etc., which Trotsky regarded as crude, semi-literate simplifications. And Stalin said at some point that Leninism was not to be probed for errors but should be taken as axiomatic. That was of course seen by Trotsky as an expression of the dogmatic state of mind fostered by a seminarian education.

Lenin had set the whole thing in motion, in opposition to liberal opinion and all other Marxist opinion. Stalin, in March 1917, had been for the Bolshevik Party operating as an Opposition within what was presumed to be the bourgeois revolution, until Lenin returned from exile and persuaded him that socialist revolution should be undertaken. Trotsky emphasised this as a very black mark against Stalin. Trotsky himself, long before 1917, had

predicted that, when Tsarism fell, the bourgeoisie would be unable to consolidate a capitalist regime, and there would be socialist revolution. He also predicted that socialist revolution in Russia would be followed quickly by socialist revolution in Europe, and European revolution would make the Russian revolution viable. But he insisted that, without the support of European revolution, the Russian revolution would be unsustainable.

He joined the Bolshevik Party shortly before the October Revolution in 1917, considering himself Lenin's collaborator rather than follower. Lenin did seem to share his opinion that European revolution was inevitable and that without it the revolution in Russia which he was undertaking would not be sustainable.

Seven years later Lenin was dead. His attempt to cause European revolution by invading through Poland had failed. European capitalism had begun to consolidate itself by means of Fascism. The Russian Revolution was isolated.

If one looked for a major error made by Lenin it would be found in his decision to make a socialist revolution in Russia in the certainty that European revolution would follow quickly.

Trotsky was not responsible for the Revolution. He had only predicted it. He had accompanied Lenin very prominently in the making of the Revolution but he had himself no means of revolutionary action. If he had in 1924 said that the Russian Revolution, having become isolated, could not succeed, he would have acted consistently with his view since 1905. But he did not say that in 1924, or later. What he did was condemn the prospect of building Socialism in one country, without saying what should be done in alternative.

Stalin's experience of life in Western Europe was much shorter than Lenin's or Trotsky's, but it left him with a more realistic understanding of it than they had. I assume this was because his experience of it was in working class circles.

He had no great expectations of European revolution, and sometimes Trotsky seemed to be suggesting that Stalin's lack of total optimism about it was the reason it didn't happen.

In 1924 the choice lay between finding a way of calling off the Revolution and attempting to see it through with a will.

The Revolution was a vast series of committees through which a proletariat was simultaneously being created and being installed as a ruling class. The *Collected Works* of Lenin were not the

means by which this unusual proletariat could quickly acquire an understanding of the world in which it was to act. The *Foundations Of Leninism* was a kind of manual of understanding, even a Catechism, that would give to millions the coherence of outlook that would enable them to act purposefully in a situation that was absolutely unprecedented in the history of the world.

And Stalin had an exceptional ability to act through committees—a thing which Trotsky could not do at all—while maintaining within the system a capacity for arbitrary action at the centre which prevented it from congealing.

**Brendan Clifford**

**To be continued**

## October Brexit Summary

Notable developments during October have been Taoiseach Leo Varadkar's distribution to fellow leaders in Brussels of an *Irish Times* article hyping the danger of violence on the Border, a long condescending speech in Cambridge by former British diplomat Ivan Rogers, the London anti-Brexit march, and the failure to reach agreement on a final Brexit deal at the October European Council meeting. In the background of these events the scramble to find a last minute solution to the deadlock over the Irish 'Backstop' has been the main focus of Brexit activity over recent weeks.

Because the next month has been publicised as the last opportunity for agreeing a deal, this is a good time for moving beyond descriptive summary and stating which outcome of the negotiations offers the best prospect for the future development of Ireland, the EU and the UK. On reflection the most likely outcome is 'no deal'—and that would not necessarily be a disaster for Ireland.

Throughout the long process of the negotiations little real progress has occurred. The UK still wants to exit while retaining preferential trade benefits in association with the EU. The two sides have fundamentally different views and have been at cross purposes for much of the time. An abrupt separation at the end of next March will bring economic disruption and the return of the Border. It will also bring a much needed clarity of purpose to the parties as a post-Brexit dispensation begins.

Ending the talks without agreement at this stage will allow some of the messy arrangements that have surfaced to be avoided, arrangements that would simply prolong the headache of the negotiation process. The long-term benefits of a hard Brexit need to be identified, and if it

happens, the habit of presenting 'no deal' as a massive failure needs to end. First though, it is important to talk about the Border.

### IRISH TIMES ARTICLE

Varadkar and Coveney have done well in highlighting the damage that a Hard Border will cause, but in guaranteeing that it will not happen they promised something that was outside their control. That mistake is compounded by misrepresenting life in the Border regions as a powder keg ready to ignite. The long War of 1970-1998 arose out of a set of political circumstances. It is now over and there is no question of it starting up again. Violence has been superseded by politics. In the event of a Hard Border there is a chance that dissident republicans might attempt to use forceful methods to damage installations. Such activity may be described as violence but it would bear no comparison to that of the republican war.

The article circulated by the Taoiseach in Brussels is not a balanced assessment of the danger of a return to violence. Written by Simon Carswell it is made up of interviews with relatives of Customs officers killed when an IRA bomb exploded prematurely at Newry Customs Post in August 1972. It is an emotional account of the losses suffered by the families that plays up the fears that many people have that the bad days will return. Describing an interview with Artie Quinn whose brother Frankie (a Customs official) was killed in the bombing Carswell reports:

"Quinn, sitting in a Newry hotel, believes there was no justification for the attack on the Newry customs post in 1972, just as there would be no justification for any attack on any possible border posts that might spring up after Brexit.

He feels the painful memory of the Troubles is too much for people in

Northern Ireland to allow that to happen. Still, he is worried about what Brexit might bring. "I would have concerns that the symbolism of check points, queues and lorries have to wait to get checked out—the symbolism of division and disruption that would not be desirable", he says" (IT, 17.10.18).

The only reference in the article that accords with the present reality that violent tactics have been permanently replaced by politics, is the statement by Artie Quinn that "*He feels the painful memory of the Troubles is too much for people in Northern Ireland to allow that to happen*". That statement is drowned out by the flood of irrational fear from other interviews. Carswell wanted his article to carry a political message but, notably, his intent did not go unchallenged. Criticism of the article came in the form of the following letter to the Editor:

"The terrible violence of the worst years in Northern Ireland was nothing to do with a customs border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. It wasn't customs posts that resulted in the Enniskillen bomb, Bloody Sunday, the La Mon restaurant bombing, Warrenpoint, or countless other atrocities. To reduce the years of violence in Northern Ireland to the fact that we had a customs border is a distortion and a misuse of history. **T. Gerard Bennett**, Bunbrosna, Co Westmeath (IT, 20.10.18).

Objectively, the re-establishment of a visible Border is an inescapable consequence of Brexit and only the sort of contrived arrangements that have been discussed in the negotiations can prevent it. Such arrangements would carry their own complications. It would be inaccurate to describe the erection of Border infrastructure in present circumstances as a cementing of Partition. On the contrary it would be far more likely to expedite the process of removing it in the medium to long term.

#### **THE NO DEAL SCENARIO**

When the options for resolving the backstop issue are viewed from an Irish perspective, the complexity dissipates somewhat. In the first place, for complicated reasons—including a widespread revulsion against the violence of the Northern conflict, from as early as the 1970 Arms Trial—a collapse of faith occurred in traditional nationalism inside the Irish elite. This highly unusual anti-national reaction which took the form of a rapid improvement in relations with Britain, ebbed and flowed over decades, but it intensified following the Good Friday

Agreement in 1998.

In this magazine we would argue that this phenomenon, which is sometimes known as historical revisionism, was a wrong turning which threatened the basic cohesion of the society. It was already running out of steam when during the centenary year of the 1916 Rising a substantial portion of the population actively supported the celebrations as though the turning away from nationalism had never occurred. In that same year the Brexit vote happened.

Brexit placed the Anglophile leadership of the political elite in a quandary. For nearly six months nothing much happened and then a decision was made inside the State machine that Ireland's future lay with EU and that *distance from Britain* needed to be cultivated. In early 2017 the leadership of the ruling party, Fine Gael, changed, and Leo Varadkar and Simon Coveney replaced Enda Kenny and Charlie Flanagan as the key politicians leading the Irish response to Brexit. Without abandoning their party's reconciliation with Britain agenda, Varadkar and Coveney have been noticeably less open to British influence than their predecessors.

As the negotiations have progressed, Varadkar and Coveney have ably defended Irish interests and worked cooperatively with the EU-27 and the Barnier team. They have also made mistakes. One mistake, referred to above, was the giving of a guarantee that the Border would remain invisible, a guarantee outside of their control. Another mistake, if it can be called that, is a predisposition that lingers in the background of Government policy to use Irish influence to prod British politics in the direction of a reversal of Brexit. Pernicious interference in the internal affairs of a neighbouring State is one way of describing that policy.

At one stage there was a reasonable chance that the EU Customs Border might be moved to Northern Ireland's airports and ports but the mischance that the May Government needed to have a 'confidence and supply' agreement with the DUP put paid to that. In retrospect the DUP's spanner in that particular works may turn out to have been a blessing in disguise; the arrangement would have created an active connection between Ireland and Britain, post-Brexit.

The main reason why a *no deal* 'hard Brexit' represents the best option is because it would draw a line under British influence

over Ireland and the EU in the coming decades. The Anglicisation trend that developed alongside historical revisionism has been an ahistorical *cul de sac*; in the circumstances a clean hard Brexit would have the effect of bringing Irish development back onto its traditional track. There is no reason why a respectful relationship cannot be developed with the UK in time but the priorities in the immediate aftermath of the British exit need to be the forging of a re-connection with the de Valera legacy of State building and a comprehensive re-orientation towards the EU.

There is no doubt that a 'hard Brexit' next March would inflict severe damage on the agri-food sector, Border enterprises, North/South trade and much else. Much has been said about those topics since the Brexit vote and various official preparations have been initiated. Yet the discourse has been overly focussed on economics. A development like Brexit is primarily a matter of political/constitutional change. The top priority should be to get right the long-term political relationships and alignments. Asserting the primacy of politics in that manner does not mean neglecting economic interests. On the contrary clear political leadership to orientate Irish trade to the large EU market, backed up by the necessary expansion of port and airport infrastructure (a strategy that is already being implemented), is what should happen. Ireland is the only English-speaking, common law jurisdiction in the EU. Brexit affords opportunities as well as threats.

If the Brexit deal turned out to be a fudge, the unresolved issues would be carried over into the post-Brexit era. Better by far, for Ireland, the EU and the UK, that a clean break should be made. A *no deal* ending of the negotiations would not represent, and should not be presented as, a disastrous failure.

On the EU side the talks have been well conducted and the solidarity of the EU-27 has been impressive. In the post-Brexit era the achievement of the Barnier task force should be built on.

**Dave Alvey**

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## 1916 Volunteer Leslie Price Saluted In Disclosures Tribunal Report: *Philosopher judge's plain truth puts the spinners to shame*

Mr Justice Peter Charleton turned to Shakespeare, history and philosophy to help him compile his trenchant report

Lise Hand wrote in "The Times" (UK), Ireland edition, of October 12th:

"Amid the blizzard of dramatic findings and trenchant criticisms in the 400-plus page blockbuster which is the third interim Charleton Report, it would be easy to overlook some of the quieter, more cerebral musings of its author.

Immediately striking is Mr Justice Peter Charleton's fondness for a quaint word, 'calumny', which he deploys 27 times—most notably, he found that there was a 'campaign of calumny' against the whistleblower, Sergeant Maurice McCabe.

The term means 'the making of false or defamatory statements about someone in order to damage their reputation; slander', according to the 'Oxford English Dictionary', but it's long fallen out of popular use. It does, however, make an appearance in Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'...

It seems that the report's author is something of a philosopher, too. 'Every judge will be a student of human nature', he declared, and went on to prove his case. Instead of the dry jargon and prosaic outlying of the facts which mars so many reports penned by the judiciary, public servants and economic wonks, this document is peppered with erudite cogitations on the nature of democracy and importance of ordinary citizens who pursue truth and justice.

He lauded one individual from the 1916 Rising. 'Leslie Price, for instance, had shown amazing courage and independence of thought on the battlefield in Dublin, rising from volunteer to officer through her work as a messenger, and later in life showed unwavering support for and advocacy on behalf of the oppressed, under her married name of Leslie de Barra, through the Irish Red Cross', he said...

If the report is memorable for many reasons, it should go down in history for one of the most spot-on takedowns of the culture of spin ever to appear in an official document. Commenting on the use of spin and 'public relations speak' by certain witnesses at the tribunal, the judge observed: 'It adds to the sense of public distrust in the key institutions of the state.

'Public service is not about public relations. Plain speaking by those who know what they are talking about is the only acceptable way to address the Irish people.'

Never a plainer word spoken.

**Manus O'Riordan**

Further references: to page 15

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The following letter, submitted to the 'Irish Times' on the afternoon of October 5th in response to its editorial that morning, was denied publication by the self-styled 'paper of record'

## Shelter And 'The First Duty Of 'The Government Of The Republic'

In correctly arguing that "Fine Gael is right to be rattled" (editorial, October 5th), you note its claim that "the Government had no ideological position on housing". But it is surely acting in the belief that landlords, of both empty premises and undeveloped land, have superior constitutional rights to those of the homeless, and that in any Court challenge under Article 43, greater weight would be accorded to the rights of private ownership, "antecedent to positive law", than to any regulation "by principles of social justice". Is it because the current Constitution is lacking an explicitly declared right of the homeless to decent shelter and housing? Well then, amend the Constitution to this effect forthwith!

A century ago, Sinn Féin was decisively victorious in the December 1918 General Election. A month later, Dáil Éireann adopted a Democratic Programme which opened: "*We declare in the words of the Irish Republican Proclamation... and in the language of our first President, Pádraig Mac Phearais... that the Nation's sovereignty extends... to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation, and with him we reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.*" That Democratic Programme further explicitly pledged: "*It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter.*" It should now be incumbent on the Government to amend Article 43 in line with that explicit "*first duty*" of shelter, and as a matter of extreme urgency.

**Manus O'Riordan**

## "ESB best option to deliver rural broadband plan

"...the National Broadband Plan (NBP) has been in crisis since two of the three bidders withdrew earlier this year... there is no case for persisting with a tendering process when there is no competition. This will only result in significant overpayment for the development of vital public infrastructure that the private sector will then own and control.

When the alternatives for delivering the NBP were first appraised, the State-owned option was ruled out. Instead, the KPMG ownership report published in December 2015 concluded in favour of contracting with the private sector under a so-called gap funding model... It was expected that competition for the contract would drive down the amount of subsidy required from the Government...

There are a number of "more public" options available to the Government. The most extreme would be to simply create a new State-owned utility company for broadband infrastructure. Ironically, this is exactly the vision that Fine Gael set out in its NewEra plan in 2010 prior to being elected into government... [which] envisaged establishing a new company, Broadband 21, which would amalgamate the telecoms assets of existing State-owned enterprises such as the ESB, Bord Gáis, CIÉ and the metropolitan area networks to create a new national, open access, next generation broadband network. It stated that €1.8 billion would be invested over four years with the goal of getting Irish broadband speeds into the top five among OECD countries.

...The ESB is the most obvious company to use in this regard. It already has a substantial telecoms network business through its Siro joint venture with Vodafone. It is also connected to every home and business in the country and can use some of its existing infrastructure to roll out broadband. The ESB has paid almost €1.47 billion in dividends to the exchequer between 2008 and 2017.

Instead of using the ESB as a cash cow, the Government could simply agree to forgo dividends for a period of time, with that money instead directed towards investment in broadband infrastructure.

**Dr Dónal Palcic, Prof Eoin Reeves**  
(University of Limerick) *Irish Times*, 17.10.18

# Does It Up

# Stack ?

## PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE

This, the Psychogeographic Experience, is what you have if you are a tourist. I never knew that before recently reading about it. We also have Psychogeographic Experiences every time we walk around our own neighbourhood. Imagine! Academics who study the effects of urban planning on those who live in towns and cities had to coin a name for the concept of the psychological effect of the urban environment on us—our feelings about how near is the nearest supermarket, or how far is it to the green space in our area.

Rising skylines and minimalist glass-box architecture are giving rise to concerns about the deteriorating quality of urban life for the inhabitants and for those who have to work in such urban conditions. As far back as 1961, Jane Jacobs promoted the idea of organised urban complexity that emerged from patterns developed and generated by human life on streets and in neighbourhoods. Studies (Batty 2013 and Ellard 2015) point to the human desire to experience less predictable complexity in the spaces we inhabit and work in. Views and vistas are important to our individual sense of well-being. The modern greed of property developers is destroying views and vistas and even cutting off our experience of natural sunlight. The ultimate in property developer greed is to be seen in places such as the City of London and in downtown Manhattan, New York and in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo.

Paris has been very sensible of its psychogeography. It does not permit skyscrapers within the city centre and it established a special area—La Defense—for them several kilometres on the N23 to the Northwest of Paris. So successfully was this done and the architecture is so beautiful that La Defense has become a tourist attraction and is in fact a great psychogeographical experience in its own right. Similar urban planning is evident in nearly all French cities. The city of St. Malo is a very good example, with its walled city open to all tourist activity and then all around outside it—the huge business plazas and port facilities.

But the greed is spreading everywhere,

especially where there is new wealth. The people living and working in high-rise intensified environments do not vote for the intensification, and that does not matter because the Urban Planners are not elected by the people. Urban Planners are bureaucrats, accessible only mostly to the wealthy property developers.

## URBAN PLANNING

Corruption in one form or another is very obviously part and parcel of the urban intensification. It goes like this:

In a city in Ireland, about a year ago, it was put out in the media that there were new developers in town. The biographies, suitably edited, were put about in the local media. These developers were very successful and experienced in the USA where they built skyscrapers. And every self-respecting city must have skyscrapers. News emerged that they had spent millions of euros on site acquisition. Then word went out on National media through speeches made by Government Ministers and by prominent Chamber of Commerce-type opinion-makers that what Ireland needs is more high-rise buildings. "*High-rise buildings*" became a mantra to be introduced into every speech on nearly any subject. (No one reminded anyone of the high-rise disaster that was the Ballymun housing estate in Dublin where the Towers were demolished a few years ago.)

Then at a city council meeting, an elected councillor asked why was a (named) city manager having discussions with the (high-rise) developers when such a high-rise development was in contravention of the city plan as approved by the city council—the elected representatives. The bureaucratic un-elected manager replied to the effect that yes, he knew such developments were not allowed by the City Plan but he was talking to the developers anyway and discussions would continue. Some short time after that Planning Permission was granted to a company promoted by the developers for a high-rise building almost in the city centre. And it was reported that the Planning Permission was granted against the advice of the Senior City Planners. Now can anyone give you or me a good lawful reason why a city manager would go over the heads of elected representatives and Senior Executive City Planners to grant such a Planning Permission?

PR Consultants, Media Managers, Lobbyists, Opinion Makers and some rogue City Managers all have a lot to answer for. If we open our eyes we can all

see the sleazy stuff going on. It appears, bit by bit, in the media. Bit by bit it is not libellous or slanderous to comment on it but put it all together and it may be actionable because of lack of cast iron proof of wrong-doing. In the meantime, our urban environments are being destroyed piece by piece and our Psychogeographic experiences are deteriorating. We are supposed to live in a democracy but the evidence is not convincing. Our democracy seems to have been cut off at the knees and it is certainly to the detriment of the people.

## CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF IRELAND

Not to be outdone by Oxford University Press, which produced its Nine Volume *New History of Ireland* in 1968, Cambridge University Press has recently issued its own version of Irish history in Four Volumes covering the period from 600 A.D. to 1916 A.D.—a total of 1316 years. Of these 1316 years, the 1000 years, 600 A.D. to 1550 A.D. is given only the thinnest Volume of the four. It is thus a misrepresentation of Irish history even before we read it. Ireland's history did not begin in 600 AD and it certainly is odd to give the impression that 1916 was the end of Ireland's history.

The Editors are Thomas Bartlett, James Kelly, Jane Ohlmeyer and Brendan Smith. The latter appears to be the lead Editor. It would be very interesting to read the Minutes of the initial Editorial Meeting—who decided to omit St. Patrick, St. Declan and St. Ciarán *et al* of the 4th and 5th centuries, people who had such a profound effect on the history of Ireland? Did the Editors argue among themselves about what would be included and excluded from their history? It would be most interesting to know—maybe the Editors did not discuss these matters at all? Perhaps the parameters were decided elsewhere and handed down to the Editors from 'on high' so to speak.

Even a School History such as A.J. Grant's '*Outlines of European History*' refers to three thousand years of history and states:

"Authentic history, resting on contemporary record of some sort, whether on stone or parchment, takes us back for close on three thousand years".

And

"the history of no one period can be properly understood unless we know something of all periods that have preceded it. The roots of the present are deeply embedded in the past, even in the remote past."

Michael Stack ©



## TROUBLES continued

1960. These were the volunteers who had already fought against the Japanese occupation. Malaya was granted Independence in 1963.

"Shinners" is another derogatory term coined up by the British media and used by the Black-and-Tans as a term of contempt for most Irish people of that era, together with "white Kaffirs". The Cromwellians called us "the Tadhgs and the Donals".

**That was the "Empire where the Sun never Set or the Blood never Dried!"**

\*\*\*\*\*  
"Why have the troubles inspired relatively little lasting drama? One answer lies in the nature of the dominant form of theatre in Northern Ireland. Most of what has worked... has been meticulously naturalistic. For all its revealing power, though, close-up slice-of-life realism is not very good at the big picture. The intimate life of the tribe is laid bare, but the wider dynamic of conflict remains obscure" (Fintan O'Toole *The Irish Times*, 2.11.2001), quoted in *Greenspeak. Ireland in her own Words*. Paddy Sammon. Town House, Dublin. 2002).  
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### WAR-LIKE PEOPLE?

"We are not by choice a war-like people. When our native institutions flourished before the seventeenth century they were not based on a warlike conception of society. The forces with which mediaeval Irish warfare was waged were largely mercenaries introduced from Scotland—the Galloglasses. Yet, apart altogether from the warfare that has been discussed in this series of papers, few people have seen such widespread military service as ours. Few peoples have served under so many alien flags. No country as small as ours has earned such a name for itself as the home of soldiers."

"We have had an extraordinary military history at home and abroad. In the development, century after century, of our domestic affairs, the names of Clontarf, Faughart, the Yellow Ford, Benburb, Aughrim, New Ross, 1916 stand out as perhaps the greatest among very many battles that our forefathers had to fight before the Ireland that we know emerged" (*The Irish at War*. Edited by Hayes-McCoy. Mercier Press. Radio Eireann Thomas Davis Lecture Series. 1965. p.106).

Professor Hayes-McCoy edited this

series before the outbreak of the war in the North. It is doubtful if Radio Eireann would have dared to publish such a book or produce such a programme after 1970.

### THE COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

"*They Irish are not at peace unless they're at war*" (George Orwell)

The Irish made up a third of Wellington's British troops at Waterloo in 1815, 30 years later they and their children starved in the Great Famine—so much for their reward.

At one point in the 19th century, there were more Irish soldiers in the British army than there were English ones.

"Be that as it may, the Crimean War was not simply a distinct event in 19th century Irish history during which a large cross-section of people supported it or showed great interest but can also be seen as a distinct period in Ireland's long and distinguished military tradition within the British Armed Forces. Although it did not alter the trend in what most historians agree to have been a diminishing Irish presence,—Irish soldiers representing 42.2% of the Army in 1830 and only 12.9% in 1898—the conflict still saw thousands of Irish civilians volunteer for military service, from a variety of localities and backgrounds, and for multiple reasons. To these can be added the thousands of men already serving in the Irish garrison who eagerly volunteered for other units in the East, although they are not analysed in this paper. Neither will this paper consider the private individuals who proposed the raising of volunteer units in Ireland to aid the war effort in a manner which foreshadowed the imperial yeomanry of the Boer War" (*British Military Recruitment in Ireland during the Crimean War, 1854-56*. Paul Huddle. University of West London: Email: paulhuddle01@gmail.com).

On 16th December 1880, the First Anglo-Boer War began. It took ten weeks in 1880 and 1881. The British were defeated.

The Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) witnessed close to 30,000 Irish soldiers in action on the British side. On the Boer side were two Irish Transvaal Brigades, among their leaders were John Blake and John MacBride. The latter, executed by the British for his participation in the 1916 Rising. Black people also fought alongside the Boers in the war and they made up 20 to 25 per cent of total Boer manpower. Germany was friendly

to their cause, and the Boers used Krupp guns. Much of the fighting was on horseback. As the Boers lost battle after battle they were eventually forced to make peace on the 23rd of March, 1902, and surrender to British authority.

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"The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned, the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence, and common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants and the fatuity of idiots" (*Rev. Sydney Smith*).  
\*\*\*\*\*

But all is not lost: Dermot Keogh spoke out in a recent introduction to a publication entitled "*Soldiering Against Subversion—The Irish Defence Forces and Internal Security during the Troubles, 1969-1998*" by Dan Harvey, a nephew of former Taoiseach Jack Lynch.

Keogh, Emeritus Professor of History, University College, Cork, has dared to express the reality of the conflict, with the qualification of a couple of quotation marks: "*There was no need for 'war'...*" and "*The author of this volume is in no doubt about the fact that, from his perspective the 'war' was unnecessary.*"

"I was working in the Irish Press newsroom on Bloody Sunday, [30.1.1972] and I remember vividly on the evening on the Subs desk waiting as the copy came in, and it was three, and then four, and then five, and six, all the way up to the Butcher's Dozen. It was a terrible night because I and others who had no sympathy for the I.R.A., or no sympathy for violence in Northern Ireland, was wondering what was going on in the minds of British administrators. It was like Amritsar all over again. It was like old-fashioned colonialism."

"As I was standing in the Park just opposite the Embassy, somebody said 'Take down the railings!' And I looked in stupefaction. But within minutes the railings were down and people had poured out. And then I saw people in green uniform, Oglai na hEirean, directing traffic. And that was the moment of realisation that there was a Fascist organisation likely to take over the state, unless there was radical action: that the IRA were intent, not just on destroying Northern Ireland, but also on bringing down the Government in Southern Ireland. And that was a moment of truth for me..." (Dermot Keogh in an interview for the RTE documentary, *The Seven Ages Of The State*)

This is fantasy standing in for history! British historians can rest content.



**"TROUBLES: A characteristically understated term used to describe various periods of unrest in Irish history. In the 20th century the name became particularly associated with the Anglo-Irish war of 1919-21 and the Civil War that followed." (Brewer's Dictionary of Irish Phrase and Fable. McMahon & O'Donoghue. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London. 2004)**

## Sorry for your "TROUBLES" ?

Words really matter in the world of politics!

\* The Northern War (1969-1998) was the most protracted and continuous resistance to British rule in a part of Ireland since the Nine Year War (1594-1603) fought by the Gaelic Chieftains.

\* Led in the main, by a Barman from Belfast and a Butcher from Derry, a resistance made up of predominately working-class groups of volunteers from main urban centres and rural towns and countryside—they held the field for 30 years.

\* Having proved their prowess on the field of battle, they went on to excel in like-manner at the table of diplomacy and unlike their predecessors in 1921, they negotiated an international agreement, whilst, still maintaining discipline and unity within their ranks.

\* "An estimated 300,000 British soldiers served in the Six Counties from 1969 to 2007 and there were around 25,000 British troops deployed at any one time during the 1970s and 1980s. [The total force in the Irish Army at the time was 12,000]. During Operation Motorman, Britain had 21,000 troops on the ground. In December, 2016, there were 5,000 Brits garrisoned in the North, with the promise not to reduce for 5 years" (*Saoirse Irish Freedom*. February, 2018).

\* In almost 30 years of war, 2,600 people died in the Six Counties. In England, 125 died. In the Republic of Ireland 116 people died. Road fatalities in the Republic so far this year is 117 persons.

### WILLING DUPES

The most cowardly and obnoxious aspect of the conflict is the willingness of the Irish media and academia to embrace the term "Troubles", such evasion comes second nature to a former Imperial Power, but to read or listen to the Dublin media : one would almost think the Northern War was nothing more than a body of housewives in pinafores welding roller pins down the Springfield Road!

To concede that it might be a War would be beyond the ken of the Southern Establishment : how could the 'unemployed' of the Falls or the Bogside fight a War? Well, yes, providing it was war on behalf of British Empire? That's different!

**As James Connolly wrote: "Ruling by fooling is a great British art—with great Irish fools to practise on."**

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"trouble. The Troubles. The civil war (sic) in Ireland between January 1919 and April 1923. "Things are being done in Ireland which would disgrace the blackest annals of the lowest despotism in Europe." LORD ASQUITH. (*Brewer's Dictionary of 20th Century Phrase and Fable*. Cassell. 1997). This geezer was one of the architects of World War 1 that caused the death of 16 million people!  
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### POLITICAL VOCABULARY

"Ireland is a terminological minefield. 'Even before you begin to mention political violence', said television reporter Peter Taylor, 'the words you use may betray the political path you seem to be treading.' He went on:

'At the most basic level, where is the conflict taking place? Is it in Ulster? Northern Ireland? The province? The North of Ireland? Or the Six Counties?...

'And once you've sorted out the names, what's actually going on there? Is it a conflict? Is it a war? A rebellion? A revolution? A criminal conspiracy? Or a liberation struggle?...[Is it the Troubles?]

Lastly, and probably most important, how do we describe those involved? Are they terrorists? Criminals? The mafia? Murderers? Guerrillas? Or freedom fighters?" (*Ireland: The propaganda war*. Liz Curtis. Sasta. 1998. p.133).

### MAKING WORDS FOR FOOLS

Britain choose not to call its action in Malaya a war, but an "Emergency". It did the same in Kenya.

The first national uprising against colonial rule (1857-1858) in India was described as the "Indian Mutiny" or "Sepoy Mutiny".

In "The Malayan Emergency" Britain fought the guerrillas of the Malayan Peoples' Liberation Army from 1948 to