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## Brexit Destinies

What Ireland remains to be determined by Britain's final decision about Brexit and by the EU's handling of Brexit.

Britain is not European in sentiment. It is an offshore island which has conducted its own affairs for close on half a millennium, not only separate from Europe but in conflict with Europe. It made itself a World Power and, in order to do so, it fostered wars in Europe. It has defeated every European state at one time or another, perhaps with the exception of its 'oldest ally', Portugal. The culture through which it knows itself is deeply marked by that history and it could only become a European state on a par with the states of Europe by being born again.

It is today a matter of astonishment to it that Europe has held firm against it for more than two years over the terms it will make after Brexit, and on insisting that it will negotiate terms only after Britain has left and become a foreign state.

In the light of the history of Britain/Europe relations, it is hard to resist the conclusion that the purpose of Brexit is not merely to reassert British independence but to bring about divisions between the EU states under pressure of Brexit that would encourage the unravelling of the EU. A successful Brexit which left the EU intact, and strengthened by having resisted divisive pressures, would not be in the British interest at all. The mere fact of a Europe united and dealing with European interests diminishes Britain.

*Europe divided is Europe free: Europe united is Europe enslaved.* That was a principle of British foreign policy for three centuries. It stood for the sacred principle of nationality in Europe while snuffing it out at home. Any nationalism that served its

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## Roy Foster's Platonic Thinking

The Irish Cultural Centre in Hamersmith is running a series of lectures on *The decade of centenaries; Ireland in 1919* and it was launched by Roy Foster on 1st May with a talk on "*Revolution within the revolution? 1919 and the generation of 1916*".

Foster's talk was a rehash of his '*Vivid Faces*' book in which we are presented with essentially a pile of gossip about people involved in the politics of the period: Salacious titbits from their diaries being a speciality which provided the usual tittering responses from his audience. The big idea being that the pre-1916 generation was trying to break free from the personal and social restrictions of their society and particularly their families but, unfortunately, post-1916 a new generation emerged that instead chose to turn to violence and hatred and civil war, sidelining the causes and hopes of the earlier generation. It was like an exposition of Plato's *forms* applied to the period; in this case Irish hatred, violence and inter-generational differences are *forms* that

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## May Brexit Summary

Since last month's Brexit summary which covered events to late April there has been some notable movement in Britain but the overall trend of continuing deadlock remains. At the end of April the picture was dominated by the European Council's extension of Article 50 to 31st October 2019, the start of a talks process between the British Government and Labour, the strong showing of the Brexit Party in

opinion polls and a difference between Donald Tusk who wishes to see Brexit cancelled and Guy Verhofstadt who voiced concerns that the Article 50 extension would lead to continuing uncertainty.

The most important recent developments have been in electoral campaigns in both the UK and the EU. And, following the failure of the Tory-Labour talks, attention focused on the impossible odds which faced Prime Minister May in attempting to get the Withdrawal Agree-

ment Bill (WAB) through the British Parliament on a fourth attempt.

### LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS

Local elections in England and Northern Ireland on 2nd May gave voters a chance to respond to the evolving Brexit crisis, but the results in both regions failed to signal any message that might serve to ease the deadlock. In Northern Ireland, while centrist Remain parties like Alliance and the Greens made gains, they did so

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***Labour Comment*, edited by Pat Maloney:**

**The White Van Army!**

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purpose was depicted as an elemental expression of human nature, while a nationalism against its interests was an anarchic product of insufficient policing.

The British 'Remain' party in the European election is a "*Remain and Reform Party*", as was made clear by its leader Vince Cable. Alastair Campbell, Blair's lieutenant, declared on Radio Ulster (27.5.19) that "*Britain would lead reform in Europe*" after the Brexit vote was overturned. Britain joined the European community, which had been developing very effectively without it, for the purpose of retarding its development and bending it to British interests.

The Tory Leader who gained entry for it, Edward Heath, was the odd man out on the British scene, being in many respects European in outlook and post-Imperial in spirit. He was discarded as soon as he had performed the service of getting Britain in. Margaret Thatcher ousted him, and began the business of 'reforming' the EU away from its original design, and gaining

British 'exemptions' from a whole range of things.

British Labour was then going through a socialist mood. It saw Europe as a capitalist obstacle to socialism. And one eminent socialist expressed sadness at the prospect of England's glorious thousand years of separate destiny coming to an end. But the Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, managed to get a majority in a referendum for keeping Britain in Europe.

A sadly misjudged attempt at socialist revolution was made by Miners' leader, Arthur Scargill, assisted by a very radical Kim Howells. And then Kim Howells appeared in government under Tory Blair as Minister for Competition in Europe—Minister for freer capitalism!

Blair, by a combination of rhetoric, personality and organisational manipulation, dissolved the culture of British Labour. He displaced the rhetoric of socialism with the rhetoric of "*radicalism*". Radicalism, taken as a self-sufficient noun,

was the historic ideology of free-ranging capitalism.

The effect of Blairism on Labour was such that, whereas Labour in the 1970s saw the European social market as an obstacle to socialism, it now looks to a Europe whose social market has been undermined by British influence as the only protection against British capitalism. Labour has hollowed itself out.

Blair preached that the great tragedy of British politics in the 20th century was the split in what he called the *radical movement* around the time of the first World War. The radical movement was the Liberal Party, the great party of capitalist development which opposed ending child labour and shorter working hours. It curbed separate working class political development for a couple of generations. The split which Blair regretted was the formation of the Labour Party in 1917, after the Liberal Party fragmented under the stress of conducting the Great War which it launched in 1914.

Blair urged that Labour and Liberal should be united—which meant that Labour should go back under Liberal tutelage, as the Liberals certainly would not put themselves under Labour tutelage.

Alastair Campbell, Blair's public relations man, has revealed that he voted Liberal Democrat in the European election.

(It needs to be said that there is a stratum of Blairite working middle class in the Home Counties which has a strong interest in remaining within the EU that is distinct from larger political considerations. The EU provides it with a better class of working class. They have become accustomed to the services of skilled, hard-working, conscientious East European tradesmen to do their home improvements, build their conservatories: they do not relish the prospect of becoming once again dependent on the English tradesman with his uppity ways.)

We haven't a clue how Brexit will work out. But it seems that its working out will have a considerable influence on affairs in Ireland.

The EU has decided that the UK state cannot simply withdraw from Europe as a unit, but must leave the Six County part of it behind in Europe, in economic terms, in the interest of the dimension of Irish unity established by the Good Friday Agreement, and of the peace which depends on that unity.

We cannot see what formal grounds for

this view there are in the GFA. But, if the EU holds it firmly, then it becomes a political fact of the situation.

The GFA provided for a structural recognising of the way the Six Counties, as 'Northern Ireland', were to be governed as part of the United Kingdom. It also set up North/South and East/West Councils, but they were sops to sentiment which could mean anything or nothing.

The GFA made no provision for an all-Ireland economy. Free trade across the Border had been established during the preceding quarter of a century by the simultaneous entry of Ireland and Britain to the EU and the market innovations made under the EU.

Ideals were projected onto the GFA, and were declared to be its spirit, which had no grounds in its letter.

Its purpose, as expressed in its arrangements, was not to bring the two national communities together but to enable them to get on with one another by being formally separated into two distinct electoral bodies which took Ministries in the devolved government independently of one another, without having to form an organic government. This was possible because Northern Ireland is not a *state*, and because it is excluded from the political life of the state. If the Labour and Tory parties had functioned in the Northern Ireland region of the UK state, the condition of the Six Counties would be different from what it is.

There are grounds why the North could be treated as not quite being part of the UK state, and these grounds if stated would not easily be rebutted. But those grounds have not been stated, either by the EU or by the Dublin Government.

Seamus Mallon has chosen this moment to publish a book in which he argues against holding a Border Poll (which could resolve the Brexit crisis at a stroke), and against deciding the matter of Northern consent to unity by a majority vote.

Mallon is described in *Irish Times* publicity for the book as "*one of the principal architects of the Belfast Agreement*". He was no such thing. He was deputy leader of the SDLP under John Hume, and was fiercely opposed to Hume's efforts which helped to bring about the GFA. He would have ousted Hume if he could. He held a kind of bookish ideological Republicanism that had no bearing on the political realities of the North in flux after August 1969, and on

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## Huawei: Snowden revealed that the US has been doing what the US now accuses the Chinese of doing

Using communication equipment manufactured by the Chinese company Huawei in our networks risks providing the Chinese State with access to our vital secrets. If the Chinese State ordered it to provide access to the information travelling in those networks, as a Chinese company it would be obliged to do so. That's the story being peddled in Washington and echoed over this side of the Atlantic.

No evidence has been presented that anything like this has actually occurred, but that hasn't stopped the US demanding that Huawei kit be banned from future networks, in particular, from the 5G networks that are in the process of being built all over the world.

In the furore about this in recent days, the mainstream media have avoided mention of the known activity of the US National Security Agency (NSA) in this area, as revealed by Edward Snowden. As Glenn Greenwald, the journalist who broke the Snowden story, wrote back in 2014:

"For years, the US government loudly warned the world that Chinese routers and other internet devices pose a "threat" because they are built with backdoor surveillance functionality that gives the Chinese government the ability to spy on anyone using them. Yet what the NSA's documents show is that Americans have been engaged in precisely the activity that the US accused the Chinese of doing" (*Glenn Greenwald: how the NSA tampers with US-made internet routers*, Guardian, 14 May 2014)

Greenwald continues:

"But while American companies were being warned away from supposedly untrustworthy Chinese routers, foreign organisations would have been well advised to beware of American-made ones. A June 2010 report from the head of the NSA's Access and Target Development department is shockingly explicit. The NSA routinely receives—or intercepts—routers, servers and other computer network devices being exported from the US before they are delivered to the international customers.

"The agency then implants backdoor surveillance tools, repackages the devices with a factory seal and sends them on. The NSA thus gains access to entire networks and all their users. The document gleefully observes that some "SIGINT tradecraft... is very hands-on (literally)!".

"Eventually, the implanted device connects back to the NSA. The report continues: 'In one recent case, after several months a beacon implanted through supply-chain interdiction called back to the NSA covert infrastructure. This call back provided us access to further exploit the device and survey the network.'

"It is quite possible that Chinese firms are implanting surveillance mechanisms in their network devices. But the US is certainly doing the same."

Recently, a *Private Eye* article (No 1496, p37) revealed that the UK Government relies on Huawei kit for communication between the Foreign Office and around 550 overseas locations, including obviously British Embassies and Consulates. For this purpose, it has a £350 million contract with Vodafone for whom Huawei is a "*long-term strategic partner*" and a major supplier of communications equipment. Does the vital information carried by this network not need to be protected from prying Chinese eyes by replacing the Chinese equipment?

David Morrison  
24 May 2019

## Double Standards?

The press reports the opening of a new establishment in central Dublin offering "*alcohol-free beer, wine and cocktails*". No produce containing alcohol will be on sale.

Socializing need not involve the use of mood altering substances, be they legal or illegal. It is good that this fact is recognized in terms of the range of choice offered the consumer.

The name chosen for the new pub, for that is what it is, is unfortunate. That name is; *The Virgin Mary*. This is a display of disrespect towards a religious tradition dear to a substantial number in Ireland and further afield.

It reflects poorly on the entrepreneurs behind the project.

Can we rely on the politically correct crowd to object and protest?

Tim O'Sullivan (9.5.19)

that flimsy basis he denounced the Provisionals as sectarian thugs.

Hume, having gained the Agreement, handed the SDLP over to him to operate it. But he couldn't do it, because he lived in alternate reality. He genuinely did not know what the Agreement provided for. He wasted years playing futile games with Trimble, who had no intention of letting the Agreement work if the IRA was not humiliated.

The IRA knew what it had settled for, and set about working it in earnest. And Mallon soon found himself back in the shade.

In a *Belfast Telegraph* article (May 18), *Why A Simple Majority In Favour Of United Ireland Will Not Deliver Future We Deserve*, he writes:

"Generosity is something that has been absent from British-Irish relations for centuries... The formation of an independent Irish state in 1918-22 caused unionists to demand their own state, fearful that the new state would be a cold house for them... Generosity has been in short supply in any attempts to deal with the Northern Ireland Troubles over the past 50 years... In my new book, *A Shared Home Place*, I make what I hope is a generous new offer to unionism as a former constitutional nationalist leader..."

This offer is that unification should be subject to "*parallel consent*", such as operates within the devolved Assembly, which consists of two bodies of elected representatives, each of which can block motions proposed by the other. Mallon's proposal is that the decision about unification should rest with the Unionist block, the Nationalist body effectively being disenfranchised.

We proposed in 1969, when Unionism was a large majority in the North, that Nationalist Ireland should recognise it as a distinct nationality as a basis for conducting a dialogue with it. Then Mallon would have no truck with the 'two nations theory'. The Unionists were part of the Irish nation, though they didn't know it.

When that proposal was shot down, we proposed that the Six Counties should be brought within the democracy of the British state, so as to ameliorate relations between the two communities whose relations with one another could be nothing but bitterly hostile in the closed Northern Ireland set-up.

Democracy is party-political. The Democracy of the state was Labour versus Tory. The Six County electorate was

avidly interested in Labour/Tory politics though excluded from it, and large numbers would have aligned themselves as Labour and Tory if the parties were available to them. But Mallon was opposed to that too.

"*Generosity*" is not an element in actual politics. It is a gloss on the opportunism generated by effective party-politics in a democracy.

The Unionists, at the start of it all, did not "*demand their own state*". Their programme in the 1918 Election was for a Six County Partition which would leave them within the British political system. When Partition was offered them on the condition that they should operate a little Six County Government, to help Whitehall deal with Sinn Fein, they refused that devolved government in the first instance, saying they had no desire to govern Catholics but wanted all to be governed by Westminster. But they were nudged into it by the threat that they would otherwise come under Dublin. And then they became addicted to it and were disabled politically by it.

The SDLP, as represented by Mallon, is the old Nationalist Party—a survival of the Party of John Redmond and of Joseph Devlin, "*the pocket Demosthenes*". Mallon's quaint runs of eloquence are an echo of it. The Socialists who were very prominent at the founding of the SDLP, Gerry Fitt and Paddy Devlin, are not mentioned in the publicity surrounding the issuing of his book or in the newspaper extracts from it.

He remarks on how uncomfortable he felt when he first passed the Carson statue going into Stormont, and he treats Stormont as Carson's project. In fact, the establishment of the Northern Ireland system marked the defeat of Carson's project and Carson took no part of it.

In 1920, as the Bill setting up Stormont as the instrument of Partition was going through Parliament, C.P. Scott (influential Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*), who had been a strong supporter of Nationalist Home Rule, wrote to the leader of the Nationalist remnant, Joe Devlin, advising him to support Carson's policy of a straight Partition without the setting up of Protestant sub-government in the Six Counties. Devlin's mind boggled at the suggestion. He had taken part in the demonising of Carson as a Partitionist and he could not bend his mind down to considering the terms of Partition.

It has been reported in many Nationalist

publications over the decades that there was no Irish vote in Parliament for the Partition Bill, which suggests that Partition was imposed on the Six Counties by Britain. That is the kind of verbal reasoning that short-circuits thought.

Britain had virtually bankrupted itself by its Great War, and had only been saved from defeat by American intervention. It was fighting a dirty war against the elected Sinn Fein Government in Ireland, contrary to the principle of national self-determination for which it had supposedly launched the Great War. It did not want to be seen as Partitioning Ireland by American opinion but it knew that there must be Partition. It therefore brought in a Bill giving Home Rule to Ireland, but giving it in two parts. then, if the Irish wished to divide themselves, that would be their affair.

The Partition Bill was also a Six County Devolved Government Bill. And devolved government was the means by which Partition was to be enacted.

The Ulster Unionists wanted Partition but not a Home Rule system in which they would have to govern a very large and very active Nationalist minority, but were told they must operate Home Rule in order to get Partition. The Nationalist minority did not want Partition and its leaders took no interest in the detail that Partition was going to take the form of subjecting them to a local Protestant sub-government that would operate outside of the democracy of the state.

The 1970 war arose out of the antagonisms that were active when the sub-government was set up and that were preserved and aggravated by the working of the sub-government. It ended when the Stormont caricature of democracy was abolished by the Good Friday Agreement.

Mallon, in the best tradition of the Nationalist Party, does not see the British State as the responsible party in all of this, and he gives the impression that the war was fought between the two national communities rather than between the Catholic community and the State.

The Backstop problem for Brexit seems to have come about through the perverse refusal of nationalists, especially Constitutional ones, to describe Partition and Northern Ireland realistically. It is said that former SDLP leader Mark Durkan put it to former Fine Gael Taoiseach Enda Kenny that the Irish Border situation was much the same as the German Border situation, and could be treated in the same

spirit and that this should be explained to the EU. And the EU, which is shy of its own history, just as recent Irish Governments have been shy of Irish history, took this to be the case.

But the differences between the two Borders were profound. There was no internal national difference in Germany behind the formation of the two German states after 1945. The Border was the meeting point of the Russian and American Armies at the end of Britain's second Great War on Germany.

Britain collaborated actively with Hitler in building up the power of Nazi Germany from 1934 to 1938, then in 1939 it declared war on Germany capriciously, on the comparatively trivial issue of Danzig, did nothing much towards waging that war until Hitler responded to the declaration of war on him in May 1940. It retired from the fighting in June 1940, after losing the first battle. But it refused to make a settlement, and denounced France for doing so. It used its Imperial power to maintain a war situation, looking for others to do the fighting. This brought about the German invasion of Russia in June 1941.

The United States joined the war in December 1941. It tried to hustle Britain back into the fighting in 1942 and 1943 but Churchill refused. He finally agreed in 1944, after it became clear that Germany was going to be defeated by Russia. The pressing object then was not to stop Germany from conquering the world but to occupy as much as possible of Europe before it was occupied by the Russians who were pressing the Germans back.

Russia, having borne the main cost of defeating Germany, was not going to hand the ground that it occupied over to the United States, to be used as an advance base for the Western war against it which it knew was on the Western agenda. And so Germany was divided at the meeting point of the two armies, and two rival German states corresponding to the rival world systems were set up.

About thirty years ago, the idea of the two German nations was advocated by opponents of the idea that there were two Irish nations. It was said that the political division had generated national division. We could see no ground for that idea. Nations once formed are not so easily dissolved.

When the Soviet system fragmented, Germany re-united. The unity took the form of Western destruction of what had been constructed in the East, and there was an element of Western colonising of

the East, but there was no Eastern national resistance to unification.

Margaret Thatcher debated whether she could allow German reunification. In a fit of megalomania she tried to live out the British demonising of Germans, and Prussians in particular, in the two wars on Germany. She called a meeting of historians to advise her on whether the Germans had been sufficiently de-Germanised to allow them to unite. But it was all make-believe.

Her beloved Churchill, by prolonging the British war on Germany after June 1940 with the strategy of getting others to fight it, had undermined the Empire which it was his purpose to preserve. The Empire melted away after 1945, with Britain fighting a few dirty, racist wars in its effort to retain it: Malaya and Kenya are the best known. Burma asserted its independence in alliance with Japan and could not be re-conquered.

The Indian national movement had declared itself neutral in the World War. Britain escalated its pillage of the country during the war, causing a major famine, but could only slink away after 1945, as its policies bore fruit in a religious civil war.

And, in Germany, the Christian Democratic movement, led by Adenauer, formed itself into a state with American backing. And Adenauer, with British policy on Germany in the 1920s and 1930s in mind, was determined to negate British influence after 1945—influence that operated through the German Social Democracy.

British Imperial Power was a spent force in 1989. This was nowhere more the case than in Germany. Britain and Germany were both subordinates of the United States. Disregarding Thatcher's antics, the Federal Republic swallowed up the Democratic Republic. This was brokered by an EU agreement arranged by Haughey as President of the Council of Ministers. Haughey's action showed that Ireland was not altogether in Britain's pocket and gained it considerable German support in subsequent years.

Germany, in the post-War Christian Democratic era when it took part in founding what has become the European Union, understood itself. Adenauer ensured a considerable degree of continuity between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic, making possible the rapid reconstruction of the State. But that understanding was not written down as authoritative history. Perhaps it was not politic to record truths in that situation.

Somewhat like Irish history in the Fianna Fail era, from the thirties to the seventies, it was transmitted within the party. But German Christian Democracy was then disabled by a spurious anti-corruption campaign, and came under the leadership of an Easterner who was starry-eyed about the West. So it is conceivable that the story about Kenny selling Europe the idea that the Partition of Ireland was of a kind with the Partition of Germany is true.

Possibly the EU did not know what it was doing when it made the Backstop a condition of an agreed withdrawal of the UK from the EU. But it now knows that Northern Ireland will not melt away as East Germany did.

But, having made the Backstop a condition, it must stick to it. European *Union* is infinitely more important to it than the British Union.

Britain is probing it for a crack through which it could be levered apart. It must not be allowed to find one.

That should also be the concern of the Irish State, but clearly it isn't. The inclination of official Ireland, after forty years of revisionist subversion, is to give way to British pressure. Its future therefore depends on the will of the EU in this matter.

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Fintan O'Toole has become an anti-Partitionist in his disillusionment with Britain because of Brexit. See *It's A United Ireland, But Not As We Know It* (Irish times May 25). Irish unity was predicted for 2024 by the android Commander Data in an episode of *Star Trek* broadcast in 1990, and O'Toole comments that: "*Data's date for Irish unification now seems astutely chosen*". But he says that the reasoning by which Commander Data got the right date was wrong. The Star Trekker, in his dispassionate and timeless observing of the course of human affairs, saw terrorist movements as agents of political change and he fixed on 2024 as the year in which the impulse given to Irish affairs by Provisional IRA terrorism would work itself through to a conclusion. It is morally unacceptable to O'Toole to suggest "*that the IRAs violence paid off in the end and therefore might be seen in the distant future as a terrible means, ultimately justified by a good end*".

That episode of *Star Trek* was banned in Ireland because of its message that what the IRA was doing would succeed in the end. Banning it was right because the

message was "utterly wrong". And O'Toole means wrong in both senses: false as well as immoral. Because terrorism is not only deplorable but is ineffective:

"the actual truth is that even if Irish unity does happen in 2024... it will have happened in spite of and not because of the IRAs 30 year campaign. And if we are ever to be able to think straight about such a momentous possibility as a united Ireland we need to disentangle it from the mythology of terrorism. The irony of Data's retrospective "prediction" is that even as it was being made, the IRA's own leadership was reaching a precisely contrary conclusion—that terrorism was not an effective way of promoting political change. Martin McGuinness, Gerry Adams and their allies were beginning, very belatedly, to admit to themselves that trying to kill and bomb their way to a united Ireland was not merely futile but actively counter-productive.

...There has never been an admission of this truth of course, but it is effectively conceded in the way Sinn Fein has reshaped the "armed struggle". It was about equality and "parity of esteem" for Catholics within Northern Ireland.

And yet the mythology of the armed struggle still looms over the very real need to think about Irish unity... It generates fierce emotions—triumphalism on one side and revulsion on the other..."

All of this might be fairly described as android observation of human affairs.

O'Toole, beamed up into a cosmopolitan bubble, and busily raking in the money with little articles about Ireland for the 'quality' press in London and New York, sees actual life in Ireland as an alien.

The fierce emotions of triumphalism and resentment were what Northern Ireland was constructed on by British democracy. There was no need whatever for Northern Ireland, except the British need to bring its terrorist campaign against the Sinn Fein Government to a conclusion that left a damaged Ireland behind in the act of withdrawing.

It is beyond the bounds of conceivability that any of the British statesmen who devised the Northern Ireland system, as a bizarre entity within the British state but outside its functional democracy, should have thought they were providing for good government in the Six Counties.

Edmund Burke's summing up of the 18th century British system of Irish government as diabolical applies with much greater force to Northern Ireland. But O'Toole of course knows nothing of actual life in Northern Ireland during the two generations after 1922 when it was a

democracy with all the vital parts missing, and was therefore experienced as Heaven by a very substantial part of the Protestant community and as a place of slow torment by the Nationalist third.

When the Catholic community decided that it would live in sullen resignation no longer, what should it have aimed for? People on the whole choose between options that are laid on for them by the existing structure of things. The choice in Northern Ireland, as laid on by the two states claiming sovereignty, was between the *status quo* with marginal amendment and a United Ireland.

That the *status quo* was a perversely undemocratic system was an idea that was actively discouraged by both states. We know because we were the only ones who said it. And we know that the *Irish Times* did not allow any hint of it to appear in its pages.

O'Toole now says that the IRA came to see that the Border could not be ended by force and took the re-structuring of Northern Ireland as its purpose. Of course he doesn't say that straight but that seems to be the sense behind his fumbblings.

What he says is that the IRA came to see "that terrorism is not an effective way of promoting change". We know of no evidence that that was the case. The change that it brought about was not the change that it aimed for in the first instance. But that does not mean that the change it brought about could have been brought about without war.

The 1998 settlement is different in kind from the 1974 arrangement, which continued majority rule. It is a "two nations" settlement. The fact of two nations was hotly denied in 1974. And Martin Mansergh later commended the *Irish Times* for not allowing discussion of the idea in its pages. The 1998 system operates with two electorates and denies the democratic validity of general majorities in Northern Ireland. And *that* was not a possibility in 1974.

Wars change peoples—a fact which has been commented on favourably with regard to Britain's wars on Germany. Well, the character of the Catholic community was changed considerably by the war which it sustained against the British State, and that was a major factor in the 1998 settlement.

It was triumphalist in 1998. In 1974 it was more in the nature of cunning

satisfaction at having brought off a confidence trick. And, given the nature of things in Northern Ireland, a soundly-based sense of triumph was a precondition for equality.

And equality and "*parity of esteem*" were never presented by the IRA as an alternative to unity. They were a step on the way to unity.

Within the British Northern Ireland system the substance of politics could only be the grating of the two national communities against each other. The 1998 restructuring improved the position of the Catholic community in that process of attrition.

"If Irish unity does come about in the next 10 years, it will not be the product of the IRA's atrocities. It will not even be primarily driven by Irish nationalism. It will be the result of a plot line too far-fetched even for Star Trek: Brexit. Brexit is creating the very real possibility of the break-up of the British state"

—And if Irish unity does not have an Irish cause that will make it OK with O'Toole.

The England of his cosmopolitan dreams is crumbling. It was never there.

Brexit has been in the offing longer that O'Toole has been in the *Irish Times*. It was set in motion when Thatcher replaced Heath. The sense of Imperial destiny is not an easy thing to give up. The balance-of-power instinct against Europe is ingrained in British political culture. Leaving the EU was put on the political agenda by a *Times* editorial around 1990.

England has her constancy no less than Rome, as Gladstone said about a century and a half ago. And so it seems has Ireland, in the form of "*an illegal organisation*".

\*

On O'Toole's general contention that terrorism is never politically effective: the clearest refutation of it is the state of Israel. the Jewish nationalist movement launched an unrestrained terrorist campaign against the British administration of Palestine in 1947. Its most celebrated action was the blowing-up of the King David Hotel. Britain surrendered Palestine to it in 1948, and set it free on the native Palestinian population. Surely O'Toole knows about this—but, being wise in his generation, he also knows what he must not acknowledge that he knows.

## LEST WE FORGET (6)

**THE WEEKLY SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING 9th AUGUST 1919 IS NOT AVAILABLE.  
THE FOLLOWING ARE ACTS OF AGGRESSION COMMITTED IN IRELAND BY THE POLICE AND MILITARY  
OF THE USURPING ENGLISH GOVERNMENT—AS REPORTED IN THE CENSORED DAILY PRESS— FOR  
WEEK ENDING:- 16th AUGUST, 1919.**

<b>DATE:- August</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>13th</b>	<b>14th</b>	<b>15th</b>	<b>16th</b>	<b>Total.</b>
Arrests:-	7	2	2	4			15
Sentences:-	5	1	1	3			10
Armed Assaults:-	3	1				1	5
Militarism:-				1			1
Suppressions & Proclamations:-	2		3		6	1	12
Courtmartials:-			3	8		1	12
Raids:-	20	2	1	1		13	37
<b>Daily Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>92</b>

Sentences for the week, as reported in Press, amounted to 52 months imprisonment.

### MONDAY, AUGUST 11th, 1919.

**Raids:-** Large forces of police and military, fully armed, forcibly entered and searched many houses situated upon the left bank of the river Shannon. Upwards of 20 houses were thus raided and searched.

**Arrests:-** Two men, whose names have not transpired were arrested near Portmore, Co. Armagh, because they participated in a Republican meeting which was proclaimed by the English military.

**Sentences:-** Michael and Timothy Spillane of Carrigaha, Castlegregory, Michael Flynn and Michael Griffin of Cappanane, and Michael Maunsell of Duagh all of the Co. Kerry, were sent to prison until December to await trial for the "attempted murder" of two policemen who were not even wounded. The five men indignantly protested their innocence but upon the evidence of policemen the paid magistrate committed them to prison.

**Proclamations:-** A Republican meeting at Portmore, Co. Armagh (Ulster) was proclaimed by the English military. A meeting which was held some miles away was attacked by military and police, the latter of whom dispersed the crowd at the point of the bayonet. Aeroplanes were used by the military to discover the whereabouts of this meeting. An Irish Language festival arranged for Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh (Ulster) was proclaimed by the English military authorities. Large bodies of English troops in full war-equipment were drafted into the district to enforce the proclamation.

**Armed Assault:-** In addition to the assault above mentioned, the police at Lisnaskea attacked a crowd which gathered near the place where the proclaimed festival was to have been held. Many of the young men and women of whom the crowd was composed were injured, six seriously.

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 12th, 1919.

**Raids:-** For the 42nd time in 12 months the house of Mr. John Meagher, Golden Grove, Roscrea was raided by military and

police. Mr. John Meagher himself has just been released from Cork Gaol where he underwent the torture of seven and a half months solitary confinement.

**Arrests:-** Mr. James Sugrue, Mounahone, Waterville, Co. Kerry, was arrested by military and police at his father's house which the armed forces forcibly entered and searched.

Mr. William O'Shaughnessy, Limerick, who is Organist at the Ennis Catholic Church, was seized by English military and carried to Limerick where he was lodged in prison. No charge has been brought against him.

**Sentence:-** Mr. James Sugrue, above mentioned, was sentenced at Listowel, Co. Kerry, to six months' imprisonment for "illegal drilling".

**Armed Assault:-** At Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath, when Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington (widow of Mr. Francis Sheehy-Skeffington brutally murdered by the English military) endeavoured to address people gathered to celebrate a Language festival, the crowd was attacked by armed police and many were injured among whom was Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington herself. English military were also present.

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13th, 1919.

**Raids:-** A strong force of English military and police raided the offices of the "Kilkenny People" a newspaper published in the town of Kilkenny. They carried away much of the machinery. This is the third occasion on which these offices have been raided.

**Arrests:-** A young lad named Cunningham, of Upr. Digges Street, Dublin, was arrested on a charge of being in possession of ammunition. Patrick Clancy, Co. Sligo, a student at Galway University, was arrested for having interrupted a recruiting Lecture delivered by an English Officer.

**Sentence:-** The lad Cunningham above referred to was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for having in his possession six rounds of ammunition.

**Court martial:-** Mr. Francis Whitney of Drumlish, Co. Longford,

was tried by English courtmartial for having six shot-gun cartridges in his possession. Michael Collins, Dublin was similarly tried for having fourteen cartridges in his possession. The sentences have not been promulgated.

**Suppression:-** By order of the English military the "Kilkenny People" a largely circulating weekly journal has been suppressed.

**Proclamation:-** By a proclamation issued by General Hackett-Pain, an Irish Language Festival at Ballysheal, Co. Down (Ulster) was suppressed. Military in great strength accompanied by armed police, and attended by aeroplanes mounted with machine guns were drafted into the district and occupied the field where the festival was to have been held, as well as the roads leading to it. Meanwhile the aeroplanes scouted the adjoining country in order to prevent the festival being held elsewhere. It was nevertheless held secretly at Ballynanny, Co. Down. General Hackett-Pain who proclaimed this festival was, in 1912, the Chief of the Staff of Sir Edward Carson's revolutionary Forces. He was in 1914 attached to the English Staff and can now employ English forces to suppress Republican meetings. An Irish language festival to be held at St. Cronan's Well, Carron, Co. Clare, had to be abandoned owing to the threats of the English Military.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 14th, 1919.**

**Militarism:-** A Cork prison doctor recommended the discharge of Patrick Griffin, Listowel, a prisoner in Cork Jail, because of his weak and grave condition, resulting from his treatment in jail. The recommendation was ignored by the Prison Board, and the doctor resigned as a protest showing clearly that he would no longer be responsible for the life of the prisoner, as long as he complained of treatment continued. Mr. Griffin has been in solitary confinement for over 13 weeks.

**Raid:-** Large forces of British military and police raided and searched the Carbery Irish College, Shorecliffe House, Glan-dore, Co. Cork. The grounds surrounding the College were also searched, including the tents of many of the student visitors. A Republican flag was removed from the house and a Union Jack substituted by the raiders.

**Arrests:-** During the above search, Messrs. Gerald O'Sullivan, M.A., Professor, Carlow College; J. B. O'Driscoll, R.D.C., Castletownsend; James Murphy, and

Denis O'Brien, were arrested, and remained in custody to the Skibbereen Petty Sessions on a charge of unlawful assembly. None of the accused, recognised the Court and were afterwards removed in a military motor lorry to Cork jail.

**Courtmartials:-** Mr. Paul P. Galligan, M.P., Ballinagh, Co. Cavan, was tried by court-martial on July 25th, 1919 on charges of illegal drilling and inciting persons to endanger the safety of a sergeant and constable of the R.I.C., and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment with hard labour. James Cullen, Ballymaghery, Hilltown, Co. Down, tried by court-martial at Belfast on July 31st, 1919 was sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment. The accused was charged with the possession of one copy of the official organ of the Irish Volunteers. John O'Sullivan, Listowel, Co. Kerry, charged with illegal drilling at Ballyduff, was offered by the P.M. the option of giving bail for future behaviour or doing 2 months; O'Sullivan refused to recognise the Court's jurisdiction, and was sentenced to 2 months' hard labour in Limerick jail. Samuel Heron, Clerk, was remanded at Belfast Police Court on a charge of using "seditious language calculated to provoke a breach of the peace". Accused refused to recognise the Court.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 15th, 1919.**

**Proclamations:-** A Proclamation was published yesterday, prohibiting and suppressing in County Clare, the Sinn Fein Organisation, and the Gaelic League. A procession to celebrate Lady Day, including Nationalists, Sinn Feiners, Hibernians, Foresters and Catholic Discharged Soldiers, was to have taken place yesterday at Derry. Last evening

a Proclamation signed by Brigadier General Hackett-Pain, prohibiting the holding of any meeting or procession on or in the neighbourhood of the City walls was issued. Resentment is strong because Orange processions were always allowed on the Walls, without any interference from the military authorities. But Brigadier General Hackett-Pain is the competent military authority, and, at the same time, a member of Carson's rebel army!

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 16th, 1919.**

**Proclamation:-** A Sinn Fein Meeting announced for Stewartstown yesterday, was proclaimed by the "authorities" but one was held instead in the evening never Coalisland. About 40 British military and some police under a District Inspector advanced on the crowd at Coalisland, who stood and jeered derisively. The District Inspector informed Mr. Milroy, one of the speakers, that the meeting was proclaimed. On being asked on what authority, the D.I. replied that it was on his own. A section of the crowd were then dispersed on the point of the bayonet, the soldiers capturing several American and Irish Republican flags.

**Court martial:-** Joseph O'Reilly, Carlingford Terrace, Dublin, was courtmartialled at Ship Street Barracks, on a charge of possessing a revolver without a permit. The decision of the Court will be promulgated.

**Raid:-** The Irish Republican Bar, Findlater Place, Dublin, was raided on Wednesday morning, by British military and police. An old-fashioned pistol was found. The police at Oylegate, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford raided the houses of several farmers, and commandeered all shot guns in the district.

**THE WEEKLY SUMMARIES FOR THE WEEKS ENDING 23 AND 30 AUG. 1919 ARE NOT AVAILABLE.**

**THE FOLLOWING ARE ACTS OF AGGRESSION COMMITTED IN IRELAND BY THE MILITARY AND POLICE OF THE USURPING ENGLISH GOVERNMENT – AS REPORTED IN THE DAILY PRESS – FOR WEEK ENDING:- 6th SEPTEMBER, 1919.**

DATE:- Sept.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total.
Raids:-	11		3	30	12	22	78
Arrests:-	11			5	4	1	21
Sentences:-				1	7	1	9
Armed Assaults:-	2	3			4		9
Courtmartials:-	1	1			9	2	13
Proclamations & Suppressions:-	2	3					5
Militarism:-		2		1			3
<b>Daily Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>138</b>

Sentences for the week, as reported in Press, amounted to 41 months imprisonment.

## **MONDAY, 1st SEPTEMBER 1919.**

Raids:- At 4 a.m. armed police raided the houses of Messrs. Meagher, Hackett and Wheahan, Toomevara, Co. Tipperary. In the early morning armed police raided and ransacked the house of Mr. James Porsunan, Dundalk. In Tipperary town fully armed military and police forcibly entered seven houses and searched them. These raids also took place in the middle of the night.

Arrests:- At Toomevara, Co. Tipperary, Widger Meagher, W. Hackett and P. Wheahan were arrested on a charge of taking possession of a shot-gun. At Tipperary town seven men named John Black, Martin Breen, Robert Condon, Patrick Dalton, Thomas Fennelly, Patrick Ryan, and Thomas Twomey, were arrested on a charge of being members of the Sinn Fein Organisation and the Irish Volunteers. A further charge against them is one of "unlawful assembly" at Brookville, Co. Tipperary. Mr. A. Brennan, District Councillor, Co. Clare, was arrested by armed military and police.

Proclamation:- Two meetings arranged to be held by Republicans at Ringsend and Rathfarnham, Dublin, and which were to have been addressed by the Representative of the Constituency elected at the General Election last December, were proclaimed by order of the English Military Authorities.

Armed Assaults:- An attempt to hold the above mentioned meeting at Ringsend was suppressed by armed police who attacked and dispersed the crowd. At Rathfarnham the meeting was held secretly.

Court martial:- Mr. Patrick Kiernan, Moneyduff, Co. Longford, was tried by court martial at Ship Street Barracks, Dublin, on a charge of being in possession of "documents", which if published might cause disaffection. The finding of the Court has not been promulgated yet.

## **TUESDAY, 2nd SEPTEMBER, 1919.**

Court martial:- Mr. Nicholas Keohane, farmer, Croagh, Skibbereen, Co. Cork, was tried by court martial at Cork Barracks on a charge of being in possession of documents "which if published might cause disaffection". The decision of the Court has not yet been published.

Proclamation:- A Republican meeting to be held at Bundoran, Co. Donegal (Ulster) and which was to have been addressed by the representative of the Constituency elected at the General

Election last December, was proclaimed by General Hackett-Pain (late Chief of Staff of Sir Edward Carson's Volunteers). Meetings at Ardara and at Brackey in the same County were similarly proclaimed.

Armed Assault:- Efforts to hold each of these three meetings were suppressed by large bodies of armed military and police which in each place attacked the unarmed crowds. Several persons were injured at Ardara, where an aeroplane operated against the people in conjunction with the military and police. At Brackey where the military and police made many charges the numbers injured is said to be great.

Treatment of Prisoners:- Mr. Paul Galligan, member of the Irish Parliament for West Cavan, and Mr. Hugh McKennon, Crossgar, Co. Down, have been removed from Belfast Prison to a nursing home. Their condition, resulting from their treatment, is critical.

## **WEDNESDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER, '19.**

Raids:- The houses of Jas. Coffey, Top Street, Cahirciveen, Jas. Griffin, Fair Field, and Daniel Donohue, Quay St., were raided and searched by British forces. Nothing incriminating was found.

## **THURSDAY, 4th SEPTEMBER, 1919.**

Arrests:- Early on yesterday morning John Jos. Madden, said to be from Co. Galway, was arrested near Lorrha, (where a police sergeant was killed on Tuesday) and conveyed to Borrisokane, where he was remanded by Major Dease, R.M., and conveyed to Limerick Jail. John Dillon and Denis Brett were also arrested at Fortahaha, Co. Galway, but were afterwards released.

Raids:- Military and police scoured Lorrha district, searching about thirty houses. Aeroplanes hovered around during the raids.

Militarism:- Ennistymon magistrates consider the infliction of Military rule in Co. Clare an unwarrantable encroachment on trade, and a gross infringement on the liberty of a law-abiding people. The prohibition of fairs and markets they regarded as most unjustifiable and a flagrant abuse of military power, and called for its withdrawal. They further condemned the murder of Francis Murphy, Glen; and tendered sympathy to the relatives. At the inquest on Francis Murphy the Jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the

British military. It is interesting to note that these magistrates are the paid servants of the British Government.

Sentence:- Joseph Wilson, Loughisland, Clough, Co. Down, tried by court martial at Victoria Barracks, Belfast on August 22nd for possessing a revolver, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

Arrest:- While visiting her sister at Carron, Co. Clare, Miss Catherine McCormack, of the Irish Hotel Ennistymon, who had been "on the run" was arrested by police. She was not allowed dress fully, but removed on a military motor lorry. Her relations are not aware of her whereabouts. Andrew Healy was arrested on Friday last on the Naas Road, Inchicore, Dublin, by armed police and military. Numbers of citizens have been held up and searched by police and military in the same district during the week.

## **FRIDAY, 5th SEPTEMBER, 1919.**

Raid:- The residence of Mr. McGuinness, who is "on the run" was surrounded and searched by police and military, who also visited the hotel of Mr. T. English, Tullamore, the distillery and a number of private houses. Messrs. G. O'Reilly, D.C., and James Clavin, Kilbegan, were tried and remanded at a Mullingar special court on a charge of unlawful assembly. Both were released on their own bail.

Arrest:- Mr. Johnson, S.F. Organiser for Offaly, was arrested under the D.O.R.A. and removed, with his papers, etc., to the Barracks. Three more young women were arrested at Moneygall, charged with flag-selling without permits, and removed to Limerick Jail under armed military escort.

Trials:- Messrs. John Stark, M. Breen, R. Condon, P. Dalton, T. Fennelly, P. Ryan and T. Twomey, were tried at Tipperary under the Crimes Act, with unlawful assembly on August 1st, as members of Sinn Fein and Irish Volunteer Organisations. Breen was sentenced to three months with hard labour. The other six were sentenced to two months hard labour each, and ordered to find bail or serve another three months' imprisonment.

Armed Assaults:- During the above trials, military and police made several assaults on groups of citizens who had collected outside the Courthouse. Women and children were knocked down and injured.

## **SATURDAY, 6th SEPTEMBER, 1919.**

Arrest:- A man whose name has not transpired, was arrested yesterday in Co. Tipp., in connection, it is stated with

the killing of a policeman in Lorrha. He was removed to Dublin under military and police escort.

**Raids:-** There was great military and police activity yesterday between Nenagh and Lorrha, 17 miles distant, when many houses were raided and searched. People crossing the Co. Galway – Co. Tipperary border were stopped and questioned by military.

**Court martial:-** James Browne, Lislawn, Co. Tipperary, was acquitted at a Cork court martial on a charge of possessing a seditious pamphlet—a copy of the official organ of the Irish Volunteers. Nicholas Keohane, Clouncugger, tried by court martial at Cork on August 30th, on a charge of possessing a seditious document, including one copy of the Irish Volunteers' Official organ, was sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

**Raids:-** Military and police searched the house of Mr. Edmonds, O'Connell Road, Tipperary. The house of Mr. Delahunty, Kilcoleman, Birr, was searched by police, who removed papers etc. Mr. Delahunty is Secretary, South Offaly Sinn Fein Executive.

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All Welcome

## Dev: A Hated Hero?

Recently I discovered on YouTube a programme put out on BBC2 called "Ireland's Hated Hero."

I was somewhat surprised that its subject was Eamon de Valera, for I can remember BBC's "Radio Newsreel" report following Dev's return to power in 1957, when Gerald Priestland referred to him as a "Freedom Fighter". The term was newly-coined, I believe, by *Time*, a crusading American anti-Communist magazine, for those Hungarians who rose up against Soviet domination the previous October; it was considered a compliment in the West.

I've been searching to establish exactly how "hated" de Valera was.

I found that, in the 42 years between 1917 and 1959, he had been a Member of Parliament for a Co. Clare Constituency in the province of Munster; having been returned on 16 consecutive occasions. He had, additionally, twice during those years been elected as an MP for Mayo in the province of Connacht. Following Partition in 1921, he had been elected as a Member of the "Northern Ireland Parliament" for Co. Down from 1921 to 1929 and South Down from 1933-1937, absenting himself from that Assembly as promised.

De Valera led democratically-elected Irish Governments on ten occasions. The first followed Sinn Fein's landslide victory in 1918 and the second its landslide victory of 1921. As leader of Fianna Fail he led eight Governments. So he was in power for 24 of the 42 years following his first standing for Parliament. He never entered into coalition with anyone. During his tenure there were no 'heaves' to replace him, and his colleagues were no "yes-men" nor ciphers, but independent-minded revolutionaries.

When he left Government he did two Laps of Honour as President, totalling 14 years, having defeated strong candidates in both elections.

So much for de Valera's record within Ireland. On the world stage he was not unknown. He was elected President of the Council of Ministers of the League of Nations in 1932 and President of the League's Assembly in 1938.

Over 20 years before the eldest of the Beatles was born, de Valera was packing crowds into sports stadia across the United States and was being given official receptions in many of those States and their cities.

A copy of *The Illustrated London of News* from 1938 shows the scenes at London's Euston Station as Dev's train pulled in. Tricolor waving fans jumped on top of the leading carriage and jumped from carriage to carriage. The pictures seemed like a template for stills from *A Hard Day's Night* filmed more than 25 years later.

Dev's Fabulous Public Career ended in 1973, four years after the breakup of the Beatles.

It occurs to me that, in 1948, when the Irish electorate gave Dev a break from leading their Government, people of India, the newly liberated and most populous democracy in the world gave him a hero's welcome.

The British electorate had most enthusiastically ejected Winston Churchill from office some time earlier. What a pity he didn't take the opportunity to revisit India. Thus the BBC was denied an opportunity to contrast the life and legacy of Britain's Universally Adored Hero with Ireland's 'Hated' one.

What a Shame!.

**Donal Kennedy**

"We, of all nations, know what force used by a stronger nation against a weaker one means. We have known what invasion and partition mean, we are not forgetful of our own history, and as long as our own country or any part of it is subject to force, the application of force, by a stronger nation, it is only natural that our people, whatever sympathies they might have in a conflict like the present, should look at their own country first and should accordingly, in looking at their own country, consider what its interests should be and what its interests are"

**Taoiseach Eamon de Valera, Dáil Eireann, 2nd September, 1939.**

"I did not know as I know now, that I was a mere puppet in a political game... I was in earnest. What a fool I was! I was only a puppet, and so was Ulster, and so was Ireland, in the political game that was to put the Conservative Party into power"

**Lord Edward Carson on being duped by the British on the Anglo-Irish Treaty.**

## A Matter of Inquiry

### Clair Wills and the Story She Tells (Part 11)

Imagine the land that I got when I read in the last issue of the *Irish Political Review* (May) the article by Donal Kennedy entitled *'Thoughts on Fergal Keane, OBE'*. saying that Keane had been "dropped by the BBC and the Irish Studies Department of Liverpool University" for suggesting that a *'Truth Commission'* be set up to examine events in Northern Ireland's recent War! Though, in fairness to Keane, I doubt he would have used that term, opting instead for the sanitary version—*'The Troubles'*.

According to Kennedy, Keane did this in an article that was published in the UK's *'Independent'* newspaper. To say that I was gobsmacked would be an understatement indeed and I immediately paused my research on Clair Wills to have a look instead at Fergal Keane. This is the same guy who has only to come over to Ireland and all those aching liberals pivot at his approach and *salaam* in his direction because he works for *oh-my-God*—the BBC! I mean come on—who is gaming who, Donal?

Only last 18th January 2019, Barry Roche wrote in *The Irish Times* under the giddy headline, *'Top BBC Journalist honoured at Cork Person of the Year'* and underneath was this information:

"Fergal Keane pays tribute to native city during ceremony for Hall of Fame award".

The article continues thus:

"Award-winning BBC Correspondent Fergal Keane today spoke of his delight at being honoured with a Hall of Fame Award at the Cork Person of the Year

Awards. Keane paid tribute to his native city and how it had helped become the person and reporter that he now is. He is only the second person to be awarded a Hall of Fame honour and follows in the footsteps of former Irish Examiner publisher Ted Crosbie".

The latter has definitely contributed hugely to Cork and if, I were him, I would return my award immediately because it is one thing being a Ted Crosbie of the great Cork Crosbie family—who for generations were real contributors to the life, culture and economy of this city and also the whole Munster region—and quite another to being a blow-in who was born in London and brought up mainly in Dublin and only latterly in Cork city! Keane went on that night to state:

"Frank O'Connor once said that he although he had left Cork, Cork had never left him. And I understand what exactly he meant... wherever I go in the world, whether it's Beirut or Baghdad or Kinshasha whatever part of the world I'm in the voices and the memories of Cork are always with me... It is the city that gave me my start in words and in broadcasting and it is the place where my heart lies forever... So thank you Cork." "Keane said that Cork was the place in which all the formative changes in his life had taken place. And he paid particular tribute to the late principal of Presentation Brothers College, Br. Jerome Kelly, who saw and nurtured Keane's talent and steered him towards a career in the media."

"How fortunate I was to be educated by that visionary man... I was suspended three times and almost expelled... somebody who might make something of himself if he was guided in the right way"

"Paying tribute to his mother, Maura, who accompanied him to the event, for instilling a love of words in him, Keane

said he was deeply moved to be honoured by the city which had produced such writers as Frank O'Connor and Sean O Faoláin."

The man behind the awards is Manus O'Callaghan, who is a PR specialist and head of 'Southern Advertising', which sponsors these type of ceremonies and awards and, as there was no comment about the Lord Mayor's presence, nor indeed of anyone from the City Hall or Cork Chamber, it is hard to make out whether this was an official event or not because frankly from the reporting it is rather difficult to assess. At the time, I heard nothing and usually any events, if they take place in the City Hall, are well flagged so I must conclude that this was a private award ceremony promoted by *'Southern Advertising'*, who are behind the *'Cork Person of the Month'* and then *'Cork Person of the Year'* awards. That said, the only other titbit of information that I was able to dredge up was that Crosbie got the award in 2018 and this year—it went to Keane.

I also found it interesting that, looking up Fergal Keane on the internet, he allows that his parents are Maura Hassett and then segues into informing us that he *"is the nephew of Irish playwright, novelist and essayist John B. Keane"*. His father is nowhere to be seen, though we know that he was the actor, the late Eamonn Keane. After finishing secondary school in 1979, he became a journalist with *The Limerick Leader'*, then *The Irish Press'* and then moved into broadcast journalism with RTE before joining the BBC in 1989 as Northern Ireland Correspondent but in 1990 he became the BBC South African Correspondent and later covered the *"Rwandan genocide"*, picking up awards along the way—along with honorary degrees from the Universities of Strathclyde, Bournemouth, Staffordshire and Liverpool in 2011. He received his OBE for *"services to journalism"* in the 1997 New Year's Honours List.

But what far outstrips all of the above and which shows his undoubted status to the British State is that Keane *"provided the commentary for the Westminster Abbey service marking the centenary of the Armistice with the Monarch Elizabeth 11 and other senior members of the Royal Family in attendance in 1918"*. Naturally all the senior members of Parliament, the Armed Forces *et al* were there too, with their Poppies and Medals blazing. Seriously Donal Kennedy can you still believe that Keane is out of favour with those who matter most in the British State?

In 2017, Fergal Keane wrote a book (one of several), but this was seriously personal and he titled it: *Wounds: A Memoir of Love and War* (William Collins. London.) This won him the very prestigious Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize in April 2018. The chair of the judging panel was of course Roy Foster and the panel itself was very impressive. The prize, awarded biennially, was for £5,000 and the ceremony was held in Belfast.

The historian Professor Marianne Elliott was awarded a special £5,000 "for her achievement in advancing the understanding of Irish history in Britain". The judges were Paul Arthur, Catherine Heaney, Onora O'Neill, Ian McBride, Thomas Pakenham and Foster himself. But only two were known to me other than Foster, so who were these people whom the British State itself considered such "safe pairs of hands"?

Paul Arthur, after much research, turned out to be Professor Emeritus at the University of Ulster and the former Director of its Graduate Course in *Peace and Conflict Studies*. Onora O'Neill turned out to be Baroness Onora O'Neill, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge. Catherine Heaney is the daughter of Séamus Heaney; and Ian McBride—an old pal of Fosters'—is Professor of Irish and British History at King's College, London. Obviously Thomas Pakenham is from the Lord Longford stable.

These people are also very active in that organisation *The British Council*, which seeks to further *British interests* in a "soft power model". And, make no mistake, this organisation is very serious about its intent.

At the 2018 British Council event in Belfast, where Fergal Keane got his award, the list of those who were present was a showcase of who's who in the *British firmament*. At the Opening Plenary the Chair was William Crawley, BBC journalist and broadcaster. The Opening Welcome was given by Sir Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive of the British Council. The Plenary Panel consisted of Lord Alderdice, Director of the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict, University of Oxford and Chair for Democracy and Peace Building; Helen Alderson, Head of Mission to the UK and Ireland, International Red Cross; Lord Lothian, Former Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office; and Candice Mama, Reconciliation Ambassador. The keynote Speech was given by Baroness O'Neill.

The Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize was presented by Kate Ewart-Biggs, Director *Global Network*, British Council, and Roy Foster, Emeritus Professor of Irish History at the University of Oxford and part-time Chair of Irish History and Literature at Queen Mary University of London. The Closing Remarks were made by Dr. Jo Beall, Director of Education and Society, British Council. It is instructive to look at the list of the seven shortlisted entries for the 2018 prize amongst whom were:

Noel Dorr, *Sunningdale: the search for peace in Northern Ireland* (Royal Irish Academy.)

Tony Doherty, *This Man's Wee Boy: a childhood memoir of peace and trouble in Derry* (Mercier Press.)

Fergal Keane, *Wounds: a memoir of War and Love* (William Collins.)

Peter Leary, *Unapproved Routes: histories of the Irish Border 1922-1972* (Oxford University Press.)

Frank Ormsby, *Goat's Milk: new and selected Poems* (Bloodaxe.)

Connal Parr, *Inventing the Myth: political passions and the Ulster Protestant Imagination* (Oxford University Press.)

Robert Savage, *The BBC's 'Irish Troubles': television, conflict and Northern Ireland* (Manchester University Press.)

In case there are those out there wondering about Christopher Ewart-Biggs, he was the British Ambassador to Ireland who was assassinated by the IRA in 1976 when he and his driver drove over a road-side bomb. But, looking at that list of authors who were shortlisted and then at who won, it is really a testament to how much Keane is lauded by the British Establishment! There simply cannot be any doubt about that and it has to feed into any assumptions we might make about him and his very successful career so far. Speaking for the judges, Professor Roy Foster stated:

"This year's list, which covered three years, was extremely strong and varied... But our choice of Fergal Keane's powerful book *Wounds* was unanimous. Fergal Keane is a legendary journalist who is also a first-rate historian and a marvellous writer. Using these gifts he has explored the complexities of personal and political relationships in a North Kerry townland at a time of revolution, with an insider's knowledge and the incisive analysis of an impartial outsider. As the Irish proverb he quotes in his last paragraph says, there are two versions of every story and twelve versions of every song; in giving us both versions he has produced a classic and moving history, which epitomises the

values which Christopher and Jane Ewart-Biggs stood for, and which their prize recognises."

By the by, Foster also went on at length to complement the other recipient—Professor Marianne Elliott ending with this endorsement:

"There is also her great achievement in building up the Institute of Irish Studies in Liverpool into a beacon of Irish academic achievement in Britain, and her tireless work on the Opsahl Commission and other initiatives devoted to bettering life in Northern Ireland. Her achievements as a public intellectual could not be more relevant to the tradition of work commemorated by this prize, and we are delighted to recognise them."

Foster in his speech quotes from the review in *The Irish Times* by Diarmaid Ferriter, Professor of Modern Irish History at UCD on 30th September 2017 where the latter wrote:

"...Keane writes with honesty about family inheritance, tribal strengths and shortcomings and the conflicting legacies of revolution... there is also strong and interesting material here, including about memory, forgetting and compartmentalisation of the past and present... Keane's reflections on the aftermath of the revolutionary era are also thought-provoking and nuanced; he sees his forebears as courageous idealists but does not shirk the revolution's *underbelly* and in the long run, *the stifling of independence*... Perhaps the book delivers less than it promises, but it is frequently absorbing and intelligently reflective" (The italics are mine –JH).

And, in the end, isn't that what the British State and indeed the Irish State wants everyone to take away from our independence struggle, that so called *dark underbelly*—that very last word connotes so much by itself and then what was it all for—we were *stifled*—our very freedom was never going to be what we thought it was, according to these paid *agents of another state!* That *scuit* Ferriter even began his review by telling an old canard that Keane had written about at the end of his so-called 'memoir' about one of his great uncles who *hected a mission priest*" by shouting him down inside the church with the use of profane language. That this country continues to produce these *eejits* tells me a lot about our nation and truly it is enough to make one weep!

Ferriter also gave a very precise kick to Keane by writing that the latter:

"could have gone to the trouble of telling us precisely how many Protestants

there were in Listowel before and after the revolution".

What is the former implying here—that they were all '*disappeared*' to use Hartian phraseology. But if this is bad—one should see how the review of the book was done by a J.P. O'Malley in the *Irish Independent* on the 25th September 2017. The latter pronounces:

"In the official version of Irish history, The War of Independence was fought by dashing young men in long trench coats, who were always righteous, just, and heroic. In the same narrative, the Civil War of 1922-23—where former comrades executed each other without mercy—is simply hushed over and barely spoken about... History, Keane was quickly learning—through colourful oral folklore—had given the people of north Kerry such a yearning for land, that some were even prepared to kill for it"

Well—quite!

But Donal Kennedy still might have something going for his thesis. Keane, as the *Limerick Leader* wrote on 26th December 2017, is to "*become the new Adjunct Professor of Journalism at the University of Limerick*". And he also intriguingly has signed up with a London '*Speaking Bureau*' as a "*public speaker, event chair and after dinner speaker*" with fees starting at £3,000 and accommodation etc.

Would he be doing all that if he was not still the darling boy of the BBC News Commentariat?

Julianne Herlihy ©

## Roy Foster's Platonic Thinking

continued

become realities and that was a self-sufficient explanation of what happened.

That these the stances taken up were a response to changing circumstances—i.e. the reality of increasing British opposition to Irish Independence—does not appear in the exposition, even though that was the most important reality of all. Cause and effect cease to operate for him here.

In Foster's concept of history, Plato's *forms* are replicated by the concept of *themes* which can be as arbitrary as one chooses but provide great scope for waffling and speculating about anything and everything apart from what actually happened.

Foster took great pains to paint Muriel

MacSwiney, in particular, into this picture. She adorns the cover of his book. While getting her family background wrong (being distillery owners and not brewers), he painted the rejection of her family in psychological terms. But any reading of Muriel on the subject makes it clear she rejected their Unionist and Imperialist politics first and foremost, followed by their version of Catholicism. Then, he claimed, when she saw the Independence that came into existence, she became sceptical of her Republicanism. The implication was that this confirmed his intergenerational/disappointment theme.

Foster was reminded that those of this parish, who came to know Muriel, knew that she was a Republican until the day she died. Foster argued that this could not be true as she was an international communist—not being able to conceive that the two could be complementary. And she was quite clear about what had prevented the Republic she fought for not yet coming into existence—British and Free State terror plus excommunication by the Church. Her idea of the Republic was alive and well in the 1960s and she did her bit then to help achieve it.

Even though de Valera was far removed from the strictly urban pre-1916 generation that Foster eulogises, he had to be included as another person who had psychological issues and therefore supported independence for some dubious reasons. These stemmed from '*rejection*' by his mother and the strictures of poor rural labouring life.

There is no evidence for any of this. His mother did what she thought was best for him and he never held it against her. She fostered out her child to another member of her wider family. That was quite normal in the Ireland of her time, and much later, and rejection did not come into it—in fact the opposite was the case. He always took great pride in his social background as a reliable guide for his life—looking into his own heart etc. Who can suggest he was wrong about that—whatever else one might think of him? His mother's decision could be claimed as one of the greatest decisions ever made by an Irish person and should be celebrated.

Foster went on to ruminate about the conservative nature of the '*revolution*', which complemented his view of the intergenerational theme and the disappointment of the pre-1916 generation. But the War for Independence was a war for just that—Independence—no more and no less. It necessarily involved the commitment of millions of people, as confirmed in the 1918

and subsequent elections. Every participant probably had different views about what the outcome should entail but all were clear about the aim, and that was the most important fact. Otherwise there would have been no war and no independence.

Apparently, the Platonic form of War of Independence violence became reality in a boreen in Soloheadbeg but, in answering a question about whether the 1918 Election led to violence, he said he had to admit the violence was probably inevitable. *Why inevitable*, he was asked? Because, he admitted, of the British opposition to Independence!

*Eureka!*\* I nearly exclaimed.

Jack Lane

\* He found it.

## May Brexit Summary

continued

from relatively low bases; overall local representation remains dominated by the DUP and Sinn Fein.

In England the number of Conservative Councillors dropped from 5,521 to 3,564 and the number of Conservative-controlled Councils dropped from 163 to 93. The Labour Party also lost ground. Its tally of Council seats declined from 2,278 to 2,021. While the number of Labour-controlled Councils actually increased from 74 to 84, the Party lost control of six Councils. These losses translated into gains for the Lib Dems (from 702 to 1,351 seats), Greens (from 71 to 265 seats) and Independents. It is worth mentioning, however, that the map of local representation in England continues to be dominated by blue for the Conservatives.

Since the Lib Dems and Greens are unequivocally in favour of remaining in the EU, the results represented a boost for the Remain camp but the matter is not clear-cut. The Lib Dem result is partially explained by the Party regaining 400 seats it lost in 2015, which might have happened regardless of Brexit. The idea of a major electoral shift to Remain is also contradicted by the strong showing for Nigel Farage's Brexit Party in advance polling for the European Elections. Many commentators and the major parties themselves interpreted the local election results as a punishment exacted on the Tory and Labour Parties for failing to deliver Brexit.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

Elections that were not supposed to happen—the UK Elections to the European Parliament—are proceeding and are being seen as a proxy referendum on Brexit. The critical results will be the combined percentage of the vote achieved by the Brexit Party, UKIP and possibly the DUP, measured against the combined percentage achieved by the Lib Dems, SNP, Greens, Change UK, Plaid Cymru and possibly Sinn Fein and the other anti-Brexit Parties in Northern Ireland. Another critical number will be the actual number of MEPs returned by Farage's Party compared to those returned by Parties supporting Remain.

If the Hard Brexit camp comes out on top in these numbers and if, as seems likely from media reports, the new Leader of the Tory Party is identified with a Hard Brexit position, the course of British politics will shift towards acceptance of the default outcome of the negotiations with the EU—No Deal—by the time the extension runs out on October 31st.

Outside of the UK, the conduct of the European Elections is highlighting the lack of coherence at the heart of the EU. Guy Verhofstadt travelled to Britain to endorse the Lib Dems' anti-Brexit platform, thereby aligning himself with the Donald Tusk position he seemed to oppose last month. In an interview with *Suddeutsche Zeitung* on May 16th Angela Merkel, impressively, announced that "*the old certainties of the postwar order no longer apply*" and that "*Europe needs to reposition itself in a changed world*". She argued that the EU was increasingly being forced into opposition to Russia, China and the US. However, this approach is contradicted by the policy stance of Manfred Weber, her party colleague and the European Peoples Party candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission. In line with US policy, Weber has come out in opposition to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Europe.

#### SPITZENCANDIDAT ROW

A division over how the European Commission President is chosen is threatening to become a source of contention on the European Council, a dispute which may go on for months and may even cause Jean-Claude Juncker's tenure to be extended beyond October. The issue has been simmering beneath the surface of EU politics since Juncker's appointment in 2014.

On one side of the argument the Commission, a number of Heads of Govern-

ment that includes the dominant groupings in the European Parliament, favour a model of selection known as *spitzencandidat*—German for lead candidate—in which the Presidency is awarded to the grouping with the most seats in the Strasbourg Parliament. The EU Treaties lay down that the Council, acting by qualified majority, must nominate for Parliament's approval a Commission President "*taking account of the results of the European Parliament election*". The supporters of *spitzencandidat* interpret that wording as conferring the decisive power with the Parliament.

On the other side its opponents, who include the leaders of France, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia, dispute the above interpretation and argue that in practice *spitzencandidat* hands control of the appointment to Germany, France and the Commission.

Emmanuel Macron believes that the model virtually guarantees victory for one of the big traditional groupings in the European Parliament. He favours a reform of the Election process in which voters would choose from a List of the groupings in the Parliament—a thought-provoking proposal. In a speech in 2018 European Council President Donald Tusk also expressed reservations about *spitzencandidat* on the grounds that a winning candidate could face difficulty getting sufficient support in a new European Parliament.

The list of possible candidates for the position presently includes Manfred Weber (Christian Democrats), Frans Timmermans (Social Democrats), Margrethe Vestager (Liberals) and Michel Barnier (Christian Democrats). Under *spitzencandidat* Weber should get the position but his lack of Ministerial experience is being described as a disadvantage. Whatever the eventual outcome, the amount of political attention being expended on the row will hopefully add to the prestige of the Office, something that Margaret Thatcher undermined in the early nineties.

#### SINN FEIN TAUNTED FOR BEING 'ANTI-EUROPEAN'

When European Election business is concluded in Irish count centres, there will be the usual raking over of the political implications. A feature of the campaign that may be overlooked is a taunt repeatedly thrown at Sinn Fein and other Left candidates in media debates: that they are "*inherently anti-European*". That ball was

set rolling by Micheál Martin at the launch of the Fianna Fail campaign and was taken up in a column from Stephen Collins. Collins wrote:

"We can mock the British for Brexit, but at least the people who vote for Nigel Farage have a clear idea of why they are doing so. They simply want their country out of the EU, regardless of the consequences. By contrast, a substantial chunk of the Irish electorate seems to have no idea what it is doing. A recent opinion poll showed that a whopping 93 per cent of Irish people are committed to this country's continuing membership of the EU, but there is every chance that on May 24th they will elect a number of MEPs whose goal is to wreck it" (Irish Times, 9 May).

Collins was answered by Sinn Fein MEP Lynn Boylan who said that her Party "*believes that Ireland's place is in Europe but that the direction of the EU has been, and is, misguided*" (IT Letters, May 13). On the point that Sinn Fein is out of step with the electorate, she referred to the numerous referenda in which Irish voters showed they were not afraid to voice concerns against the direction being taken by Brussels. Boylan was in turn answered by a Cork letter writer, Rory Crotty, who pointed out that Sinn Fein is allied in the European Parliament to the Danish "*People's Movement against the EU*" and also to the "*fiercely anti-EU French Communist Party*" (IT Letters, May 14).

That much of this exchange consisted of debating points is unfortunate; the underlying point at issue is real. If the French Communist Party continues to mindlessly castigate the EU without taking account of the reality that the Soviet Union no longer exists, that is not a reason for the Irish Left to mindlessly follow suit. Likewise, the position that Irish critics of EU neo-liberalism should follow down the path of British Euroscepticism, as Anthony Coughlan has argued for many years, is incompatible with Irish interests and preferences.

Certainly, EU leaders and officials embraced neo-liberalism with fervour from the early 90s onwards, and in foreign policy matters they have mostly made the EU subservient to the US but, in the same way that Dail Eireann can be influenced by purposeful opposition, so can the EU. In EU matters the Hard Left constituency is not being well served by the current mishmash of conspiracy theories and nationalist resentment offered by its representatives. Opposition to market fundamentalist policies in the EU is far

more effective from inside than outside the tent. The Portuguese Socialists have shown the way in that regard.

Dave Alvey

#### Postscript:

As of 29th May, most of the European Election results are known. Regarding Brexit the important results are those for the UK. The Brexit Party achieved a massive endorsement for its position winning 29 seats as against 16 for its nearest rival, the Lib Dems, and the overall UK result reaffirmed the Referendum result. However, the share of the vote received by explicitly anti-Brexit parties (40.9%) was higher than the combined percentage vote for the Brexit Party, UKIP and the DUP. Given its position on Brexit, it is reasonable to add the total Conservative vote to the pro-Brexit tally. This gives a pro-Brexit total of 43.4%. In seats, pro-Brexit (Brexit Party, DUP and Conservatives) won 34 as against 29 on the other side.

On the question of whether the European Elections can be considered as a proxy for a Brexit referendum, it must be acknowledged that the turnout in the Europeans was approximately 40% whereas that for the Referendum was 72.2%; a large section of the electorate was absent this time round. So far the Remain camp has been conspicuously unwilling to accept the legitimacy of any of the three electoral mandates/quasi-mandates for Brexit, so the paralysis in British politics is likely to continue.

In the EU as a whole voter turnout broke 50% for the first time and the anti-EU populist vote, unexpectedly, failed to increase significantly on its 2014 tally. Its successes were in Italy, where the Lega won 22 seats, and in France where Marine le Pen's party narrowly defeated Macron. The over-optimistic concluding sentence of an *Irish Times* report (28 May) stated: "*Perhaps at last they [these Elections] mark the coming of age of a real pan-European democracy.*"

In Ireland the count is still ongoing. Media coverage was skewed by an exit poll which significantly over-stated the success of the Greens and under-stated support for Fianna Fail, especially in the Locals.

DA

It is hoped to carry a report of all the elections which took place in May in the July issue, Editor

## Evidence Douma Chemical Attack Staged

An alleged chemical attack against civilians took place in Douma, near Damascus, on 7th April 2018. The US and its allies blamed the Syrian State for this attack and the US, UK and France bombed Syrian State targets in retaliation on 14th April 2018.

A Fact Finding Mission (FFM) from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was able to get on-site and begin investigating the incident on 21st April. The FFM produced its [final report](#) on 1st March 2019.

### There is now compelling evidence from an OPCW document

- (a) that the attack was staged, and
- (b) that the OPCW knew it was staged but omitted evidence that it was staged from its final report.

This evidence has been assembled by the [Working Group on Syria, Propaganda and Media](#)—see their reports:

- (1) [Briefing note on the final report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission on the alleged chemical attack in Douma in April 2018](#)
- (2) [Assessment by the engineering sub-team of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission investigating the alleged chemical attack in Douma in April 2018](#)

*Authors: Paul McKeigue, David Miller, Piers Robinson*

The proponents of the thesis that the Syrian state was responsible for a chlorine gas attack assert that the gas was contained in two cylinders dropped at two different locations by Syrian military helicopters. These cylinders allegedly fell through roofs into rooms below and the gas was discharged killing 35 individuals at one location.

The Working Group on Syria, Propaganda and Media has obtained a copy of the OPCW document [Engineering assessment of two cylinders observed at the Douma incident—27 February 2019](#), which is a report of an investigation by OPCW personnel. Its final paragraphs are as follows:

32. At this stage the FFM engineering sub-team cannot be certain that the cylinders at either location arrived there as a result of being dropped from an aircraft. The dimensions, characteristics and appearances of the cylinders and the surrounding scene of the incidents, were inconsistent with what would have been expected in the case of either cylinder having been delivered from an aircraft. In each case the alternative hypothesis produced the only plausible explanation for observations at the scene.

33. In summary, observations at the scene of the two locations, together with subsequent analysis, suggest that there is a higher probability that both cylinders were manually placed at those two locations rather than being delivered from aircraft.

This conclusion, which means that the Syrian Government probably did NOT carry out a chemical weapons attack in Douma on 7th April 2018, was absent from the OPCW—s final report published on 1st March 2019. In fact, the final report gives the opposite impression in sections 2.14 and 2.15, namely, that the physical evidence at the two sites was consistent with the cylinders having fallen through the concrete roof of the building—and therefore consistent with the cylinders having been dropped from Syrian military helicopters.

The Working Group on Syria, Propaganda and Media concludes:

"We note that the Douma incident was the first alleged chemical attack in Syria where OPCW investigators were able to carry out an unimpeded on-site inspection. Since 2014, OPCW Fact-Finding Missions investigating alleged chemical attacks in opposition-held territory have relied for evidence on witnesses and materials collected by opposition-linked NGOs of [doubtful provenance](#), including the CBRN Task Force, the Chemical Violations Documentation Centre Syria, and the White Helmets. Even for the investigation of the Ghouta incident in 2013, the OPCW-WHO mission was able to visit the alleged attack sites for only a few hours, and was under the close supervision of the armed opposition. For those who until now have been prepared to accept the findings of OPCW Fact-Finding Missions that did not include on-site inspections, the finding that the Douma incident was staged, based on a careful on-site inspection, should cast doubt on the findings of these earlier Missions."

David Morrison  
16 May 2019

## The *Irish Times* And The Knocklong And The Short Of It!

The *'Irish Times'* website had the following report from Ronan McGreevy posted on the afternoon of Saturday, May 18th:

"Historian and former Government minister Dr Martin Mansergh has criticised those who claim that the War of Independence was not justified. Dr Mansergh said there was a "legitimate pride in the courage, the dangers and the hardships" endured by the IRA in the war. He believed those who question the constitutionality of the war "never ask how many of the actions of the British at the time were constitutional" and the British government had "made up the rules, or decided to ignore them as they saw fit." He added: "They fought hard to prevent Irish independence from ever happening. While they had vastly superior resources, most of their forces were not fighting on home ground." Dr Mansergh was the chief speaker at the national centenary commemoration to mark the rescue of Seán Hogan at Knocklong railway station on May 13th, 1919. Hogan was the youngest of those involved in the Soloheadbeg ambush in January of that year. He was picked up after a dance in Tipperary town and put on a train from Thurles to Cork. He faced certain interrogation and possible execution. He was rescued from the train by a group of IRA volunteers including Seán Treacy and Dan Breen following a ferocious gun battle which lasted 15 minutes. Two Royal Irish Constabulary, Sergeant Peter Wallace and Constable Michael Enright were killed in the rescue.

Saturday's gathering at Knocklong Community Field in the Co Limerick village was the culmination of a week of events to mark the centenary of the rescue. The programme included a series of four plays covering the dance, the plan, the rescue and the trial of two IRA volunteers who were executed in 1921 for their role in the rescue. Dr Mansergh reminded those present in Knocklong that Seán Hogan's father Matthew had been a tenant of Dr Mansergh's great-grandfather before his lands were sold under the Wyndham Act of 1903. Dr Mansergh described the targeting of Irish-born RIC men as "one of the tragic necessities of the time even though most of them were decent and honourable men during their duty by their lights." He contrasted the fight that hundreds of thousands of Irishmen had been in during the First World War for the values of the rights of small nations and national self-determination with the refusal of the British to grant the same self-determination to Ireland. The end of the war had provided a "unique opportunity" to claim independence for

Ireland. "It was an opportunity that might never have recurred or that would not have been feasible later on," he said. "Painful though the cost of revolution may have been on all sides, the bloodshed during the entire Irish revolution was relatively low compared to the civil wars in Europe after the end of the Great War, low compared to Irish casualties in that war, and low compare to the loss of life in the 1798 rebellion or the conflicts of the 16th and 17th centuries in Ireland."— Independence might not have happened without the IRA, historian says. Martin Mansergh praises courage of the old IRA during the War of Independence."

McGreevy's own spin and rejoinder on Knocklong, in the shape of "*An Irishman's Diary*", was published in both the print and online editions of the *'Irish Times'* on Monday, May 20th. In tandem with its secular theologian Patsy McGarry, McGreevy was articulating that paper's own line on the War of Independence. Underneath a photo of Dan Breen's wedding, McGreevy wrote, *inter alia*:

"The best man Seán Hogan who is dressed in the uniform of the Irish Volunteers. Unlike Breen, he looks shy and awkward, his body tilted as if to convey how ill at ease with himself he was. Had Hogan shown the same diffidence in May 1919, he might have saved himself and his comrades a great deal of trouble. Hogan was the youngest of those involved in the Soloheadbeg ambush on January 21st, 1919... (On his capture) Hogan faced interrogation and possible execution. Knocklong ambush, which occurred on May 13th, 1919, saved Hogan from such a fate, but it came at a terrible price for all those involved..."

Hogan was being escorted to Cork by four RIC men. They faced five volunteers, three of whom were armed. A ferocious gun battle ensued, lasting 14 minutes. Constable Michael Enright (30), from Ballyneety, Co Limerick, was shot dead immediately. Sgt Peter Wallace and Sean Treacy, another of those involved at Soloheadbeg, wrestled over Treacy's gun. Wallace, who was a huge man, shot Treacy in the throat before the gun was turned on Wallace, who later died from his wounds... Knocklong became an exalted event in the iconography of Irish Republicanism. At Soloheadbeg, eight armed and ready volunteers faced two unwary policemen. It was not a fair fight. Hogan's rescue from the train at Knocklong demanded organisation, courage and daring of the highest order. Hogan continued to serve in the War of Independence and on the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War. By the time hostilities ceased

in 1923, he was only 23, but had spent the previous five years in armed combat. The toll on his mind and body were huge. In 1924, he was admitted to St Brice's Military Hospital suffering from "attacks of restlessness and depression—inability to concentrate his mind on anything". His then wife Christina ran a nursing home in Tipperary, where her patients included many shellshocked Irish veterans of the first World War. The couple would later separate... Seán Hogan died on Christmas Eve 1968 from a cerebral haemorrhage and chronic bronchitis. At the funeral reception, his estranged widow is supposed to have told a niece of Hogan, "Well, but wasn't that some waste of a life". Sean and Christina are buried 50 paces from each other in St Michael's Cemetery in Tipperary town, divided in death as they were in life."

McGreevy was, of course, taking issue with Mansergh who, however, remained the great unmentionable in his "*Diary*" spinning. And yet, despite the fact that the web report of Mansergh's address carried, underneath, the *'Irish Times'* slogan—"Facts have no agenda. Real news has value."—this self-styled "*paper of record*" took an editorial decision to both censure and censor Mansergh by COMPLETELY EXCLUDING the report of his Address from its print edition! So, you will have read it here first!

**Manus O'Riordan**

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### That British Loan To Ireland

[A letter in *Belfast NewsLetter*, 18th April, accused Ireland of not repaying a loan obtained from Britain during the economic crisis: 'Like Stalin, Irish PM seems to think gratitude a disease', Davy Wight, *News Letter*, April 15, and received the following response. Ed.]

***In the interest of truth and facts there is one very good reason why Ireland has not repayed it's loan to Britain [sic].***

It's because they would face paying a €200 million penalty fee under a break clause in the deal.

Compare that with other loans which have been paid back early, because there was no penalty in doing so.

The loan to Ireland was purely an investment for Britain. It was money lent at a considerable interest rate initially of 5.8% reduced now to 3.5%. Compare that to the interest rate to Sweden of 1.07% and to the IMF of 2.79%.

Ireland has now paid £358 million (€428 million) in interest to the UK on a crisis loan it gave to the State in 2010. Britain will do well out it's loan/investment to Ireland.

To page 17, col. 1

## Approaching The Half-Centenary Of The Arms Trials!

A strange thing has begun to happen in recent months: the actual history of Irish affairs of the past half-century has begun to be written in academic publications.

But, needless to say, it is not in academia in Ireland that this beginning has been made.

Professor Raymond Crotty of Trinity College, Dublin, made a public confession of the bankruptcy of Irish academia in the London *Times* of 3rd July 1972, and he appealed to England to take Irish thinking in hand. English academia did this with a will. It first made nonsense of Irish history, but now it seems to have decided to restore some sense to it.

The crucial matter is the response of the Irish Government, and of Dail politicians in general, to the British pogrom against the Nationalist community in the North in August 1969—before the Provos were ever thought of. That response was to establish relations with Nationalist Defence Committees in the North, and then disown those relations nine months later by means of the Arms Trials.

Taoiseach Jack Lynch, under pressure from Britain exerted through the Fine Gael Opposition, brought criminal charges—which were in effect charges of treasonable conspiracy—against a number of the people who had been implementing his policy, including a military Intelligence officer, Captain James Kelly, a senior Cabinet Minister, Charles Haughey, and, most important of all, John Kelly—who had acted as liaison between the Northern Defence Committees and the Dublin Government. (Albert Luykx, a businessman was also charged.)

### Loan

continued

It was not for any great concern for Ireland, but purely in the interest of self protection of their own banking systems and economy that Britain made that loan,

A British treasury report in 2017 stated that "The [British] government agreed to provide a bilateral loan to Ireland because it is in the UK's national interest that Ireland has a successful economy and a stable banking system".

There is no need for Ireland to feel grateful. It's paying handsomely for the loan given by Britain to protect British interests.

Mary Russell, Dundalk

Charges were also laid against Cabinet Minister Neil Blaney, but were dismissed at a preliminary hearing in the Magistrates Court. No adequate reason for the dismissal was ever given. It may have been that Blaney was not willing to enter a minimal technical defence, as Haughey did, and the case was dropped because too much would have come out at a full trial.

The two Kellys, Luykx, and Haughey were subjected to full trial. The Jury brought in Not Guilty verdicts. Government and Opposition agreed in dismissing the verdicts as perverse, the Jury having either been intimidated or carried away by nationalist passion.

It has recently come to light that in fact the Jury was a bit unusual, in that the percentage of Protestants on it was higher than the percentage of Protestants in the population. This suggests that the Prosecution was looking for a bias in the other direction, assuming that Protestants would not look too closely at charges against defendants who were alleged to be extremist Republicans.

The evidence presented was reassembled from newspaper reports of the trial, along with State Paper releases, by Angela Clifford in *The Arms Conspiracy Trial 1970*, there being no Court transcript available, and the Trials were set against the background of events since August 1969. It was shown that the Not Guilty verdict was entirely in accordance with the evidence presented and that any other verdict would have been perverse—and that the innocent defendants were informally published by the State (Government plus Opposition) in ways that are open to a State which has manipulated public opinion into mindlessness.

Angela Clifford's book made no impression on the History and Politics Departments of the Universities, which quickly became parts of the mind-bending system of State propaganda. Her assembling of the relevant facts was not disputed, nor was her reasoning upon them. It was decided that the only way to deal with the book was to ignore it and restrict its circulation.

Dermot Keogh was particularly effective in this regard. He was overcome by a nightmare vision of Fascism at the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin in response to the Bloody Sunday massacre

in Derry. He crossed over from Fianna Fail politics to academia, became the master of Cork University, used the immense economic power of the University to close city bookshops to material which had its source in North Cork, and sought to stop thinking about the Six Counties by fostering a fantasy line of history, which was made the key to a successful career—the Six Counties were not an undemocratically-governed region of the British state for which the British Government was responsible, but were themselves a state, for whose affairs neither the British State nor the Irish State had responsibility. The important thing was that Northern affairs should be excluded from the political discourse of the Irish state.

Keogh came late to academic life, but he came to it with a mission to make Jack Lynch the hero of the situation. He mastered the situation quickly, meeting with no resistance from Professor John A. Murphy and Professor Joseph Lee, who had already demonstrated their talent for not seeing what Northern Ireland was.

He wrote the authoritative biography of Lynch—the biography sanctioned by authority—in which the gross facts of the Arms Trials are conjured away.

But now, on the eve of the half-century of the Arms Trials, authority seems to be changing its mind on at least this aspect of Irish history. Angela Clifford's book on the Arms trials is cited, and recommended, in a three-volume *Treatise On Northern Ireland* just published by Oxford University Press, written by Professor Brendan O'Leary, who moved from London to the United States a generation ago.

Here is the new Oxford account of the affair.

After the August 1969 events in the North:

"A government sub committee with Haughey in the lead... was put in charge of contingency planning for aid for the North, both relief aid and arms provision were envisaged... Captain James Kelly was in charge of the project to import arms. The purpose was to supply Northern citizens' defence committees, some of whose members became members of the Provisional IRA—to help them defend themselves in doomsday scenarios, if the government thought it appropriate. Kelly reported to the Director of Army Military Intelligence, Michael Hefferon, who reported to the Minister of Defence, Jim Gibbons. Haughey gave general clearance at customs. The plan became known to the senior civil servant at Justice, Peter Berry, a longstanding hardline opponent of the IRA. He sought to block the

imports, on Clifford's account thereby improperly overruling his own minister... Berry claimed that the arms were for the IRA, and went, irregularly, to the aged President de Valera, and then to Lynch. Berry, and perhaps others linked to British intelligence, briefed the opposition leader, Liam Cosgrave..., who went to see Lynch. Lynch responded by firing Blaney and Haughey. Subsequently, criminal conspiracy charges were launched against Haughey, Captain Kelly, John Kelly (widely agreed to be a key figure in the formation of the Provisional IRA), and a Belgian businessman, Albert Luykx... Their defense had been that the operation was authorized and conducted covertly to avoid British knowledge. The jury plainly believed them...

"Lynch's government, in conjunction with the principal parliamentary opposition, refused to accept the verdict of the court, though it could not alter the defendants' status as free men. Allegations were made that the jury had been tampered with—subsequently denied by the foreman of the jury, interviewed thirty years later. The suggestion was made that the jury was emotionally sympathetic to the defendants—in short, biased. But reading the record of the court proceedings—carefully recovered and reprinted by Clifford—will persuade reasonable persons that the jurors were right to acquit the defendants... On Clifford's account, Berry was the moving force in insisting upon a trial, and rigged matters to try to secure a successful prosecution. She makes a good case, but not all will be persuaded.

"It had in fact been Irish government policy at least until April 1970 that Catholics in the North should have some means of self-defense...

"... This summary should make it clear that it is hard to be persuaded by heroic characterizations of Lynch, or by the orthodox demonization of Haughey as the man who armed the IRA. Though he was later found demonstrably corrupt, and possibly corrupt throughout his public life, Haughey's corruption has no bearing on which he acted in 1969-70 outside government policy. He had helped to shape policy with Lynch's delegated authority and knowledge... The reader of Clifford's documentation will conclude that, after the exposure of his government's policy by Peter Berry's manoeuvres, Lynch found himself between a rock and a hard place. One part of the state had been kept from the knowledge of what another part had authorized. The choice was to admit government policy, for which Lynch had had little enthusiasm, and face up to the domestic and international embarrassment, or to fire two of his party rivals for allegedly unauthorized conduct, and, as its corollary, to send another minister to lie in court against yet another. The jury's verdict has greater integrity than do many of the fulsome portraits of "honest Jack" who saved his

state. Clifford rightly identifies a key puzzle. If Haughey was so dangerous, so out of control, why did Lynch subsequently restore him to cabinet? And why did other Fianna Fail stalwarts work with him?" (*A Treatise On Northern Ireland*, Oxford University Press 2019, Vol. 2, pp 194/5; the remarks about Haughey's 'corruption' and John Kelly and the Provos are O'Leary's own and owe nothing to the book he cites.)

Half a century of duplicitous Irish academic historicising is here devalued at a stroke delivered by its source in "*the mainland*". (It is entirely appropriate to apply that Northern term in the South with regard to academic relationships.) British academic authority has decided, possibly for reasons connected with Brexit, that it is time to moderate the falsifications and blurt out some of the truth about the most consequential event in Irish history since the ending of the Treatyite regime in 1932-3 and the British evacuation of the Ports in 1938.

Captain Kelly has been vindicated—having had the satisfaction of doing a considerable amount of vindicating on his own behalf.

Haughey constructed a traditional Fianna Fail base for himself within the Party, disposed of Lynch, and brought the Irish economy into the modern capitalist world while being howled down by the Lynchite mob and the *Irish Times*.

But it was the prosecution of John Kelly that had the greatest consequences.

O'Leary's statement that John Kelly was "*a key figure in the formation of the Provisional IRA*" may be true, but it is so in the sense that he was the liaison between the Defence Committees and the Lynch Government. The Provisional IRA did not exist in August 1969 or for many months after. It came about from many different sources in the course of about nine months.

What existed from August onwards was the Defence Committees. But Defence and Offence were not sharply distinguishable qualities in the disrupted situation resulting from the August events. The Defence Committees were not State bodies. They existed independently of the State, and what they were was an improvised defence against the local communal forces of the State under the Northern Ireland system.

They looked to the Southern State as their State. It asserted *de jure* sovereignty over them, and Lynch had told them in August that he would *not stand idly by*. Their defensive capacity was sustainable only with backing from outside—with support and direction from what they saw

as their sovereign State. They had no grounds for regarding the thoroughly abnormal local Six County variant of the British State as their sovereign authority. They maintained a close relationship with Dublin. But Lynch—unable to work through the implications of the relationship which he had established with the detached Northern segment of the nation, and unwilling to see what Northern Ireland was—cut that relationship in a sudden panic by laying criminal charges against John Kelly. The Provisional IRA then materialised rapidly and went to war.

If Lynch had persisted with his August policy, the sharp division of Northern Nationalist politics into 'Constitutional' and 'Physical Force' could have been averted. It was his destructive collapsing of his own August policy that brought physical force into play offensively. The 'men of violence' were, on the whole, created by the subverting of the Defence Committees by the Arms Trials. Drastic shifts of public opinion occur rapidly in response to events in revolutionary situations, and what existed in the North after August was a revolutionary situation.

Radical opinion was far from being Anti-Partitionist at the start. It was directed towards something which it could not quite define. A responsible Dublin policy would have been support of Defence Committees, and guiding them towards a reform which met the particulars of the conditions in which the Catholic community existed in the unique Northern Ireland situation.

A realisable constitutional demand backed by force was what the situation required. And a constitutional reform movement backed by force was what actually existed from August until April. The force was defensive, but it was force nevertheless. The Catholic community had withdrawn itself from the state in the form in which the state presented itself in its Northern Ireland form.

Lynch disrupted that ambiguous structure. The outcome was that War was launched for the impossible object of ending partition. The determination of the Catholic community that it would not return to the *status quo ante* was such that it sustained that War rather than surrender, which was what Lynch and the Coalition which succeeded him required of it—at the same time as they upheld the *de jure* sovereignty article in the Constitution. It remained for Adams to do what might have been done under a different Dublin leadership in 1970.

As to Haughey's corruption: In the immortal words of Fintan O'Toole: "*there is no doubt that he was on the take; the only question is whether he gave anything in return*"!

If rich men gave him money as a politician, they must have been buying something from him. And, since it cannot be discovered what they got from him, it must have been corrupt. That's the evidence of his corruption.

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The *Sunday Independent* of May 5th carried a report by Mary O'Rourke (of the Lenihan political connection) of a talk given to the Old Athlone Society by retired RTE and *Irish Times* journalist, Michael Heney, under the title, *Unlocking The Myths Of The 1970 Arms Crisis*. Heney has written a book on the subject which is to be published next year, on the half-centenary of the Trials. Judging by the talk, the book will be very much on the lines laid down by Angela Clifford. It will be interesting to see what the response to it by Micheál Martin's Fianna Fail Party will be.

It now appears certain that Angela Clifford's comprehensively investigated and extensively referenced account of the Trials will, whether acknowledged or not, become the standard account—but a generation too late for it to influence the course of events.

Heney described his book as "*revisionist*", which in a pedantic sense it is. What he takes issue with is the Establishment view; the view backed by authority, both academic and political; the view that has been expressed in almost all publications on the subject. He revises/corrects that view. But *revisionism* took on a different meaning in Irish affairs over the past half-century.

The most famous revisionist—the one whose books were rammed down the throats of schoolchildren, was Professor Roy Foster of Oxford and various other English Universities. He was recently recognised as the outstanding Irish historian by former Taoiseach Enda Kenny. But Foster's purpose was not to correct the established historical narrative but to abolish historical narrative with relation to Ireland, unless it be British historical narrative. His *Modern Ireland* is a mish-mash of disparagement, much of it absurd in its detail. His purpose was not to correct the historical narrative but to subvert it. He holds that, with regard to Ireland at least, narrative history is false because it is narrative.

At the West Cork History Festival two years ago he made some remarks about

Charles Haughey as a *gun-runner for the Provos*. When Pat Maloney drew the attention of the meeting to the fact that Haughey was tried by a jury on that charge and found to be Not Guilty, the correction was not appreciated. At the end of the session, the Chairman, Simon Kingston (who was described by Foster as a very influential person in the administration of Oxford and Cambridge) suggested to Moloney and his colleagues that it might be best if they left the meeting. *That* is revisionism. It is not a method of grounding narrative in fact, but something very different.

If fact-based history is restored, the conclusion can hardly be avoided that Lynch adopted in August 1969 a Northern policy of co-operation with defence groups in the Northern nationalist community which had sprung up in response to the pogroms, maintained this policy until the early Summer of 1970, and then aborted it under British pressure, doing so by prosecuting for criminal conspiracy a number of the people chiefly responsible for implementing the policy.

The Government did not present evidence that supported the charges, and yet it rejected the Not Guilty verdict as perverse. The jury was expected to convict on the mere word of the Government that the accused were guilty.

Why did the Government launch a highly disruptive prosecution which it must have known it was unable to support with evidence?

This was in substance a treason trial. But the alleged treason was at the heart of the State. Assuming it to have been the case, it was treason of the most serious kind. There was no treasonable act in breach of a law, but a difference of opinion within the heart of the State about the conduct of the state. And that is not the kind of thing about which evidence could be presented in a public court of law. The case on the one side was at least as good as the case on the other side.

The Government was prohibited by the Constitution from recognising British government in the Six Counties as legitimate. And, in addition, the mode in which the British State chose to govern its Six Counties, excluded the Six Counties from the democracy of the state. Six County government was franchised out to the Protestant community in matters of policing and local Government, while in all other matters it was taxed and legislated for by the Westminster Parliament. The outcome of this arrangement was a pogrom

against the Catholic community by local instruments of the British State.

What should the Dublin Government, which asserted *de jure* sovereignty over the Six Counties, do in such circumstances?

What Lynch did from August until April was what one would have expected an Irish Government to do in these circumstances. When, nine months later, he decided that he must revoke his Northern policy, one can see that he would have difficulty making a case for it against colleagues who wanted to continue the policy that had been in place since August.

It does not seem that he argued a case for discontinuing that policy and adopting another policy. He collapsed the situation by laying criminal charges against those who were implementing his own policy, denying that it was his policy. The prosecution failed, but the political disruption it caused ended the August to May collaboration with the Defence Groups.

I was never quite sure what the second C in CCDC stood for. Was it *Central Citizens* or *Central Catholic Defence Committee*? It was probably *Citizens*, but the effective sense of it was *Catholic*.

Northern Ireland in 1921 was founded on a sharp antagonism of the Protestant and Catholic communities and its functioning systematised their comprehensive separation from each other. The Protestants, organised as the Unionist Party with the Orange Order at its core, dominated rather than governed the region outside the democracy of the state, while state legislation made life tolerable for the Catholic community below the political sphere.

I proposed, immediately after the August pogrom, that Dublin should undertake a major revision of its Northern policy by recognising that the Protestant community was a distinct national development of the 17th century Plantations and migrations, with a history of its own, that it was not in any practical sense a part of the Irish nation, and that telling it that it was only made it more determined not to be.

Lynch, at the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis a couple of months later, roundly condemned this 'two nations theory'—a theory which was only an acknowledgement of an obvious fact which everyone took account of in practice. He declared that Ireland was a nation, divided against its will, and that there could be no peace until Partition was ended.

Admitting the fact of two nations would not have been in any way inconsistent with collaboration with the Catholic

Defence Committees—far from it. The problematical thing—the thing that gave revisionism its head but that revisionism never dealt with—was the denial of the Northern social reality of two nations.

It was up to those who asserted there was a single Irish nationality to find ways of appealing to the part of it which organised itself as Unionist and bringing it home. Neither Fianna Fail nor anybody else ever even attempted to do that.

Acknowledgement of the fact of a distinct national development in the North, combined with attention given to that development and the forming of policies on that basis, would probably have led to a process of gradual *rapprochement*. Denial of the fact of national division has led to half a century of intensified communal attrition in which Unionism has been worn away to some extent but has not been softened.

Michael Heney was asked by a member of the audience in Athlone if he thought the Arms Trials had the effect of creating a vacuum in the North which was then filled by the Provisionals. He seemed reluctant to go into this aspect of the matter, but he seemed to suggest that the Defence Committees were not entirely defensive.

I used to wonder sometimes how somebody who was not living in that situation of the Autumn/Winter/Spring of 1969-70, and also the situation of March-May 1974, with a degree of objectivity in mind, could ever get to know from Archives what went on in them.

Defence and Offence are not always clear contraries. Defence maintained against the State is a kind of offensive. (It is treated as insurrectionary by General Frank Kitson.) A No-Go Area is a kind of area liberated from the State. Dublin might have maintained that kind of Catholic defensive position by collaborating with the Defence Committees along with asserting a reform policy towards the British Government based in the social realities of the situation. But it was in denial of the social facts of life in the North.

And, by prosecuting John Kelly, it abandoned the vigorous element of the Catholic community, cutting it loose, ending the ambiguous Defensive posture and laying out the ground for the War that began a few months later.

It might have done something on the lines of what the Adams group set about a dozen years later, supported by Haughey—the only Dublin politician who had a realistic understanding of what Northern Ireland was, and by John Hume—a Social Democrat who actually learned from experience.

**Brendan Clifford**

## War of Independence

### —Crossbarry Commemoration.

On Sunday, 24th March 2019, the ninety-eighth anniversary of the Battle of Crossbarry was commemorated at the monument at Crossbarry. Chairman of the Kilmichael – Crossbarry Committee is Donnchadha O’Seaghdha, Hon. Secretary is Carmel O’Mahony. Upwards of one thousand people attended, led in singing The National Anthem—*Abhrón na bhFian* by the Bandon Pipe and Drum Band. The Chaplain, Monsignor Caoimhín O’Ceallacháin, led the prayers.

This year’s oration was given by Mr. Tom Cooper of Dublin.

After the event at Crossbarry, many of those present attended a dinner at The Munster Arms Hotel in Bandon, at which the Cathaíreach and Mr. Tom Cooper spoke again and after the dinner there followed an evening of music and singing which was most enjoyable.

**Séamus Lantry**

Chairman, *General Tom Barry National Commemoration Committee*

## THE 98th CROSSBARRY/KILMICHAEL WAR OF INDEPENDENCE ADDRESS

I would like to thank the Crossbarry—Kilmichael commemorative committee for inviting me here today to deliver the annual speech. I have no doubt that my name would be one of the least known of those who preceded me in delivering the Address but without question no one has felt more honour and pride at being selected.

We proudly gather here today to honour the memory of the four Irish volunteers who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. Charlie Hurley, a civil service clerk and brigade O/C, was convalescing after being wounded in a raid on a train in Upton. He was shot dead while escaping a British Army raid on brigade headquarters at Denny Forde’s farm in Ballymurphy. Twenty Two year old Con Daly from BallinacCarthy, Jerh O Leary of Leap, and a Scottish army deserter known as Peter Monaghan were all killed by crown forces during the Crossbarry Ambush on 19th March 1921. These men were not sectarian or murderers: they were patriots and heroes and remain so to this day.

We should also pay homage to the mothers, wives, sons, daughters, friends and neighbours and a significant proportion of the general population, who were prepared to endure the inevitable harsh reprisals the independence struggle brought in its wake to those caught assisting the rebels. Despite insuperable difficulties and almost impossible odds, the tradition of insurrection and the spirit of revolutionary resistance were too deeply etched in the history of the country and its people to be ignored. For our part we must ensure that we do not permit inventive historians to dictate the political present, as we are all aware that whoever controls the

present narrative controls the past narrative.

Opponents of the War of Independence suggest that freedom could have been achieved by the introduction of Home Rule. I disagree. John Redmond was a zealous admirer of the British House of Commons, and sought only limited Irish self-government, considering it undesirable that Britain and Ireland should be separated as he had no wish to see the dismemberment of the British Empire. Despite claims that Redmond was opposed to physical force, he nonetheless enthusiastically encouraged young Irishmen to enlist in the British army in 1914 in return for this promise of Home Rule. These young men were told by Redmond that they were fighting a just war, undertaken in defence of small nations and oppressed peoples. Redmond was referring to Belgium which was in fact a ruthless colonial power that practised slavery and genocide in Africa.

The Irish Party leader apparently found no contradiction between his support for Irishmen being part of the mass-murder of millions of people in the Great War and his trenchant opposition to Irishmen using force to rid this country of an Imperial power. John Redmond’s version of Home Rule was no more than being allowed to participate in your own colonisation. It was an exercise in replacing the Act of Union with an acceptable version which gave the Irish people the delusion of self-government.

In the 1918 General Election, one of the key defining moments in modern Irish history, Sinn Fein was given an overwhelming mandate to establish an independent all-Ireland state. This wholly constitutional

and parliamentary decision of the Irish people was rejected by the British Government, a rejection which led to loss of life and bitterness of war. In contrast, the previously dominant Irish Parliamentary Party, which was still campaigning for the elusive Home Rule, were swept from power, and even its leader, John Dillon, failed to be re-elected.

The refusal of the British Government to recognise the legitimacy of the 1918 General Election, the First Dáil in January 1919 and the subsequent insistence of the British to continue to impose its rule in Ireland against the democratic wishes of a majority of the people, led to the War of Independence.

The Irish people had endured for centuries the brutality of colonisation. The War of Independence, which was yet another strike for freedom, restored a sense of national pride in a people, many of whom were confused as to their identity. The colonial violence inflicted on the dispossessed peasantry included the punitive policy of transportation to the penal colonies for minor infringements of law. It also forcibly imposed the Plantation of Ireland, the Penal Laws, harsh evictions, harsher landlordism, and chronic hunger. The violence of the *Great Hunger*, which saw Ireland lose about two million of her poorest children to starvation, disease and emigration while exporting huge surpluses of food from her ports, was in itself sufficient reason to forcibly rid this country of British rule.

Revisionists persistently attempt to denigrate the memory of our heroes at Crossbarry and Kilmichael in order to distract attention away from the cause for which they died. Some 3,000 poorly armed and trained Irish volunteers took on the might of the world's only Superpower, which had 50,000 troops and 15,000 armed police at its disposal.

In total 404 IRA volunteers sacrificed their lives in the War of Independence.

Similar odds were faced by the 102 volunteers of the IRA's 3rd Cork Brigade at Crossbarry, who inflicted about 40 fatalities on the 120 auxiliaries and 1200 British troops of the Essex and Hampshire regiments led by Major Arthur Percival. Percival would later lead the British Army into its greatest defeat, when he surrendered Singapore to the Japanese in 1942.

The IRA's victories at Crossbarry and elsewhere inspired national liberation movements around the world for decades after. The guerrilla tactics used in Cross-

barry in 1921 would be used in France and Yugoslavia in the 1940s, Hungary and the Baltic states in the 1950s and Vietnam and Zimbabwe in the 1960s and 1970s.

In recent years the world has become familiar with the terms "*fake news*" and "*alternative facts*". Unfortunately, we Irish republicans have been acquainted with these terms for decades, as we have been subjected to the "*alternative reality*" of '*revisionist history*' where our freedom fighters are depicted as cold-blooded murderers and our War of Independence as a sordid sectarian squabble.

Charlatans, like the late Canadian historian Peter Hart, claim the burning of 76 Ascendancy 'Big Houses', the killing of 13 Protestants in Dunmanway in April 1922, along with the killing of another 24 Protestant informers in Cork during the War of Independence, amounted to a sectarian pogrom. This is simply not true. A sectarian pogrom did take place in this period, but it happened in Ulster—not Munster—and those guilty wore the uniform of the Crown, not the Republic. Between June and July 1922 in Belfast 257 Catholics were killed, 11,000 lost their jobs, 23,000 were forced from their homes and 500 Catholic-owned businesses were destroyed.

An example of this "*fake news*" and "*alternative facts*" phenomena was columnist Eoghan Harris'-scripted and -narrated Irish language film, *An Tost Fada* (The Long Silence), broadcast on RTÉ on 16th April 2012. *An Tost Fada* told a story of Rev'd George Salter's father, William, being forced to abandon his West Cork farm in 1922. But the story was historically misleading. The subject matter of the programme concerns matters of public controversy and debate, the specific killing of 13 Protestant civilians in Ballygroman, Dunmanway, in and around Ballineen Enniskeane and Clonakilty, between 26th-29th April 1922; and, generally, the treatment of the Protestant minority in Southern Ireland. The programme-makers broadcast incorrect information, seemingly so as to maintain the programme's pre-selected narrative drive.

The programme stated that the Salters family consisted of six sisters and two brothers. But every one of them left Ireland by April 1922. The narrator stated "*fear*" and "*threats*" forced the Salter family to emigrate, never to return. But on what basis were these statements made? No evidence was offered in support. The strong suggestion of the programme was

that the Salters were forced to leave Ireland because of their religion, by Roman Catholics in West Cork. This is a grave accusation to level at a community, and one wholly unsubstantiated by anything presented in the programme or elsewhere.

Mr Harris stated that Irish Protestants "*must feel free to talk about their past*". So they must. And we all must listen. A good start would be if alleged professional communicators, who purport to assist them, left their personal agendas at the door. They should also check evidence thoroughly. It is time-consuming but rewarding.

Some speakers at inaugural *West Cork History Festival* in 2017, collaborated to undermine the ethical and moral standing of the IRA generally. Mr. Harris showed his incompetent 2012 documentary, *An Tost Fada*. Festival-goers were informed of at least one serious error, admitted by RTE after I complained. The programme stated that two men, Matthew Connell and William Sweetman, two local Protestant farmers, were presented as shot during April 1922 (after the War of Independence, prior to the 'civil war'). That was false. Connell and Sweetman were shot during the War of Independence on 19th February 1921, over a year earlier. They had testified in court against named members of the IRA. Religion seemingly was not a factor in their deaths.

Despite being aware of the date discrepancy, Eoghan Harris included factually incorrect information. Why? There is further evidence that the filmmakers deliberately suppressed the dating error. A camera shot in the film showed the headstone of William Sweetman. Though the headstone contains the date of Sweetman's death, that information was omitted from the image broadcast. This seems to have been a deliberate changing of important historic detail for the sake of narrative.

The dates were separated by the July 1921 Truce, the Anglo-Irish Treaty split in January 1922, and the slow descent into 'Civil War' that began in June 1922.

Eoghan Harris is good at writing sectarian gibberish, including the relentless denigration of those who fought at Crossbarry, Kilmichael and many other revered locations for Irish Independence. I suggest that he abandons the fake history claims and broaden out the War of Independence discussion so that a more historical and less hysterical analysis is advanced.

I am disturbed that Eoghan Harris was given public money to promote partisan

politics, in defiance of rules regarding objectivity and fairness. I am also troubled that narrow-minded sectarian propaganda was broadcast uncritically by RTE, ironically in the name of tolerance and remembrance. I am concerned that RTE broadcast a programme alleging that Roman Catholics felt such hatred for their Protestant neighbours, purely on the basis of religious belief, that they harassed and persecuted them generally and then set out to kill and threaten them in a haphazard sectarian manner. I am concerned because the argument is highly contestable, but was not tested in a programme that appeared to deliberately broadcast misleading and wrong information in order to get its sectarian point across

Now, almost a century removed from the Flying Columns era, the necessity and morality of IRA actions during the War of Independence continues to be subject to intense scrutiny by revisionists.

It is notable that the actions of British forces during the same conflict are not subject to a similar level of inspection and debate.

The recent comments by Secretary of State for the North Karen Bradley, who said that killings during the recent Troubles perpetrated by British soldiers and police were '*not crimes*', confirms this claim. One could almost see Sammy Wilson nodding approval of Ms Bradley's words.

Ms Bradley's subsequent claim that she was '*factually wrong*' in her depiction of events during the Troubles, that it was '*a heat of the moment slip of the tongue*', do not add up. Due in no small measure to widespread unease in the nationalist community in NI at extra-judicial killings by security forces, the former Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, chaired the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland. Patten proposed replacing a police force which had its roots in both the principles of a private army and local militias with one that would have its roots in a new socially and politically homogeneous community, something we in the South have enjoyed almost since the founding of the State.

The Stevens Report on institutional collusion between the North's police force and loyalist death squads, and the Stalker/Sampson Report on allegations of a shoot-to-kill policy engaged in by the RUC, which the British Government decided in the 'national interest' not to make public, fuels further suspicion of dysfunctional army and police forces which operated

beyond democratic political control. Effectively, the British Government stood back and condoned a situation whereby the people of the North were policed by forces which would not be acceptable in England, Scotland, or Wales. The 175 changes recommended, and mostly implemented, in the Patten Report came not a moment too soon.

With almost boring predictability, revisionist historiographers, political chameleons, and unionist propagandists, stridently express their legendary anti-nationalist bile and narrow-minded sectarian visions of those who fought for Irish freedom, while remaining consistent to another singular viewpoint, that of unquestioning support for the political and social position of those who conspired to maintain unionist hegemony in colonial Ireland. They have for decades promoted a false sectarian narrative about the War of Independence, which is as far removed from the truth as it is possible to get without appearing to lie.

Their relentless incendiary assaults on the nature of republican participation in the War of Independence appear to be attempts to foment sectarian division this side of the border. Some revisionists reserves their bitter invective almost exclusively for those who fought to rid this country of British misrule including the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries who, during a drunken orgy of reprisals sacked and burned more than three hundred buildings in Cork City in one night. This group of uniformed thugs further sated their lust for pyromania by burning Balbriggan and Trim towns, and numerous other atrocities. Even the commander of this undisciplined group of terrorists, General Frank Crozier, resigned in protest at the deployment of these men.

Narrow versions of Irish identity are contrasted by the broadminded response from southern Protestants in Irish civil society during 1920-22 who said that Republicans were non-sectarian in the War of Independence. Indeed, one of the reasons we had an Independence struggle in the first place was in reaction to the sectarian nature of British rule. During and after the War of Independence, southern Protestant opinion was divided. Most were revolted by Crown Force methods. A minority actively supported British reprisals and torture. The IRA targeted these latter when republican lives and liberty were put in jeopardy. The same happened with Roman Catholic informers and spies. There is no solid

evidence of religion-based targeting. Republicans acted generally in the non-sectarian traditions of the movement founded by Wolfe Tone. That is why some Protestants joined it. Others said they feared Crown Forces more than 'Sinn Feiners'.

The killings of Protestants during the period 1918-1922, were not sectarian in nature, they were political. The theory put forward that there was a conspiracy to drive out Protestants is Paisleyite myth-mongering. Who said so? Protestants did. Leading Methodist Crown Prosecutor and West Cork independent TD Jasper Wolfe (coordinator of loyalist compensation claims) discounted that the April 1922 killings of 10 Protestant civilians in the Bandon Valley area were sectarian. After these killings, a Protestant Convention, fully representative of southern Protestantism, met in the Mansion House in Dublin. On 11th May 1922 they resolved, '*that until the recent tragedies in the County Cork, hostility to Protestants by reason of their religion, has been almost if not wholly, unknown in the twenty six counties in which Protestants are in a minority.*' In other words, Protestants regarded these killings as exceptional. Trading on and promoting society's capacity for self-doubt and introspection, revisionists generate a propaganda diet reminiscent of that promoted by Carson and Craig. These drove thousands of Catholics out of jobs and houses in 1920-22. Brave Protestant socialists who opposed this unionist sectarian drive to divide the working class in Northern Ireland were also driven out.

Present day Protestants who oppose the sectarian view of the War of Independence are also subject to *ad hominem* attack. Dr. Martin Mansergh, who served under three Fianna Fáil leaders as Director of Research, Policy and Special Adviser on Northern Ireland, was a target of Eoghan Harris on this very issue. Writing on October 9th in 2005 on the killing of the Protestant Pearson brothers in Coolacree, Mr. Harris had the effrontery to term then Senator Mansergh a '*posh southern Protestant*' who '*provides a rotten role model for any young Protestant Irishman*'. Harris was equally offensive the following week: '*Dr Martin Mansergh ... has a posh accent. I could almost hear his dulcet tones in his Irish Times column last week*'.

The Pearson brothers had deliberately and consciously engaged in an act of war on the British side, so their execution was a legitimate act of war. The sole motive in these IRA executions was political, with-

out regard to creed or class. Many Catholic collaborators were also subject to the same treatment. Indeed, just prior to the execution of the Pearsons, the South Offaly Brigade IRA killed one spy, two informers and three RIC men—all Catholics. Between 21st September 1920 and 29th June 1921 six RIC men were shot dead in Co Offaly alone, all Catholics. It must be remembered that members of the RIC were the muscle of a system that for many republicans ended on the gallows or the convict ship. It appears that the compilation of the chronicle of events surrounding the Coolacree incident disseminated by British verisimilitude is now being peddled by Irish history revisionists, whereby the acceptable version of 'facts' are those favourable to British/unionist propagandists.

Although the War of Independence was won, the battle against revisionism continues.

It is regrettable that revisionists are given almost unchallenged column inches to promote partisan politics in defiance of objectivity and fairness. It is also unfortunate that narrow-minded sectarian propaganda is published uncritically, ironically in the name of balance and fairness. It is also unworthy of some present day publications to relentlessly permit allegations that Roman Catholics felt such hatred for their Protestant neighbours, purely on the basis of religious belief, that they harassed, persecuted and even murdered them generally in a sectarian manner.

These allegations by those who believe that we are the primary architects of our own problems by daring to assert our version of our own history—that the primary motivation behind the killings of Protestants during the War of Independence was sectarian—are themselves sectarian. Such a mindset is a sober reminder of just how many generations it can take to breed out the colonising gene.

Some historians take the decline in the Protestant population in the area of Independent Ireland after the War of Independence as proof of widespread intimidation and discrimination. Such claims continue to provoke analysis and comment. In studies of Protestant depopulation in Ireland. But conclusions have been reached that the causes of this decline were primarily social and economic. The de-industrialisation of Ireland led to economic decline, leading in turn to a fall in immigration of Protestant persons from Great Britain, along with accelerating out-migration of Irish Protestants. This

exodus of tens of thousands of Protestants from the nascent Irish Free State, heralding the decline in the Protestant population, was not as a result of sectarianism, intimidation or land-grabbing. Such stated views clearly promote a sectarian narrative about republican actions during the War of Independence and are not supported by evidence. In a small number of cases Irish Protestants were victims of a process of expulsion, coercion, and even murder—acts which would have been abhorred by those who planned the Easter Rising and War of Independence—however, there are other reasons for this population decline.

A significant contributor to this decline can be identified with the First World War and aggressively-encouraged Protestant relocation north. The horrific slaughter of young Irish Protestant men in the 1914-1918 war had a devastating and disproportionate impact on the male Protestant population of the south. This was reflected in the birth rate for decades following the war. In addition, the Northern Ireland regime led by Sir James Craig enticed large numbers of Protestants, through the offer of government jobs and housing, to relocate north of the Border in an attempt to offset Catholic majorities in Border Counties.

Some in Government service chose to leave with their families, rather than enter the civil/public service of the Free State. In addition, there was a large British military establishment in Ireland which was stood down in 1922. This group was disproportionately Protestant. Others left because they no longer enjoyed the social and official privilege being Protestant once brought. Furthermore, the strong religious, cultural and political ties which southern Protestants had in common with the northern majority resulted in a sizeable shift of Protestants north across the Border.

It is worth noting that two Protestants who decided to stay south subsequently became Presidents of Ireland.

Another very significant factor was the social force of marriage, especially the marriage pattern of Irish Protestant women marrying British military grooms on an Irish tour of duty. Research has found that fully one-third of Protestant brides married British military grooms. The loss of young marriageable females to British soldiers was much more significant than the *Ne Temere decree* in depleting Protestant society in Ireland. This research also confirmed that social class was more important than religion in explaining

depopulation.

In this generation we have seen Irish people become European and Europeans become Irish.

The sacrifices of the men of Crossbarry are all the more relevant today with the arrogant and reckless actions of British Brexiteers and Loyalist extremists who have in effect undermined the very foundations of the peace process and expelled hundreds of thousands of Irish Citizens from the European Union against their clearly expressed democratic wishes with a cavalier disregard for their economic and social interests. The hubristic actions of Brexiteers like Jacob Rees Mogg and Boris Johnson have ironically done more to internationalise the issue of the partition of Ireland than Eamon De Valera, Sean Mc Bride and Patrick Hillery did.

The partition of Ireland is now no longer solely an Irish or a British problem. It is a European problem and may have a European solution if some pragmatic unionists view their future interests would be better served within Europe.

If we truly want to honour the memory of those who died here nearly a hundred years ago, along with those like Jim Crowley and Dan Corcoran who were wounded and others like Tom Barry, Liam Deasy, Tom Kelleher and the "piper of Crossbarry" Flor Begley, who fought here, then we all must continue relentlessly to achieve the objective of an independent and united Ireland for which they sacrificed so much. They did the heavy lifting in ploughing a dangerous furrow to secure Irish Independence. Although many of these brave men did not live to reap the harvest they had sown, we in this generation are the fortunate beneficiaries of their heroic endeavours.

It is our duty to defend their sacrifice, confront their detractors and prevent their names being dishonoured and besmirched. These brave men did not sacrifice their lives for riches. They did not sacrifice their lives for glory. They did not sacrifice their lives for power. They sacrificed THEIR lives for OUR future. A future still, as yet, unrealised. A future when Ireland is at peace, united and free and we should protect their memory from those who resented the emergence of the Independent Irish nation they were pivotal in establishing. Their legacy is that the country they fought to free is now one of the most stable democracies in the world. We salute you.

**Tom Cooper**

## Casement: *The Gauntlet Is Thrown!*

The so-called '*Black Diaries*' of Roger Casement have been a veritable industry for decades with the case for authenticity being accepted overwhelmingly by academia and the commentariat. This book is the first in over 60 years to make a '*full blooded*' case for their forgery. It does so in an uncompromising and thoroughgoing manner by giving a detailed narrative account of how and why they were created. It throws down a direct challenge to those who defend the authenticity of the diaries and it will be very interesting indeed to see how effectively they respond. If they fail to do so it will speak volumes.

The issues surrounding the diaries are so vast and complex that it is easy not to see the wood(s) for the trees. Hyde's book deals with both very well. His main thesis is that there is no evidence that the volumes now in the National Archives at Kew (London) existed while Casement was alive. If they had, they would no doubt have been shown to those that needed evidence of his alleged behaviour. That would have settled the issue there and then and there would have been no subsequent controversy.

It is also useful to note that there is no witness to any of the homosexual activity described in the diaries. This is so, despite the fact that Casement knew hundreds of people that undoubtedly included active homosexuals. There is no account by anybody of homosexual relations with him, even by men who shared a tent and possibly a bed with him, such as Joseph Conrad in the Congo. And Casement was closely watched by the Police and Intelligence services of a number of states and private agencies. There is therefore a whole kennel of dogs that never barked in this case.

Furthermore, there is no homosexual activity recorded or hinted at in any diary or record by Casement that had not passed through hands of the British Foreign Office and Intelligence services.

There is understandable scepticism that such a large forgery was feasible or necessary to do the '*dirty deed*'—that is, to execute an internationally renowned humanitarian figure. But Hyde reminds us of the 62 volumes of the Hitler Diary forgery created by Konrad Kujau in only two years, which for sheer size puts the '*Black Diaries*' in the shade—despite the resources of the greatest Empire in the world being available to create the latter.

Kujau explained that it took him about two weeks to create some volumes, and he fooled world famous handwriting experts as well as newspapers, magazines and famous historians such as Hugh Trevor Roper—an Oxbridge authority on Hitler! The sheer size, and the banality of most of it, was something that made it so convincing to these people.

As regards the necessity, apart from the fact that quantity really does impress, an important factor to bear in mind is that the British ruling class learned from experience in this, as in other areas, and a very relevant experience was the attempt to ruin another Irish leader by forgery, i.e. Parnell, at the *Parnell Commission* hearings that masqueraded as a trial at the Royal Courts of Justice.

This was the greatest spectacle in London in its day. It was better than any theatrical event in the West End and Oscar Wilde attended to enjoy the show. He could hardly have written a better script! It had a cast of hundreds, from all corners of Ireland, in their '*peasant*' glory—witnesses who were wine and dined and paid to attend to give evidence against Parnell and the Land League.

They were '*the talk of the town*', a living exhibition of primitive beings that rivalled a visit to the zoo. Everybody who was anybody had to be there to see and hear them perform. They were the scum of the Irish countryside whom the Government and the *Times*, acting together, used in order to throw everything they had at the Party. And failed.

The point is that this 'trial' was almost a contemporary event to the generation then in power in 1916. Asquith himself was part of the legal team at the Parnell Commission. The chief editorial writer for the *Times* during the Great War, James Woulfe Flanagan, cut his teeth as a journalist for the paper at the hearings and published a 35 volume (at least) verbatim account of the evidence, '*Parnellism and Crime*'—which is, by the way, an untouched goldmine for local historians. It is also a monument to the genius of Michael Davitt who organised the massive task of refuting the Government and the *Times*' case against Parnell and the Irish Party.

One lesson that would have been learned from that episode—from which the *Times*' reputation and finances never fully recovered—was that a letter or two does not provide a

sufficient basis to risk such a daring enterprise. And that great care is needed, as the misspelling of a word can help ruin the case as happened with Piggott. So great effort and care is needed to make a convincing forgery. (A letter he claimed had been written by Parnell contained a mis-spelt word and, when he was asked to write it out in Court, he spelt it in the same way.)

Moreover, the same people who were involved in the '*Black diaries*' went on to forge a run of the *Irish Bulletin*, a run of *Pravda* and the *Zinoviev letter*. Forgery was second nature to them and it all involved great effort and imagination. But these efforts were not wholly successful as the forgeries had to be made available to serve their immediate purposes and could therefore be scrutinised by all interested parties 'on the spot', so to speak. That exposed their weaknesses and undermined their credibility.

But crucially, this was not the case with the *Black Diaries* which were shown to some carefully selected influential people. But what was shown was typescripts, taken on trust by them to be the work of a self-confessed traitor on the Government's assurances. This happened at a critical period in the middle of a great war, and this stratagem proved sufficient to serve the pressing purpose of the authorities—to silence appeals against the execution of a renowned humanitarian. After all, "*sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*".

People had to wait forty years to get an admission from Government that the handiwork—the Diaries—even existed in the hands of the authorities.

In *Anatomy Of A Lie* Paul Hyde deals in detail with all the contradictory accounts of the provenance of the diaries, the motives behind their creation, and also sets out the methodology of how a variety of authors have sought to authenticate the diaries. The response of those in a position to attempt a rebuttal would be interesting.

Hyde poses 22 reasonable questions (pp 17-19) that would need satisfactory answers, to allay suspicions that the diaries are forgeries and he establishes that no satisfactory answers have been provided to these questions. It is a must read for anyone interested in the subject or indeed on how a controversial historical issue should be approached.

**Jack Lane**

PS. The matriarch of a neighbouring family of mine in Aubane was a witness at the Parnell Commission and had the distinction of being cross-examined by the future Prime Minister. However she was denied the honour of taking pride in this distinction as she was on the anti-Parnell side and—like the *Times*—never wanted to hear about it again, if at all possible.

## US Troops In Carryduff

We couldn't believe it when the first US Army vehicles began passing our house in Carryduff (Co. Down). Jeeps, beeps, and trucks carrying US troops. This on the Ballynahinch Road, which is a narrow two-way road, It was Summer 1942.

The children of the area were the main cheerleaders. The troops threw out US chewing gun and what they called candy. There seemed to a superabundance of it during this wartime rationing period.

The vehicles moved slowly, sometime at walking pace on the crowded road. You went to bed at night and the endless convoy still passed with cowled lights. This continued the following day and the following night.

During this movement of US army vehicles word came through that a bus driver had been shot dead when he refused to pull into a side road to let the convoy through. The details were of a US army officer who had drawn alongside the double-deck bus in a jeep and had pumped five shots from a revolver into him, as witnessed by a farmer.

Carryduff was highly militarised already. There was a British army camp and two smaller army emplacements. One had acres of what looked like wire mesh. It was obviously some crude form of radar. Carryduff was part of the flight-path of German bombers hitting Belfast. There was also a British army searchlight unit.

On top of this was the large RUC police barracks, which was also accommodated the local B'Special units.

Locals also carried shotguns and .22 rifles supposedly under wartime conditions. Then there was the Home Guard also with rifles. All were on manoeuvres continually. B'Specials had a habit of banging on our door to say they could see a chink of light coming from behind the black-out curtains, as if we were signalling to German bombers and German reconnaissance fighters that regularly streaked over the area.

Our local school became militarised with continual marching of the pupils, anti-aircraft drill and gas-mask exercises. Large posters on the walls helped you identify German booby traps in the form of toys and household articles. Other posters showed what incendiary bombs looked like, what British fight-back weapons looked like.

At lunch time pupils played war games. The school would divide into English and German, boys and girls, dividing into English and Germans as if WW2 had nothing to do with Northern Ireland. About ten Catholics at this Protestant school, out of 82, couldn't be English and had to be German.

War had become exciting. After school some of us would sneak on the British Army firing ranges and pick up lost ammunition for trading for comics, or for use in throwing into a fire we had lit, and then running like hell before they exploded. We left the hand grenades alone.

Two boys at another school had been killed when they pulled the pin on one they had found on the firing range. We hoped the war would go on until we had grown up enough to take part in it.

The British Army vacated its main camp to make way for the US Army—the 608th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company. The Brits had been there sufficiently long enough to have a cricket pitch, lawns, flower beds and no sentries, until 1939 at least. You could wander through the camp without being challenged.

US Army trucks made changes by churning up the cricket pitch, the lawns and the flower beds to make parking for their innumerable vehicles. Sentries were everywhere. They weren't the type to give gum and candy to children.

This camp housed gravediggers, the reclamation of bodies crews and their registration plus padres of all religions.

The few Catholics in Carryduff had no religious facilities. Most didn't have the money for bus fares to go to a church in Belfast or to send their children to Catholic schools. That's why we were attending a Protestant school.

Protestant school were originally meant, after 1921, to be a kind of state school to which both religions could attend, like a form of social-engineering, but the Catholic Church decided on separate education.

As far as I know a Catholic Priest, Father Kelly, asked the US military authorities if the Carryduff Catholics could attend their chapel, which was based in a Nissen hut, It seemed to have been used by all religions as the Catholic altar was a

mobile affair that was carried in.

The priest, Father Kelly, had to robe in front of us. His altar boys were two uniformed soldiers. The confessional was a chair with priest and confessor on either side of it, with the priest looking through the back of the chair.

You had an idea how religious duties might be carried out on the battlefield.

During one Mass an elderly local Catholic died. An army doctor examined him and pronounced him dead. When a relative began to wail he shouted: *"It's no use going on like that he's stone dead!"* The priest (Father Kelly) give him the last rites. The soldier altar boys left and come back with a khaki body bag and put the dead man in it. We had never seen a body bag before so we thought it was merely a sack and that the dead man wasn't being given due respect. An officer then reminded us that we were on US military territory. The Mass then continued.

I was now 12 years old and at a late age for First Communion, as were two of my sisters. Novice nuns were then dispatched to the camp from Belfast to teach the children their catechism. Then came First Communion. It was difficult that Sunday walking through the area dressed in our best. The girls stood out more than the boys with their special communion dresses. We had a few sectarian insults from the youth of the area. *'Mickey'* was the insulting word for Catholics then, followed by *Fenian*.

One Sunday we noticed a crowd gathering. We recognised some of the worse bigots in the crowd, ones that had stoned our house on a few occasions, and had poisoned our well water at a cottage we had lived in.

We were used to these gatherings by now. The local B'Specials had decided to drill in front of our house with their .303 rifles on some occasions. But this Sunday we weren't aware what the mob might be up to. We went to Mass and after a while we heard shouting outside the military camp and the crackle of a carbine.

Mass or no Mass we had to get outside. Armed soldiers were running all over the place. We were told to get into the bunkers but we knew the local bigots as cowards so we went out of the camp and watched the mob running up the Saintfield Road.

As boys we picked up the empty shells from the US sentry as souvenirs.

A few months before the 6th of June, 1944 the convoys started again. The US Army was leaving. The troops were grim-faced and didn't respond to the children

waving at them: no chewing gum, no US candy. And certainly no Christmas parties ever again held in their camps for the local children.

In our area three children had been killed by a speeding US army truck mounting an embankment adjoining Cedar Valley.

Three local girls were pregnant by soldiers they would never see again. Two of them left the area in shame. The third one, the daughter of a wealthy quarry owner, stopped her studies at Queens University and worked in her father's office. She didn't look as if she was worried about the social stigma that abounded in the area.

She and her sister had passed through the school in Clontonacally I had attended. I remembered the two girls as being non-sectarian, the same as their parents. It was hard to understand this as a kid. Two farmers, the Shaws, and their families were the same, as were four Protestant pupils at the school. Weren't they all

Protestants? After withdrawal, the young men of Downpatrick no longer had to battle with the US soldiers in order to keep their girlfriends.

The black versus white US soldier gunfight for 24 hours in Downpatrick was never to be reported in the media. News of it had been conveyed by bus crews on the Belfast-Downpatrick run.

After the incident of a sentry firing over the heads of the demonstrating loyalists, things were quiet for the handful of Catholics in Carryduff. With the US troops out of the area things hotted up for us again. Five years after WW2 we left the area but only to take the tenancy of a new house with all modern conveniences in Carrickfergus. We weren't under the illusion that sectarianism was dead despite this new policy of Unionist attempts at social-engineering on these new estates being built.

**Wilson John Haire.**

28 May 2019

B. Then Bank A will lose funds. But on the other hand Bank B could lend money to Customer C who spends the money on goods supplied by customer D, who lodges the money with Bank A, replenishing the latter's funds.

So as long as a bank is in step with general bank lending the funds it loses from lending will be offset by the funds it gains from other bank's lending.

The credit creationists seem to believe—in Martin Dolphin's words—that there is:

"virtually no limit—other than the existence of profitable projects—to the amount of credit that can be created".

There are two criticisms of this. Firstly, in an open economy there will be leakage of funds abroad if the lending is used to buy imports.

Secondly, even in the credit creationists model, the credit still needs to be funded. In the example above Customer B has to have surplus funds in order to deposit his sales receipts in the bank. If he is already in debt there will be no increase in the overall credit. In this latter case the credit extended to customer A will reduce the credit to customer B (i.e. customer B will have paid back his debt).

As indicated in my previous article, for credit (and therefore debt) to exist there must be a class of people with surplus funds over and above their expenditure needs, allowing them to deposit funds with the banks. There must also be a class of people with investment and consumption needs that are greater than their own resources and whom the bank believes are capable of repaying the credit extended to them. The banks are the intermediaries between creditors and debtors.

The idea that credit can be created by the banks without it being funded is not simply wrong; but gives a distorted view of the economy. The creditors/depositors are rendered invisible. It might be asked whose interest does that serve!

Martin says in the credit creationist story the accounts always balance and then says:

"a loan of £x is given, the accounts show the loan as an asset and the corresponding liability is £x in the borrower's deposit account".

But Martin is mixing up the accounts of the bank with the accounts of the borrower. The bank records the transaction as an increase in its loan assets of £x and a reduction in its money assets, whether in the form of cash or its deposits in the

### Continuing the Debate

## Money Creation

In his most recent article (*Irish Political Review*, May 2019), Martin Dolphin amends the scenario he drew in his article in March and then suggests:

"...if banks create credit broadly in step, then there is virtually no limit—other than the existence of profitable projects—to the amount of credit that can be created" (*Irish Political Review*, May 2019).

But, even in his amended scenario, credit has not been created out of thin air. The 200 million lent by the banks to CA and CB is financed by the 200 million in deposits, which the banks receive and which don't cease to exist because Martin doesn't identify them. So, in his example, the amount of credit that can be created is limited to the 200 million in deposits.

It is quite common to see statistics on debt, but it is rare for information on credit to be published. However, a chink of light shines on the lenders when banks go bust.

Martin refers to the collapse of Northern Rock in 2007. The lenders were there for all to see. They were literally on the streets queuing in an attempt to withdraw their funds. He says the British Government had to put in 28 billion sterling to keep the bank afloat. But where did this money go? It didn't go towards the shareholders who

were wiped out (i.e. the losses were not socialised); it all went to the depositors and other creditors. Since the bank was unable to pay the creditors out of its own resources, the State decided to step in. Finance supplied by depositors and other creditors had to be replaced by finance from the State for the bank to survive.

How can the credit creationists explain this requirement for finance if credit is created out of thin air? Indeed how can they explain the bankruptcy of banks if credit does not need to be financed?

Martin quotes from a credit creationist as follows:

"Had Northern Rock instead expanded its lending—and created the type of money used by the public—at the same rate as other banks, it would have found that its daily inflows of central bank reserves roughly matched its outflows (since the payments from its customers to other banks would be cancelled out by payments from other banks to customers of Northern Rock)".

In this scenario it is assumed that nothing leaves the banking system. So Bank A lends to customer A who spends the money on goods supplied by a customer B who deposits the money with Bank

central bank (debit loans, credit money). This is what Keynes meant in his typically vague phrase "*every movement forward by an individual bank weakens it*". In plain terms, when a bank makes a loan it transfers its money from itself to the borrower in exchange for an interest-bearing asset (the loan).

Finally, Martin gives the following quotation, suggesting that banks have unlimited overdraft facilities with the Central Bank.

"The truth is the opposite of the textbook model. In the real world, banks make loans independent of reserve positions, and then during the next accounting period, they borrow any needed reserves. The imperatives of the accounting system ... require the Fed to lend to the banks whatever they need".

Up until now the impression given by the credit creationists is that credit does not need to be financed. It now turns out that the Fed or Central Bank is needed to

finance the banks as a last resort. Of course, the last resort occurs when the banks cannot obtain alternative funding.

As mentioned in a previous article, if the Central Bank is providing an overdraft facility, credit indeed is being created out of thin air. But it is the Central Bank that is performing the deed, not the commercial bank. However, the implication of Martin's quotation is that the commercial banks are controlling the Central Bank. But that has not been the experience of Irish banks during the recent financial crisis.

The European Central Bank (ECB) made available emergency liquidity assistance (ELA) during the financial crisis (at its peak 130 billion euro). But funding came with strict conditions. The banks' shareholders were wiped out. The Irish experience would not suggest relying on Central Bank funds is a palatable option for the banks. Relying on Central Bank funding is a sign of weakness rather than strength.

**John Martin**

Review of *Illusion financière* by Gaël Giraud

## A Jesuit Looks At The Money System

Giraud is the Jesuit priest former trader and writer about finance described in *Irish Political Review*, May 2019. His book *Illusion Financière* (2012, revised 2014) is a useful explanation in more or less layman terms of the 2008 Financial Crash and of the regulation necessary to prevent a recurrence. His proposals echo those made by former bankers; when he says that banks that would refuse to be split into commercial and speculative entities could be nationalised or have their banking licence revoked, he is saying what a former head of the Federal Reserve, Paul Volcker, said in 2012:

"If they don't like it they should stop being banks and become hedge funds. That's fine. They are then not guaranteed by taxpayer funds. If Goldman Sachs gives up its banking license it can do anything it wants to do."

Moving on from the crisis and looking to the future, he passes into wishful thinking.

He says that banks today, although offered money by the Central Banks, are not lending to households or firms. The future seems unhelpful: there is no social project capable of creating hope, and investment or consumption. (Keynes and Irving Fisher had discussed this type of situation.)

A society needs a project. The one that underlay the 2008 crash was to "*make the USA a home owner society*".

Giraud thinks the ecological transition will function as a third industrial revolution, galvanising economic activity around new housing, transport and energy. Giraud does say that this will only offer something like 1% profit over ten years, much less than that offered by speculative investment today. That alone would rule it out in the real world.

### THE COMMON

Giraud does say that recalcitrant banks could be nationalised or have their licence revoked but, following Catholic doctrine, he does not advocate State Socialism. Since he also thinks private ownership is not conducive to the common good, he puts forward a third option, following his interpretation of Karl Polanyi and Elinor Ostrom in thinking some things need not be appropriated and exploited privately but can be treated as common-pool resources, without being State-owned. The summary of Ostrom's book, "*Governing the Commons*", says:

"Common pool problems sometimes are solved by voluntary organizations rather than by a coercive state. Among the cases considered are communal tenure in meadows and forests, irrigation

communities and other water rights, and fisheries."

There are three possibilities for ownership. Things can be owned and exploited privately, or owned and exploited by the State, or used by local people through cooperation and negotiation. Ostrom studied real life cases of the third option and concluded the system was theoretically possible in other places.

Giraud thinks this is what we need in Europe; the political decision should be taken to consider the environment, access to not only drinking water and to energy as common pool resources, but also railway networks, a renovated housing stock, and money.

In his view, money is "non exclusive and rivalrous": that means no one should be excluded from access to money and credit. It is something everyone needs like water (non-exclusive). But, on the other hand, excessive access to this resource by some limits or stops access by others (rivalrous).

The objection to this approach is that *commons*, as described by Ostrom, are only possible in small communities where direct democracy is possible. It cannot have any relevance in the mass economies of the modern world.

Giraud's book is informative and has the *common good* at its heart. But it is so determined to be fair and technical that it does not give a good account of the huge power of the finance sector and its influence in politics. His view is that the system is "*inefficient, condemned to lie, not necessarily leading to the common good*". Significantly perhaps Giraud quotes two paragraphs of the 1931 Papal Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno—On Reconstruction of the Social Order*, but he misses out the words that come between the two paragraphs, which are much stronger in their condemnation of the present financial system, and still apply fully today. Here is Pius XI:

"Wealth is concentrated in our times but an immense power and despotic economic dictatorship is consolidated in the hands of a few, who often are not owners but only the trustees and managing directors of invested funds which they administer according to their own arbitrary will and pleasure.

107. This concentration of power and might, the characteristic mark, as it were, of contemporary economic life, is the fruit that the unlimited freedom of struggle among competitors has of its own nature produced, and which lets only the strongest survive; and this is often the same as saying, those who fight the most violently, those who give least heed to

their conscience.

Free competition has destroyed itself; economic dictatorship has supplanted the free market."

And here are the words Giraud left out:

"106. This dictatorship is being most forcibly exercised by those who, since they hold the money and completely control it, control credit also and rule the lending of money. Hence they regulate the flow, so to speak, of the life-blood whereby the entire economic system lives, and have so firmly in their grasp the soul, as it were, of economic life that no one can breathe against their will."

Those words speak to us today, and it is strange that a Jesuit should omit them.

Giraud also leaves out geopolitics, invoked in no uncertain terms by the Encyclical:

"108. This accumulation of might and of power generates in turn three kinds of conflict. First, there is the struggle for economic supremacy itself; then there is the bitter fight to gain supremacy over the State in order to use in economic struggles its resources and authority; finally there is conflict between States themselves, not only because countries employ their power and shape their policies to promote every economic advantage of their citizens, but also because they seek to decide political controversies that arise among nations through the use of their economic supremacy and strength."

Now these are inspiring words.

It should be said that the Encyclical condemns Communism in equally strong terms; in the same way Giraud rejects both private and collective property. But whereas the Encyclical here quoted and its predecessor of forty years previously (*De Rerum Novarum*) exercised huge influence on political life in Europe, Giraud does not seem to have the same robustness, clarity of vision and determination to fight for the common good that would inspire action. The words 'conscience', 'authority', 'struggle' and 'fight' are absent from his vocabulary.

The publisher of Giraud's book, *Éditions de l'Atelier*, was founded as *Éditions Ouvrières* in 1939. It was the brainchild of a library opened by the Young Christian Workers for the working class in Paris ten years earlier, which started publishing books in 1930. The publishing house changed its name in 1993. It is headquartered in Ivry sur Seine, an old red *banlieue*.

In 1958 this house started the publication of the *Dictionary of Bibliography of the French working class (Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français)*. In 2004 the name changed to

*Dictionnaire biographique, mouvement ouvrier, mouvement social*. It is the biggest biographical dictionary in the French language.

It now includes the Trade Union movements of other countries, for example the section for Great Britain, which naturally includes the biography of Ernest Bevin (see <http://maitron-en-ligne.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?article75318>). That is remarkable because the British labour movement—in so far as it is aware of its history at all—remembers Aneurin Bevan, a far less substantial Labour Minister than Ernest, who laid the foundations of the new welfare state during his period in Churchill's war cabinet. Though we do have Aneurin to thank for the National Health Service being a State, rather than a Local Government institution.

I will return to some issues raised by Giraud in a further article.

Cathy Winch

## Housing And The Banks

If there is one thing that everyone agrees about, it is that more homes are needed in Ireland particularly in Dublin and other major cities. Any Government that addresses that issue would get a big boost in public confidence.

So, the question arises: why does the Fine Gael-led coalition not do the obvious thing and launch a crash building programme? There have been some moves through the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) and the new Land Agency, as well as limited Local Authority interventions, but the general impression is that the State is making haste slowly. There has been nothing as vigorous as the Fianna Fail building programme, particularly in the 1930s.

A common explanation for the inaction is that the Government does not want to upset its voter base. After all, increasing the supply of homes would reduce property values, leaving many mortgage holders in negative equity and existing householders with less valuable assets: and there are no votes in that!

What that argument overlooks is that most people do not regard their homes simply as an exchange value: it is where they live and raise families. And householders understand very well that their children and wider family cannot find affordable accommodation, either to rent or to buy. Any Government that facilitated availability of places to live would get a boost in popularity. This suggests that

successive Governments have taken the hit of the unpopular policy of aloofness from an active housing policy for a more serious reason.

What springs to mind immediately is the position of the banks. In Ireland the banks play a huge role in the supply of mortgages. Five major banks between them hold most of the home mortgages issued in Ireland. In 2018 Allied Irish Banks (including the Educational Building Society) held 33% of the residential mortgage market. The Bank of Ireland had 28% of it, while Permanent TSB, Ulster Bank and KBS (Belgium) between them had 39% of it (see Peter Hamilton, *Mortgage Hunters: Time To Look Beyond The Five Main Banks?*, in *Irish Times*, 4.10.18).

If property prices were to drop as a consequence of a rapid increase in the supply of homes—built as social housing either by Local Authorities or resulting from an extensive building programme sponsored by the Government, directly or indirectly—the financial model of the banks would take a bit hit. With the banks still in recovery mode from the 2008 financial crash, that is a serious consideration for a Government that is unwilling to contemplate the socialisation route.

Mortgages constitute a major element in the assets of the banking system and a sudden increase in the supply of homes would diminish their value.

After the Government had to intervene in the banking system, it had to inject huge cash investments into the rescued banks. These banks had to accept a Government-nominated Director to sit on their Boards, as a corollary of that. However, it does not seem that those Directors have seen it as their duty to address the business model of the banks. Nor has the Government indicated that it sees anything wrong with the present way in which housing is delivered. Perhaps only a 'populist' Government would dare to do that!

Housing provision has been a victim of the Anglo-style capitalism that has become more dominant in recent decades. Local Authorities appear to have lost the ability to build homes and the private rental market has tied up capital which should be engaged in more socially-useful investments, driving house prices up whilst not increasing supply to the levels needed: a speculators' paradise! The banks, which should be channelling money into commercial/ industrial development, live off an unhealthy mortgage market. And the Government, intent on returning Irish banking to the private market, dares not interfere with the banks' cash-cow: those forced to pay over the odds for homes.

Angela Clifford

# Does It Up

## Stack ?

### CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Nobody knows how old the world is, but reputable genuine scientists believe there is geological evidence that our Earth is at least 4,500 million years old. During all of these Four Thousand and Five Hundred Million years there has been plenty of scope for some drastic changes. For example, it is known to geologists that a part of Ireland, that part south of a line from Limerick to Drogheda was at one time, millions of years ago, in the Southern Hemisphere and it got to where it is now by the movement of tectonic plates into which the upper surface of the Earth is divided.

On the other hand, Newfoundland was at one time up against the Northern half of the island of Ireland.

The Atlantic Ocean is getting wider by approximately 25 millimetres a year. This might seem to be a small amount but it means that, at the time of Brain Ború and the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, he was, unknown to himself, 25 metres nearer to Canada than we are now. And, about 100,000 years ago, there was no Atlantic Ocean.

Climate Change is like that. It happens whether we like it or not. Emotive photographs, such as a Polar Bear on an ice flow or Adelie Penguins in Antarctica are irrelevant—polar bears like being on ice flows, they do it regularly when they are fishing and they can and do swim 150 miles at sea. So what they have to do with climate change is exactly nothing. Zilch!

It is known by responsible scientists that Climate Change is caused by changes in the Sun and changes in the Earth's relationship with the Sun.

Ten thousand years ago, Europe was covered by ice. A mile thick of ice in some places. Then it started to melt. The glaciers retreated. Not due to pollution nor CO2 but due to a change in the Sun. In historic times, in the Middle Ages, there was a mini-ice-age. Again due to changes in the

Sun. We have absolutely no control over climate change—it will change no matter what we humans do. It would be very helpful to our discussions if we got that straight.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

Our environment is a totally different and separate matter. We do have some control over our environment. We can if we wish control the use of micro-plastics in cosmetics and other products. We can stop farmers rolling out plastic sheeting on top of growing crops—it disintegrates into the soil and becomes part of the food we eat. We can stop fishermen using plastic nets and ropes which, when discarded or lost at sea, are eaten by fish and whales and other mammals in mistake for their food. Steel and jute ropes are preferable. Steel oxidises and jute, being a natural product, is biodegradable.

But, instead of pursuing practical effective measures to protect and improve our environment, we rush in and encourage technophilic products like extra phones, more PCs, unnecessary computerisation, at enormous environmental cost, of cars, buses and trucks. We encourage by grants and subsidies the use of electric cars, without first ensuring that the electricity is cleanly produced which it is not at present.

In Ireland, most electricity is produced from burning turf, coal and oil and so electric cars are at present just about the dirtiest and most polluting forms of transport here. In Switzerland, where hydroelectricity is more common, the use of electricity to drive cars and trains is environmentally cleaner.

Instead of subsidising the end-user—the tax-payer's money should be used to develop more hydroelectric generation capacity and to develop hydraulic electricity generation, along the lines of the Rance Scheme at St. Malo in France.

The active control of technophilia is vital for the good of our environment. The Irish Revenue Commissioners, for example, need to be controlled. They are rolling out compulsory computerisation for the records of even the smallest businesses, whose records could very easily be written in a small account book.

The EU needs to be controlled when it insists that even the smallest fishing boat has to record its catch of fish on a computer, when a notebook would do the job fine. Notebooks are recyclable when finished

with, or can even form part of an archive, but a computer of any sort becomes a non-recyclable nuisance when it is no longer of use because its manufacturers insist on in-built obsolescence. This latter is a very cynical move and should never be tolerated by any government in the world. That would bring real change to the matter of our disappearing clean environment!

Unfortunately human beings tend to be technophiles and, like any other human vice, technophilia needs to be controlled for the good of society. At present, it is rampantly out of control and being actively promoted by those who most profit from it such as Google, Apple, Amazon and Microsoft—to name the top giants.

Forget Climate Change which we can do nothing about—it is the Environment we need to focus on and we can do a lot about it if we have the will to do what is needed. The Environment is what we live in—in the here and now—so let us care for it properly.

### CELTIC INTERCONNECTOR

The Celtic Interconnector project is at the consultation stage which Eirgrid calls Step 3. The Project is to connect Ireland and Brittany, France, with one or more electricity and communications cables which will enable Eirgrid in Ireland to buy and sell electricity with France. Information meetings are being held to update communities, stakeholders, landowners and members of the public in the progress of the project to date. I have seen the drills doing test borings of the sea floor offshore of East Cork. I have also seen a sample of the copper cable which is about one hundred millimetres thick.

Meetings were held at six community halls throughout East Cork on various dates in April and May this year. The cables will run in the Atlantic Ocean bed from Ireland to/from France outside UK territorial waters. It is proposed by Eirgrid that the project will be completed and in use by 2025/2026. The project is co-financed by the European Union.

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## WHITE VAN continued

Donoghue urging him to “review the contracts awarded to outsourcing company Capita, which was in dispute over the redundancy terms of a number of workers at AMT-Sybex”.

"In the letter to Donoghue, UNITE accused Capita of “flagrantly disregarding the state’s industrial relations machinery and treating workers, and their representatives with contempt. This company appears to regard the state as little more than an ATM machine, and its workers as disposable profit generators” ...” (*Sunday Business Post*, 19.5.2019).

Capita's clients include the Department of Justice and Equality, the Personal Injuries Assessment Board, Failte Ireland, Irish Rail and NAMA, while the firm runs *Eircode*, the national postcode system. The total value of state contracts at the time of the dispute, UNITE claimed, was nearly €140 million Euros.

### THE FUTURE?

"The emergence of the Irish partnership system represents one of the most profound breaks with inherited British governance culture in Ireland over the last fifty years. It is closely related to and deeply inspired by systems of social

governance in Europe, but also goes beyond them. It has built on corporatist and other trends in the culture of the Irish Republic and also on long term trade union strategies for socialising the Irish state.

These have their roots in the political philosophy of James Connolly, an admirer of historic German social democracy. There are no blueprints for where the Irish partnership system will develop from here: this will be determined by the political will of the major players—the state, employers, trade unions and the other sectors involved. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see this novel and successful way of doing things being thrown away in exchange for a return to the poorer systems of governance of the past...

Whether, as Begg suggests, the “counter-tendencies” to a fully-fledged liberal market economy that still stubbornly define the Irish case are sufficient basis on their own for a return to a consensus economic development strategy and a “negotiated economy” remains to be seen. Much will depend on the quality of leadership that emerges at political, social and trade union levels in the stormy Trump era we are now entering” (Philip O’Connor, *Dublin Review of Books, Ireland, Small Open Economies and European Integration. Lost in Transition*, by David Begg, Palgrave Macmillan. 1.12.2016)

In an interview piece in *The Sunday Business Post* on April 28th 2019, Tom

Healy, director of the Nevin Economic Research Institute made little or no reference to the 20 years of Social Partnership but emphasised on the Right to Collective Bargaining.

"According to Healy, the current legal framework is weak when it come to recognising unions... and that’s where I think a constitutional referendum would be useful.

SIPTU and the Labour Party have previously called for such a referendum. The right exists already as part of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, a constitutional right would mean a significant change in Irish law.

My understanding is that to secure full rights to collective bargaining, you would need a constitutional referendum amendment”, Healy said."

However, Healy admits this seems unlikely in the near future. “The right to collective bargaining is not going to be on the political agenda any time soon”...” (*Sun. Business Post*, 28.4.2019).

No Pain, No Gain, Brothers!

• *An Ireland Worth Working For* by Tom Healy. New Island Books 2019, €14.95 Euros.

• *The Road to Reality, Next Steps Towards a Real Economy-20 years of Social Partnership in Ireland*. €10 Euros.

· Biteback · Biteback

## Israel and Palestine

Fintan O'Toole writes that parallels between Israel and apartheid South Africa "can never be exact" ("Everything about Israel is political, even Eurovision", *Culture*, May 11th).

True, but in respect of the denial of voting rights there is a parallel. Like non-white people in apartheid South Africa, Palestinians living in the West Bank cannot vote in elections to the parliament that governs them. Jews living in settlements established illegally by Israel in the West Bank can vote in elections to the Knesset (the Israeli parliament); but Palestinians living next door to them in the West Bank don't have a vote. That is akin to the voting system that operated in apartheid South Africa, where non-white people were excluded from the franchise.

Dr. David Morrison

## Eurovision Blues

The Eurovision has always had a special place in my life, since my father co-wrote Ireland's first winning song *All Kinds of Everything* in 1970. Every year I make a point of watching the contest, usually marking the occasion with a themed party with friends. This year, however, I will not be watching it. I can't bring myself to watch Israel put on a big show in Tel Aviv when just 70km away, two million Palestinians are forced to live in appalling inhumane conditions and face a regular onslaught of Israeli aggression and violence. If enough people switch off this year, and refuse to watch or vote in the contest, then maybe the message might just get through.

Suzanne Lindsay

(*Irish Times*, 15.5.19).

## Taboo!

Queen's University Students' Union cancelled a planned screening of the Eurovision contest. *Taboo*, which specialises in hosting LGBT events, usually hosts a free Eurovision final screening party in the Speakeasy at Queen's. The events promoter said "that was the intention this year" but the booking "was unfortunately cancelled". He added:

"Despite our best efforts, due to the late notice of the cancellation we have not been able to find a suitable alternative venue and are of course disappointed on behalf of the hundreds of loyal Eurovision fans who attend that we aren't able to do the event this time around"...

(*Irish News*, 14.5.19).

## WHITE VAN continued

entitlement to parental leave. But the social policy officer of the ICTU, Dr. Laura Bambrick said it was unfair that employees were paying three times more for benefits that were now being extended to the self-employed.

In the last year the self-employed have also gained from an extension of PRSI treatment benefits, which covers dental and optical costs, and the invalidity pension.

Dr. Bambrick said:

"Even before Budget 2019 comes in to effect, the self-employed already have access to 80% in value terms of contributory benefits while making a mere 28% of the effective rate of social insurance paid in respect to PAYE workers" (*Irish Independent*, 30.10.2018).

She said this was happening at a time when the Government was making it more difficult to qualify for the full-rate contributory State pension and increasing the pension age to 68.

Dr. Bambrick said the self-employed were not being asked to pay more PRSI, even though a survey commissioned by the Department of Social Protection of 20,000 self-employed workers last year found that 88% would be willing to pay higher social insurance contributions for better benefits.

A spokesperson for Ms Doherty's Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection defended the move to pay the dole to the self-employed.

"This measure is part of the Government's stated aim of creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurship, including providing an income safety net to employees and the self-employed alike", they said.

Employers' body Irish Small & Medium Businesses Association (ISME) said the Trade Unions were not being fair or logical in their opposition to the move to extend Jobseeker's benefit to those who work for themselves (*Irish Indep.* 30.10.2018).

\*\*\*\*\*

**The Average Industrial Wage is  
€37,000.**

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### BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Jean Winters, of the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), said trade unions in the construction industry had created a narrative that bogus self-employment was widespread.

Legislation that would tackle the

problem of bogus self-employment with "draconian" penalties will hurt the Irish economy, the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) has claimed.

Recently proposed legislation on the topic would cause customers to "flee" from genuine self-employed individuals, the business lobby group told the Oireachtas committee on Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Bogus self-employment arrangements are where workers are forced by an employer to declare themselves as self-employed rather than employees.

Rhona Murphy, head of Employment Law Services at IBEC, said there was an absence of evidence to support the narrative that bogus or false self-employment was widespread.

Ms Murphy said the issue could be addressed by increased inspections and better enforcement of current regulations. She said the suggested changes to employment definitions would have a "significant distorting impact on the Irish economy".

Specialist workers, in areas such as construction and IT, often preferred to be classified as self-employed, she said. There was a risk that the changes proposed could classify a window cleaner as a direct employee of a customer.

"Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, this week brought a memo to Cabinet setting out plans to tackle bogus and false self-employment. The plans include a stand alone team to investigate potential bogus self-employment in large companies" (*Irish Times*, 28.3.2019).

"I believe that absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence and that we need to enhance our regulatory approach to this issue. We need to strengthen the rules, beef up our inspections and give workers greater protection to report bad practices.

That is why I recently sought and received Cabinet approval to act on the issue of false self-employment" (Regina Doherty, *Irish Independent*, 9.4.2019).

Under the Minister's proposals, legislation would be introduced to try to prevent victimisation of workers who seek an official determination of whether they are actually genuinely self-employed.

Legislation to tackle the issue has also been brought forward in Private Members Bills by members of the Opposition including Labour Senator, Ged Nash and People Before Profit T.D., Bríd Smith.

"Fianna Fáil spokesman on social protection Willie O'Dea TD said there

was a 'counter narrative' that people looking to tackle the problem wanted to 'do down' genuine self-employed workers.

"I have complaints on hand at the moment from people in the construction industry, from people being forced to act as self-employed, even when they are patently not self-employed", he said.

Ms Smith said there was a need for in-depth research to find out the scale of the problem. "We're not making this stuff up, we don't have these Bills before the House because we've nothing else to do" ... (*Irish Times*, 28.3.2019)

### BLACKLISTED

"Mr Nash said he was aware of cases where individuals who complained about being incorrectly classified as self-employed had been blacklisted.

"I know there is a form of blacklisting going on in the construction sector, and I have also learned there is blacklisting going on in parts of the pharmaceutical sector and IT sector"... (*Irish Times*, 28.3.2019)

Jean Winters, director of industrial relations with the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), said trade unions in the construction industry had created a narrative that bogus self-employment was widespread.

"Recent reports on the misclassification of workers do not bear out the unions' concerns", she said" (*Ibid.*)

Ms Winters said legislation based "purely on anecdotal evidence" would have the effect of "stifling the industry's ability to grow and create employment".

"According to Patricia King, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the State could be losing up to €240m a year because of bogus self-employment, which is a problem particularly in the construction industry" (*Irish Independent*, 3.5.2019).

### ICTU: PUBLICLY FUNDED PROJECTS

"...The government should implement a "vigorous compliance policy" on employment right for companies that are awarded state contracts, according to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) ..." (*Sunday Business Post*, 19.5.2019)

"New lobbying filings show the ICTU's industrial officer Liam Berney recently wrote to Paul Quinn, the Government's Chief Procurement Officer, "to advocate that publicly funded projects should be intensively monitored for employment right compliance"... (*Ibid.*)

The *Sunday Business Post* highlighted correspondence sent by the UNITE Trade Union to Finance Minister Paschal

continued on page 26



## The White Van Army!

The self-employed emerged as major beneficiaries from the measures announced in the 2019 Budget presented on 9th October 2018.

Those who work for themselves will be able to earn more before paying tax, will get a new entitlement to Jobseekers' Benefit if they lose their jobs, and have escaped any increase in social insurance contributions.

The new Jobseekers' Benefit will apply from 4th October 2019.

The changes are set to benefit some 150,000 people, the Dáil was told.

Drafting of the necessary legislation has commenced for the new scheme to be available from November next and it is estimated that up to 6,500 individuals could benefit from the support during a full year.

The earned income credit will rise by €200 to €1,350. Basically, this is money a self-employed person can earn before they pay tax.

They also gain from the increase of €750 in the income tax standard rate band for all earners.

This goes from €34,550 to €35,300 for single individuals, and from €43,550 to €44,300 for married one-earner couples.

Changes to the 4.75% Universal Social Charge rate (USC), which is coming down to 4.5%, will also benefit those who work for themselves.

Department of Finance figures show that a single self-employed earner on €55,000 will be €452 a year better off from the income tax and USC changes, that take effect from 2019.

But tax experts said that those who work for themselves are still worse off by €300 than their PAYE counterparts. (*Irish Independent*, 10.10.2018)

Currently, the Earned Credit for self-assessed taxpayers has crept up in the Budget by another €200 to €1,350. But it

still has another €300 to go to match its PAYE equivalent.

Presently, the Self-Employed are entitled to Jobseekers' Assistance however, this is means-tested. And these tests use the previous year's income. So people could be refused the dole on the basis of what money they were earning a year earlier.

From 4th October 2019, however, the self-employed will be able to claim Jobseeker's benefit, which isn't means tested.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the 9th October 2018 Budget, a married couple, both employed, one earning €150,000, one earning €30,000, property owners, had a net saving of €478. A self-employed couple, married and earning similar salaries, also property owners would have saved €878. This of course was due to the change in Tax Credits for the Self-Employed (*The Business Post*, 14.10.2018)

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### TAX REFORM

Meanwhile, the second of three proposed rises in PRSI rates is confirmed by the budget—increasing the cost of employment.

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The Earned Income Credit was introduced in 2016 to reduce the differential in taxes payable by employees and self-employed individuals. The finance minister announced that the credit for 2019 will increase by €200 to €1,350. However, it is still €300 lower than the corresponding PAYE credit available to most employees.

In addition, there has been no equalisation of self-employed and employee USC (Universal Social Charge) rates on income over €100,000 as previously promised by the government. As such, non-PAYE income over €100,000 will continue to be liable to USC at a rate of 11%. The employee rate for wages of €70,044.01 and over is 8%.

### TRADE UNION OBJECTION

Trade Unions have criticised the move to allow the self-employed claim the dole, despite the low rate of social insurance they pay.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) questioned why Social Protection Minister Regina Doherty has sanctioned the granting of Jobseeker's Benefit to those who work for themselves when they only pay PRSI of 4%.

This compares with the 14.85% contribution for PAYE workers, made up of 4% from the employee, with the rest from the employer.

"Self-employed workers have to apply for means-tested Jobseeker's allowances based on the previous year's income.

This excludes many seeking Unemployment Benefits when their businesses collapse" (*Ir. Ind.*, 30.10.2018).

However, the Budget saw Jobseeker's benefit extended to thousands of those who are self-employed.

Jobseeker's Benefit is paid for nine months for people with 260 or more PRSI contributions paid.

The Budget also saw them given a new