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## After Trump!

Donald Trump has left the White House, but has refused to concede that he lost the Election.

Some time before the Election he was asked if he would concede if he lost it. He replied that he would decide when the time came. That was taken as meaning that, if he lost the election, he might possibly remain the governing power nevertheless. That is what the Irish and British media represented him as saying.

What he actually said is that, depending on the circumstances, he might—like Hillary Clinton—refuse to concede that he had lost it.

Media commentators do appear to have genuinely forgotten that Hillary Clinton refused to concede that she lost the election, and maintained that that it had been stolen from her by the Russians—and that they themselves had for about three years held it to be a fact, though entirely unsubstantiated by demonstrable evidence, that the Russians had stolen the Election for Trump.

A veteran BBC reporter, John Humphrys, retired a few months after the 2016 Election. He said on his retirement that the BBC staff on the whole were shell-shocked, traumatised, by the election result, and that they went into denial about it.

Nobody on RTE or *Newstalk* has come out and said the same thing happened in Irish broadcasting, but it was patently obvious that it did.

We know of no more evidence in support of Clinton's contention that the Russians stole the election from her than we do that the old Establishment stole it from Trump by massive vote-rigging. The one seems to be about as plausible as the other, and the only relevant principle is that what is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander.

A Florida Congresswoman told British *Channel 4* television, which campaigned actively on the ground in America against Trump, that it had no grounds for fearing

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## Brexit's Inexorable Logic

A front page story in the *Irish Times* on January 16th had the headline, "No 'Fix' for Brexit checks, Tanaiste warns". Page 6 of the same edition carried a headline, "Ireland and UK determined to 'reboot' relationship after Brexit, says Taoiseach". In the first article Leo Varadkar is quoted urging the business world to grasp the new reality of Brexit by accepting that trade controls arising from it cannot be

changed. In the second, Micheal Martin is quoted saying that both the Irish and UK Governments need to work at redefining their close relationship by setting up structures for regular meetings at heads of Government, Ministerial and senior official levels.

The simultaneous release of the above two statements by the Government begs

## The EU and the UK

—*Quo Vadis?*

A very significant spat has arisen between Brexit Britain and the EU. The BBC reports that:

"A diplomatic row has broken out between the UK and EU over the status of the bloc's ambassador in London. The UK is refusing to give Joao Vale de Almeida the full diplomatic status that is granted to other ambassadors. The Foreign Office is insisting he and his officials should not have the privileges and immunities afforded to diplomats under the Vienna Convention. It is understood not to want to set a precedent by treating an international body in the same way as a nation state" (20.1.21).

The EU responded to say that:

"...it is not a typical international organisation because it has its own currency, judicial system and the power to make law... One EU source said: "It seems petty. This is not about privileges, it's about principle. What does it say about the UK, about how much the British signature is worth?"

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a question: why should business leaders defer to Government advice about accepting Brexit realities when the Government is itself failing to do so? If Boris Johnson's Government decides to incur the financial and political costs of holding such regular meetings with Dublin, what purpose could it have beyond interference in EU affairs? The Government is refusing to accept reality by refusing to recognise that Brexit has broken the Anglo/Irish relationship of recent memory and nothing can put it back together again.

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

From The Archives!

1990

Haughey And Thatcher!

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that Trump might win again. The Virus, combined “with the fact that Joe Biden has so much money, and can literally overwhelm the Trump ads, that will make the difference” (see *Irish Political Review*, November 2020, p4).

An interesting discussion took place on *Russia Today* on January 16th between Scott Ritter (A United Nations Weapons Inspector in Iraq), who was not a Trump supporter, but said that in 2016 he expected him to win because of the disillusionment with the Democrats that he saw in working class circles, and a Trump supporter, Brian Trascher (“*Trump Campaign Surrogate*”) and Laura Fink (*CEO Rebelles Communica- tions* [sic]), a Democrat.

Trascher compared the Republican mob that demonstrated in the Capitol with the Democratic mob that demonstrated against the appointment a couple of years earlier of Justice Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court:

“Not only did the Democrats start lying about him, they dug up a mentally ill woman... to try to destroy a perfectly

good man who has become a perfectly good Supreme Court judge. And, not only that, the Democrats, presumably Democrats of the left wing, took over the Hart Senate Office Building. Senators were locked in their offices. They couldn't come out because Security lost control of the crowd. And they were trying to disrupt a Constitutional process of confirming a Supreme Court Justice. The media said nothing about insurrection. They said nothing about an attack on democracy.”

And, in the “*Black Lives Matter*” demonstrations, Democratic leaders encouraged mayhem.

Laura Fink did not indignantly deny any of this. Why should she? Felt truth in a democracy is partisan. Democracy, in the only form recognised by the West, is partisan and divisive. It operates through the conflict of parties. The United States has the most thorough democracy, and therefore the one with the least holds barred. That is the source of its demonic energy.

The partisan divisive, nature of demo-

cracy is, of course, also the reason why it is not easily reproduced in societies where it is based only on dictated principles rather than being a product of history.

There was never any practical possibility that Trump could remain the governing power after the election result, as authoritative presenters said he had lost. We assume that he knew he couldn't. And he never said that he would try to.

The scuffle in the Capitol after it was opened to demonstrators can be mythologised either as a *Storming of the Winter Palace* event that was defeated, or as a *Reichstag Fire* event that succeeded. If we had to choose between them we would opt for the latter—a success by the Democratic Party in providing for a propaganda assault on Trump's development of Republicanism. But it remains to be seen whether Biden will be reckless enough, in the grip of ideology, to try to restore the *status quo ante* of freely operating globalist capitalism.

### WAR AND PEACE!

The distinctive thing in Trump's Presidency is that it did not launch any wars or destroy any states.

One has to go back a very long way to discover another President with such a record. In 1954, only a few years after the supposed establishment of *international law* by the formation of the United Nations, the US Government overthrew the Government of Guatemala in the interest of the United Fruit Company, and that set the pattern until Trump was elected.

When he was elected, the United States was the master of globalist capitalism which was investing capital abroad in pursuit of cheap labour, with the effect that industries were being destroyed within the USA.

There was nothing new about freely operating capital creating boom towns around the United States which then became ghost towns. This was part of the way of life when the capital movement was chiefly within the US. But it seems to have been felt differently as capital movement increasingly went abroad in the course of constructing an American-dominated global economy.

The outlook of the working population began to part company with that of the advanced movement of Finance Capitalism. Instead of appreciating the internationalism of capital, they remained lodged within the routine of American

nationalism, and they saw good jobs being given away to cheap foreigners and resented it. They became Hillary Clinton's "deplorables". They failed to see themselves within the perspective of America's historic mission in the world and sacrifice themselves to it. They were unable to relativise themselves. They voted to keep jobs at home. That was "Trumpism".

It has been estimated that about 45% of the population felt that way four years ago, and it does not seem that four years of intense media propaganda against Trump has significantly reduced that percentage.

Trump has been described as a 'white supremacist'. Nothing he has actually said warrants that description, except by means of a far-fetched process of deduction. He increased his non-white support in the election he has lost. But his main support came, of course, from the swathe of society which suffered from the export of capital/jobs, which was white—but white trash, deplorable rather than white supremacist. And the blacks he attracted were those who were effectively making themselves an integral part of the American system, as distinct from being patronised into a subset of it.

The United States is white supremacist in origin, development, consolidation, and expansion. It exterminated the populations that inhabited the Continent when the Mayflower landed, and it is not very long since its intellectuals pointed to Latin America as the *horrible example* of what happens when the dominant white race engages in race-mixing with native populations under Roman Catholic influence, instead of exterminating them..

It inherited a slave population from Britain. Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery as a tactic in his War to establish a Continental super-state, did not intend that the freed black slaves should become citizens of that state, but rather that they should be sent back to Africa. And the great liberal Democratic President, Woodrow Wilson, half a century later celebrated at the White House the essential service to the American nation performed by the Ku Klux Klan.

The United States is the supreme construct of white supremacy. The white trash population created at home by the export of jobs in recent times is the least of its manifestations, but they are Americans too, and they have refused to be discarded as a deplorable proletariat. Trump gave them a political presence. The immediate

## Michael D and Ethical Remembering

A lecture delivered by President Michael D Higgins at his official residence on 4th December last had the purpose of launching a new initiative regarding the Decade of Commemorations, *Macnamh 100*. Clearly part of a Government attempt to regain control of the Commemoration agenda following former Minister Charlie Flanagan's cancellation of an RIC commemoration in January last year, it had the title, *Of Centenaries and the Hospitality Necessary in Reflecting on Memory, History and Forgiveness*. In the speech the President tried to explain what he called, "the ethics of narrative hospitality".

By way of response four professors—Ciaran Benson, Anne Dolan, Michael Laffan and Joep Leerssen—then made further speeches. These covered topics that anyone familiar with Irish current affairs would recognise as different aspects of historical revisionism. The event was effectively a carnival of revisionism.

A curious aspect of the initiative is its low profile. It is simultaneously being conducted publicly and being kept quiet. Political commentators who take the Government line on commemorations are referring to it positively but if you don't follow politics closely you could easily miss it. Michael D. announced that the proceedings were being made available on the Presidential website and on the RTE Player, but on the website you would need good IT skills to locate the text of his speech and the texts from the four Professors are nowhere to be seen. I found it impossible to locate anything about the event on the RTE Player.

A possible explanation for the low profile is that, outside of a university environment, discussions about the ethics of *narrative hospitality* are unlikely to go down well. Most people would have difficulty understanding such concepts and some would object to the use of deliberately abstract language. Yet once the full series of these *reflections*, as the President calls them, has concluded, the Government will announce how well the process has gone, and how *inclusive* it all was. The last thing the Government wants is a proper public debate about how the State was founded.

The real problem with the official agenda for the Commemorations is that it's built on a foundation of sand. Its double premise is that the way Irish history was traditionally taught, and the way the 1966 commemorations for the Rising were conducted, both contributed to the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland. There is no truth in either of these claims. Violence erupted in the North as a direct result of the sectarian antagonism inbuilt in the political system there. Following the shambolic Arms Trial of 1970, the Dublin Establishment created a false monster needing to be slain: republican militarism seething beneath the surface of life in the Republic. It was the ultimate false narrative. It has ended up spawning our very own species of academic poseur!

Dave Alvey

problem for the Democrat globalists is how to make them vanish. The political theatre at the end of the Trump Presidency was directed to that end.

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What Trump did to upset Europe was to say that the US should stop trying to run the world and should tend to its own interests as a nation among the nations.

Obama asserted universal American sovereignty in the most extreme form. He said that sovereignty followed the dollar into currencies that were in any way dependent on it, and he acted consistently in accordance with that principle.

He also said that the US was "the exceptional nation", and "the only indispensable nation". The meaning was

that it was justified in sacrificing every other nation to its own interests—a thing that previous Presidents had done but not said. And the EU, despite its Great Power pretensions, was content with that.

Angela Merkel was greatly upset by the British decision to resume independent action in the world. Britain had saved Europe from Fascism, and now was abandoning it.

What Britain did as the Super-Power of the inter-war period was facilitate the growth of Fascism, particularly in Germany where it had a formal right to act against it under the Versailles arrangements. It collaborated actively with Hitler from 1934 until March 1939. When it declared war in September 1939, its action was such that it provoked Germany into a position



of dominance in Europe, which led to the German/Russian War. It was Russia that rescued Germany from Fascism. And it was then that the United States saved Germany from the Power that saved it from Nazism.

Europe was on the whole content with Fascism. There were no internal overthrows, not even during the War. And who can tell but that it would have been content with Communism if the US had not joined the War and compelled Britain to return to Europe in 1944, after a four-year absence?

Post-1945 capitalist-democratic Europe is a construct of the United States in the context of its Cold War antagonism against the Russian State which broke the power of Nazism, and of the hot wars by which that Cold War was carried on in the outlying regions, and Trump wanted the US to abandon responsibility for the running of its creations and leave them to look after themselves.

Europe, accustomed to functioning under US financial and political hegemony, felt lost—Angela Merkel especially so.

It might be that the world of substantially independent states, which existed before Britain launched its destructive World War a little over a century ago, cannot now be restored. It might be that the power achieved by the USA as a result of the disruptive effect of the British Empire's two World Wars, is too great for it ever to revert to being a state among the states, tending to its own interests, as Trump proposed. If that is the European view, then the ideal of the United Nations is Utopian and should be discarded, and the world should be systematically remade with the one indispensable nation at its core.

But steps have actually been taken during the Trump Presidency towards a restoration of a world of independent states, which relate to each by means of accommodations and limited conflicts. The Russian State is stronger than it was four years ago. The Chinese sphere of influence has extended. The Syrian State, de-legitimised by Obama and Clinton, has survived by means of an international alliance. Iran has maintained itself against intensified US sanctions and remains influential in Iraq amidst the shambles brought about by the USA and Britain.

Biden will not find it easy to do what Ms Clinton was poised to do when the *deplorables* deprived her of the opportunity.

## Democratic War-Mongering!

The *Irish Times* says that the time for “ritual condemnation” of Russia has long passed. The EU and the USA must demand the release of Alexei Navalny and take strong action by means of economic sanctions against the Russian Government if it does not obey.

Navalny, it says,

“survived an assassination attempt by State actors in Siberia in August, his life saved only by a pilot’s decision to divert his plane and by German medics who treated him for poisoning by Novichok—a banned chemical weapon”.

We know only what was reported at the time of the incident in the Western—that is, the anti-Russian media. But what was reported was not that the plane was diverted to Germany where Navalny’s life was saved, but that it landed in Russia, and that Navalny was treated in a Russian hospital. If that was the sequence of events, and if Navalny’s life was in danger, then it was Russian doctors that saved it.

It was then reported that the Russian doctors could find no poison in Navalny’s body, and that the Russian State passed him on to Germany, which had been making a big issue of the matter. A short time later the German Government announced that the German doctors had found Novichok in Navalny and that the Putin regime had put it there.

This is very puzzling: Putin had ordered that Navalny be poisoned with Novichok, and had handed him over to the Germans to find it!

The *Irish Times* evades that puzzle, streamlining the story to omit Navalny’s treatment in Russia before being handed over by the Russians to the Germans. Is this what is called post-truth? Or was the landing of the plane in Russia a media invention?

Navalny has now returned to Russia, and has been arrested for breaching the terms of previous suspended sentence on charges which the European Court of Human Rights says “are trumped up”. That European Court has no jurisdiction, not even in the EU. It is essentially a propaganda body, and by the nature of things it is hostile to Russia.

Julian Assange has long been in strictly-controlled confinement in a British prison,

as the outcome of a strange charge of rape, brought up against him in Sweden which might reasonably be said to have been trumped-up for the purpose of getting him arrested—since it was dropped after another way of holding him was found after his arrest. And he does not, from prison, have the access to the public that Navalny clearly has.

Mass demonstrations throughout Russia, calling for Navalny’s release, were called for by, among others, the American Embassy in Russia. The purpose seems to be to bring about a ‘colour’ revolution—a revolution without a coherent political purpose capable of being realised in a functional State.

The *Irish Times* says that “Navalny humiliated the Putin regime last month by releasing a recording of a phone call in which an FSB agent admitted taking part in the assassination attempt.” We have no idea whether Putin ordered him to be assassinated or not. The assassination of political opponents, if they are Palestinians, has been freely practised, at home and abroad, since the 1950s, by the Israeli State, which is held up by Western media and politicians as an exemplary democracy. Condemning the doing of it is obviously not a matter of principle but of expediency.

The *Irish Times* praises Navalny’s return to Russia “as an act of extraordinary courage”. It was no such thing. His life would not have been worthwhile to him if he had not returned. He is existentially committed to the destruction of what Putin has constructed, and apparently acts on the assumption that Democracy would be the natural outcome of an act of revolutionary destruction.

Russia has had two periods of government of the kind the US/UK considered democratic. It had six or seven months of the futile Kerensky Government in 1917. Then it had about ten years of the Yeltsin Government in the 1990s.

Yeltsin pulled the State apart, let the Capitalism of the Oligarchs rip, shelled the Parliament when it tried to interfere, opened the country to foreign plunder, and life expectancy plummeted. That was OK! That was Freedom! And no doubt it was.

But the populace found that a free life in urban conditions is a miserable life. It supported Putin when, from a basis in the security forces and the military, he began to apply against some of the wilder Oligarchs some of the laws of the old State

which had not been repealed. The West called that “*Stalinism*” and declared that the charges were trumped up.

It seems unlikely that Navalny could whip up mass action against Putin’s construction. And, if he did, the likely outcome would be a return to the 1990s.

Has there ever been a functional democratic State founded by revolutionary destruction of an old regime?

Nationalist revolutions are capable of founding States. The United States was founded by nationalist revolution. Britain became a democracy by means of a process of long, slow concessions to popular pressure by an aristocratic State. The democratic revolution—the democracy founded by revolution—was the *French Revolution*. It evolved into a dictatorship within ten years.

The leaders of the democratic West must know all of this very well. They preach simple-minded ideas of democratic revolution to the rest of the world for destructive purposes.

## EU and the UK

continued

Some in the EU also fear hostile states might copy the UK and downgrade the protections granted to EU diplomats in their own countries. This could open them up to being harassed and make them easier for them to be expelled.

A European Commission spokesman said:

“The UK, as a signatory to the Lisbon Treaty, is well aware of the EU’s status in external relations, and was cognisant and supportive of this status while it was a member of the EU.

“The EU has 143 delegations, equivalent to diplomatic missions, around the world. Without exception, all host states have accepted to grant these delegations and their staff a status equivalent to that of diplomatic missions of states under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the UK is well aware of this fact... The EU argues it is not a typical international organisation because it has its own currency, judicial system and the power to make law.”

This is a crucial issue that the EU has to face—what exactly it is and what is its ultimate aim as a political entity. It is unique and seeking to do something unique. It is therefore an experiment that has to constantly assess its progress

and justify itself to half a billion people. If nothing else Brexit has made that very clear.

There has been a general notion that has sustained the EU for many people for a long time and in Ireland more so than anywhere else. It is also the bottom line justification used across Europe. This is the notion that the European project was created by an outbreak of a desire for peace and harmony among European nations, who suddenly decided to stop slaughtering each other *circa* 1950 and ‘*saw the light*’ of a harmonious Europe. And, because it worked well, it seemed that a modern, secular miracle had occurred in Europe; a Panglossian approach developed that all would be all right in the end because everyone was working for such a glorious end: so what could possibly go wrong?

The reality is that the European project was essentially an American project to counter the Soviet Union. John Foster Dulles wrote a book in the late 1940s called specifically “*The United States of Europe*”, making the case for it. The money was supplied by the Marshall Aid Plan and the necessary muscle was provided by NATO.

This worked a treat until the need for European Unity disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union. European states had then to maintain the project by depending on the satisfying of internal needs, and the existing dynamic alone. The Euro was the most significant of these features. It was accompanied by a paraphernalia of laws, courts and by enlargement.

But the real need was not in evidence: further integration towards a *state*. And the elements held in common do not a state make.

There was also, *inter alia*, the nonsense of a *Constitution* for a Europe that did not yet exist. There was a whole decade of displacement activity—and a waste of time, money and energy, initiated by d’Estaing and diligently followed up by John Bruton, which failed. The proposed Constitution instead became the Lisbon Treaty—which is totally ignored for all practical purposes and rightly so. Bruton was put out to grass in Washington for his efforts.

The present EU spat with the UK should concentrate European minds about its real status in the world. It should cause it to consider whether it develops towards a state. It needs to consider that, if it does not,

it will indeed be just another international organisation with a pretend government, a pretend parliament, five Presidential Offices—and *none of the critical instruments of a state*, e.g., a Federal Police Force and a Federal Army.

These latter are the expressions of a credible state and they entail the existence/creation of a *demos* to exist and sustain the entity concerned. Nothing else will ultimately suffice. States in their fullness are what matter in today’s world and states are either free agents or beholden to others, depending on their state’s capabilities.

The anomalous position of the EU and its Member States is seen at G7 meetings, which is a serious forum for face to face informal get-togethers between the heads of state of the ‘free world’. It includes some EU member states. However, the EU is *represented* but, since it is clearly not a state, it is there not as a full participant but as a courtesy.

The UK position is consistent with the EU status at G7 meetings. The EU has a pretend role as a state at such events, and in this spat the UK is simply saying that the Emperor has no such clothes.

An army would be an essential part of the necessary clothes. As a result, the EU tries to make the case for an army, citing the need for defence of the Union against Russia. But this scenario is based on a fantasy. Russia, like all states, seeks to improve its position in the world. But Russia has never (ever) attacked Europe. It only got involved in Europe in the past as part of its own defence against assaults from Europe.

It is pure fantasy to assume that Russia today is so stupid as to initiate an attack on Europe. And, trying to create crises with it about alleged poison on a door handle in Salisbury, and in a dissident’s underpants in Siberia, is too silly for words. Monty Python would be envious of the script.

Europe in its history always had a variety of states and cultures and they cannot simply be rolled into one for some great cause or abstraction. What went with the variety was a succession of dominant states and that is the reality that remains. Germany is the latest to fill that role and, despite two World Wars launched by Britain to prevent it being that state in the 20th century, there is no doubt that it is in that position again.

But the problem is that Germany has no inclination to lead the EU in any independent direction. The Trump administration encouraged Europe to be independent of

the US, and Brexit obliges it to be so with regard to Britain. But both developments were treated with horror, and as existential threats by Germany. As a result, it and the EU are re-embracing the US with the Biden Presidency.

The two wars against Germany have been successful in neutering and neutralising that country for a leading role in Europe. The destruction of Dresden was successful in more ways than one! As a result, Germany has acquired a self-denying ordinance about itself. That is the EU's main problem.

Jack Lane

## Brexit's Inexorable Logic

continued

Adapting to the permanent change that Brexit represents is posing immense challenges in the first instance for haulage and shipping companies, but these problems also impinge, ultimately, on their clients: businesses in key sectors of the economy. If anything, these problems are more acute in Northern Ireland than in the South. The name of the game from here on in will be understanding, and adjusting to, the new regulations: that is the signal that official bodies on both sides of the Border need to be sending.

During the years of Brexit negotiations, the Fine Gael-led Government was forced to make difficult choices and pragmatic adjustments. Fine Gael was forced to place in abeyance its 'close-to-Britain' policy, instead siding with the EU and lobbying strongly for the Border to remain invisible. It put defending the national interest before its ideological attachment to the alliance with Britain. As Leader of the Opposition Micheal Martin objected strenuously to that stance, on the grounds that it was undermining the relationship with London.

With Fine Gael and Fianna Fail in Government together, and with Micheal Martin holding the position of Taoiseach, the question of the relationship with Britain may be a tension point. It is possible that, in the interests of Government unity, and to reconnect with its Anglo-Irish orientation, Fine Gael will row in behind the Taoiseach. In this context it will be instructive to review what have been the main lessons for Ireland of the Brexit process. First

though, because the practical implementation of Brexit is relevant to its politics, it is necessary to examine the disruption that has occurred in the first three weeks of the post-Brexit era.

### Disbelief and Calls for Easements

A note of disbelief amounting to an expectation that the customs regime accompanying Brexit will be eased or changed was detectable from statements by industry representatives in early January. A sampling of such statements is contained in a long article by Tony Connelly, "*The squall before the storm*" (RTE website, 16 Jan 2020). Referring to reaction in Britain he says:

"Those bewailing the terrible bureaucracy wrought by Brexit are clamouring for "easements", facilitations, pragmatism, and UK operators like to think it would be in the EU's interests.

"We need the EU to move to a more digitalised service that allows for trusted traders", Andrew Opie, head of the British Retail Consortium, told the Future Relationship with the EU Committee [at Westminster], "that recognises that companies are auditing their own supply chains rigorously and robustly, and therefore to ease the friction [for] every time you move a product"..."

On the other side of the Irish Sea, lobby representatives, as quoted by Connolly, are hinting that customs officials are being too strict.

"The FTAI (Freight Transport Association Ireland) general manager Aidan Flynn told RTE News that across the board hauliers, wholesalers and retailers are struggling with the new complexities when it comes to importing goods across the land bridge or direct from the UK.

This has led to drivers being stuck at the customs and food safety inspection bays at Dublin Port for days. It is not clear whether Revenue and food safety officials are being over zealous in their application of the rules.

"It's very hard to introduce a scalability of what constitutes a simple mistake," Mr Flynn told RTE News. "It does look like they are being very strict. It's compounded by the fact that there are mixed messages coming from agents to drivers. There are some loads there for three or four days"..."

Connolly also quotes the Head of the UK Food and Drink Federation, Ian Wright, advising the relevant House of Commons Committee that "*there will be easements, there will be fixes, there will be work-arounds*" but that, even with these changes, EU/UK and GB/NI supply chains will need to be re-engineered over the next six to nine months.

Yet a clear message throughout the article is that the scope for easing the new customs regulations is severely limited. Connelly refers to the two international and legally-binding Treaties that underpin Brexit: the *Withdrawal Agreement* (2019), which includes the *Northern Ireland Protocol*; and the *Trade and Co-operation Agreement* that was signed on Christmas Eve. He summarises the view in Brussels that "*the market—and the UK (and Ireland)—will have to adapt to new realities*". In short, the Brexit changes are of such magnitude that senior industry figures are having difficulty accepting them, but their protestations are unlikely to have much effect.

### Direct Sea Route or Landbridge?

A similar resistance to new realities is to be found in the 'UK landbridge versus direct sea route' debate. The Chief Executive of the company that operates Irish Ferries, Eamon Rothwell, was quoted claiming that the route through Britain will remain the choice of businesses after Brexit because it is "*faster and cheaper*" (Irish Times, 2 Jan). Rothwell made the claim, despite a Brexit investment by his company of 150 million euro. Likewise, a report from the Irish Maritime Development Office, commended by Government Ministers and published towards the end of last year, found that there was adequate shipping capacity to cope with the increased use of the direct sea route to Europe expected to follow in the wake of Brexit.

Both of these predictions have been shown to be wrong; and Opposition Deputies who argued for increased shipping capacity on the Rosslare routes have been vindicated. Due to the complexities and delays now associated with Brexit, the landbridge is no longer seen as an option by many companies. Even with four shipping companies travelling between Rosslare and the Continent—Irish Ferries, Stena Line, Brittany Ferries, and the Danish line, DFDS—lorries that had booked passage were refused boarding in the first weeks of January, due to overbooking.

Laurence O'Toole of *O'Toole Transport*, a Galway company that transports fresh Irish seafood to Europe, said that solutions were needed quickly to guarantee cross-border transport through the Brexit checks at the ports. "*The new direct ferries haven't got near enough capacity. We need another twenty ships per week going to Europe*," he said (Irish Times, Simon Carswell, 13 Jan). A problem that may be present already is overuse and crowding at Rosslare Europort. As suggested by



Michael Stack in the January *Irish Political Review*, the Government should revamp the Lift On/Lift Off facilities in the Port of Cork and initiate road works so that hauliers can have easy access to the Roll On/Roll Off service at Ringaskiddy on the other side of the Lee. In the medium term minor improvements in Cork would relieve pressure on Rosslare.

#### NORTHERN IRELAND

Under the Northern Ireland Protocol, Northern Ireland faces the same adjustment challenges to Brexit as the South. The supply chains of some medium-sized retailers in Belfast have been disrupted as GB suppliers have either failed to meet the customs requirements or avoided them as being too much trouble. In one area the Province was granted an easement: in December *the Joint Committee*, headed by Michael Gove and Maros Sefcovic (the body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement), granted two separate grace periods during which the supermarkets are exempted from having to secure Export Health Certificates for certain food products. The first grace period is three months for products of animal origin, the second is six months for prepared meats including sausages and mince.

The responses of firms to the disruption of supply chains could turn out to be advantageous for the Province, in that more supplies could be sourced locally or even from the South. As market actors adapt to the new dispensation, the other advantage, tariff-free access to the British market and Single Market access to the EU, may come into play. This may be relevant for NI industrial sectors like software and hardware engineering which are currently booming.

Tony Connelly, in the article already quoted, refers to a division in the DUP between figures like Ian Paisley Jnr. and Sammy Wilson—who want to inflict maximum reputational damage on the “*hated Protocol*”—and elements who favour a more pragmatic approach. Given the practical and political problems associated with pushing back the EU frontier to the Border, not to mention the determination of the Biden Administration to block any moves that would undermine the Good Friday Agreement, the DUP may be falling into the same trap as some lobby group representatives, of failing to accept the implications of Brexit. In any case, the Northern Ireland Assembly will be voting on the Northern Ireland Protocol in four years’ time.

#### RULES OF ORIGIN

The big advantage of the EU Single Market is that it added to the advantages of the Customs Union by doing away with what economists call “*non-tariff barriers*”, meaning customs regulations and differing safety or technical standards between the participating countries. The deal agreed on Christmas Eve allows for tariff-free trade between the EU and the UK, but the UK has still left the Single Market and Customs Union. The new customs regulations are not a punitive regime being imposed by the EU but standard international trade arrangements.

A part of the rules governing international trade is a Convention called *Rules of Origin*. Its point is to prevent tariff-free trade in a product, if parts of it have come from outside the tariff-free area. An example of the type of abuse it is designed to prevent might be if most of the components of a motor vehicle were manufactured in Japan, with only assembly being done in say France, then the motor vehicle is essentially from Japan and should incur a tariff.

The pre-Brexit pattern of trade in the EU, whereby retail products from the Continent were transported to various large supermarket hubs in Britain and then repackaged for Ireland and Northern Ireland is now deemed to be in breach of *Rules of Origin*. The logic of the Single Market questions why goods should be transported out of the EU only to be repackaged and returned to the EU when they could simply be moved from one Member State to another. This issue seems not to have been understood at the political level during the negotiations and is now a problem. Connelly quotes an EU diplomat on it as follows: “*The general view is that can’t continue. Or, it’s going to have to continue in a way compatible with the rules.*”

It will be for the bodies managing the two Treaties to sort out matters such as this. These are the *Joint Committee for the Withdrawal Agreement/Northern Ireland Protocol*, and the *Joint Partnership Council* for the recent Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Joint Partnership Council will most likely deal with *Rules of Origin* issues.

#### THE KEY CHANGE IN IRELAND’S BREXIT POLICY

Turning now to a number of milestones in the formation of Irish Government policy on Brexit, I wish to show that, post-Brexit, it makes no sense for the

Government to seek to establish formal structures for holding regular meetings at the highest levels with the UK Government, as is being proposed by Micheal Martin. The first such milestone occurred during December 2016. Until that time, Government policy entailed close alignment with the UK as proclaimed regularly by Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Foreign Affairs Minister Charlie Flanagan.

Despite an uncharacteristically wild statement from Enda Kenny, sometime after the Brexit referendum of 23rd June 2016, that Ireland was now on course to achieve national unification, Kenny and Flanagan continued to hold to their close-to-Britain position throughout 2016. When Kenny met Michel Barnier for the first time on October 12th, his statement to the media afterwards referred to Mr Barnier’s “*strong appreciation of our close historical, political and economic ties with the UK*”. Likewise Minister Flanagan chose to defend, in a speech to the British-Irish Association in Oxford on September 10th, his Government’s vigorous support for British Prime Minister David Cameron in the run-up to the referendum by stating “*We passionately believed that a strong UK in a strong EU was the best possible outcome for Ireland, the UK and the EU*”.

Further evidence of the official position is provided in an article about a leaked Government memo on the subject of Brexit, which referred to “*the approach Ireland must take to building alliances to ensure that Britain maintains as close ties as possible to the EU*” (*Irish Times, Confidential memo reveals Irish view of UK Brexit ministers*, 14 November 2016). This evidence that the Kenny Government was failing to adjust its policy orientation in line with the new reality following the Brexit vote was described in a letter from the *Irish Political Review Group* published in the *Irish Times* on 5th December 2016.

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If the course of politics had gone in accordance with the preferences of Enda Kenny and Charlie Flanagan, the Irish response to Brexit and the conduct of the Brexit negotiations would have gone very differently; EU solidarity would have been dealt a damaging blow at a critical time. An inquiry by a Select Committee of the British House of Lords having the title *Brexit: UK-Irish Relations* commenced work in September (2016) and received oral evidence from 33 witnesses including many from the Republic and Northern Ireland. The main drivers behind it on the British side, Lord Boswell of Aynho

and Lord Jay of Ewelme, both had practical experience of Anglo/Irish relations; Boswell, a retired Conservative MP, was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the UK Ministry of Agriculture during the 1990s and Jay, a career diplomat with extensive experience of the EU, headed the UK Diplomatic Service from 2002 until 2006. The hearings of the Committee were conducted over three months until November 2016.

An 80-page report from the Select Committee, duly published on December 10th, proposed that a bilateral agreement on trade and customs should be entered into between the UK and Ireland in advance of the Brexit negotiations. The only way to prevent a hard Border from being introduced, the report argued, was “*for the UK to remain in the customs union, or for EU partners to agree to a bilateral UK-Irish agreement on trade and customs*” (Report, Conclusion 7, p. 65).

Responding to the report on the following day, the then Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan, said that the report was very important in highlighting the would-be implications for Ireland but that the negotiations would have to take place between the European Union and the British authorities—there could be no deals “*on the side*” (Irish Times, “*Brexit impact may be worse for State than UK, report suggests*”, 12 December 2016).

Whether this intervention by Noonan was part of normal business or a deliberate move on his part to prevent a projected alignment of Ireland with the UK regarding Brexit is difficult to say, but all the indications are that it was the latter. An item on *Morning Ireland* on RTE radio on the following Friday suggests that a rapid change of policy direction had happened. Discussing the end of the political term with Micheal Lehane, Niamh Lyons, then Political Editor of the Irish edition of the *Times*, described excitedly that in each of the Government Departments she had visited and all over Government buildings the word was the same: “*Distance from Britain!*” (Morning Ireland, 16 December, 2016).

Before Michael Noonan’s rejection of the House of Lords proposal, Government policy was to keep in with both the UK and EU sides—this was made explicit by Simon Coveney, while standing in for Enda Kenny in the Dail on December 8th, when he stated that Ireland “*will be neutral as between the UK and the EU in the Brexit negotiations*”. After the Noonan move, that position no longer held. As

Tony Connelly puts it in his book, *Brexit and Ireland*:

“But Brexit had broken the status quo, and Ireland had declared for the EU-27” (p. 80).

The change of position in Dublin was clearly important for the EU and Irish EU Commissioner Phil Hogan and Commission President Jean Claude Juncker were quick to grasp its significance. Prior to the change, the fortunes of the EU had been at a low ebb; after it the possibility emerged that EU solidarity would hold in the looming negotiations with Britain. Brexit became less and less of an existential threat to the EU from that point on.

The important point regarding this key change in Ireland’s Brexit policy is that it needed to happen. The Kenny/Flanagan position was untenable and incoherent. Ireland, being an EU member, could not be neutral between the EU and Britain. Apart from being against the country’s economic interest—given the flow of foreign direct investment that depended on Ireland’s position in Europe—accepting the House of Lords proposal would have gone against the spirit of Irish involvement in the EU since 1973.

#### OTHER MILESTONES

Another key milestone—more accurately described as a lesson—was the failure of Mairead McGuinness to win a nomination from the European Peoples Party (EPP) for the position of President of the European Parliament in November 2016. McGuinness was considered the front runner for the nomination because she was popular and respected in the EPP but also because she was well regarded by the Greens in the Parliament, a grouping whose support was needed to win the Presidency.

Manfred Weber, the EPP leader, let it be known that he thought the nomination should go to a woman. McGuinness’s main opponent for the nomination was Antonio Fajani, a member of Berlusconi’s party in Italy, not a party you would expect to be popular in the European Parliament. Reporting for the *Irish Times*, Suzanne Lynch canvassed opinion among EPP MEPs and was told that McGuinness was highly regarded but that “*her nationality was against her*”. Being Irish she was considered “*too close to Britain*”. In the event Fajani won the nomination and the Presidency.

The clear lesson for Ireland of that relatively unimportant episode in EU politics is the obvious one. So long as Ireland is perceived as being close to Britain, Irish

representatives seeking to advance or influence the Brussels institutions, will struggle to win support.

A third milestone was the deal stuck between Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Prime Minister Johnson when they met on the Wirral, near Liverpool, on 10th October 2019. That deal broke the deadlock over the Backstop and enabled the Withdrawal Agreement to be successfully concluded later that year. What is noteworthy about it in retrospect is that it showed that the Government had become agile in steering a route compatible with Irish interests through the storm of Brexit. The dexterity displayed by Varadkar and his officials in avoiding being dragged into the machinations of the Remainers in Britain, or their Anglophile supporters in Ireland, was captured in an article by Pat Leahy in the *Irish Times*.

“...To see the world as it is, not as you would rather it were, is a facility that evades many in politics, as it does in life. Recognising that Johnson’s ascension to power had changed British politics profoundly was a clear-sighted judgment by the officials and politicians who have led Ireland through the unfinished maelstrom of Brexit. Once this judgment was made, they moved to act on it.

...Boris Johnson’s 19th-century predecessor, Lord Palmerston, observed that nations do not have permanent alliances; only permanent interests. It is surprising the UK has not been able to appreciate the fact that Ireland has national interests, and will act to defend them. First Ireland’s clear-eyed independence surprised and confused the Brexiters; now it has done the same to the Remainers, who have been lately venting their anger at Dublin.

‘They’re not happy,’ says one Government insider. ‘But we were never going to fix Brexit for them.’ Shrugs another, ‘Look, we deal with the British government’...’ (IT, 26 October 2019).

It would be wrong to read too much into that appraisal but, by cutting a deal with the ultimate demon of Brexit, the Government showed how far it had travelled since the days when Enda Kenny gave every appearance of being a sidekick of Prime Minister Cameron.

As the problems confronting businesses as a result of Brexit mount up, the Taoiseach should be exhorting his own civil servants in the relevant Departments, as well as market actors, to redouble their efforts in adapting to the new customs regulations. He should be leading by example. Instead, he is engaged in a forlorn crusade to salvage something from the pre-Brexit relationship with London.



The lessons of the last four years are clear. Ireland cannot be neutral between Britain and the EU; it must stand firmly in the EU camp. Any perception that the Government is veering towards a close relationship with Brexit Britain will damage the credibility of Irish representatives in Brussels. Seeing the world as it is, not in the way that a sizeable chunk of the Irish media wishes it to be, requires dispassionate consideration of Ireland's interests. The logic of Brexit has forced the Irish State to adopt a flexible approach to its international alliances, and in the process to disengage from the anti-Brexit zealotry of what might be described as liberal opinion. These are lessons to which our current Taoiseach seems deaf, dumb and blind.

Across the water in Britain, the Government's approach to Brexit is refreshingly political. The EU Ambassador to the UK has been informed that as he does not represent a state, he cannot enjoy the privileges of other foreign diplomats. Meanwhile a columnist in the *Sunday Telegraph*, Julie Burchill, recently took a pot shot at Ireland's most iconic rock star, Bono, for his showy virtue signalling on behalf of the EU. Her favourite example is: "Europe is a thought that needs to become a feeling." Clearly nothing is sacred to these Brexiters! The EU needs a good shake up and Brexit may be the catalyst, but that's a subject for another day.

Dave Alvey

## New on U-tube

ATHOL STREET BULLETIN 1

### Bill McClinton on the Pandemic and Low-paid Key Workers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt31EyiwzvA&feature=youtu.be>

**Bill McClinton:  
Government pays lip-service to the key workers who stand between the public and the abyss.**

## Whatever Happened To Intrepid West Britons?

Today, Monday (January 4th) *The Irish Times* gives its view on *the Decade of Centenaries*, telling its presumably simple-minded readers, that it is "a complex history", and endorsing Leo Varadkar's assertion that the Commemorations "had lost their way over the past year". The paper draws the conclusion that the Government should get "a grip on the programme of the year ahead so that official ceremonies are conducted in an inclusive and respectful manner".

The Official Commemoration of the Decade so far were not intended to honour those who created a *Government of the People, By the People, For the People*, in 1918, in an election. That election was "regarded on all sides as a Plebiscite" according to *The Times* of London, then quite as opposed to the concept of Self Determination of Nations as its echoing rag in Dublin. The Irish electorate endured a reign of terror unleashed by the Usurping Imperialists in London, for three years. During those years they confirmed their adherence to their Republic in Municipal, Borough, County Council and other Local Elections in 1920 and a General Election of 1921.

The so-called *Decade of Remembrance* was planned by the Irish Government to lobotomise the Irish People. The generation which established Ireland's first Democratic Government, and heroically endured the terror unleashed upon them, was to be treated as imbecilic and criminal. The Imperial Government's terror was to be accorded as a service to Ireland, whether practised by Britishers or their Irish collaborators.

The Irish people were not impressed, to the chagrin of Varadkar, Charlie Flanagan, Micheal Martin, *The Irish Times* and its secretive, oathbound, British-established controlling "Trust".

On Saturday (January 2nd) *Irish Times* Reporter, Ronan McGreevy had already written "with some trepidation about the forthcoming commemoration of the centenary events in 1921", under the Heading, "A Truce, A Treaty, And The Beginnings Of Northern Ireland."

Jack Lane of the *Aubane History Society* emailed the Editor of *The Irish Times*

that day, but his letter was not printed in the paper.

Jack pointed out that there was no *Treaty* signed by Irish delegates in London in 1921. He cited the statement of the leader of the Irish delegation, Arthur Griffith, given to Dail Eireann on 10th December 1921: "It was "not a Treaty, and I got the official title; 'Articles of Agreement between Ireland and Great Britain'."

The full text of Jack Lane's letter follows below and may explain the trepidation of Ronan McGreevy and his Editor.

Donal Kennedy

Unpublished Letter To *Irish Times*

## Commemorations

Ronan McGreevy writes with some trepidation about the forthcoming commemorations of the centenary events in 2021 (*A Truce, a treaty and the beginnings of Northern Ireland*, 2 Jan. 2021).

When he includes what he calls 'a treaty' he means, of course 'The Articles of Agreement between Ireland and Great Britain' signed under the threat of renewed war on 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1921. That was not a treaty. It did not say it was a treaty and treaties are not signed between unequal participants. The Irish Republic was not recognised by the agreement and instead was treated as a Dominion of the British Empire. It entailed an oath of allegiance by one side to the other. These aspects of that Agreement make it oxymoronic to call it a treaty.

This was recognised at the time by the leader of the delegation that signed it, Arthur Griffith, who explained to the Dáil, that "it was not a Treaty, and I got the official title: 'Articles of Agreement between Ireland and Great Britain'." (Dáil debate, 10.1.1921.)

No doubt Mr McGreevy and others will return to the issue during the year. Could I suggest a New Year's resolution by him and all concerned that events are called by their correct names? That might be a great help in clarifying what exactly we will be commemorating.

Jack Lane

## ‘The Jail of Clonmel’.

“Kerrymen, pray for me.  
I love your soft voices,  
Nor thought I would never  
Return to you living.  
But our three heads will soon  
Be on spikes for a show  
In the snows of the night  
And all weathers that come.

If you go to Uíbh Ráthach  
take the news to my people  
I’m condemned on this sod  
And won’t live beyond Friday.  
Get the things for my wake  
And a fine coffin round me  
—Here’s an end of O Dónaill  
And pray for him always.”

“This is reputedly a song from the time of the agrarian troubles in the second half of the eighteenth century when the Whiteboys were engaged with trying to intimidate the landlords, and thereby stem the flow of evictions. A few of the verses, however, appear in substantially the same form in a poem dated c. 1754.”

*An Duanaire: 1600-1900: Poems of the Disposed.* Séan O Tuama with verse translations by Thomas Kinsella. The Dolmen Press. Portlaoise, Ireland. 1981.

“If the greater part of the past had not been, mercifully, forgotten, the effect upon our modern sensibility would be unbearable; it would not only be injustice and bloodshed that we should have to remember but the dismay, the apathy, the brutalising humiliations of people for whom there was no break.”

Elizabeth Bowen. *Bowen’s Court.* The Collins Press. Cork. 1998.

## Elizabeth Bowen.

### A Review of Patricia Laurence’s biography.

#### Part 9.

In the previous article for the *Irish Political Review*, I had the intention, as I stated, of reviewing Elizabeth Bowen’s war-time report titled *Eire* as it was re-produced in the *New Statesman* (No. 21, 12th April 1941), and which Neil Corcoran in his book, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Enforced Return*, Oxford University Press, 2004, attacked the Aubane Historical Society for seeming not to even have heard of.

Corcoran is not the only one to see this report *Eire* as being in defence of Ireland’s neutrality. Martin Mansergh and others all fall upon it as a testament to Bowen’s objective work while spying in Ireland. So it is good to have the full article in front of one while decoding its merits. In *The Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen* (edited by Hermione Lee, Virago Press, London 1986), there it is, published in a book long after Bowen’s death.

The Aubane Historical Society have kept a keen watch on any new documentation appearing in the historical files in the National Archives in Kew and have been so credited by some scholars using their research. The latter always tend to be either English or American—even if they

do have quibbles about minor matters, like typos or sometimes “careless editing”, as Patricia Laurence did. But no Irish academic would ever use the work of Aubane, unless it is the likes of Roy Foster whose sole intention seems to be common abuse. But where is the surprise in that?—even the Irish newspapers like to use similar methods, hoping to appear intellectually sophisticated but managing time and again to look like gormless eejits.

*Eire* appeared in 1941, which was a very important year for the British and their war effort. So, in this wartime issue of the *New Statesman*, it was left to Elizabeth Bowen to do the honours. Unfortunately she reverted back to her style as a novelist, rather than the unvarnished plain-spoken *Reports* that went to the Ministry of Information, and onwards to the Dominions Office, Foreign Office; and some to the Prime Minister’s Office—Winston Churchill.

To begin with, Bowen is at great lengths to show how “difficult” the Irish are being and how the British are beginning to see in Irish neutrality something that is:

“a passively hostile and in some senses rather inhuman act”.

Indeed the British are—

“puzzled by Eire’s apparent failure to realise the magnitude of the issue at stake, and puzzled to find a country that cared so much for freedom refusing to add her effort to freedom’s war.”

Those last two words could come from a George W. Bush/Tony Blair propaganda phrase! And then Bowen goes in for the tough love variety of persuasion: “*Pig-headedness, ostrichism, childishness, apathy as to the fate of civilisation and even a dishonourable timidity have been the charges levelled at Eire from this side*”. And Bowen goes on to lament our propensity for the grander things of life in war-time Ireland.

“The blaze of Dublin city lights (almost Broadway, after the darkness here) suggest an unfeeling ostentation, and hams, steaks, and butter are given luscious prominence by journalists who, on flying visits to Dublin, failed to obtain the desired interviews.”

Why then would the Irish Government allow these press journalist in, when travel restrictions were in such force, as Bowen later admits in this article? It does not make sense if the popular British press, as she admits, makes hay with such lurid depictions of our *grá* for fine dining, yet get no information from our own Press Office and our various Departments, including that of the Taoiseach Eamon de Valera. But of course it is propaganda that they are after and not plain facts.

But leave all this to one man to sort out, and in this case Sean O’Faolain is our man. (My proof reader once asked me why did I leave out all the Irish *síniú* over that writer’s name and I can only reply that that was the way he wrote it himself so I will have to honour his intentions.)

In O’Faolain’s memoir, ‘*Vive Moi*’ (this edition was published in 1993 by Sinclair Stevenson, London, with an Afterword by his daughter Julia O’Faolain, two years after the writer’s death), Sean, in a chapter headed ‘*War and No Peace*’, wrote that there was a breakfast table scene when—

“in our home in or around late 1940 or early 1941 in my normally cheerful domestic way I asked my beloved Eileen crossly why couldn’t I have a banana with my cereal. She replied dryly, ‘Because there is a war on’.”

But O’Faolain is a man whose accounts of things I would have to advise my readers carry a warning. He is given to—how shall I put this—well outright exaggeration. He owns that he called Bowen during their

very short affair ‘*Liz*’ or ‘*Eliza*’ and this is the most laughable *raméis*, because nobody, including her husband Alan or her lover of over thirty years, called her anything but *Elizabeth*. And O’Faolain tries to impress by claiming that “*as we lay-abed, passion-sated, Alan had rung from his office to tell her that the British fleet had been ordered to mobilise, ‘Which means war’.*” But that war had been declared by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on 3rd September 1939 (and not August as O’Faolain asserted), which was a Sunday, owing to the machinations of a war-mad element in Parliament—who were threatening to bring down the Government. And I doubt that Alan was anywhere near an office, but our hero will have his conquest with no qualms for either scorned husband or wife.

According to ‘*Vive Moi*’, O’Faolain met Elizabeth in Dublin only once during the War. It was in the famous restaurant, *Jammet’s* of Dublin. (There is a book of this name brought out in 2018 by The Lilliput Press). According to Egon Ronay—the famed French bible of French dining—*Jammet’s* was praised for “*being a legendary French dining establishment, with a formidable list of culinary delicacies and the numerous very great clarets*”. According to O’Faolain, he—

“blundered almost with my first words, saying with a gush of false gaiety as I shook out my table-napkin,  
‘Well, Elizabeth? So is it taking a world war to divorce us?’”

Bowen wisely ignored this frightful lapse of manners but it is her response that always gives me great pause. She replied:

“I have never before felt so completely a leader.”

And wasn’t that the truth of it! and she could say it to O’Faolain because he would never understand the heft and the reality that was behind those simple words. Even Eunan O’Halpin has difficulties with it—“*the lady of the big house*”—as he coyly interprets it.

O’Faolain did a lot of favours for Elizabeth Bowen which were to be useful to her. He invited her to meet with the *who’s who* of the Dublin *literati*. He took her to a very successful tea with the seventy-year-old W.B. Yeats: and was such a hit with the latter that his wife George begged Sean to stay longer so as to satisfy the old man. Sean thought George to be a “*procuress*” for her husband because she managed so many of his affairs.

But Bowen did not hit it off so successfully with his Republican brother, Jack Yeats, when in 1947, she was brought to meet him in his studio by Terence de Vere White. Yeats’s comment was caustic:

“The English who settled in Cork remained English. They liked it because it seemed like a part of England. She was afraid I’d expect her to buy a picture.”

Victoria Glendinning, who recounted this last meeting in her biography of Bowen, commented thus:

“A strange thing to say of a member of a family who had owned land in Cork and lived continuously on it for three hundred years. But that is how it was.”

And Glendinning also undercuts Bowen’s narrative of stringent war rations in London because she quotes from Charles Ritchie’s diary thus:

20th January 1942:  
“Elizabeth and I dined in Claridges ...”

22nd January 1942:  
“Dined with Elizabeth at her home. She always manages to have unheard-of quantities of smoked salmon...”

Bowen in her essay on *Eire* talks of the ordinary people of Britain not really knowing what *Eire* was up to but believing it to be no good. All of this was pushed by a huge propaganda affair which she coyly pretends to be totally unaware of—but we Irish have a lot to answer for, she nevertheless avers. But, for all her talk of a small “*thinking minority*” who wanted war with the British at their side, she has to acknowledge that the majority were behind Taoiseach Eamon de Valera and his Government.

“That the overwhelming wish of the people of *Eire* was in 1939, and is still, for neutrality is an indisputable fact. In Mr. de Valera’s declaration sounded the almost unanimous voice of his people—a people to whom the positive aspects of peace were newer, and seemed more essential, than Britain may realise. **The decision—of which the momentousness was recognised—was made on behalf of a people young in political life, not yet adult in citizenship, now only just on the upgrade after internal strife and in no sense fit or ready to enter war. But the decision was not wholly grounded in weakness: it had one aspect of an assertion of strength. It was *Eire*’s first major independent act**” (The blockings are mine—JH).

So according to Elizabeth Bowen, *Eire*, as she continually calls our country, was a new set-up. We were adolescents who didn’t know anything about war. We, who had our War of Independence and enough

Rebellions to our name that would almost shame the French—were a crowd of eejits. And, she asks, on our behalf, for Britain’s understanding for, as she states:

“All this should be kept in view when one asks oneself how the Irish, given their disposition, can embrace what seems from the outside such a colourless, timid and negative policy. Hopes of immunity... have been dashed with a sureness that ought to satisfy *Eire*’s most savage critics at this side. Any hopes of war-profit were early dispelled. The country grasped slowly the fact known to its Government—that not only would no one be richer for all this, but that one would need all one’s energies to survive it.”

With an Economic War with Britain and sanctions against us, the ordinary Irish knew very well what the stakes were!

And, of course, according to Bowen, our national name was mud to everyone—even America. But Bowen must surely be conscious of Sir John Maffey, the British Representative in Ireland, who warned Churchill time and again to go easy on the verbal attacking of Ireland because she still “*had those Irish-Americans behind her*”—even if it killed Maffey to say it—and it did! Bowen casually writes of the “*claustrophobia of the Irish mind*”, in such “*mad isolation*” without any idea of the reach of the Universal Catholic Church which, God knows, she surely found out when she visited the fluent French-speaking Archbishop John Charles McQuaid in Dublin, on a trumped-up excuse (social work!) for her war-time reports.

Bowen also attacked our censorship—which Séan O’Casey stated was “*trifling*” compared to that of Britain: and he should know, having come the proverbial cropper, when it came to that Burmese subject—George Orwell. The latter outed poor O’Casey as a Communist fellow-traveller, on his infamous List, with the result that the playwright lost a lot of work options in London, unknowing about being black-listed. The censorship which Elizabeth Bowen found most intolerable was that Irish soldiers fighting for Britain’s war were not being given their dues in neutral Ireland. The *Irish Times* editor, R.M. Smylie concurred with that viewpoint.

But she does stress that

“English books on the war and on wartime political theory are available at bookshops and libraries, and English newspapers and periodicals can be obtained on order. ‘Picture Post’ is in constant demand.”

“But, owing to the (still) common language, the British view of the war is



represented, while the German, except in random talk, is not. On the whole, Eire's sequestration from Europe is (for her) the principal ill of her neutrality; it may go to create a national childishness, a lack of grasp on the general scheme of the world."

What blinds Bowen is her lack of awareness of the Catholic element—after all Rome is always in touch as is Europe and indeed Britain, but she can never grasp that, and it is a blind-spot that damages her grasp of Ireland.

And it is what makes her analysis of the situation pertaining to Eire less sure and ultimately less knowledgeable. But then, that is why John Betjeman was drafted in by Nicholas Mansergh, Head of the Irish Section of the MOI, who also had the Anglo-Catholic Christopher Hollis (whose brother Sir Roger became head of M15) on standby. So all bases were covered by the British, whose penetration of Ireland was not left to one source, however brilliant an agent she was.

Bowen also acknowledged the

"compassionate feeling towards war victims... the Coventry raid, in particular, made a profound impression. (It must be remembered that the name Coventry has stood out in Eire ever since the IRA bomb affair, and the executions that followed.) The wish to house British children is more than purely compassionate; it embodies the hope for a future better relationship."

'If the children grew up together', a countryman said, 'two countries might grow to be better friends'."

She also accepted that

"German influence has, very largely, a cultural source. The Nazi encouragement of folk culture runs parallel to activities in Eire that date from the start of the Gaelic League, and the Nazi revivals of racial history and myth, the organisations of Heimkunst and song and dance are sometimes held up as a model."

But what stops the Irish is "*their temperamental dislike of regimentation in any form*".

Certainly, militarism is for the English temperament but she cannot state that too directly.

Elizabeth Bowen then directly contradicts the Ireland of the "*Broadwaylights*", and succulent "*hams and butter*" that she wrote at the beginning of her article. Now she confesses that:

"Shortage and insecurity are felt everywhere... luxuries are out of the question, and Eire must look to herself for her

necessities... Outside the huge extension of compulsory tillage there is a drive for digging. Coal has had to be replaced by turf. The cost of living goes up. Tea is to be closely rationed—and one has to know Eire to know how much this is felt. There is an outbreak of foot and mouth disease—the worst this century. The stoppage of petrol, by emptying shopping towns, hits trade all round. Everywhere there is sombreness, and anxiety. But there is, with this, a growth of the sense of responsibility, an abandonment of the idea of privilege."

She then talks of—

"Parish Councils and co-operation... factions have come together and national unity is more than a phrase. The army shows, with regard to the size of the population, imposing figures, the size and zeal of the Local Security Force—whose junior group has been taken over for training by the Army command—shows citizen readiness to defend the land. While the rights of Eire's neutrality may be questioned, the conviction behind it must be believed."

Thus Bowen's report shows the true nature of what was going on in Ireland. But at the beginning she sets us up for

opprobrium. And one cannot but dispute that there is a great disparity between the beginning of this report and the ending. And I think that the censor was heavily involved here, as with her other reports that were sent out to papers, and periodicals etc. Other reports of hers saw great changes so it is only natural to suspect something similar with this article.

Martin Mansergh has written extensively about Bowen and her stand-out ringing endorsement of our neutrality. His ire is always directed at the Aubane Historical Society and especially Brendan Clifford and Jack Lane. But high politics is at play here. And Martin knows this only too well—after all, his father was Nicholas Mansergh—the Head of the Irish Division of the Ministry of Information. Surely now is the time for him to release the papers of that time and set to rest all doubts about the goings on of this very important time in our history. In the meantime, I will have to continue with my examination of the biography in question and the other books read during covid restriction.

**Julianne Herlihy** ©

To be continued.

**Book Review: *Great Britain Against Russia In The Caucasus* by Pat Walsh**  
(published by Offenbach Manzara Verlag 2020).

## **Imperial Britain's Great Games: *Russia, Turkey And The Caucasus***

In terms of timing, the gods smiled on Dr Pat Walsh. His monumental volume provides invaluable context to the understanding of the recent war of liberation of Nagorno-Karabakh by the Azerbaijani state. But the book is much more than that.

In fact the book is about several different but interconnected processes: the rise and decline of the Russian Empire; the emergence of Bolshevism; the decline of the Ottoman Empire; the decline of Persia; the fates of the peoples of the Caucasus over three centuries; and, last but not least, the fate of the British Empire before and after the First World War. Dr. Walsh weaves these interconnected processes into a coherent narrative with a professional historian's respect for truth as well as intelligibility. The book is also written in a simple and engaging style and, despite its length, 894 pages before notes and references, it is a 'page turner'.

The book is an exploration of a topic which few people, probably including

most historians, will know much about, apart from fragments, but which has had, and continues to have, huge importance for our affairs today. It is organised into ten Chapters, taking the reader from the Russian expansion into the Caucasus of the early Eighteenth Century to the Bolshevik takeover in the early Twentieth Century. Ten chapters in a book of this length and scope look daunting, but Dr. Walsh has organised the material in each chapter into roughly nine sections with clear headings, so finding your way around the book and referring back for clarification is easy to do. He uses a wide range of sources based on all the major 'players' involved and one of the joys of the book is that he is able to show how matters appear, depending on whether you are a Brit, a Russian, an Armenian or a Muslim living in what is now Azerbaijan.

It cannot be stressed enough that understanding different points of view is essential to understanding complex historical processes of the kind described

in this book. This book does it very well, and the use of multiple sources is a great aid. Particularly noteworthy is the extensive use of British sources, which show a view of the world often at odds with what is taught in British schools.

It is difficult to know where to begin to describe the interconnected processes which Dr. Walsh describes, but perhaps the expansion of two Empires is the place to start. The British Empire was primarily sea-based and began its expansion in earnest towards the end of the Seventeenth Century. Perhaps its crowning achievement was the acquisition and plunder of India during the Eighteenth Century. There was never any question of removing or killing the Indian population, as in North America or Australia: the society had to be governed by a stratum of British soldiers, sailors and administrators, assisted by a co-opted class of Indian administrators and minor royalty and aristocracy, together with additional manpower provided by indigenous people recruited into the British army. The overall culture of the society never became British except in a superficial way.

The British were aware of the fragility of their hold over India and especially sensitive to the close approach of a rival power, in this case Russia. It became an imperative to limit Russian expansion to the South Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, so that India could not come under threat. Thus was born the 'Great Game' of rivalry between Russia and Britain in the Black Sea and the mountains of Asia, which continued until shortly before the advent of the First World War. The threat arose because the limited and reluctant consent that the Indian population had given to British rule could easily be disrupted by the arrival of a major land power on India's doorstep.

But Britain was also a major European Power with interests to look after in Europe. The foremost of these interests was to ensure that no European Power came to dominate Europe. The name of the game was the 'balance of power'. The dominant Power of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century, France, was humbled in 1815. One of Britain's allies in the Napoleonic Wars, Russia, soon became a cause for concern for Britain's ruling class, as it continued the expansion begun under Catherine the Great through the Caucasus and the southern Asian steppes, thus coming uncomfortably close to India. There was an abortive attempt to clip Russia's wings in the Crimean War of the 1850s

in which France was now enlisted as an ally, along with the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire, in retreat on various fronts, was under pressure both along the southern Caucasus and in its possessions in eastern Europe. In both cases, Russia was a major source of that pressure. The southern Caucasus, including what is now Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, had come under Russian control in the mid Nineteenth Century at the expense of the Ottomans and the Persians. The dispersed Armenian people were an important agent of Russian expansion and enjoyed the favour of the Tsars.

Britain's 'other nightmare' (that is apart from the threat to India) was the possible acquisition by Russia of a warm water port, Constantinople, which would enable it to project naval power into the Mediterranean, an intolerable outcome from the British point of view. All efforts were bent towards supporting the Ottomans to prevent this happening, right up until the early years of the Twentieth Century.

In the meantime the German nation was beginning to consolidate itself into a central European nation state. Not only that, but it began also to emerge as a major manufacturing and trading Power. From the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the rise of Germany gradually grew to preoccupy the British elite and Germany was seen as the main threat to the Balance of Power in Europe, supplanting the concerns about Russia. It was now seen to be necessary to use Russia as a counterweight to Germany and that also meant that Britain's relationship with the Ottomans had also to change from ally to adversary, in order to accommodate Russia's naval ambitions. The 'balance of power' and the 'great game' were no longer in sync, since Russia's gains against the Ottomans and the Persians would threaten the outworkings of the British Empire in India. This introduced an incoherence into Britain's foreign policy.

The First World War proved to be the ruin of the Russian Empire and, in its disintegration, it started to vacate the southern Caucasus from 1917 onwards, while its front in Europe against the Central European Powers also disintegrated. The British worked desperately to keep Russia in the war, but the disintegration of the Russian Empire was too far advanced. The Bolsheviks, as Stephen Kotkin shows in his biography of Stalin, took over an empty shell. There would have been little resistance to the Bolsheviks, had it not been for British attempts to overthrow

them through very substantial support for Kornilov, Kolchak and Denikin, the main White Russian protagonists.

Meanwhile, the British were also working to complete the ruin of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire, namely what is now contemporary Turkey. This involved the invasion of northern Iran and Azerbaijan. However, the Turks recovered and allowed the Azerbaijanis breathing space to consolidate themselves as the British, feeling overstretched retreated after less than a year. With the collapse of Denikin in 1920, the Bolsheviks entered and took over the southern Caucasus incorporating that region into the Soviet Union.

This brief summary scarcely does justice to the range of Dr. Walsh's work. In particular, the role of the Armenians in the attack on Anatolia and their attempts, through savage ethnic cleansing, to create a national territory for themselves in Anatolia, Georgia and Azerbaijan (ultimately in vain) are covered in detail.

The self-destruction of the Russian Empire through an ill-judged alliance with Britain is also accounted for in detail. It is difficult to pick out the main theme of such a complex narrative but for me the most valuable parts of the book lies in the account of how the Russian Empire disintegrated and how Britain tried in vain to keep it in the war and overthrow the Bolsheviks. But above all perhaps, it helps the reader to understand the complexities of current affairs in the southern Caucasus where a new Great Game is being played out: where the United States and its allies are attempting to undermine the position of Russia in the area by the promotion of 'colour revolutions'. No longer is the concern with Russian expansion, but an attempt is being made to undermine the integrity of the Russian state by making mischief on its southern flank. Their abject failure in Georgia in 2008 and in Armenia in 2020 is in part due to the profound Russian understanding of the history and peoples of the area, dating from Russian Empire times but continued throughout the Soviet era and into the statecraft of Vladimir Putin and Sergei Lavrov.

The book is very well referenced and Dr. Walsh uses a variety of sources, not least British sources, giving a sobering insight into the scheming, treachery and general skulduggery that it takes to run and expand a world Empire, entailing a kind of 'control freakery' over any number of remote parts of the world where people, like the Azerbaijanis, just wanted to get on with their lives. The book reminds us

that empire-building costs the lives of innocents. In the case of the British Empire, all the scheming and carnage was in vain as overstretch, overly complicated conspiracies, and sheer bungling led to disaster.

I wouldn't though like to mislead the prospective reader into thinking that the book is all about geopolitics. One of Dr Walsh's great abilities as a historian is to knit together local and regional events with geopolitics. Very often the local is important to the geopolitical. The origins and rise of the Armenian tribal-nationalist Dashnak movement, dealt with in great

detail in Chapters I and II is a case in point. Likewise the careful account of the history and ethnic make up of what is now Azerbaijan is discussed in detail in the earlier parts of the book and sets the scene for the formation of the Azerbaijani state and its dealings with the British, Armenians, White Russians and Bolsheviks.

This book should be compulsory reading in British and Irish universities. Somehow, though, I doubt that it will be. That should not stop the readers of the *Irish Political Review* from going out to buy it though, great value at 24.90 euro.

**Chris Winch**

### Casement 'Black Diaries'

## Secret Provenance

There are now seven conflicting versions of the provenance of the Black Diaries and all seven come from State Officials. First among these is the head of CID, Basil Thomson, who generously provided four conflicting versions during his lifetime. Next is Casement's prosecutor, Attorney General F.E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead, whose version was published in 1926. Then there is Home Secretary R.A.B. Butler who furnished the 'official' version in 1959 to the House of Commons. Lastly, there is an ingenious version allegedly proposed in 1916 by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Charles Mathews.

One credible version from a reliable source would be sufficient to close the matter in a court of law. Two equally credible versions would cause problems for the court. Seven versions would be sufficient to close the matter for the court; none would be considered as credible. Yet the Black Diaries do exist and therefore have a provenance. But it is not the provenance given by any of the four state officials.

The question which imposes itself is: why there are multiple versions. How is it possible that the officials— Thomson, Smith and Mathews, all of whom were in a position to verify the provenance in 1916—were unable to confirm the true provenance?

The answer which imposes itself is that the bound volumes had no provenance that could be verified in 1916. This leads to the absurd conclusion that, *if the bound diaries were in police custody* in 1916, these three top officials did not know where

they had come from. To dispose of the absurdity, one is compelled to conclude that the diaries were not in police custody. But this leads to yet another absurdity: the typescripts were certainly in police custody and these were allegedly copies of diaries which were not in their custody. There is only one way to dispose of the second absurdity; the typescripts were not copies of the bound diaries which had no provenance at that time because they did not exist at that time.

### THE OFFICIAL VERSION

Since the only version supported by documents is Home Secretary Butler's, this merits examination before the other six versions. These documents are the interrogation transcript HO 144/1636 Ref 20261 which is incomplete and MEPO 2/10672, an official but incomplete list of contents of trunks wherein the diaries were allegedly found. The list of contents is dated July 1916 and indicates that the trunks were delivered to Scotland Yard upon police request on the morning of 25th April. The transcript records the arrival of the trunks at the end of Casement's third interrogation, 25th April. This version of the delivery of the trunks was recorded by the police in 1916 but remained secret until 1959, when it became the British Government's official version of provenance. However, the list of contents (MEPO 2/10672), dated July 1916, which records the alleged 25th April delivery, was kept secret until its release in June 2001.

A number of problems at once arise with this version. Chief among these is

that Thomson himself, the leading player in these events, seemed later unaware that the trunks were delivered on 25th April; all four of his published accounts state that the trunks were in police hands before that date. If Thomson is right, the police papers are false and in particular the sentences attributed to Thomson in the interrogation transcript were never spoken by him.

A second consideration supports this; on 14th June Casement sent a note to his solicitor Gavan Duffy, advising that he had possessions stored at his former lodgings in Ebury Street. But, according to the transcript, Casement knew seven weeks earlier on 25th April that these trunks had been brought to Scotland Yard on that day when, moreover, he allegedly consented to their forced opening.

A third consideration indicates that the DPP did not see the police papers referring to delivery of the trunks since his version of provenance indicates that the diaries were purchased by the authorities.

Therefore there is evidence that the police version of delivery on 25th April was kept secret in 1916 from both Thomson and the DPP. An impartial enquirer would want to know why these key players were deceived and by whom. The enquirer would also ask why, if they were not deceived, they both invented conflicting and contradictory versions of provenance.

The internal stresses in the official version are such that it cannot resist our best efforts to render it credible.

### UNOFFICIAL VERSIONS

The DPP, Mathews, wrote to Serjeant Sullivan twice in 1916 in relation to the diaries, with a view to a joint plea of Guilty but Insane (meaning that the Defence would submit such a defence, and that the Prosecution would accept it). According to Duffy, Sullivan did not respond. Many years later Sullivan was interviewed by historian Robert Kee and related that the DPP had informed him that the diaries had been stolen from Casement by Christensen during the 1914 sea-trip from New York to Oslo. At some later moment the diaries were purchased by the British authorities. There is no record anywhere of such a theft nor of the later transaction and nothing to support such an improbable version of provenance. It is improbable that the DPP would have invented such a story without a purpose; if invented, its purpose was to convince Sullivan of the authenticity of the diaries and thus persuade him to agree to the joint plea.

But the significance of this version is



that the DPP was in 1916 unaware of the police version of provenance, a version which some might consider as somewhat more credible on account of supporting police documents. If the DPP was aware of the police version, it remains to be explained why he did not relate that version to Sullivan.

Casement's prosecutor, Smith, produced a version of provenance which surpasses that of the DPP for its outlandish improbability. In his 1926 book *Famous Trials of History*, Smith relates that the diaries were found in Casement's coat pocket at Banna Strand after arriving from the German submarine. The inherent absurdity of this does not merit comment. Yet Smith was far from a fool. But it seems that he too was not aware, ten years after the trial, of the police version.

Yet he was aware of the police version in 1916, or was aware of a version of that version. This is demonstrated by the fact that, when the police typescripts were passed by his Junior, Humphreys, to Defence Counsel Artemus Jones, the former told Jones that the diaries had been found by the police among Casement's luggage from Ebury Street.

#### PROTECTIVE SECRECY

It seems impossible to resolve the questions which the seven versions provoke because none can be externally verified. The impartial enquirer risks falling into a vortex of futile speculations. The police version of 1916 became public and official only in 1959, but it did not thus become automatically true. If it was false in 1916, it remains false today. And, if false, it does not eliminate any of the other six versions which were produced by state officials.

It is the fact that there are conflicting versions which requires explanation. In the years of official silence, 1916 to 1959, state officials produced seven versions. This alone is evidence that the State had no documentary evidence sufficient to prove that the incriminating documents came into state possession in 1916. There is indeed nothing to demonstrate externally that the documents believed by many in 1916 to be in state possession were indeed in state possession at that time.

It is essential to discover what circumstance in 1916 made it possible for so many versions to come into being then and in the following years. *Secrecy was the sufficient circumstance*. It follows that the reasons for this secrecy need to be ascertained. Secrecy is a protective strategy. That which is protected would, if disclosed, compromise one's position and render one

vulnerable. There was no secrecy in 1916 about the *alleged* provenance of the unseen diaries; it was said they had been found in Casement's luggage from Ebury Street. Rumour took over at once and spread the alleged provenance. There was, however, *secrecy about material evidence* for this allegation. No documentary or witness evidence was produced. Most crucially, nor were the diaries produced. The secrecy regarding material evidence for provenance was therefore a necessity and that which rendered it necessary was the immediate absence of material evidence. In due course the evidence (transcript HO 144/1636 Ref 20261 and MEPO 2/10672) was manufactured but it remained secret in 1959 when these false supporting documents were not produced. They were released many years after 1959.

This secrecy created both lasting confusion and suspicion. The confusion is evident in both the police papers and the DPP files of the period, which give the distinct impression of a story being assembled over time by several persons acting on *imprecise verbal* instructions.

#### PULP FICTION

The implausible story in the interrogation transcript of the missing keys to the locked trunks has already been examined in Chapter 10 of my book, *Anatomy of a lie*; it is a story which belongs to the slush pile of unpublishable, third-rate crime fiction. By itself, the presence of this pulp fiction element demonstrates that no trunks were *delivered* to Scotland Yard on 25th April 1916.

Since the trunks certainly existed, it follows that they (the trunks) were already in police hands before that date. Thomson himself confirms this in *all four* of his versions of provenance. For example, in 1922 he published the following in his book *Queer People*: "Some months earlier, when we first had evidence of Casement's treachery, his London lodgings had been visited and his locked trunks removed to Scotland Yard". In 1939 Thomson published another version in his memoirs *The Scene Changes* in which the trunks are in police custody before the first interrogation and have been opened. Superintendent Quinn enters and places a manuscript volume on Thomson's table which has been 'abstracted' from Casement's luggage.

It follows that the secret police version was false in 1916, false in 1959 and remains false today. Smith's 1926 version is self-evidently preposterous and without supporting evidence. The version related to Robert Kee by Sullivan and attributed

to the DPP is also without supporting evidence and is probably among Sullivan's many inventions and deceptions.

The elimination of the official version of 1959 also disposes of the police version and the interrogation transcript of 1916. This leaves Thomson's four published versions. It has been argued and demonstrated that the trunks were in police possession before 25th April. *This does not entail that diaries were in those trunks*. Indeed the fabrication of the story of keys to locked trunks on 25th April demonstrates firstly that the trunks had already been opened and secondly that nothing had been *said or recorded* about incriminating diaries.

It might be argued that the trunks were in police custody months before the interrogations and that the diaries had been examined but that nothing was done with them so as to avoid suspicions, then and later, that the diaries had been planted in the trunks. But that decision, taken months earlier, to remain silent about the diaries would have compelled the police to an indefinite silence since suspicions of planting the diaries could be raised at any future time with or without Casement's capture. Such suspicions did in fact arise after April 1916. Those suspicions would have been substantially dispelled by display of the bound volumes, an event which did not happen in 1916.

#### THOMSON'S VERSIONS

- 1 – *The Times*, 15 November, 1921. During the first interrogation a police officer "who had been sent to search Casement's old lodgings" requests keys to trunks he had brought from Ebury Street at an unspecified time.
- 2 – *Queer People*, 1922. Police searched Casement's lodgings "some months earlier".
- 3 – *English Life*, March 1925. A detective interrupts the first interrogation to ask for keys to trunks brought months earlier by landlord.
- 4 – *The Scene Changes*, 1939. During the first interrogation Superintendent Quinn places a manuscript volume on Thomson's table. Thomson's location that the luggage "was lying in the Special Branch office" indicates it had been there for some time.

Thomson's versions contradict the police papers, which clearly state the delivery of trunks on 25th April. They also contradict the transcript dialogue about arrival of the trunks at end of that 3rd interrogation. However, it is not credible

that his four versions are 100% false. If his versions are entirely false, it means that Thomson was unable or unwilling after 1916 to relate a single true fact about the provenance of the trunks and diaries for the 23 years before his death.

It is necessary to distinguish between the provenance of the trunks and that of the Black Diaries. Casement himself on 14th June acknowledged in writing that he had left property at Ebury Street and also at Allison's depot in Farringdon Street. He did not know that the property stored at both addresses had already been taken into police custody before 14th June. He did not know because no-one had told him. Nonetheless, the official transcript of his third interrogation on 25th April contains a brief alleged dialogue between him and Thomson about the trunks. Here is that dialogue.

A.C.C.[Thomson]: "Have you got some trunks at 50 Ebury Street? I propose having them down and examined."

Sir R.C.: "There's nothing in them."

[After a seven minute interval]

A.C.C.[Thomson]: "Sir, Roger, your trunks are here but there are no keys."

Sir R.C.: "Break them open."

Thomson's four versions of provenance contradict the transcript dialogue about trunks and the police papers in this essential detail—none of the latter confirm delivery of the trunks by Germain on 25th April. Indeed his versions explicitly deny such delivery *on that day* while three versions deny that the trunks were *delivered at any time by anyone*. From this it follows that Thomson was not the author of the transcript and was not party to its preparation.

Casement's written statement of 14th June concerning his luggage at Ebury Street demonstrates that the above dialogue never took place. It follows that the transcript dialogue is a fiction and that the words above attributed to Thomson were never spoken by him. Equally it follows that the words above attributed to Casement were never spoken by him. The official version of provenance is thus demonstrated as false. It was invented weeks, perhaps months, later in order to conceal police possession of the trunks many months before April 1916. The only credible circumstance which made that concealment necessary is that no incriminating diaries were found in the trunks *at any time*.

Certainly Thomson's versions contain

lies. The most evident and clumsy deceit in two versions is that referring to keys to open the trunks. A second deceit refers to the alleged display of a manuscript volume during the first interrogation—before the trunks had allegedly been delivered on 25th April according to the transcript. The falsity of the keys story is demonstrated on page 144 of *Anatomy Of A Lie*.

#### UNKNOWN PROVENANCE

That the bound volumes have a secret provenance cannot be reasonably doubted. But secrets are devised and protected by people. The multiple contradictory versions of provenance proposed by state officials acted to protect that secret during the period of official silence. In 1959, Butler *appeared* to reveal the secret at last, but what he revealed was the police version which was created to conceal not the true provenance but that in 1916 *there was no provenance at all*. What Butler presented to MPs was a demonstrably false version of provenance, unsupported by verifiable *external* evidence. Thereafter, what had to be protected was the official version originating in false police documents which were not released to accompany Butler's revelation. Attention at once shifted to the authentic *existence* of the bound volumes which could at last be examined by selected

persons. This was a masterful piece of legerdemain with a quasi-hypnotic effect which still endures. The true provenance of the bound diaries is still unknown and from this it follows that their authorship is also unknown.

#### Opinion & imprinting

There are two principal paths by which so many people have reached the conclusion that the Black Diaries are authentic. The first of these is the path of misinformed opinion. The second is that of irrationality. In the first case they have been confused and deceived by some of the principal biographers whom they have trusted. And they have done no research of their own which would alert them to the systematic deceit. The second case is more complex, because it is inherited from both personal and collective culture, from moral and emotional needs, from an established protective *weltanschauung* often only half-understood by the individual. This imprinting functions like an acquired instinct driven by fear and desire, not by reason. One may tread both paths at the same time to reach the same destination—falsehood. "*It is useless to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he was never reasoned into*" : Jonathan Swift.

Paul Hyde

## Two Irishmen Remembered

"*The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there*" is a well-known quotation. And I might add: Some of us were foreigners in that country and the language we spoke is hard to understand now. There were indications many of us ignored, as leftist militants, that our game was over.

Back in the Summer of 1955, one Saturday mid-day, I and a friend decided to pep up the presence of the CPGB in London's Kilburn High Road, by borrowing the Party soapbox—a bespoke-made platform—from a Party member. We went to his house to collect it. Before leaving he asked us were we serious about *rallying the masses*. According to him it was all over and not to return the platform, but keep it, or give it to another *enthusiast*. He had been the Party Branch Secretary in the area and was a Ford factory shop steward in Dagenham. We dismissed him as having sold out.

We made our way to the nearby Kilburn

High Road and barked out our speeches to the passing shoppers, passing, because no one stopped to listen. But there must have been a time when they did stop to listen, otherwise: why the platform so lovingly made with its steps and dais? That could have been just after 1945 with the Soviet victory over Germany, and the rush to emulate that state with a free health service and social benefits to put off any social unrest. But we carried on our Party duties.

Then it was 1956 and I'm on the picket line of a large building site in the City of London. It was the beginning of a 13-week strike. One of our numbers had fallen down an unguarded lift shaft and had broken his back. The building company said it was his own fault, because, as a building worker, he should by now know the ins and out of a building site and its dangers.

It was the time of the Suez Crisis with Israel, France and Britain invading Egypt.

On the picket line we discussed the Crisis and the English workers backed their country's military endeavors. I thought at the time. "Here they are supporting a strike called by the Works Committee, whose members are either in the CPGB or are fellow-travelers, how can they think like this? We were on the way to losing 13 week's wages. Some of the single men had already lost their digs, not being entitled to any benefits, and were living in either a Rowton House (homeless hostel for men) or in a *spike*—a hostel for the really badly off, in Drury Lane.

Yet they won't join the Communist Party and they don't like you running down the monarchy. They also don't like the sudden heavy influx of workers from the Caribbean, now known as the Windrush Generation. "Why don't we like being swamped by people we don't understand?" One said to me in amazement.

There were already some black carpenters on our job but the same critics of them kept their views to themselves. They had to or the Works Committee would have expelled them from the site. It was the management who wanted separate lavatories for the black workers and that was opposed by the Works Committee, and voted on and carried without one voice in opposition. Even Cal Maguire, an Irish carpenter, and secret member of The British Union of Fascist kept quiet. The management was composed of personnel who had come back after carrying out big building contracts in South Africa.

Surely the few black workers would join the CPGB? The answer was no. They were figuring out how a manual worker could get a mortgage on a house. And please don't go on about white South Africa or they might get the blame.

But they didn't know what they were missing. If you wanted to become middle-class, the CPGB was the place to be. It had so many academics and top lawyers as members. It was like being at university. So many meetings had lectures on various subjects. The communist-run Unity Theatre was waiting for you, as was the then Party publisher, Lawrence and Wishart: ready, willing and able to publish you!

Having problems with your landlord? Then see the top Party lawyer in the City of London. If you were off your head, you could see a Party psychiatrist, who was a secret Freudian, unknown to the Party, which would have strongly disapproved. Alan Bush, Britain's leading composer, but overlooked because of his politics, man-

aged the Workers' Musical Association. He taught singing and how to read music.

When the Connolly Association decided to have a march from London to Birmingham in the 1960s, it was Alan Bush and his friends who put you up all the way along the route. You could be overwhelmed by it all. You didn't have their backgrounds. You were a manual worker but they were trying to help you, poor you. An academic might take you aside to get an idea of what kind of a life you were living. You told him and he would say: "*But that's not you. Can't you do something better.*" I know they meant well and they made you feel you had met a different England. But if that advice was followed by everyone, there would be no working-class left in the Party.

Meanwhile back at the building site, before the 13-week strike, Cal Maguire, the secret fascist party member, was putting forward the idea of workers' control. I didn't understand any of it at the time. To me and the rest of the workforce he was asking us to collaborate with the management. He was the equal of Brian Behan, an EC member of the CPGB. They were both magnificent orators. Maguire wanted workers' control to start on this site. He wanted a representative of each trade to join him in meeting the management. There was a promise of a pay rise and better conditions.

I remember someone asking him why the company was obviously withholding better pay and conditions. The answer was that the Works Committee had to go. That was when the lights went out. Previously someone had been at the master switchboard and when the lights went on again someone would be lying unconscious on the floor, having been punched, after saying something disagreeable.

But Behan had the lights on again before someone was about to assault Maguire. Behan believed that, the longer Maguire spoke, the more he would reveal himself as a company man. Maguire was continually in and out of the office though he hadn't been elected for any purpose nor held any position in the union-organised site. He was just a speaker at meetings, mesmerising at times on a number of subjects, a Gregori Rasputin to this Soviet building site in the middle of London's financial district.

Brian Behan had found out, through research with the editorial staff of the *Daily Worker* about Maguire's member-

ship of the British Union of Fascists. He was altogether a mystery. He changed his accent in order not to sound Irish but key words like *turd* for third or *tief* for thief he couldn't overcome. When asked what part of Ireland he came from he would say *Paddington*.

Maguire was off the tools now and sitting at a desk in the office. He still wore his work clothes, looking like a down-and-out, and with the arse out of his trousers, as noted by Behan.

After the 13-week strike, which we won on behalf of the injured workmate, we were penniless and demoralised. The black workers, still looking for that mortgage, had left as soon as the strike had been called, and now many of the workers were starting to drift away. The Works Committee was collapsing and Maguire had been elected a shop steward, and with that the rest of the militants left the site. The management then began sacking those who were left, at Maguire's instigation. But it was a hollow victory for him. It was just he and the management operating workers' control. No one else wanted to know about it.

Another attempt at workers' control happened at the building of the new Vauxhall car factory at Luton. There was a full-time Union official there, a German, with a desk alongside the management. Being German alone would have put him under suspicion. When he too spoke at a meeting, asking for cooperation between management and workforce, everyone walked out. We thought of him as typical supporter of Hitler, an automaton, probably sent from Germany. Most likely that was an unfair description of the man.

Behan, in the meantime, decided there was no future in being proud of being an unskilled labourer. He studied, and became a lecturer in the print industry. He was later to say if he was free he would marry Thatcher. Reality about the English working-class at last? But then his own country produced the Workers' Party, which became quite influential at one time and where did that lead to—Eoghan Harris!

Maguire went on to become a full-time organiser for the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers. He held that job for three months before collapsing and dying of a heart attack in 1957. He was 32 years old.

**Wilson John Haire**



## The *Irish Times* And The Protestant Mother And Baby *Bethany Home*

### Editor's Foreword

In addition to information contained in Dr. Niall Meehan's censored letters to the *Irish Times*, which appear here, *Phoenix* magazine in Dublin reveals that Ralph Walker, *Irish Times* Chairman from 1959-73, was deeply involved in the Bethany Home. He concocted highly questionable 'adoption agreements' that were part and parcel of the apparatus of social control and coercion of unmarried mothers.

In one 'agreement' Walker, nephew of Bethany's residential secretary Hettie Walker, claimed to be a mother's 'attorney'. The 1951 formal-looking 'agreement', and a subsequent 1954 legal adoption, was built on lies and threats. The 'agreements' were in the name of Hayes and Sons, Walker's legal firm that represents the *Irish Times* to this day. Astonishingly, the company today claims it has no files on the mothers and children, many still alive, dispatched from the Bethany Home. That is despite the fact that, according to a letter by Niall Meehan in the *Sunday Times* in 2014, the son of a matron of the Bethany Home, up to when it closed in 1972, was a senior partner in Hayes. The nuns that ran Bessborough, the peripheral subject of Meehan's third letter, at least have some documentation. Hayes has none, it says.

These revelations throw a new light on the censored letters published below. Initially, the *Irish Times* said Irish society in general should be "ashamed" of what happened to unmarried mothers and their children. Is the *Irish Times* ashamed? When writing his next editorial on the subject, the Editor should gaze into a mirror and try (however hard it may be) to feel some.

### THREE EXCLUDED LETTERS AND NOTES BY NIALL MEEHAN

#### INTRODUCTION

I sent three letters to the *Irish Times* between 13th and 21st January on the *Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Report* (which was published on 12th January).

I researched in 2010, for the first time, 219 deaths of children from the Protestant ethos Bethany Home, in unmarked graves in Dublin's Mount Jerome Cemetery. The discovery was publicised in the media then. The Commission reports a total 262 dead Bethany children, we in the Bethany survives campaign group say 278.

In 2014 Catherine Corless reported up to 800 dead infants in a burial ground in Tuam, controlled by Roman Catholic Bons Secours nuns. A 9th January *Irish Times* profile of Corless reported,

"In April 2014, she saw an article by Alison O'Reilly in the Mail on Sunday about an unmarked plot in Dublin's Mount Jerome Cemetery where children who had died at the city's Bethany home were buried."

Corless contacted O'Reilly. Reaction to Corless's discovery forced the Government to set up the *Mother and Baby Home Commission of Investigation*.

In the course of my research I explained problems with *Irish Times* coverage of abuse in Protestant settings. Some of it is noted below. For that reason, I did not fully expect to be contacted by the paper for comment, even though the *Commission Report* covered the Bethany Home and another institution under the direct control of the Church of Ireland.

I did expect that a letter would be

published; pointing out information not covered in *Irish Times* reports. In the first three days after publication of the Mother and Baby Homes Report all of the lead letters were on that subject and almost all criticised the Roman Catholic Church. Much of the criticism I agree with. But there is another side of the story, as detailed in the letters below.

#### FIRST unpublished letter 13 January 2021

Bethany Home: 'No exception' to high rates of infant mortality in Protestant-run institution, Jack Horgan-Jones, *Irish Times*, 13 January 2021.

Jack Horgan Jones' summary (January 13th) of the Mother and Baby Homes Commission chapter on the Bethany Home refers to its matron's belief in 1929, that "children of unmarried mothers tended to be weak and prone to illness".

This rationalisation for death and neglect was promoted by the state's Deputy Chief Medical Adviser, Dr. Winslow Sterling Berry. He said, after visiting Bethany for the second of three times in 1939, that "it is well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children are delicate and marasmic from their birth".

Dr. Sterling Berry undermined observations by an inspector of boarded out children, Moira Kennedy-O'Byrne, and by the Rathdown Board of Guardians that Bethany children suffered consistent debilitating neglect. The information was included in an October 2015 submission to the Commission and is repeated in its

report. The state medical official uttered his remarks at a time, 1935-47, when 61% of child deaths in Bethany occurred. In 2010 I identified 219 of these deaths. The Commission reports 43 more cases of infant mortality.

Dr. Sterling Berry observed that the reason Bethany attracted attention was because it attempted to convert Roman Catholic mothers and wanted their children brought up Protestant. He forced Bethany to stick to its side of the sectarian divide. His efforts were successful, attention went away and child mortality increased yet further.

The state is responsible for death and neglect in Bethany and in other institutions. Mortality and illness that was recorded officially was rationalised as a product of child-birth outside of the institution of marriage.

A final point, the "civil servant" in your report, who monitored Bethany's Hettie Walker advertising children "in English Protestant Newspapers" and taking them there, was the same Alice Litster profiled by Harry McGee. Besides mentioning Litster, Kennedy O'Byrne and Sterling Berry, the 2015 Bethany Home submission emphasised the importance of the files of an Inspector of Boarded Out Children, Fidelma Clandillon. The Commission subsequently "issued a direction to produce these files", consisting of over 30,000 pages, to the departments of health and of children. The files were removed some years ago by the government from the National Archives and should be returned.

## Note on SECOND letter

The second letter dealt with a major error in the paper's reporting of remarks on the Mother and Baby Home report by President Michael D Higgins on 15th January (online) and 16 January (print).

Unobtrusively, the paper corrected the error on 19th January (online) while noting it on 20th January (print). They did this because I sent them an email early on 19th January, with the word '*complaint*' in the subject line, implying reference to the Press Ombudsman.

I did that because previously my notifications were ignored. I alerted the paper first on 15th January, when the error appeared online, then again early on Saturday 16th January, with the unpublished letter below.

After correction, the paper did not think to alert (or indeed to thank) me.

It may be relevant to note that I have not had a letter published in the *Irish Times* since the Press Ombudsman persuaded the paper to publish one on 28th January 2020, two months after submission.

It concerned a major statistical error in the 2009 '*Ryan Report*' on institutional child abuse. **Ryan estimated over 170,000 children in industrial schools. The correct figure is about 40,000.** I brought the error to the attention of the *Commission on Child Abuse*, which noted it publicly in November 2019. Unlike *Irish Times* practice in January 2021, the Commission mentioned my role in pointing out the error. Instead, the *Irish Times* censored my subsequent letter, that noted *Irish Times* errors in reporting on the *Ryan Commission* error.

The Press Ombudsman queried this odd practice, resulting, after two months, in publication of the letter in the bottom right hand corner of the Letters' Page. The paper did not explain to readers why it published an old letter. The saga is explained on academia.edu

Whereas in the past the paper responded to email messages, albeit unsatisfactorily, it now ignores those too. Quiet correction of the President Higgins mistake may be an attempt to forestall another press ombudsman intervention. It is hard to tell because the paper feels under no obligation to explain its odd behaviour. The second letter is below.

## SECOND unpublished letter 16 January 2021

*Mother and baby homes: Higgins says State must bear ultimate responsibility, Shauna Bowers, Irish Times, 16 January 2021*

An error crept into your January 16<sup>th</sup> account of President Michael D Higgins' welcome remarks on the Mother and Baby Home Commission's report:

"President Michael D Higgins has said the State and Catholic Church "bear a heavy responsibility" for the "violation of fundamental rights" of women and children in the mother and baby homes."

The President did not mention the "Catholic Church". The official view of the Roman Catholic Church is that it is the one true 'Church' and that others are gatherings of errant Christians. The President's use of the term "Church and State" was instead pluralistic, not confined to the majority denomination.

Churches plural ran, managed and supported mother and baby institutions, including the Protestant ethos Bethany Home. The Mother and Baby Home Commission's report plus my Church and State and the Bethany Home (2010, revealing 219 Bethany infant deaths, to which the report refers) details this activity.

The Church of Ireland statement of apology (*Irish Times*, January 16<sup>th</sup>) attempted to deflect responsibility. It included "Notes to Editors", seeking to correct the Commission on Bethany links. Clergy on Bethany's management committee were prominent in the Irish Church Missions, which sought to convert Roman Catholics. Describing the ICM as a Church of Ireland society is "factually inaccurate", says the CofI.

The ICM today has the status of embarrassing relative. In 1929, two archbishops and ten bishops were ICM vice-Presidents. It advertised in the Church of Ireland Gazette as "The Church of Ireland her own Missionary Society". Clergy were ordained into the ICM. Rev E.M. Neill, an ICM linked clergyman, was President Childers' chaplain. The ICM church on Bachelor's Walk remains a parish church within the CofI. The ICM is also on record, disingenuously, as denying Bethany links.

The Church of Ireland statement erred also by omission, failing to mention the Church of Ireland's Magdalen Asylum. Its Nurse Rescue Society farmed out children as labourers, from the age of five, under bogus fostering arrangements. One survivor told me that others he knew trapped in that brutal environment descended to drink and drugs.

It is regrettable but not surprising that

the *Irish Times* made its mistake. Of many published letters on the subject on January 14-15, the only church mentioned was Roman Catholic. At least one submitted, mine, detailed state responsibility for Bethany death and neglect, plus on women officials who catalogued this activity.

Michael Viney's path-breaking series of *Irish Times* articles on unmarried motherhood in 1965, mentioned in your January 13th editorial, initiated this trend. At Bethany Home's 42nd annual meeting in 1965, matron Katherine Glover said they "dealt primarily with the Roman Catholic Population". Rev R.J. Coates, ICM Superintendent, presided.

Viney referred once to the CofI making use of two "confidential" mother and baby institutions. Confidential use of the Magdalen Asylum and Bethany Home was no reason to keep their names confidential. Viney later noted that his articles "became a text for [UCD] sociology students", limited previously to "a syllabus set by papal encyclicals". The articles brought "Catholic affairs and institutions into the *Irish Times*", he said. In other words, unmarried motherhood was a "Catholic affair" in "Catholic ... institutions".

The sins of patriarchy were not confined to the majority religious tradition and the President did not confine criticism to the Roman Catholic Church.

## THIRD unpublished letter 21 January 2021

*State abandoned in 1947 proposed investigation into almost 700 Bessborough deaths, Donal O'Keefe, Irish Times, 21 January 2021*

Donal O'Keefe's article (January 21st) on medical neglect leading to infant deaths in Bessborough mother and baby institution during the mid to late 1940s, demonstrates religious responsibility and inadequate state regulation. One of those involved, James Deeny, chief medical adviser in the new Department of Health, wanted to create a robust publicly funded health service. His efforts were thwarted by the Mother & Child fiasco that enveloped Noel Browne in 1950-51.

A 2015 submission to the Mother & Baby Home Commission of Inquiry, from survivors of Protestant ethos institutions, cited Deeny's denunciation of medical mismanagement in Bessborough. They contrasted it with deputy chief medical adviser Dr Winslow Sterling Berry's 1939 activity in the Bethany Home.

Both state officials noted that the institutions appeared clean and well run. Whereas Deeny then itemised infant

ill health, Sterling Berry contradicted Moira Kennedy-O'Byrne, an inspector of boarded-out children. She had itemised neglected Bethany children in terms similar to Deeny some years later. Sterling Berry described one such child as "delicate" who "shows no signs of neglect or ill-usage" and who had required "country air". As the Commission report notes, the infant died two months later.

Dr Sterling Berry undermined also observations by the Rathdown Board of Guardians that Bethany children suffered consistent debilitating neglect. He rationalized, "it is well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children are delicate and marasmic from their birth". He uttered his remarks during a time, 1935-47, when 61% of child deaths in Bethany occurred. In 2010 I identified 219. The Commission reports 43 more cases of infant mortality.

Dr Sterling Berry, son of the Bishop of Killaloe, observed that the reason Bethany attracted attention was because it attempted to convert Roman Catholic mothers and wanted their children brought up Protestant. He forced Bethany to stick to its side of the sectarian divide. His efforts were successful. Attention went away. Child mortality rates, that abated in 1940, rose to their highest point in 1944.

As with other institutions, the state is responsible for death and neglect in Bethany Home. Mortality and illness was rationalised as a product of childbirth outside of the institution of marriage.

A final point, the "civil servant" in your January 13th report on Bethany, who described Bethany's Hettie Walker advertising children "in English Protestant Newspapers" and taking them there, was the same Alice Litster profiled by Harry McGee the same day. Besides mentioning Litster, Kennedy O'Byrne and Sterling Berry, our Bethany Home submission emphasised the importance of the files of Inspector of Boarded Out Children, Fidelma Clandillon. The Commission subsequently "issued a direction to produce these files", consisting of over 30,000 pages, to the departments of health and of children. The files were removed some years ago by the government from the National Archives and should be returned.

#### General comment

At some point I may succeed in getting a letter published on this subject, perhaps by dropping the word 'Protestant', though that solution might be a bit 'Irish' (or 'Irish Timesish').

## SALUD!

### Peadar O'Donnell's Eyewitness Account of 1936 Spain

Two books on Ireland and the Spanish Civil War were published toward the end of 2020, and they each, for different reasons, have come as far more pleasant surprises than I might have initially expected. Having served in 1968-69 on the Executive of the *Irish Voice on Vietnam*, of which the Socialist Republican and War of Independence veteran Peadar O'Donnell was the Chairman, I was, of course, aware that O'Donnell's internationalist solidarity with Vietnam matched that given by him to the Spanish Republic three decades previously.

In 1979, it was O'Donnell who launched *Connolly Column*, my father Michael O'Riordan's book about his fellow Irish International Brigaders who fought in defence of the Spanish Republic, and in which he quoted some passages from O'Donnell's own 1937 eyewitness book, *SALUD! An Irishman In Spain*. Some further passages were quoted in *Frank Ryan*, the 1980 biography by Seán Cronin, for which O'Donnell had written the Foreword.

In his 1999 book, *Irish Politics And The Spanish Civil War*, Fearghal McGarry did not, however, quote anything at all from O'Donnell's book. Until I myself first read the new edition of *Salud!*, published this September by FIBI (Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland), I had no reason to believe that it had been little more than a necessary, but nonetheless standard, work of solidaristic propaganda. I could not have been more mistaken. For this slim 170 page volume set out to be an eyewitness account, determined to be an eye-opener on all fronts.

In July 1936, Lile O'Donnell had fixed on the fishing village of Sitges, some 35 km south of Barcelona, as an ideal place for her husband Peadar to find some peace and quiet to work on his novel, *The Big Windows*. But the O'Donnells were to find anything but peace and quiet. A mere fortnight after their arrival in the Spanish Republic, Franco launched his Fascist revolt against its democratically-elected Government, and unleashed, with the decisive military support of Hitler and Mussolini, a three year long bloody and brutal Civil War. *Salud!* is O'Donnell's 1937 account of his experiences on the eve of, and during, the opening weeks of that war, and of his return visit to Spain in September 1936.

So, *Salud!* here receiving its first republication in 83 years, provides a remarkable eyewitness account. Unequivocally in solidarity with the beleaguered Republic, O'Donnell was nonetheless openly critical of those excesses he had seen committed in the name of that same Republic. He highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of Republican activists exactly as he experienced them, including the indisciplines of 1936, which the Republic would have to address in 1937.

O'Donnell's close friend and executor Dónal Donnelly, has provided a *Foreword* to this new edition of a book which he himself never had an opportunity to read until recently, and in which, as he himself puts it, Peadar "spares no-one". With competing 'orthodox' narratives of that War in the years that followed—whether they be Catholic, Communist, Orwellian or Trotskyist—all would have found, to a greater or lesser degree, elements of O'Donnell's frankly outspoken account disturbingly irritating. Perhaps this might explain why *Salud!* was never republished until this most welcome FIBI edition, which can be ordered online from either Connolly Books, Dublin (€15), or Calton Books, Edinburgh (£14).

On arrival, O'Donnell found that in 1936 the Communist presence in Barcelona was secondary to that of the Anarchists. O'Donnell's own particular enthusiasm was for both the Catalan Republican Nationalists and the Anarchists he met in that city, while noting an antipathy and a lack of mutual understanding between them:

"There was no further independence issue in Catalonia, the Anarchists argued. I questioned this, and in the end we seemed to agree that Anarchist autonomy connoted as much as the Nationalist Independence, where the Nationalist visualized any subsequent association with other autonomous nations within Spain. But government from above, whether the seat of authority was Madrid or Barcelona, must be resisted..." (p 30).

From the advanced Catalan Nationalists O'Donnell learned of the mass expressions of solidarity with the 1920 Hunger Strike of the imprisoned Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, his death



provoking “*an uproar in Barcelona such as even Dublin itself did not surpass*” (p 23). His enthusiasm for the Anarchists was expressed thus: “*Anarchists talk eagerly of education. They had great plans for overcoming illiteracy. Everybody was eager to read. The need was for schools and still more schools.*” Less appealing to O’Donnell, however, was how zealously and dogmatically keen those city Anarchists were to rapidly collectivise the countryside, rather than come to terms with the small farmers’ own desire for peasant proprietorship to follow the breaking up of estates (pp 29-31).

O’Donnell’s account of the outbreak of the Civil War is cinematic in its descriptions. The sheer determination of Sitges fishermen to defend their democratic Republic is vividly portrayed (p 44). But in his championing of the Republic his own humanity shines out throughout. Having been a prisoner himself in Mountjoy Gaol as four of his Irish Republican comrades were extra-judicially executed by the Free State Government in 1922, O’Donnell’s humanity extends to the Fascist prisoners he encounters, particularly in his portrayal of three Fascist conspirators whose necessary death sentences he witnesses (pp 59-61).

O’Donnell proceeds to describe the streets of Barcelona, “*a great experience*” of seeing armed youths rallying to the defence of the Republic: “*Girls’ faces flashed in the cars as they swept by. Girls walked hurriedly through the streets carrying rifles at short trail, with the air of a people bent on ordinary tasks*” (p67). But when he turns from applauding such defensive actions to assessing a subsequent military offensive, O’Donnell becomes far more critical. He joins the ranks of a makeshift army setting out in the direction of Saragossa, with the aim of liberating Aragon from the Fascist Rebels, but they only succeed in securing a few villages before being repulsed, suffering serious fatalities and other casualties:

“Women’s voices were to be heard more and more in the workers’ halls. The collapse of good sense, which permitted untrained girls to get whisked off their feet towards the front with rifles in their hands, leaving trained men behind, was being overcome, and women were becoming a real force in public opinion; those stories of the prowess of girls with rifles are just lies. Meantime, untrained girls were killed, and in a few cases, at any rate, they fell through their ignorance of the ways of wars. But instances of such losses would be no kindness to anybody. Indeed, this sort of loss was not confined

to girls. The Catalan Popular Forces were the world’s worst when it came to taking cover. They seemed to think there was something unmanly in availing of such shield as the ground offered” (pp 69-72).

In exiting Spain by sailing from Barcelona to Marseilles in the company of a party of mainly pro-Franco nuns who were being expelled, but who had otherwise been well treated by the militias, O’Donnell was back in Dublin in time to challenge some of the religious hysteria being mobilised by pro-Franco forces (p83-88). A victim and target of clerical abuse himself, he could understand why anti-clericalism would be a force among Spanish Republicans. He illustrated the physical attack that he himself had experienced in 1933 as he campaigned against the deportation to the USA of Jimmy Gralton from his native Leitrim, which would later become the subject of Ken Loach’s 2014 movie *Jimmy’s Hall*:

“I recalled a Sunday morning when a parish priest flung his congregation against a meeting which was to be held to protest against the threatened deportation of a small farmer who was reputed to have become a Communist while in America. The sermon preached at Mass made it difficult for a backward village to restrain itself when ‘Anti-God’ speakers came into their midst. Their hesitations, however, had been very interesting. They hesitated to obey for I was, after all, a well-known republican, while the priest had no reputation in that field. It looked very likely that a foundation for the meeting might be wrung out of this congregation despite some stone-throwing when a few local republicans, whose knuckles I had rapped within the secrecy of the Irish Republican Army, decided that this was their moment to get their own back. Once they moved, the air just darkened with the cannonade and a few of us were for a time close to St. Stephen; with the local police in the role of Saul. And certainly, if I was to give anybody a puck for that morning’s work I should take the priest for choice” (p 52).

Following their arrival in Sitges, the O’Donnells attend Sunday Mass. (p 19). But Peadar finds very outspoken criticism of the Catholic priesthood prevalent in Barcelona even prior to Franco’s Rebellion. Yet he remains ever the sharp observer and keen investigator who is determined to examine all sides of this, as of other, issues:

“The talk against clergy ...was so startlingly sharp that I thought to seek an explanation from a priest to whom I had an introduction... He heard me out on the stories circulated against the priests in

Spain and agreed that there were grounds for such talk. He thought that much of the demoralization arose out of disgust with the role the priest was forced to play in Spanish politics. He was very bitter against Cardinal Sagura, Archbishop of Toledo, whose pastoral, following the downfall of the Monarchy, put the priests in an impossible relation to the Spanish people. The poverty-stricken working priest had sympathy with the aspirations of the people, but the bishops were staunch supporters of landlordism and Monarchy. The Popular Front Movement, however, was very stupidly making conflict between friendly priests and themselves. There was a minority among the workers who were rabidly anti-clerical. He confessed that the situation was a saddening one for which he saw no remedy” (pp 27-28).

O’Donnell appreciates that a particularly oppressive Church has made Spanish anti-clericalism quite comprehensible, not least because of its support for the Fascist revolt. But he is also quite candid in criticising the excesses of the anti-clerical response. And he vehemently denounces the Church-burning he witnesses in Sitges:

“Many people were standing still in the shelter of the trees gazing fixedly towards the church... and then without being told we knew they were going to burn the church... My wife plucked my arm and we walked back clear of the crowd. For the moment she was quite crushed. She had shared fully in the enthusiasm of the village uprising but now this came to take the good out of it all. She could not look on... Not more than twenty people took part in the sacking of the church... The attack on the church was without a trace of justification: the village was in our hands so that there could be no question of the church being used as a Fascist post... The attack was also against the interests of the anti-Fascist struggle in the village, as witness the silence of the great throng which, until now, had cheered every step taken. A steadily mounting rage was my main reaction though I could not be quite sure whether my temper drew its heat from revolt against the dark backwardness of what was taking place or from alarm at the bewilderment which such outrages must cause among Catholic masses who are sincerely anti-Fascist” (pp 48-49).

O’Donnell reserves a particularly scathing description for an Englishman who struts around adorned with that Church’s altar cloth, “*a robust little bigot, typical of Protestant opinion as I encountered it in Spain*” and he also refers to “*a touch of the same militant Protestantism in the Communist Movement in Britain*”. (p 50). He further reflects:

“I should probably always regret that I did not attempt to get at the good sense

of that Catalan crowd to end the attack on the church, though I shall always be glad to have been there when the attack was made" (p 52).

*Salud!* is accordingly devoid of simplistic propaganda. Indeed, O'Donnell expresses contempt for its counterproductive results. "*The story of this sorry business of church burning needs frank telling within working-class movements.*" And, on his return to Barcelona in September, O'Donnell gives a moving account of successfully arguing for the return to a frightened twelve year old girl of the cross that an overly-zealous Anarchist Customs' man had snatched from her:

"He fished out (from her bag) a thin chain with a cross attached. He held it up before the youngster's face, and at that moment she was as frightened a kid as you could see. Now, here was one of those crudities that take the heart out of people. He fumbled at the chain, broke off the cross and flicked it into the air. When he first dangled the chain I thought I should go around to the Anarchist headquarters later and talk with them about this sort of stupidity, but the flicked cross travelled in my direction so the drama got speeded up, for I caught it. There was quite a pause and nobody said a word. I stretched my hand towards the youngster but she shrank away. And, now again, I had an example of the self discipline of Catalan crowds. Nobody stirred, nor spoke, so that when I spoke I was heard by everybody around... (aided by) a sensitive translator who really translated and no more... People were puzzled and certainly very interested. I was afraid now that the youngster might be permitted to have the cross as a courtesy to a foreigner, so I asked 'Has this girl a right to have this cross?' A section of the crowd clamoured against it, but there were many who did not speak. I picked out a strapping young militiaman, right in the midst of a protesting group and pointed at him, 'Does F.A.I. (the Federation of Iberian Anarchists) not guarantee freedom of conscience? Would you say this girl is not entitled to her cross?' And, like a man, he spoke out straight and clear and said they did, although there was no trace of friendliness in him. 'Well, then, what is all the noise about? Is somebody starting a new rebellion against the Anarchists?' There was quite an area of smiling faces now, and a good few chuckles. I offered the girl her cross again, but she still hesitated. The interpreter spoke to her in Catalan and other voices joined in, too. She took the cross... It took me a little while to get back to the Customs man... He was now just a workman who felt that he had let down his comrades by some flash of bad temper... He had no religion himself, neither had his mother. He did not remember his father, who died when he was a child. Priests were a kind of bogeymen to him.

'But I should not have embarrassed the little girl.' What is there to say to a man like that" (pp 97-99).

O'Donnell himself never republished *Salud!* Had he done so, he would have corrected a serious misjudgement of character on his part when he wrote: "*I grumbled that the Irish Consul in Madrid had shut shop and run out; indeed I damned the Free State representative roundly during my short (September 1936) stay in Madrid for skeddaddling*" (p 119).

O'Donnell was not to know that the Irish Minister to Spain, Leopold H. Kerney, was seriously ill, having been struck down with polio in May 1936, and compelled to remain on sick leave until January 1937. With the defeat of the Spanish Republic in 1939, Kerney continued as Minister to Franco Spain. From Cronin's 1980 biography of Frank Ryan, for which O'Donnell himself would pen the Foreword, he would have learned of Kerney's determined efforts to visit Ryan in Burgos Prison, how valiantly he campaigned to have Ryan's death sentence rescinded, how he further saved the life of the seriously ill Ryan by conniving at his 1940 'escape' from Burgos to Germany, and how Kerney's wartime correspondence with Ryan showed them both acting diligently in support of de Valera's policy of ensuring that this State would not be consumed in the flames of the Second World War. Had he himself ever gotten round to republishing *Salud!*, Peadar would surely have prefaced it with a tribute to Kerney, in the light of Cronin's pioneering research.

On his September 1936 return to Barcelona, O'Donnell also participated in the Anarchist Farmers' Congress, where the voices of real farmers are finally heard, "*SALUD Catalonia*" being his own closing punch-line (pp 104-9). In this respect, *Salud!* serves as a healthy reality check to accompany a reading of George Orwell's *Homage To Catalonia*, with its uncritical endorsement of both church-burning and collectivisation. Without speaking pejoratively of any of Barcelona's militias—whether Anarchist, POUM or Communist—O'Donnell nonetheless views their competitiveness as an obstacle to the creation of an effective anti-Fascist People's Army, and he notes a growing public awareness that an effective Government is a prerequisite for the Republic's defence (pp 75, 100 and 140).

O'Donnell further highlights the role of perfidious Albion in determining the

behaviour of the Portuguese Government: "*England was genuinely against any truck with the Spanish Government. The British policy was solidly Franco or else Portugal which Britain owns would never have played the role she played*" (p 135). And also of the French Government:

"I spent some days along the French frontier and got a close-up look at such arms smuggling as went on. Maybe some day somebody will tell the whole inspiring story of these efforts to get war material into Spain. The French are a rare intense practical people who are never over-burdened with ideas and so put great energy into any task they take on. The fate of Irun stung French public opinion; French workers felt deeply the tragedy of their Spanish brothers standing bare-handed before the Fascist onslaught, while a few yards distant, but on the wrong side of the International bridge, a supply of ammunition which had arrived late mocked their efforts. It was not that Frenchmen generally blamed their Government for not letting the arms through under the eyes of the Press of the whole world, it was just the incident hurt them deeply. I found that French working-class opinion was not really hostile to Blum's blockade, although they were prepared to intimidate him to get more elbow-room, provided this was not carried to a degree which might cause his downfall. Open intervention by the French, in view of the attitude of Britain, must mean war, and that was to be avoided. But a Fascist victory in Spain must mean war too and so they steered every effort to make even stray guns available beyond the border" (p 138).

As already noted, O'Donnell also visited Madrid that September, observing that while "*in Barcelona the Anarchists were the central driving force, in Madrid Communist influence was more in evidence*". He writes of Madrid public opinion: "*If Communism was the enemy-in-chief in the eyes of the Fascists then it clearly was a fighting formation to which anti-Fascists should rally.*" He adds:

"This drift leftwards could be seen in the formation of the 5th Regiment, regarded as a Communist achievement rapidly making a name for itself as a very fine fighting machine. There was a further factor: Communist groups maturing rapidly, really felt themselves to be playing an important role and individual members expressed this in industry and selflessness" (p 127).

And so, *Salud!* was also O'Donnell's Homage to Communist Madrid, in addition to being a Homage to Catalonia that far more realistically portrayed the complexities of that region than any competing narrative, such as that of Orwell.



By the time that *Salud!* was ready for publication in 1937, it carried the following dedication:

“To A BOY FROM ACHILL who died fighting in Spain and HIS COMRADES who went the same proud way”.

Achill Islander Tommy Patten, a member of O'Donnell's Republican Congress, was the first Irish volunteer to fall in defence of the Spanish Republic, on the night of December 16/17, 1936.

As O'Donnell puts in in his closing paragraph: “Irish Republicans, smarting at the thought that Fascist Ireland

(O'Duffy's Blueshirts—MO'R) should have sent soldiers to fight against the Spanish people, stole quietly away from their homes and made the trek to Barcelona and Madrid” (p 163).

Their story is the subject matter of the second book whose publication I welcomed in the opening paragraph of this article. *In Spanish Trenches: The Minds And Deeds Of The Irish Who Fought For The Republic In The Spanish Civil War*, co-authored by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor, was published in December. It will be reviewed in a further article.

**Manus O'Riordan**

## Literary Review

**August 1983 Roald Dahl**  
*Not A Chivalrous Affair*

[Review by Roald Dahl of *God Cried* by Tony Clifton and Catherine Leroy, Quartet]

"In June 1941 I happened to be in, of all places, Palestine, flying with the RAF against the Vichy French and the Nazis. Hitler happened to be in Germany and the gas chambers were being built and the mass slaughter of the Jews was beginning. Our hearts bled for the Jewish men, women and children, and we hated the Germans.

Exactly forty-one years later, in June 1982, the Israeli forces were streaming northwards out of what used to be Palestine into Lebanon, and the mass slaughter of the inhabitants began. Our hearts bled for the Lebanese men, women and children, and we all started hating the Israelis.

Never before in the history of man has a race of people switched so rapidly from being much-pitied victims to barbarous murderers. Never before has a race of people generated so much sympathy around the world and then, in the space of a lifetime, succeeded in turning that sympathy into hatred and revulsion. It is as though a group of much-loved nuns in charge of an orphanage had suddenly turned around and started murdering all the children..."

[Four paragraphs about Palestine in June 1941 where his squadron lost half its pilots.]

"Now why, you are asking, do I ramble on like this about that long ago past when I am meant to be discussing a book just published which is called *God Cried*. I'll tell you why. It is because I retain such a glowing memory of the Palestine I saw in those days, of the beauty of the country, of the kindness of the people and of the pride they took in their little farms, and it makes one weep to think about what happened to it all since then.

We all know what it was. The Jews came pouring in with American money and American guns and created the State of Israel and out went the Palestinians. That part of it is already history. We also know about the doings in those days of a murderous young terrorist called Menachem Begin who was blowing up British soldiers in a campaign designed to get more territory for the Jews than treaty obligations permitted. This is the man who now screams 'terrorist' at Palestinians who fight to regain what he has stolen from them. We also know all about the wars with Egypt and Syria which need never have taken place if only Israel had stuck to her part of the bargain and been willing to share the land with those

## Roald Dahl And Israel

A Jewish State was established in the mid-20th century. The Jews, by their own account, were a nation without a state. They existed in dispersion amongst the states of the world Empires and nation-states. This was an unnatural mode of existence. It caused problems for both the Jews themselves and for the peoples amongst which they existed. In order to establish normality for the Jews themselves, and for the peoples who found their dispersed national existence problematical, it was necessary that territory should be acquired for the formation of a Jewish nation-state. If that was done, the Jews would become a normal people and the Jewish problem would be solved — That was the Zionist case.

Territory was acquired for the Jewish State. The Jewish State was set up over seventy years ago. But the Jewish national existence seems to be more problematical now than it was then. A few years ago the Chief Rabbi in Britain declared that the Jews in Britain would be faced with a threat to their existence if the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership won a General Election. A repeat of Germany in 1933 was threatening. The three Jewish newspapers published in Britain urged their readers to make ready for a mass exodus.

The Jewish mode of collective existence appears to be more out-of-joint with the national normalities of the world today than it has ever been.

The Jews have not in the main migrated to the homeland which they claimed and were given.

They have preferred to remain dispersed

amongst the other states. But, on the whole, they have not become nationals of those other states and repudiated national claims on Palestine.

And it appears that the viability of the Jewish nation state in the reclaimed homeland is dependent on active, uncritical, and unrelenting support of it by millions of Jews who have chosen not to return to it.

Gentiles who look at the Jewish State and comment on its actions as if it was a normal state tend to be condemned as Anti-Semites, Anti-Semitism being defined as a mental disease and certainly not a reasonable response to anything real.

Roald Dahl, a writer of children's stories which I have never read, who died long ago, was outed as an Anti-Semite last year because of a review of a book, *God Cried*, in the *Literary Review* in 1983.

*God Cried*, by Tony Clifton and Catherine Leroy, published by Quartet Books, is an account of massacres of Palestinians and Lebanese, carried out by the Israeli Army in West Beirut in 1982. A distinctive feature of the book are the many full-page colour photographs of the destruction wrought by the Israeli Army on a civilian population, including pictures of injured Palestinian children.

I was interested to see how an account of a massacre by the expansionist forces of the Jewish State (which insists that it must be an exclusive Jewish State in order to be worthwhile) could be described as Anti-Semitic. I managed to get a copy of Dahl's review of it just before the Lock-down. Here is the substance of it.



she had kicked out.

We know all that. But what we had not seen until June 1982 was a new and violently aggressive Israel whose armed forces moved into Lebanon and murdered more than 25,000 people, mostly civilian men, women and children, and severely injured another 30,000. The pretext was to get at the PLO forces who admittedly were entrenched in Lebanon, but that was still no excuse for the deliberate mass murder by shelling and bombing of the Lebanese population.

Beirut caught it worst of all, and that is what this new book is all about. One finds it almost impossible to believe that a civilised people could perform such acts of fiendish barbarism upon women and children and patients in hospitals... The Israelis pinpointed and hit no less than thirteen out of seventeen hospitals in Beirut, one of them a mental hospital and many others full of children. The authentic tales of horror and bestiality throughout this book makes one wonder in the end what sort of people these Israelis are. It is like the good old Hitler and Himmler times all over again..."

Why was Lebanon invaded in 1982? Dahl quotes the authors, Tony Cliften and Catherine Leroy, as speculating that it was to distract attention from what Israel was doing in the *West Bank Building Programme* to house 100,000 Jews. "*These centres are spreading like herpes now*", ending the possibility of a Palestinian homeland.

Dahl agrees:

"During the war [on Lebanon], the Israelis used three particularly nasty weapons—the Cluster Bomb, the Phosphorous Bomb and the Penetration Bomb... My own sources... tell me that these three splendid bombs... were given to the Israelis by the Americans on one condition. This was that they were to be used by Israel only in the direst emergencies. The agreement went so far as to specify what his emergency would be. It would be in defence of her own territory, and even then only if she were being attacked by *two separate armies simultaneously*. But undertakings such as this mean nothing to the present Israeli government... The *Washington Times* reports that Israel has received more than half of all the aid dispersed throughout the world by the United States since 1951!

During 1983 Israel is going to get \$2.5 billion of direct official US aid!

Huge Jewish charities in USA are exempt from federal tax...

In other words, America is financing and controlling the most mendacious and expansionist country (apart from Russia) in the world.

But why in heaven's name did not somebody influential in America shout 'Stop!' right at the beginning of the Lebanon affair... Is the American President and the Senate and the Congress so utterly dominated by the great Jewish financial institutions over there that they dare not defy them? And what, pray, do those powerful American Jewish bankers think about the murdering of 25,000 people in one month? Nor can the European governments be let off the hook either. They protested. Of course they did... Where were the sanctions... And where, above all, were the screams of protest from the millions of decent Jewish people in Europe and America? ...

Sooner or later the turn of the Arab Middle East will come...

Brigand nations never survive for ever. In the end the whole world turns against them. Hitler never grasped that fact. Menachem Begin hasn't grasped it either."

Then it will be annihilation.

"There is only one thing that can prevent the inevitable holocaust and that is Israel herself", by behaving decently to the Palestinians.

#### A COMMENT

A comment on this article was published in early December by Michael Coren, a Minister in the Anglican Church of Canada, who also comments on an interview with Dahl published in the *New Statesman* in 1983, which the Lockdown prevented me from seeing. That interview was conducted by Coren himself, immediately after Dahl's review of *God Cried* was published in the *Literary Review*. It does not seem that Coren challenged Dahl over the factual detail of Israel's conduct in its invasion of Lebanon.

In the *New Statesman* interview, Dahl said, according to Coren, "...*There is a trait in the Jewish character that does provoke animosity, maybe it's a kind of lack of generosity towards non-Jews...*". Coren comments:

"I did wonder whether Mr. Dahl was ill, or in the early stages of some sort of emotional or mental disorder. But he subsequently refused to withdraw anything he had said... Then, seven years later, he gave another interview, not to me, in which he said, "I'm certainly anti-Israel..." It's the same old thing. We all know about Jews and the rest of it. There aren't any non-Jewish publishers anywhere, they control the media—jolly clever thing to do—that's why the president of the United States has to sell all this stuff to Israel!" If it was an illness, it

was of the darkly political and ideological kind..." (This is from *The Globe And Mail*, 9 December, 2020).

Dahl died thirty years ago, not thinking he had anything to apologise for. His books have continued to sell, earning millions of dollars. The *Road Dahl Story Company* has apologized on his behalf, presumably on commercial grounds.

Coren relates that, in his interview with Dahl:

"At one point I said that I considered his comments bizarre and repugnant, especially those about Jewish people having 'a lack of generosity' towards non-Jews. I said I'd never witnessed this, for example from my Jewish father to my non-Jewish mother. I'm not entirely sure what I expected—perhaps an apology, even just for him to stop. But he paused briefly, made some sort of coughing noise, and then continued with his diatribe, with comments about 'them', 'they', 'sticking together' and so on..."

What bearing did Coren's father's treatment of his mother have on the collective treatment by Jews of Palestinians in the course of a conquest and colonisation? What is the significance of the use of the pronoun sometimes, instead of always repeating the noun?

If the Jews are a nation, as their leaders have forcefully asserted that they are, then they must have some national characteristic which distinguishes them.

The Jews were officially constituted a nation in international affairs by the Government of the British Empire in 1917, when it was in the process of conquering Palestine; and Palestine, though already populated by another people, was designated its national territory. Establishing Palestine as a Jewish state required that its native population should be got rid of in one way or another.

There were some in the British Government who urged that the Palestinian population should be cleared away by Imperial action, but what Britain did instead was provide the Jewish colony, which it had built up, with the means of doing it for themselves.

If it is anti-Semitic to see the Jews as having certain collective characteristics, then the movement of opinion in Britain which led to the *Balfour Declaration* was anti-Semitic. A leading proponent of the Zionist solution of the Jewish problem was *Manchester Guardian* journalist Herbert Sidebotham. In his book, *Britain And Palestine*, he reviewed the history of Jewish

States in the past. And he assumed that, since the Jews maintained themselves as a purposeful collective over 2,000 years, their national character had not changed fundamentally. The Jewish States of the past had come to grief because they made themselves intolerable to their neighbours and, he argued that it was probable that, if they were left to their own devices, the same thing would happen again. But, if a new Jewish State was constructed by establishing the Jews as a colony within the Empire, it would be viable under Imperial guidance.

But for the British Empire, there would be no Jewish State. But the Empire undermined itself in two reckless World Wars and was on the verge of collapse in 1947-8 when the Jewish colony launched

a terrorist war for Independence, to which Britain gave way as a crowning act of Imperial irresponsibility.

That is how the present Jewish Problem came about. Some powerful influence has decreed that it must not be discussed factually. To discuss it factually is to be Anti-Semitic—and that is possibly what Dahl meant when he said he had become an anti-Semite.

The British Labour Party, under its New Management, has appointed an (ex)-Israeli Intelligence operative with the job of monitoring the personal Internet communications of its members on this subject. This what the first Queen Elizabeth called "*prying into men's souls*", and said it was a thing she would not do.

**Brendan Clifford**

### 100 years of the Northern Ireland enclave is to be celebrated by Unionism.

## Too Many Candles On The Cake!

I have often written on the sufferings of what was once the Catholic minority.

I have lived within Protestant communities all the time I have lived there and the worst period was in the 1930s, which I can remember vividly. It was Kilburn Street, off the Donegall Road, 1937. Houses were still being built in Kilburn Street on part of the land known locally as the Bog meadows. It was a parlour-house street meant for skilled workers. It had two bedrooms plus a smaller bedroom known as a box-room, a kitchen, a scullery, a living room and a best-room known as the parlour, which had the best furniture like a Chesterfield suite, silk covers on the cushions, carpets on the floor, pictures on the wall-papered walls, a plant stand with a large brass pot growing an aspidistra or other plant. The curtains on the window were linen and lined. There was also a bookcase. That was bought out of wages of my father, a woodworker in the shipyard. The parlour was not for children, except under supervision, but for guests. The coal-fire would be lit for that occasion. Life was comfortable. The problem was, that at five years old, the local school was full and I couldn't be admitted so I roamed the streets, jumping on the back bumper of trams, clinging to the back of lorries slowly coming up the steep incline of the Donegall Road. Falls Park wasn't far away but it could be hazardous crossing the Falls Road with its fast trolley buses. There always seemed to be a dog lying by the kerb split open after being hit by a silent trolley bus. The traffic had the usual Crossley Tender in which the RUC sat back to back, looking out from the sides of the vehicle, rifles between their knees. Their transport was also the grey lorries with wire cages on top

against stone throwers, the cops within staring out like baboons. I expect they had been to the nearby Falls Road.

It all seemed exciting for a five year old until one day, on the front of Donegall Road, the pedestrians started running, with a large lady screaming to a deafening pitch. Shops were closing their doors to people wanting refuge. There had been gunfire.

There in the road, across the tram-lines, a motor-cyclist lay on his back, blood gushing from beneath his leather helmet. A tram had stopped in time in order not to run over him, the driver was just staring down at him, the back wheel of the bike still revolving.

Then the next day, at the front of the road, crowds running again, shop doors closing, then silence as the traffic stopped. Somebody lying in the street, I being pulled away and pushed behind a wall by somebody. The sound had to be shots. More silence on this usually very busy road. Now there was just nobody around. At home I didn't mention any of it – the first incident of the motorcyclist and the second of one of someone in the street, lying dead, outside Stewarts, the chain-store-grocers. I wasn't allowed to go to the front of the road. Back then it could be a slap, from a father, that would knock you to the ground.

These were new houses we lived in. Just over the door was a metal holder for a small flag. That flag would be for the Union Jack. A few days before the 12th of July, a group of men came round and did indeed put a small

Union Jack in each holder, for free. My father, a Protestant, my mother a Catholic, and we three children, I being the oldest, were also Catholics. My father lifted me up, opened the door, held me up, and told me to remove the flag, After that I ran into the street with it, waving it everywhere, right up to the front of the road. My father had taken a risk with our house the only house with no flag. Maybe he had calculated that I running in the street would obscure his purpose in removing the flag. I wave that flag until it fell apart.

Neighbours, though you don't particularly mix with them, get to know what you are. My mother would go to Mass at the pro-Cathedral Peter & Paul up the Falls, and I'd be also brought along. Somebody always sees you and in the wrong area too many times and thus you are labelled.

It's Winter and there's unemployment. You can tell that by the street being now half empty. People have disappeared because of owing huge amounts of rent. Others have downgraded to the back-streets - to kitchen houses, without parlours, where the rent is lower. Some of those who remain have sold every last stick of furniture.

Many house looked empty with just a bundle of rags for a bed in an empty parlour.

I went through the window of one of those houses and found nothing but a walking stick in the entire house. There was absolutely nothing in the kitchen where you might expect teacups, a kettles, pots, some food. There was nothing. I returned home with the walking stick thinking still that the house was empty. Soon after there was a knock on the door and an old lady was demanding her walking stick back.

The neighbours had spotted and reported me. My father couldn't believe this depth of penury existed. He just had to go down to that house to apologise, as a way of having a look. But it was the old lady who apologised for not being able to offer him a cup of tea. When she had to drink of water she used her hands under the tap as a cup.

In the case of the unemployed, someone from the Labour Exchange would come round to your house as soon as you had registered for the meagre benefits - £1 for a married couple, a shilling each for the children, per week. Out of that you paid your rent, bough food, clothes, and shoes. The man for the Exchange would examine all the rooms in your house and note the value of everything. You were then told to sell these items. You were left with table and chairs and beds. So our parlour became a bare-floorboard echoing room. When you had shown the receipts of your enforced sales, you were told how many months you had to live on the money. When that was spent you could claim the starvation unemployment benefit.

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# Does It Buy Up

# Stack ?

## Brexit and the Stockmarket.

When\* the Irish Free State was established (a thorny question), all sorts of loyalties and practicalities were up for consideration. If you were a journalist by profession, for example, you were probably in the National Union of Journalists (the NUJ) but which nation did 'National' refer to after 1922? The NUJ decided to stay with England and the result is that Irish members of the NUJ have tended to have an English bias to this very day.

Maybe these decisions did not arise for Stockbrokers. Most of them were in fact Protestants and Freemasons. But also the Stock Exchanges were genuinely local. Each of the cities had a Stock Exchange, where the local Stockbrokers would meet at a certain time each business day and they would transact business in the shares of Public Limited Liability Companies. These were, by law, companies with more than fifty shareholders each. Each Stock Exchange had rules for regulating business and for regulating conduct between members.

So, to buy and sell shares in Dublin-based Public Companies, a buyer or seller went to a Dublin Stockbroker; to buy or sell shares in a Cork-based Public Company, a buyer or seller went to a Cork Stockbroker; and to buy or sell shares in an English Public Company a buyer or seller went to a London Stockbroker.

Many buyers or sellers simply went to their Accountant and asked him or her to do the needful. In those days accountants were mostly men, whereas nowadays women are in the majority in the profession.

After 1922, there were Irish Chartered Accountants, English Chartered Accountants, Scottish Chartered Accountants, the Incorporated Society of Accountants (London based), and the London Association of Accountants (London based). Also Cost and Works Accountants (London based), Faculty of Company Secretaries (London based), and one or two other bodies which faded out later. There was

\* 14th April 1922 is stated in *Cahill v. Attorney General Of Ireland*.

then no requirement that an Auditor of any company needed to be professionally qualified, except that there was a provision in the *Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1893* (an English Act) that the Auditor of one of these Societies had to be a 'Public Auditor' appointed by the Minister for Industry and Commerce. Accountants in practice, and many not in practice, acted as insurance agents, travel agents, auctioneers and stockbrokers as well as doing accountancy work.

It was a sort of organised chaos and it needed regulation. The three Institutes of Chartered Accountants, the Incorporated Society of Accountants and the London Association insisted on qualification by examination and experience. The Irish, English, and Scottish Institutes received each their Charter from Queen Victoria and, in imitation of the London Craft Guilds, the new Institutes of Chartered Accountants insisted on training for apprentice accountants under Articles of Clerkship similar to those for the English Law Society. The other Institutes and Societies followed suit. Gradually stockbroking was left to the specialised stockbrokers and so with the travel agents, insurance agents— these jobs were left to the specialists. Culture and politics had their part to play also.

The membership of the three Chartered Institutes was confined almost totally to Freemasons, along with Church of England/Church of Ireland members in England and Ireland respectively. Because the English Queen on her Coronation day swears an oath to be Protector of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Presbyterians are allowed to become members of the Scottish Chartered Institute of Accountants.

These arrangements left out the many Methodists, Wesleyans, Catholics and other non-conformist aspirants for the Accountancy profession and these were provided for by the Incorporated Society of Accountants (probably the most highly-qualified of all) and the London Association of Accountants and, for Accountants working in Industry, the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants.

After 1922, many Irish members questioned why they were members of the London Association and they set up and incorporated The Irish Association of Accountants which, after the *Companies Act 1963*, amalgamated with the Irish Society of Certified Accountants to become *The Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (CPA)*. The CPA qualification is

the most widely recognised accountancy qualification in the world.

The 1963 Act in Ireland and the 1948 Act in England were the big shake-ups for Accountants.

In the meantime, the Stockbrokers (to be a Stockbroker, the main qualification is money and contacts) have been active over the years. Some time in the 1960s they realised that the Stock Market itself, of which they were members, was worth money and they sold the local Stock Markets to the Dublin Stock Exchange, which they were also usually members of. The Dublin Stock Exchange then became very valuable, and it was sold by the Irish Stockbrokers to The London Stock Exchange. The Dublin Exchange became a branch of the London Stock Exchange.

And so, with Brexit happening on 31st December 2020, all has gone silent. What is happening? It would have been better if the Irish Stockbrokers had not sold the family jewels, so to speak, but now what?

It is known that the City of London took a huge hit with Brexit and the consequences of that are only now manifesting themselves. Are the Irish Stockbrokers trying to buy the Dublin Stock Exchange? Or will the ever wily English try and divide the London Stock Exchange into UK Pounds in London and EU Euros in Dublin? Or will the Dublin Stock Market be bought by the Frankfurt or Paris or another European Stock Market?

Then also, because of Brexit, all of the Irish Public Companies are changing the way their shares will be bought and sold. Up to now, a major part of the shareholding in each of these companies was held in Uncertificated form—i.e. on computer and not needing a Paper Share Certificate. Up to 90% of Shares in Public Companies are held in this way and the Agent holding them—all 90% of Irish Public Companies—has been an English Company called CREST.

Now somebody on high has decreed that CREST in London will lose the business and the chosen recipient is a Belgian entity called Euroclear Bank. The Irish companies say this move—migration it is officially called—will not affect the quotation of their share prices in Dublin or London. They do not explain in detail precisely why this migration is necessary, except to say:

“For legal reasons (principally the *Irish Migration Act*) because of Brexit the settlement system relating to trading



in their shares needs to move from CREST in London to Euroclear Bank in Belgium. This will occur by participation of their shares in Migration. Migration is expected to occur on 15th March 2021."

We are assured that Migration does not apply to shares held in Paper Share Certificate form. Why do the Uncertificated (computerised) shares not move from CREST in London to an agency in Dublin? Why Belgium?

And why are Irish Companies changing their own regulations to make them compliant with Royal Belgium Decrees?

No doubt it will all be explained after the event. But just now it does not stack up.

Michael Stack ©

## Candles

from page 25

The Union Jacks are ragged from wind and rain and limp in their holders. There is the smell of burning potato peels, of newspaper, of onion leaves, of old rubber shoes burning in grates as people, without coal, trying to cook a meal. The draught from the Black Mountains and hills that ring Belfast, carries the smell into the houses. The Ardglass herring seller with his pony and spring cart has been here. Six herrings costs sixpence, a life saver. (Eggs are also sixpence for six) But some people don't have sixpence. Children from the back streets are coming into this once well-off street to beg for food. The one car in the street is still there. It belongs to a RUC man. Children once surrounded it, jumping on the running board, pulling out the amber indicator and getting an electric shock from the battery. Now they don't seem to have the energy. They knock on the policeman's door and ask for a slice of bread. His wife gives them corn squares, a small cake full of raisins. Now, they're all at her door and she decides not to open it anymore. A few days later I knock on her door. Seeing only one of me she gives me a corn-square. I'm not hungry.

The children stay disappeared. They have been knocking on other doors in our street and have gained nothing, for mostly, there is now nothing in this once respectable street. One five-year-old called Rosie perseveres in her knocking, and we always have a slice of bread for her.

But just before that there is the slow sound of drumbeats and a RUC silver band appeared with a black leather coffin being carried by the handles by his comrades.

My parents, if not the street, already knew the policeman had shot himself because of debt. I had seen a few coffins by now. It was

suicide time by the gas-oven run by the last few coins in the meter.

Then there were the small white coffins of children. Pneumonia was the killer, followed by diphtheria and scarlet fever. Kilburn Street had its share. Bertha, the six-year-old next door had died from pneumonia. The undertakers were owed a lot of money was all I heard when death was mentioned. If you couldn't have anything then let us turn up dead and respectable by having a good funeral. The wee white coffin showed them that they weren't down as much as people thought. After that you had to have your dead relatives appear in the death notices of the Belfast Telegraph. If you were able to pick up a Telegraph then it was normal to turn to the death columns first. and say: "God you'll never guess who's dead!" The answer might be: "62. [the house number] He went like snow of a ditch."

Rosie defied the elements, defied the childhood diseases. A cold, wet winter and she's dressed only in a ragged cotton dress and wearing no shoes. She knocks on doors to survive. Her feet are purple. She knocked on our door a number of times. All she wanted was a slice of white bread. Butter was out of the question then, and in many cases margarine. Some people used lard on the bread. That was too low down for my family. We weren't starving by any means. My parents managed the money well. There was always a lonely sixpence around. I even found one in the street. People without anything always walked the streets with their eyes down but I got it first. My mother immediately bought six eggs in Stewarts with it. She complained about the tinkers who were able to buy ham and eggs and a couple of baps there. She complained that a woman had parked her car, went into Stewarts, and her car had rolled down the hill and almost run over people. She said a group of women were on the point of attacking the driver.

For some families in our street it was bread and tea for breakfast, dinner and supper. For some it was bread and tea once a day, with some days without. The thing for many to do was to go round to the bakery—there were many home bakeries around—with a pillow slip and ask to buy the stale bread, the leftovers. You think you are badly off but there is always somebody even worse off—people who didn't have a few pence for a pillow slip of stale bread.

So Rosie got her slice of bread dipped in milk with some sugar sprinkled over it. We had no clothes to give her, no shoes to give, no stockings to give her, no old overcoat to give. Our overcoats were for best, maybe worn a Sunday if there was a special occasion. You had your good shoes and your old shoes. You played in the snow without an overcoat, wore the leaky old shoes in the rain: so there was nothing for Rosie. We didn't know which of the back-streets (back-street meaning poor street) she came from. My parents spoke of

## ARCHIVES continued

ing Norway, Austria and Sweden should not be turned down. She also said a door should be kept open for Turkey. "Above all I don't want Turkey to fall back into the Muslim world", she said.

She returned to the theme of political union.

"After the [second World] war our industry was devastated. German industry was flattened. They reconstructed their industry, with Marshall Aid [the plan to finance the redevelopment of Europe], from the ground up, with the most modern technology.

"Their workforce is highly efficient. They will buy German—as the Japanese buy Japanese and the French buy French. They are highly efficient and totally ruthless. You talk about the European Community. In the end there will only be three powers in the world: the US, Germany and Japan. The rest of us must really stand together."

The notes of the conversations were taken by Secretary to the Government *Dermot Nally* (National Archives reference

her sturdiness and hardiness in the hope she would survive. We had nothing but we had guilt about being able to manage through difficult times.

There had been the unemployment riots in Belfast, the momentarily coming together of Protestant and Catholic workers, crowded over ever since, but that came to nothing. The identity of national belonging was too strong. The Protestant was just as aggrieved, as the Catholic, at being baton-charged by their own Protestant militia, the RUC, during their unemployment militant action but that was the beginning of nothing. They also put up with the unemployment, the starvation in many cases, the general deprivation concerning housing, but it was soon forgotten when talks of war came and that re-opened the Belfast shipyard and other heavy industries. But we too had to disappear eventually owing a lot of rent. It was to Carryduff, to some WW1 army huts on a hill. My mother was unhappy, some of the neighbours were from the back-streets, and not from Kilburn Street. It was 1938 and there was talk of war. The shipyard and other heavy industry were reopening.

In 1939 it was war and with reports of air-raids on Polish cities we decided to stay in the countryside.

Don't remind us of 100 years of Northern Ireland!

Wilson John Haire

## ARCHIVES continued

"I am getting completely fed up with the European Community trying to tie us up with bureaucratic regulations. We are trying to get Eastern Europe to accept democratic standards and here we are recreating our own politburo. They are just too much."

"In discussion with her Irish counterpart in Downing Street on June 13, 1990, before a summit of EU heads of government in Dublin that month, Thatcher dismissed Jacques Delors, who was then the commission president, as "a mere appointee."

"She claimed Delors must have had "a rush of blood to the head" over recent comments in favour of a single currency."

(*Sunday Times* [Dublin edition], 27.12.2020)

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### 1990 STATE PAPERS

***Faultline that would lead to Brexit evident in Haughey-Thatcher meetings***

(*IrishTimes*, 28.12.2020)

The nascent faultline between Britain and the EU that would eventually lead to Brexit was evident 30 years ago during private meetings between taoiseach Charles Haughey and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

During the course of the meetings Thatcher excoriated the European Commission as an undemocratic "politburo", belittled the European parliament as "not a parliament at all" and was wholly dismissive of a suggestion of greater political union.

Ireland held the presidency of the European Community (as it was known then) in 1990, at a time of political uncertainty in Europe, caused by the fragmentation of the USSR and the reunification of West Germany with East Germany.

Haughey met Thatcher twice in Downing Street in April and June that year for detailed bilateral meetings which primarily focused on the future of Europe. They were to be the last one-on-one meetings between the leaders, as Thatcher resigned in November 1990 and Haughey stepped down in early 1992. Their decade-long political interactions had been marked by early cordiality, then distrust, and finally a stronger relationship during Haughey's second term.

During 1990, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, French President François Mitterand and Commission President Jacques Delors had proposed greater

political union among the 12 EC members following the end of the Warsaw Pact and the reunification of Germany.

When Haughey broached the subject of political union with Thatcher, he said it could be "as minimalist or as maximalist as we make it".

The British Prime Minister replied curtly. "There was first of all an economic community. Then we widened it to develop European political co-operation. We have enough to digest at present. If we go further we will create even wider divisions".

She then compared Ireland and the UK favourably to other member states, saying they were far more developed.

"Germany has been in existence for some 40 years. Belgium is simply the Walloons and the Flemings. The Dutch were part of the Hapsburg Empire. On the other hand, Spain is a proud nation and so is France".

She noted, after unification,

"Germany will be so powerful that it will dominate everyone.

"[French president Charles] De Gaulle joined. Then he was dealing with a very weak Germany. Our troops were in Germany to support him. [De Gaulle] would not have signed the treaties in present circumstances.

"They will be dealing with a powerful and dominating nation of maybe 80 to 90 million people with a new confidence—a new euphoria."

Thatcher reserved her harshest criticism for the European Commission, which she said was anti-democratic.

"The days of appointed commissioners must be numbered. We must give power to the council of ministers. I am not handing over authority to a non-elected bureaucracy..."

"We must take away the power of initiative from the Commission. Can we get this through?"

The Taoiseach replied: "I don't think so."

"They are just a new Politburo", she added.

"What does political union mean? Are they going to change the crowned head of every country? Are they going to change the president of your country?"

"The commission was necessary for the European Community to start off, but it is a totally non-democratic power structure now. It is not responsible to the European Parliament or to any other parliament. What we need there is a proper, profes-

sional civil service to serve the council ministers. We must metamorphose it into that."

Haughey replied: "I don't disagree. We don't want any more powers for the European Parliament at any rate."

Thatcher said: "Kaput! It is not a parliament at all."

Thatcher added that she and Haughey were accountable to their parliaments.

"I must to go parliament tomorrow to justify what I have done today. [Spanish Prime Minister Felipe] González goes three times a year. [François] Mitterand never goes. [Helmut] Kohl goes quite infrequently.

"With you and me there's intimate and instant accountability. Italy was never one nation. Portugal is struggling and needs help. How can this group of people form a union?" she asked.

Thatcher emphasised the disparate nature of European countries during the two meetings, claiming the Italians "will continue not to pay taxes", and berating Greek prime minister Andreas Papandreu for "petty interference" by lecturing her on the rights of part-time workers.

"Italy quite cheerfully propose this and that and then just as cheerfully ignores that that does not suit them. Try to force this process too far and we will all become subsidiaries of Germany", she said.

"This is why we think you should take a major part in this debate", said Mr Haughey.

She replied:

"There is no paper before us. What does political union mean? Are they going to change the crowned head of every country? Are they going to change the president of your country? Each country has a parliament. Are they going to change that?"

"If you give away your powers of taxation you have lost your sovereignty. In talking of a single currency, Delors must have had a rush of blood to the head. We are not going to have a single currency."

She continued:

"I am not in a position to commit my country for seven to nine years ahead. I don't know what is going to happen in the USSR. I don't know how Germany will develop."

When Haughey asked her about expanding the membership of the community from 12, she was more favourable, say-

continued on page 27, column 3

## ARCHIVES continued

However, Haughey urged Thatcher to get more involved in the European political union issue.

“I would ask you to take a major interest in political union and in the question of more powers for the European Parliament. My personal view is if they get more powers **they will be an impediment to the Community**,” the Taoiseach warned.

Both agreed that Sweden and Austria should be supported in joining the Community, with Thatcher stressing she wanted to assist Turkey to ensure it didn't revert back to the Muslim world.

Thatcher was also fulsome in her praise of the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, but she believed the Soviets, on foot of their economic reforms, “*will soon be asking for money*”.

“The Russians are being quite responsible at present. After all, they have given territory to the Lithuanians and defence needs in the area”.

She also said she wanted to support Gorbachev's reforms, admitting surprise that the Russian leader had previously chatted to her about Western economic thought.

“He is concerned about the relationship between Nato and the Warsaw Pact. We must think of how to help Gorbachev and allay their fears.”

She noted to Haughey that she had visited Kiev and it had a population of 850,000 in 1940. When the Germans left in 1943, the population was 150,000.

“*The Russians lost 27 million dead in the war*”.

Haughey replied: “*That lingers.*”

Thatcher was also trenchant in her comments about her opposition to a more powerful European Central Bank, any additional powers for the European Commission and political union within Europe.

(*Sunday Independent*, 27.12.2020)

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### 1990 STATE PAPERS

***Thatcher hit out angrily at EC ‘politburo’ as Haughey looked to her for help***

(*Irish Independent*, 28.12.2020)

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher vehemently opposed European political union as she slated the European Commission as a kind of non-democratic “*politburo*”.

She also warned that European Commission President Jacques Delors must have had “*a rush of blood to the head*” in proposing a single European currency.

“*We are not going to have a single currency*”, she vowed.

Taoiseach Charles Haughey tried to persuade Mrs Thatcher to get more involved in European reforms as he warned the European Community (EC) — and particularly smaller member states — needed the UK involved as a country which not only passed directives but ensured they were implemented.

He also said the UK was important for the EC given the inevitable impact of a reunited Germany.

Mr. Haughey insisted to Mrs. Thatcher that he wanted her more involved in Europe.

“Britain is at the head of the league — we will have to get the others up to speed. We must see that we do not just pass directives. We must see that they also get implemented,” he said.

Further, the Taoiseach sought UK support in dealing with what he termed an “*appalling proposal*” from Belgium and Germany that the European Parliament be given co-decision rights on major policies.

Mrs. Thatcher was adamant that it was the EC Commission itself that needed to reform.

“The Commission was necessary for the European Community to start off but it is a totally non-democratic power structure now. It is not responsible to the European Parliament or to any other parliament”, she said.

“What we need there is a proper, professional civil service to serve the Council of Ministers. We must metamorphose it into that.

“The days of appointed commissioners must be numbered — we must give powers to the Council of Ministers. I am not handing over authority to a non-elected bureaucracy. They (the EC Commission) are just a new politburo.”

Further, she insisted that no further legislative powers be given to the European Parliament.

She said she favoured an internal market to promote trade but warned Mr Haughey not to underestimate EC cultural differences.

“The cultural differences will remain... the Italians will continue not to pay taxes,” she said.

Mrs. Thatcher also resolutely refused to consider any European police force “*above our (UK) police force*”.

And she warned Mr. Haughey bluntly about a united Germany.

“After the war, our industry was flattened,” she said “German industry was flattened. They reconstructed their industry with Marshall Aid from the ground up with the most modern technology.

“Their workforce is highly efficient. They will buy German — as the Japanese buy Japanese and the French buy French. They are highly efficient and totally ruthless. In the end, there will only be three (economic) powers in the world — the US, Germany and Japan. The rest of us must stand together. We are not going to be dictated to. We want a gold standard and the Deutschmark does it. If you give away your powers of taxation, you have lost your sovereignty.”

(*Irish Independent*, 28.12.2020)

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### 1990 STATE PAPERS

***British PM complained to Haughey of ‘EU diktat’***

(*Sunday Times* [Dublin edition], 27.12.2020)

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called for a “*proper professional civil service*” to replace what she regarded as the undemocratic European Commission during a meeting with Charles Haughey, who was then the Taoiseach, in London in 1990.

State papers show the Tory leader engaged in a strongly worded criticism of EU institutions over a working lunch with Haughey, who was president of the European Council at the time.

The documents released under the 30-year rule by the National Archives show that Thatcher wanted to end the appointment by Brussels of EU Commissioners in order to “*give power to the Council of Ministers*”.

“I am not handing over authority to a non-elected bureaucracy,” she remarked.

Thatcher complained:

continued on page 28





## From The Archives . . .

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*Thatcher hit out angrily at EC 'politiburo' as Haughey looked to her for help*  
(Irish Independent, 28.12.2020)

**"Haughey looked to her for help"** — that would be typical Irish journalism. He was President of the European Council after all, so he had to give and take?

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*Check this paragraph!!*

**"I would ask you to take a major interest in political union and in the question of more powers for the European Parliament. My personal view is if they get more powers they will be an impediment to the Community,"** the Taoiseach [Haughey] warned.

(Sunday Independent, 27.12.2020)

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### 1990 STATE PAPERS

**Thatcher told Taoiseach of her fears about 'devious' Germany**  
(Sunday Independent, 27.12.2020)

"British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher confided to Taoiseach Charles Haughey [President of the European Council at the time, Jan.-June, 1990] that she found Germany's actions on reunification to be *"devious"* and was concerned at the eventual impact on the EU of a powerful German superstate.

The revelation came in confidential papers released as part of the 1990 State Archive.

Haughey met Thatcher in April and June [1990] with the discussions dominated

by Northern Ireland, the reunification of Germany, apartheid in South Africa and calls for greater EU integration.

However, it was the impending emergence of a united Germany within the European Community which prompted Thatcher to be remarkably open with Haughey.

"Particularly with Poland and the question of their borders—Germany is playing a very devious game here. Also with Hungary", she said.

Thatcher admitted she was concerned at the pace of German reunification, with the process much faster than either she or French President Francois Mitterrand had envisaged.

Haughey said monetary union and elections in Germany would likely be in 1991.

"He [German Chancellor Helmut Kohl] is changing his mind again? I thought he had 1993 in mind for German

elections", she said. "The French think they can influence Germany within the [European] Community—but Germany will be so powerful that it will dominate everyone.

"The Community is completely different from when [French President Charles] de Gaulle joined. Then he was dealing with a very weak Germany. And our troops were in Germany to support him. He would not have signed the treaties in the present circumstances.

"They will be dealing with a powerful and dominant nation of maybe 80 to 90 million people with a new confidence, a new euphoria.

"This nation will be highly competitive, they will make things and sell things at prices nobody can beat.

"This new Germany will dominate the Community.

"France and Germany think they can get on within the Community but the Community is too disparate to manage together. And then they talk about the democratic deficit?"

Thatcher was scathing about calls for greater European union. She said Haughey and herself were instantly accountable to their parliaments—but she said Kohl, Mitterrand and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez rarely went to parliament.

"Italy was never one nation, Portugal is struggling and needs help... how can this group of people form a union?" she asked.

The UK leader, in a scathing aside, said the Italians only agreed to never pay taxes.

"If we do not manage this right, Germany will undercut us in every market."

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